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The History of the Social Question in the Antique World *Geschichte der sozialen Frage und des Sozialismus in der antiken Welt.* Von Robert Von Pöhlmann. 2 vols. Pp. xvi + 610: xii + 644. Munich: Beck, 1912. M. 26.

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which was the proper foundation for an omen. *Mēsa* would be undistinguishable in sound from *mēnsa* with the nasalised *e*, or at least would be so nearly the same as to make the ambiguity legitimate, and, in proper circumstances, ominous. And this seems to be implied in the *alludens* of l. 117 (*heus, etiam mensas consumimus, inquit Iulus, nec plura, alludens*). The verb *alludere* is extremely rare in pre-Virgilian Latin; except in its primary sense of 'play up to' (*litoribus alludit*, Cic. *N.D.* ii. 100, *quae . . . fluctus salis alludebant*, Catull. lxxiv. 67), it only seems to be recorded twice: Ter. *Eun.* 434, *ad id alludere*, 'to joke about it'; and Cic. *Or.* i. 240, *alludens varie*, 'playing with various arguments.' The sense in the line of Virgil obviously is 'playing with' the word—*i.e.*, with its double meaning, or punning upon it, but not himself recognising the ominous import of his pun, as is done by Aeneas, who immediately stops him in order that the omen may not be spoiled by any further words.

If we read the passage aloud, bearing

in mind that *mēsa* and *mensa* have practically the same sound, the connexion would be perfectly clear; what would obscure it, and what may have caused Virgil some difficulty in handling the incident, is that in the written poem one is obliged to spell the word definitely either in one way or in the other. The author of the *Dirae*, we may conjecture, would have explained the point beforehand by adding a line between 109 and 110:

Et adorea liba per herbam
(Liba vocant Itali antiquo quae nomine mesas)
Subiciunt epulis.

But that is not Virgil's way. He has done what he could to prepare us for a surprise by the laboured and retarded wording of ll. 113-115, and he leaves it at that.

It may be some confirmation of the theory here suggested, that the jingle of *ambesas mensas* in *Aen.* iii. 257 seems to point towards the use by Virgil there of the wording of some old Latin rhyming prophecy or song.

J. W. M.

REVIEWS

THE HISTORY OF THE SOCIAL QUESTION IN THE ANTIQUÉ WORLD.

Geschichte der sozialen Frage und des Sozialismus in der antiken Welt. Von ROBERT VON PÖHLMANN. 2 vols. Pp. xvi+610: xii+644. Munich: Beck, 1912. M. 26.

I.

PROFESSOR VON PÖHLMANN is to be congratulated on this, the second and enlarged edition, of his *History of Ancient Communism and Socialism*. In changing the title of the work, he has indicated more accurately its contents. He has, indeed, almost changed his book to a social and economic history of antiquity. I have rarely come across a work which has shed so much new light upon the numerous social problems of the classical world, and the author is so careful an historian that

from the materials which he assembles with great impartiality, it is possible for the reader to draw conclusions which are not at one with the conclusions of the author.

I suppose the sociological impulse is caricatured by Terence in his famous line, *homo sum*, etc. At any rate Chremes finds enough to do at the end of the play in dealing with his own affairs. Pöhlmann, however, expands the maxim when he declares (I. pref. vii): 'Unless we are in a position to build up our science of the antique as a science of the antique population in all the expressions of its life, we shall never succeed in making the antique world really alive for us and for others.' Those who are anxious about the political effect of these investigations will be

reassured when they note that Pöhlmann finds in them a warning for doctrinaires. 'Such persons can see what is the meaning for state, freedom, and personality, of that unchained "monster" (Plato's *μέγα θρέμμα*)' which now again 'in the twentieth century with the solid weight of a uniform mass comes creeping on at the doors of the future.' Pöhlmann, however, does not allow his hopes and fears to interrupt the clear current of his exposition. I was about (with the editor's permission) to entitle this review 'The Spiritual Triumph of the Outcast,' when a second reading of the author's prefaces, recalled me to the world which, by definition, has no use for the man who is 'fired out.'

'Plus cela change, plus c'est la même chose.' So, with some reservations, we might state the reign of law in human society. But the main outlines of social life are seen more clearly in one age than in another: in the favoured periods of history rather than perhaps in a self-confident age, such as the present, and the recent past. Socialism appears for the first time as the critic of capital in the sixth century B.C. (I. 160). For the Homeric age had been an age of production for the sake of consumption, and not for the sake of profit. Not yet had there appeared that abyss between the rich and the poor that marked the development of Greek feudalism. When the oligarchies became supreme, the man of lower estate found himself treated after the methods of a merely economic calculation by the noble who should be to him 'a castle and strong tower.' And the movements of the masses buried deep in their misery are at first like those of Enceladus who, when he would complain of his misery, causes earthquakes (I. 194). At Megara the masses, in their hatred against the rich, fell upon the herds of the great landowners and slaughtered them. The pasture had taken the place of the tilled land. The sheep in Thomas More's phrase had killed the man (I. 195). The countryman thereupon came into the town and took part in the industrial life which was beginning to develop especially in the cities on the shores of the Aegean Sea. But he only found fresh difficulties before him, and this as

early as the time of Solon. Pöhlmann speaks disrespectfully of 'the capitalist jargon of modern times' which talks of 'hands,' and compares this expressive phrase with the Greek equivalent 'servile bodies' *σώματα οἰκετικά*, or with Aristotle's neat definition of the slave as 'an animate machine.' The competition of slave labour was always tending to depreciate the position of the free craftsman. The Athenian democracy, indeed, insured a pitiful survival of the latter class by a system of payments for attendance in the national assembly, and by bribes to attend theatrical performances and other spectacles. It is easy to condemn such a system of finance, but it has recurred in different forms, in the Roman allowances of corn, in the English parish relief of a century ago, in the system of doles which in devious shapes reach the pockets of the less wealthy classes in modern nations.

The cause of these facts is universal: the tendency of capital to grasp at the greatest possible share of the produce (I. 232). War only accentuates the phenomena of peaceful commerce. The impoverishment which war brings applies mainly to those who are already poor (I. 235). But neither Pöhlmann nor Marx does justice to one most important factor which assures the existence of some kind of middle class. Both Marx and Pöhlmann ignore the part which until seventy years ago the originality of the craftsman has always played in production. There are many occupations which cannot as yet, thank heaven, be entirely carried out by machinery or servile persons. The physician, the artist, the thinker, the teacher, must be free if they are to do their best work. And this applies also to many handicraftsmen. In particular the execution of the works of art of classical antiquity gave a chance to the skilful craftsman to rise from the inferno in which otherwise his life was spent. Pöhlmann is scarcely just to the individual patrons of the fine arts. If the divine figures which came from the chisel of Phidias were due to the patronage of the state, the portraiture of Hellenistic, and still more of Roman times, was executed in obedience to the demand of the wealthy

citizen. Surely the portraiture of Athens is as precious to us as its images. Again, the religious drama and the public comedy of the Athenian stage were replaced by the plays of Menander. Here justice has yet to be done. The sculptors of Greek portraits were less successful than Menander in their rendering of human nature. Even the delicate art of Anatole France is a whole world inferior to that of his Greek predecessors. Of course the wealthy patron laughed at art and science in comparison with his moneybags (Plato, *Laws*, 831c). Yet he too was an instrument in the hands of a greater power. The Greek millionaire was something at least of a connoisseur. But when the Roman Philistines arrived with their brute force Greek capital had to bow to it. And so the Roman noble became the middleman between the later art of Greece and modern times. The possession of a fine taste was not graded in the antique world by reference to social station. Hence, when the Greek proletariat found some employment in the great Roman houses, the conquered, by his greater intelligence, took his conqueror captive. Such is the point at which we take up the history of Rome as it appears in these fascinating pages.

II.

Pöhlmann selects many striking passages from Latin authors which harmonise with the formulae which we have found illuminating in the case of Greece. Why should such expressions come so readily to hand? Because, we are told, the historians of Rome transferred to the earlier periods of Roman history the standards of their own day. Thus the Roman nobles are accused 'of lying in wait like footpads to collar the common lands of the state' (Liv. VI. 5). And the disappearance of the small landowner is quickened by the warlike policy of expansion (II. 435). Even Cicero, for whom our author has a rod in pickle, catches a glimpse of the truth. *Patimur multos annos et silemus, cum videamus ad paucos homines omnes omnium nationum pecunias pervenisse*. This text is developed with especial reference to the capital. The ownership by Crassus

of half of Rome, illustrates the perseverance with which land speculators carried on their operations. Blocks of flats rose skywards, in which it took two hundred steps to reach the attics which alternated with the cellars as the homes of the poorest. Such were some of the circumstances of poverty.

Pöhlmann mistakes, in my opinion, the accidental for the essential elements of the social problem under the early empire when he dwells exclusively upon the competition of slavery and the rise in prices (II. 438). No one would gather from his exposition that the world was on the eve of a period of great happiness. The imperial system, with its bureaucracy, made for peace on the one side and justice on the other. These two majestic figures dominated the world; and under their kindly shadow man caught some glimpses of paradise. The state socialism of the Roman Empire wrought up into a new political system the largest number of happy and intelligent human beings who have ever been controlled from a single centre. The concurrent manumission of slaves and the foundation of the first great system of state education deserve fuller recognition than even this large work can find for them.

The historian must measure events by their relation to the future as well as the past. It is only the pessimist who ends his drama always at the fourth act. Surely on Pöhlmann's own principles the bitterness of the defeated oligarchy must not interpret to us the rise of a new world upon the ruins of the old. No longer was the Roman Empire a pendant to the capital. When the legions learned that Emperors might be made elsewhere than at Rome, they bore evidence to the multiplication of those provincial centres, each of which was a little Rome with something of the self-consciousness of the capital. The intensity of the social distress was alleviated by being thus distributed. The brilliant expedient of Augustus, who, by the institution of the Augustales, drew the newly rich into the service of the state, brought out a voluntary redistribution of surplus wealth, and so removed one cause of poverty. It is lamentable that a one-sided presenta-

tion of socialism should close the eyes of so many thinkers to the great political genius of the Imperial bureaucracy.

III.

When the reader, in his progress through these many pages, comes to the seventh chapter, which deals with Christianity, he will find that his not unpleasant labour is richly rewarded. He will be surprised to find that many of the circumstances of early Christianity fall into their place as part of a movement which in one respect was certainly democratic, although the modern professional democrat sometimes fails to see his face in the mirror. Of the three interpretations of Christianity which are in fashion—the socialist, the eschatological, the mythical—Pöhlmann does justice to the first and the second. He does not express an opinion upon the third (II. 587). Some persons might consider it old-fashioned to speak as if Jesus ever lived. I am sorry to say that in order to complete this review it will be necessary to take account of Pöhlmann's daring in supposing such to be the case. At any rate there is nothing antecedently improbable if, in the Roman world as described by Pöhlmann, a popular leader among the poorer classes should reach the cross. Such a fate was so common in those days that it passed into a proverb. Crucifixion was on a par with hanging as it was practised by the English governing class in the good old days. There is nothing therefore specifically prophetic in such sayings as: 'he who does not take up his cross cannot be my disciple.' And yet there are persons who, not knowing the idiom of the masses, treat a phrase like this as miraculous. It is only those *qui se paient des mots*, who can dissolve the great figures of history in a mist of words and,

by refusing to biography every detail which they do not understand, turn tradition into a mythology.

Even Pöhlmann, as we have seen, omits some of the traits which we might expect in a picture of the early Empire. His total effect errs perhaps on the side of an almost unrelieved gloom. But he enables us to understand how the declaration that the old world was at an end, and that a new world was at hand for the disinherited, should have appealed to the masses. The poor had the gospel preached to them. It is instructive to find that the gospel which shows most traces of Roman influence is precisely that gospel which announces the triumphant revolt of the Christian Church against the Roman world. Mark lays stress upon the majestic interference of Jesus with the existing order. But when we come to the teaching of Jesus, as it appears in the oldest source, we find that the maxims of the new order are such as could least have been expected. Unlike the modern socialist, Jesus did not fight capital with its own weapons. The synthesis in which the two warring elements were dissolved was something entirely beyond the scope of either taken alone. The hatred of the rich was forbidden to the poor. On the other hand, the rich were commanded to lend without expecting any return. It is an exaggeration, perhaps, when Christianity is represented as being in its earliest form a socialist manifesto (II. 587). Renan says indeed that, if it had not been for its wealthy and cultured adherents, Christianity would not have survived. It is also difficult to see how, without the poor and ignorant, the Christian Church could have come into being.

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THE GREEK COMMONWEALTH.

The Greek Commonwealth: Politics and Economics in Fifth-Century Athens.
By ALFRED E. ZIMMERN. I Vol.
9½" x 6". 454 pages. Clarendon Press,
Oxford, 1911.

THERE are some works, which, without being the parents of new philosophies or schools of poetry, are nevertheless original in that they exhibit a new pose to old facts, a new way of regarding