

and have made London the center of the world's commerce. If reward went to the individual in proportion to his services, and were handed on to his descendants, what percentage of this wealth would go to the descendants of Watt and Stevenson, of Cobden and Bright, of all the discoverers and inventors, the thinkers, statesmen and administrators, to whose efforts we owe this vast and peaceable expansion of an orderly and healthy community? We know no way of making the computation; but we are sure that the percentage so expended would be so great as to leave not much for those who have condescended to own the soil, and who have actually received the money. This vast increase has fallen into private hands, through the carelessness and want of forethought too characteristic of our public life, and the result is that we have to bear a burden that presses too heavily on the many whom our industrial progress has left poor.

It will be said—we ourselves have said—that the landlords fear the taxes not for the burden they actually impose, but for the valuation which they necessitate. We have pointed out that as the duties are arranged it will be in the interest of both sides to arrive at a fair value, and why should owners object to a fair valuation? The answer is in part that such a valuation will become, whether by custom or by statute law, the basis of price in compulsory purchases, but mainly that it will facilitate the next step in fiscal reform—that is to say, the shifting of the burden of local taxation from buildings to sites. What discourages building, what weighs upon the householder, and accentuates the housing problem at present is that our municipal finance, unable as it is to draw on the unearned increment for its revenue, is forced to impose the whole cost of the government of a town on buildings and sites indiscriminately. The result is a heavy tax on bricks and mortar, which for all social purposes it would be desirable to relieve as far as possible from all taxation. The separate valuation of the site necessitated by the Finance Bill will make it possible to lay a portion of the rate on the site, and so relieve the building. It is this change, perfectly just, and socially most desirable, which the owners of urban land anticipate with dismay. But the measure of their fears is the measure of the hope for democracy. The Budget has given new life to the Liberal party, and brought it once more into line with those democratic forces which threatened at the close of last year to diverge from it. What is needed now is the resolution to despise timid counsels, ignore ridiculous threats, measure the opposition of unrepresentative men at its true worth, and deal drastically with any treason in the citadel. We have not always agreed with Mr. Asquith, but we rejoice to feel assured that some of his most distinguished qualities, his intellectual lucidity and directness, his powers of

impressive speech and his unflinching loyalty to his colleagues and to his declared policy, are precisely those which the present situation demands in the chief of the party in power.

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## BOOKS

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### A STUDY OF RACE CHARACTER.

**Ezekiel.** By Lucy Pratt. Illustrated by Frederic Dorr Steele. Published by Doubleday, Page & Company, New York.

Ezekiel is a little Negro boy, one "of a child-like, willing, erring race, transplanted from the gentle drift of an Oriental country to the stern, exacting West," and "surrounded there by another people, uncomprehending and impatient." As a boy he is as true to life as Tom Sawyer, but of a type as different as the color of his skin.

Ezekiel goes to the Whittier School at Hampton Institute, down in Virginia; except for a short time, when a Northern man experiments with him in a white school in New England, and with much the same result as might be expected from transplanting a water lily to a sand dune. The boy is without guile and not disposed to indolence, but an imagination that would make his fortune if trained in the manufacture of "best sellers" in fiction, gets him, among his unappreciative superiors, a reputation for prevarication and shiftlessness.

This misinterpretation would be easy to fall in with if the author didn't admit the reader into those recesses of the boy's mind which are closed to the unsympathetic white people of his whereabouts. But admitted to a view of the child's springs of action, the reader finds in this string of stories of a white teacher's experience in a Negro schoolroom at the South, a faithful study of Negro character. It is a study which reveals the Negro as "just folks," differing from white folks not in capability but in temperament, not in less intelligence but in greater affection.

A faithful study this, and humorous in presentation, with little streaks of pathos running through the humor. It is a study, too, of a real Negro boy—composite, may be, but all boy and all Negro. The illustrations are gems of Negro child-life.

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## PAMPHLETS

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### A Lesson for Lawyers.

S. S. Gregory's address to the 1909 graduating class of the John Marshall Law School of Chicago, on Samuel Romilly as a great lawyer and law reformer. (S. S. Gregory, 100 Washington St., Chicago), rings out a sounder note than is usually struck by the older lawyers when they welcome young men into