

thinking of that when we wrote of "capital and nature's storehouse," nor of the unquestioned fact that the land value of cities and towns is greatly in excess of the value of lands which may be termed "the storehouse of nature." We ought not to except mines from such consideration. Even if we do, however, forests and agricultural lands remain, and these are not "negligible quantities" as regards value. But suppose they were. The purpose of the Single Tax is the enfranchisement of labor through the opening up of natural opportunities, whether they be more or less valuable.—Editor Single Tax REVIEW.)

BOOK REVIEWS.

AN EPOCH MARKING BOOK.

The worldwide struggle of the enslaved masses to burst their ancient bonds is the most interesting and inspiring spectacle on this earth at present, and nowhere is this spectacle so hopeful and so fascinating as in Great Britain. In his new book, "The British City," Mr. Frederic Howe presents us with a series of sketches of this scene which show him as an artist of a very high order. From the graphic and comprehensive preface to his final picture of "The City of To-morrow," every stroke has meaning and purpose, and where repetitions occur they are always the salient features, which gain new force and significance with each appearance.

Though Mr. Howe professes to be hampered by his inability to "understand a nation to which he is an alien" there is little doubt that few born Britons will read these pages without gaining new light on home conditions. A fresh eye will always detect faults which custom hides from those familiar with them, and the author here illustrates his conclusions by an appeal to universal principles common to every people. Thus the most universal instinct of man is to avoid effort, to live if possible without labour. This is the motive that underlies the surface phenomena of all history. It is the one note that is common in the contemporary politics of all countries. Back of the spectacular controversies of parties, the by-plays of Kings and Ministries, of Parliament and Congress, is the struggle of the few to get upon the backs of the many. It is the lust of something for nothing that makes of the House of Lords and the United States Senate instinctive obstacles to democracy. Both chambers are the sanctuaries of privilege. At their doors democracy is beating in the name of humanity. The movement is inspired from below among the common people.

*The British City. By Frederick C. Howe, 12 mo., cloth, 370 pp. \$1.50 net. Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y. City.

Government by gentlemen is the costliest burden under which the nation staggers. The ideal statesman is a member of the nobility, the country squire, the leisured gentleman, and the generous employer of labor, some dignitary of the community. And because Great Britain has succeeded in luring this class of men into her politics we have been assured that representative government was there at its best. It is to this class that many reformers would have America entrust her affairs. British and American observers have been deceived by the appearance of things. The members of the gentry are in Parliament, for the same reason that the railway director is in Congress. They are looking after their interests.

The popular fallacy that municipal graft and corruption is a strictly American product Mr. Howe punctures with some very enlightening facts and figures concerning the ancient Livery Companies which still retain control of government in the old city of London. True, as the author points out, this corruption is considered quite proper because sanctioned by ancient statutes, which view of the case reminds one of Henry George's chapter on "The Great Grandson of Captain Kidd." It is, however, none the less corruption "and the viler as underhand." So long as such a sore festers at the heart of the kingdom's chief city her claims to superior civic and political purity must fail to impress the well informed American. Such barriers of ancient privilege, however, are one by one being swept away by the rapidly rising tide of civic democracy, and to the next generation of Englishmen they will perhaps seem as unreal and incredible as Robin Hood and his Merry Men seem to-day. It is to the doings of this civic democracy that Mr. Howe devotes the major portion of his book. Four-fifths, he reminds us, of the British people live in towns and cities. In discussing in "Progress and Poverty" the possible decline of modern civilization Henry George points to the modern cities as the nests from whence might issue the new Goths and Vandals to destroy our boasted institutions. And truly but a few steps backward were apparently needed when he wrote to make such a thing possible. Now, however, thanks to Henry George and his kind, the danger seems past, and in Britain at least these hordes will issue forth to build and not destroy. And their efforts like charity and all other good things are beginning at home. "Back to the land" is a good cry, but "Forward to the city" is a more practical one, and gives promise of a better country also when the new democracy gets around to that. If the work at hand is well done later tasks will prove easier.

Mr. Howe, of course, tells us all about the wonderful spread of municipal enterprises of various kinds upon which nearly

every British city has entered, and in every case is carrying, or has carried, to final success. He gives what should be the permanent quietus to the stupid charge that these enterprises are being carried on at the expense of the tax payers by showing that the tax or "rate" payers, as they are there called, are much more strictly attentive and actively alive to their own interests than the same class here, and we may therefore rest assured that if they approve the new ventures they are gaining instead of losing by them. True, the city councils are frequently hampered in extending their projects by the rate-payers' conservatism, but once their consent is gained success may be considered certain. And it generally proves so, for not only are prices lowered, but the rates or taxes as well. It is not surprising that in such circumstances public service is considered exceptionally honorable. Public service of that kind is real service, and not a private snap at the expense of the public, and so it would surely prove here if the opportunity to render it were given. Nothing tends so much to give dignity and satisfaction to any work as the knowledge of something accomplished for the general welfare. A sense of *noblesse oblige*, says Mr. Howe, seems to animate even the humblest of city employes, every one of whom apparently feels the responsibility resting on him to demonstrate his usefulness to the fullest extent. This is somewhat curiously illustrated in what is perhaps the only unsatisfactory episode in the book. Mr. Howe relates how he went and personally investigated offices and officials and enterprises of all kinds until at last his duty called him to the wonderful sewage filtration plant of Glasgow, of which we have all read with admiration, not unmingled with doubt as to at least one of its features.

It seems that the sewage of the whole city is taken charge of at this wonderful place and transmuted by some magical process into solid bricks of the finest fertilizer on the one hand and living springs of the finest water on the other. This water we have been assured is not only fit for drink but exceptionally pure and healthful though the fact that it was turned after purification into the Clyde instead of into the city's reservoirs seemed somewhat suspicious. However, now we would know for sure, for Mr. Howe was going to see for himself. He was shown the way by one of the oldest though humbler of the officials engaged in this branch of the city's business, who was also imbued with the usual spirit of *noblesse oblige*, as was soon to appear, for after explaining to Mr. Howe the details of the process of filtration he drew off a glass of this wonderful water and naturally handed it to his guest to sample, but strange and sad to relate, while we hold our breath for his verdict, Mr. Howe simply and soulfully remarks, "I

did not feel very thirsty just then, so he drank it himself." Here was *noblesse oblige* indeed, but of what use to a waiting continent was this second hand demonstration? Every one knows to what lengths British pride and prejudice will carry a man, and "a poor thing, but my own" is a motto that might well animate the Glaswegian here, but how it would taste to an American is what we wanted to know. Mr. Howe, as we understand it, went abroad to investigate and he should not have shirked his duty. Suppose he had not felt like riding would that have excused him from testing the British trains? Had he pleaded being a Kentucky Colonel we might have excused him, but that he was not thirsty just then is an obvious evasion. Before he goes again he should eat plentifully of salt herring for breakfast and let us know the truth. But if the sentiment of *noblesse oblige* animates the city governments the general government, composed largely of the ancient nobility, to whom the motto is supposed to have a special appreciation, have ceased to practice it, not that they ever did practice it, save within their own narrow and selfish limits, though in feudal times they had certain obligations since incontinently shuffled off, but it is the old story that as soon as the proposition is made them to really get off the people's back there's "nothing doing."

But it is the ground rent of his country that is the chief and peculiar graft of the British aristocrat, and it is to its continuance that his constant efforts are directed. Here is the tender spot wherein he is threatened by the new democracy of the cities. For as the Glaswegian said to Mr. Howe: "We got control of our tramways and extended them to the suburbs, thinking to get cheaper sites for workingmen's homes, but instead of making land cheap for the workman we found we simply made it dear for the landlord." This is the crucial point. The crisis has been reached and the issue joined in Britain. This is why the new radical parliament calls for the suppression of the House of Lords. We seem to be ages away from such a situation in America, and it is for this reason that the prospect seems so much more hopeful in Britain. Everyone interested in this momentous struggle should read Mr. Howe's splendid book, which is fittingly dedicated to Tom. L. Johnson.

P. AITKEN.

From a report of the Woman's Suffrage League of Natal we gather that one of the most active members of the League is Mrs. Henry Ancketill. This report is from her pen, and takes a wider range than most of the utterances of woman suffragists on this side of the water. So true is it that a well grounded knowledge of the science of economics tends to widen even one's view of the suffrage question!