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sulting products, labor and fuel conditions, and the relative merits and adaptability of different available processes.

S. M. WOODWARD.

Washington, D. C.

Three Acres and Liberty. By BOLTON HALL, assisted by R. F. POWELL, with an introduction by GEORGE T. POWELL. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908. Pp. xxiii, 435. \$1.75).

A Little Land and a Living. By BOLTON HALL, with a letter as an introduction by WILLIAM BORSODI. (New York: The Arcadia Press, 1908. Pp. 287. \$1).

The author of these books is a lawyer interested in social problems and from this point of view approaches the subject of agriculture as a means of relieving urban poverty and congestion.

The title *A Little Land and a Living* would have been appropriate to the contents of both of these books. The title of the first book is entirely misleading. The author gives the experience of no one who has taken three acres of land and by cultivation made a living and secured "liberty," but it is his theory that it could be done. To justify his belief the author prepares this book,—compiling the bulk of it from other writers,—for the purpose of showing that a small piece of land when properly cultivated is capable of producing large crops. The returns from experiments in vacant city lot cultivation in New York and Philadelphia are given to bear out his contention that a living can be made from a small piece of land by intensive culture. With all this one may agree, but when it comes to accepting the author's conclusion that large farms are not necessary and give poorer returns than small farms, that is another matter. His theory strikes at the whole system of modern agriculture and fails to recognize that the production of small fruits, flowers, vegetables, drug plants, and novel live stock is not all there is to "farming." The great staple crops of cotton, corn, wheat, oats, flax, potatoes, and others cannot be raised to advantage on "three acres."

Be it said to the credit of the author that he sees there is a problem to be solved—the congestion of cities and the prevalence

of poverty. He sees, also, that the solution of the problem depends upon getting the people "back to the land!" But *how?*—that is the question which is demanding the energies and thoughts of the ablest men in most modern nations at the present time, and they have been unable to answer it. The author's proposed remedy, however, is simple, and in general is as follows:

Purchase land for a home in the country, buy or build a house, raise produce for a living or for your family use if you are to work in the city, and buy near a city so as to take advantage of a "probable increase in land values. Even if you are primarily interested in your early sales of produce, you will not object to reaping an additional profit from the presence of other people."

To what class of people is such advice given? Not to farmers for they are already in the country; not to the city unemployed and the mass of mechanics, for they have no money with which to "buy" and "build;" and, therefore, it must apply to those who have some means. But this is the class which does not want to take up horticulture or agriculture for a living, and so the great question of the city unemployed and city congestion remains as far from solution as it was before the appearance of *Three Acres and Liberty*.

The second book adds practically nothing to the first. It is doubtful if *A Little Land and a Living* would have been written had not William Borsodi, a friend of the author, written him a long letter which is used as an introduction. The point of the letter is that the first book is incomplete—in other words, offers no solution of the problem of city congestion. Therefore, Mr. Borsodi counsels:

"Now complete the work which you have so ably begun, and we will see a mighty concerted effort to make the movement to the land a practical success. You have pointed out the way, now go ahead, write another book, that will discover the leader." (p. 74).

This was the incentive to *A Little Land and a Living*. Much of its contents is condensed from the first book, but the author's viewpoint has changed. His counsel to those who would take up farming for a living is not to take a "city vacant lot," or an acre, or even "three acres," as was suggested in the first book. Now it is: "Get a piece of land; ten acres will do, and fifty is not too much; it should be near a town or an institution where the product

may be sold" (p. 261). *Fifty* acres! But that would be a good sized farm.

And yet, in the second book, the author shows not how to get the land nor who is to be the leader of the movement of the people "back to the land." But even if some rational theory relating to the solution of the great social problem of city congestion had been suggested in either book, from the practical point of view the counsel given is exceedingly doubtful. The whole trend of the teachings of these books is that any city-bred man, without previous training or experience, can take up farming or do the work of a competent farm laborer and be successful. This is a serious mistake, so frequently made by those who have had no training in agriculture, the proof that it is erroneous being found in the great number of failures which have followed the efforts of such people at farming even when financially and morally backed up by charitable and other organizations.

The economics of these volumes is a strange medley. To illustrate from the latter volume: The author says (p. 104) that "the vacant lot gardens show that even to-day available land only and not capital is necessary to make a living." And yet it is difficult to conceive how the smallest piece of land could be exploited *without capital*. Later on the author recognizes this truth for he says "Large capital is not needed. * * * For success or for profit, land near markets and transportation, manure, hot beds, crates, wagons, and tools are needed. * * * Borrow the capital even if you pay high rates." (Pp. 176, 177).

One could go on indefinitely quoting from these books to show that neither from the practical nor the economic point of view has the author digested the subject matter of the great problem with which he deals, nor grasped the difficulties in the way of its solution. Does it not seem rather incongruous to tell readers to buy "fifty" acres of land; that "it is better to pay five hundred dollars for an acre of land close to residences than a hundred dollars an acre for outlying land, because it is cheaper to get stable manure to it, and it is more accessible to the cultivator, besides being easier to show and closer to the market; and because the rise in the value of the land is greater and more certain" (p. 261)—and then to find in the very last paragraph of the book that this advice is intended for the occupants of "the crowded, unhealthful life of the city

tenement," in the hope that it may "afford a ray of hope to the discouraged toiler"? But what ray of hope the discouraged toiler or occupant of a tenement house in large cities like New York can derive from the prospect of securing land that will cost him from \$5,000 to \$25,000, to say nothing of the cost of stocking and fitting up the property, is hard to conceive, for it is well known that these classes have little or no savings. Nor can such people "borrow" the capital, and it would be an exceedingly doubtful policy even if they were to do so.

While the perusal of these books, or either of them, would impress the reader with the author's earnestness and good intentions, still they contain nothing relating to agriculture that has not long been known and offer very little of practical value toward solving the great problem of poverty and the unemployed in our large cities with which problem they are primarily concerned.

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L'Industrie Américaine. By ACHILLE VIALATE. (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1908. Pp. 492).

Monsieur Viallate has given his countrymen a book about the United States that is a model in its way. While the material and even the point of view are familiar to many American readers, the author has exercised careful judgment in the selection of his secondary authorities and brought out clearly the essential points in American industrial history.

Under the general divisions of *L'évolution industrielle et la politique commerciale*, *L'organisation industrielle*, and *L'expansion industrielle* the author presents a brief summary of American economic history, a description of the economic organization and a discussion of the expansion of industry both at home and abroad. Many facts and figures are given illustrating the growth of the nation.

It is to Monsieur Viallate's credit that he makes no attempt to force his material to the maintenance of any thesis. Only in the last chapter does he give way to prophecy when he calls attention to the insufficiency of legislation to protect the nation against the