

the wealth that they produced would fall in larger measure to themselves and to their children, affording comfort, leisure, and enjoyment now unknown. There would, in fine, be laid the foundations of a new and higher social life, whose crowning characteristic and whose glory would be greater prosperity and happiness—greater and also truer, because more general."

Even those who do not agree with Mr. Dawson in regard to the possibility or expediency of all the changes he would recommend, will certainly sympathize with him in his generous aspirations for the future of humanity.

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LUXURY. No. 24, Social Science Series. By EMILE DE LAVELEYE.
London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., 1891.

M. LAVELEYE's purpose, in this book, is to show that luxury is "pernicious to the individual and fatal to society." He begins wisely by defining. *A luxury* is to him "anything which does not answer to our primary needs and which, since it costs much money to buy and consequently much labor to produce, is only within reach of the few;" or again, "everything is a luxury which is at the same time dear and superfluous." He then sets forth the causes of luxury, finding them—under the lead of Baudrillart's "*Histoire du lux*"—in three natural and universal sentiments in man—"vanity, sensuality, and the instinct for adornment." He then, still following Baudrillart, adds a fourth—"the desire for change." This analysis of causes is not at all logical, for the four heads are not severely separated, and the first—sometimes called vanity, sometimes ostentation—is continually coming to the front. In truth, a searching analysis must reduce all these causes of luxury, as distinct from something commendable, to one—ostentation—as even the writer's slovenly discussion makes apparent. The desire for sense-gratification is instinctive and animal; the instinct for adornment is also primal; it

is only as, in the consideration of these, the thinking animal man introduces comparison, and that eager craving for monopoly which change of fashion caters to, that true luxury arises in the ostentatious desire to exclude all others in sole possession.

The writer next comes to his thesis—"luxury is unjustifiable"—which leads to a larger elaboration of his definition. He agrees with Bastiat that "to maintain that wealth consists of labor is nothing but a *Sisyphism*, or making work for work's sake." "To dig a hole and fill it up again, to embroider shirt-fronts or set precious stones, is not really to work, for it is not productive of the least utility." "Is an object worth the pains it would require and the time it would take for me to make it myself? If so, it is not a luxury." It will be seen that M. Laveye considers that alone as wealth which contributes to general well-being, but when he comes to apply his definitions in his investigation of the effect of luxury upon society he fails to adhere to them. He makes his application from three points of view: "First, as a question of morals, for the individual as such: Within what limits is the effort to satisfy wants favorable to the normal development of human faculties? Secondly, as a question of economics: To what extent does luxury serve to advance or hinder the accumulation of wealth? Thirdly, as a question of right and justice: Is luxury compatible with the equitable distribution of products and with the principle that each man's remuneration should be in proportion to the amount of useful labor accomplished by him?"

All true economists will agree with the writer that wasteful expenditure for the sake of ostentation is adverse to the increase of individual well-being and to the accumulation of salutary riches. Yet all will not accept his conception of *useful* labor. But M. Laveye unconsciously plays fast and loose even with the definitions that we can accept, and when he condemns luxury apparently strikes at much which his definitions do not cover. We fear that

his condemnation would take away from the individual libraries, paintings, beautiful houses, musical culture, and that great educator and civilizer—travel. The higher nature of those who are the leaven of the race would starve while waiting for the State to follow M. Laveleye's suggestion and furnish these as it furnishes parks and drinking fountains. Travel, indeed, the State can never furnish. The writer seems to be touched by the theories of the socialistic levellers of the Old World, and apparently fails to see that, for the progress of society, we must not so much level down as grade up. It is not true, as he maintains, that the desire for the necessities of life will be strong enough to stimulate men to work. Practical socialists, who have studied men and not merely theories, know that the lack of ambition, of abstinence, and of precision on the part of the working classes are largely responsible for their unfortunate condition. "The leisured classes," of whom M. Laveleye speaks, are in large measure the steam-power of their time and generation. Destroy them with their ambitions and refined tastes, with their love of ideals and ideas, whose culture the possession of comparative wealth makes possible, and the whole race will not only sink to a low material life, but will finally reach a condition where even material prosperity will cease.

The appended essay on "Law and Morals in Political Economy," while presenting nothing new, well emphasizes the basis of economic well-being in morals and hygiene, and also that of property in economic utility.

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CRIME AND ITS CAUSES. By WILLIAM DOUGLAS MORRISON, of H. M. Prison, Wandsworth. London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co.

THIS is a thoughtful and thought-suggesting book, which had its genesis in an experience of fourteen years in connection with H. M. Prison at Wandsworth, England, and