

whose value does not come from the industry of the adjacent community, the larger part, if not all, of the revenue from the taxation of minerals should go to a larger political division than a township or county where they happen to be located. Possibly under our system of government the State would be an appropriate unit, although something can be said in favor of making this a source of national revenue; especially if proper allowance be made to the localities for the expense to which they are put through the presence of the mining industry.

The final question, as to what inducement there would be for men to prospect for precious metals if all but labor values were taken in taxation, involves a great deal more than assessment and taxation. It might be said on the one hand that an allowance ought to be made in the assessment for profits based upon the difficulties of discovery of particular kinds of mineral. On the other hand, it might be argued that prospecting is a gambling game in which the losses much overbalance the gains, and that the social good as well as the welfare of individuals would be enhanced if we waited for our minerals until they were found in the ordinary course of events.

Perhaps, too, it is a proper function of government to explore for the natural resources within its borders. Which leads to the thought that both original forest growths and mineral deposits ought never to pass into private hands, but should be retained as part of the public domain, to be cut or mined on a royalty or leasehold basis; a plan which has been followed in wiser countries. But these resources are largely in private hands, and the questions relate to taxation under those conditions.

A. C. PLEYDELL.

THERE is but one thing needed in this world, but that is indispensable—Justice, Justice, in the name of Heaven give us Justice!

THOMAS CARLYLE.

THE Single Tax Postulates are:

That all the community have equal rights to the natural elements; and that each individual has an exclusive right to the products of his own industry.

## BOOK REVIEWS.

### EUROPEAN CITIES AT WORK.\*

Here is another of the valuable works which Frederick Howe has contributed to the literature of city life and government. We know of no more intimate account of the public life of the cities of Germany than is comprised in some of these chapters. Mr. Howe writes with enthusiasm if not always with discrimination, and the reader is impressed with the conviction that we have much to learn from the Fatherland in the splendid civic spirit in which the Kaiser's dominions have set so striking an example.

For it is a generous picture that municipal Socialism contemplates. One feels a sympathy, of which he cannot well rid himself, for these efforts of the German cities to provide for the needs and comforts of their people, to extend the activities of the city government up to the door step and into the very household of the citizen. When one of them says, as quoted by Mr. Howe, "The city is more than a business affair. It is more than a political agency. It is an agency of social welfare with unexhausted possibilities," we respond to the sentiment, and for a moment we hesitate to question whether these German municipal policies may not be those that American cities should adopt.

Suppose that all cities should do what these German cities have set out to do? Suppose the programme should be carried still further? Is there any disposition (is there in fact any real knowledge that would guide such disposition were it existent?) to deal with the problem of poverty fundamentally? Why make a division, as Mr. Howe does, between these activities of the German cities and the *laissez faire* of American cities, and assume, or lead his perhaps too careless reader to assume, that there is not a realizable *laissez faire* in which the individual may be left free to deal with his own property and the city to assert only such cir-

\*European Cities at Work. By Frederick C. Howe. Ph.D. Cloth, 12 mo., 370 pp. Price \$1.75 net, Chas. Scribner's Sons, N. Y. City.

cumscribed and primary functions over its property as are needed to secure the individual in the enjoyment of what is his? Would not these well-meaning activities which these cities are undertaking in a very generous spirit for human betterment be seen to be merely temporary expedients and for the most part barely reaching with remedial touch the real sore of humanity?

For there is another side to the life of German cities which goes far to show that the real evil in modern social conditions remains well nigh unabated by all that is being done in the way of municipal Socialism. Mr. Howe tells it in a few brief paragraphs. One from page 160: "Six hundred thousand, or nearly one third the population (of Berlin) live in dwellings in which each room contains five or more persons, while 80 per cent. of the working people in the larger towns of Germany are said to live in cellars, attics and tenements inadequate to the maintenance of a decent family life. Official reports on the subject show that in the following cities, out of every 1,000 persons, there live in dwellings consisting only of one or two rooms, the following number of persons, to wit: in Berlin, 731; in Breslau, 742; in Dresden, 688; in Hamburg, 523; in Hanover 679; in Konigsberg, 730; in Magdeburg, 726; in Mannheim, 610; and in Munich, 524."

This extraordinary evenness of proportion is pretty fair evidence that one sole cause is at work in all of these cities to which bad housing conditions is to be attributed, and is evidence, too, how little has been done by all these socialistic experiments to remedy conditions. It is to be regretted that similar figures are not at hand for Dusseldorf and Frankfort-on-the-Main, for it is these cities to which Mr. Howe has devoted considerable space, and which seem to be in advance of the other German cities in their socialization of functions, Mr. Howe telling us that "Dusseldorf cares for its people as a parent does for its children", (page 67), which, by the way, may not be the best way to care for them. We may guess that both Dusseldorf and Frankfort-on-the-Main will show like proportions of persons in

1000 living in dwellings consisting of one or two rooms, though this we can only surmise. We can be certain, however, that whatever the varying proportion due to temporary or surface causes, nothing or but little that these German cities have done has gone very far to remove the cause of bad housing conditions due to the private appropriation of ground rents.

We detect Mr. Howe in a remarkable lapse from consistency. Let us present it in "deadly parallel."

"Nor is there any hard and fast line between those natural monopolies, which many people in this country admit should be in public hands, and industries of a competitive, non-monopolistic character. (III.). Yet on page 114 we find Mr. Howe saying: 'There is an intelligent discrimination between those things which should be public and those which should be private.' Is our author napping? Or has he yet determined whether there is a hard and fast line, or any line at all, that should anywhere be drawn? It would seem so, for though pages and pages in tacit and express approval of all these social experiments have preceded what we are now about to quote, and although there is disapproval of what he terms the *laissez faire* policy of American cities, he says on page 176 when he comes to the subject of the taxation of land values: "If we compel owners to build (i.e., by taxing land values, for it is this subject that Mr. Howe is now considering) the housing problem will take care of itself. There will be no need of municipal dwellings; little need of tenement regulation. *Competition will take care of this.*" (The italics are ours.) So the *laissez faire* policy is not to be wholly condemned; there is a natural law which may be trusted to do its own regulating. And some day we shall learn this; we could have learned it long ago if it had not become the fashion to sneer at it, and to speak of "brutal competition," or to talk as Mr. Howe himself does on page 107: "Thought in America is obsessed with the idea that the laws of commerce are like the laws of nature. We assume that these laws cannot be controlled or aided by man." If there are laws of commerce

they are natural laws and therefore like the laws of nature. We do not speak of "regulating" or "aiding" the laws of nature unless our thinking is as loose as our language; the most we can do is to conform our actions to them.

But these are doctrinal points. With much of what Mr. Howe has written the Single Taxer will find himself in nearly complete accord. There *are* things which the city should do for itself and it may be true, and doubtless is, as Mr. Howe says (page 356) that "the American city owns so few things and does so little for the people that it fails to awaken their pride or affection." But what should it do and what should it refrain from doing? And what should it do first without which all its activities are but the labors of Sisyphus—a ceaseless weaving of ropes of sand.

—J. D. M.

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#### FROM CAPITALISM TO DEMOCRACY.

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A large book of 431 pages is *Between Eras; From Capitalism to Democracy* (Intercollegiate Press, Kansas City, Mo.) by Albion W. Small, and it consists for the most part of conversations upon the economic problem. These conversations are often clever and epigrammatic, but amazingly superficial. It reminds one of the character of those works that came in a flood preceding the advent of Populism in the '70's. There are some reflections that are not without their value, and verbal coruscations now and then arrest one. But the real *raison d'etre* of such a work does not appear. It can do nothing but add to the lumber of the book shelves. Not a hundred men will have the courage and patience to read it through. Its closest readers will be the author's relatives and immediate friends.

There is one allusion to Henry George, and that is in the chapter on the Fallacy of Distribution, at page 355. One of the characters, Graham, who is gifted with extraordinary fluency, says: "You know as well as I do that there would be no capitalistic problem if the only capital concerned were the kind that exists by the

grace of the self-sacrifice of the present holders. When you assume the contrary, your special pleading for capitalism makes a good pair with the Henry George argument that because savages get their food without capital therefore capital is not necessary for civilization."

It is to be feared that anybody who rattles off that sort of nonsense about the teachings of Henry George has nothing of much value to offer on any related economic subject. And the fear will be borne out by anyone who wants to burrow through these pages.

J. D. M.

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#### PRAISE FOR F. L. SIDDONS.

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President Wilson has followed the custom of the times in appointing two Single Taxers to office. The two new members of the District of Columbia Commission are Messrs. Newman and Siddons, both Single Taxers. Perhaps the best known of these Single Taxers is Frederick L. Siddons, who for years has been associated in the practice of law with Jackson H. Ralston. The *Johnstown Democrat* pays Mr. Siddons this well-deserved compliment:

"Under his administration of district affairs an honest and equitable system of taxation and a scientific management of public utilities are among the many reforms that may be confidently expected. That his administration will be honest, efficient and economical no one who knows his sterling qualities will question. Those fundamental principles which have their home in the honest heart; the wisdom which tests all things by the standard of natural justice; the clarified constancy of mental vision which pierces the mists and tricks of sophistry; the irresistible energy of mind which casts aside the artificial impediments which obstruct the path to justice and economic truth; the keen intellectual faculty which sheds a ray of light into every dark corner where fraud and trickery might seek a hiding place; the sterling integrity which braves all dangers in the cause of social and industrial justice—all these he possesses; and they have