REVIEWS.

Die Frauenfrage: ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung und wirtschaftliche Seite. Von LILY BRAUN. Leipzig, 1901. Pp.xii+557.

It is somewhat remarkable how frequently the subjects which are most discussed receive the least serious study. Of this fact perhaps the most striking example is afforded by the fiery arguments ranging around the position of women. There must be many thousands of articles dealing with this matter to be found in the magazines of the last sixty years; there are not a few partisan books. But of genuine study, of patient thought and investigation, there is hardly a trace. To take the earliest book on the subject, Mary Wollstonecraft's work is the wail of a woman suffering under the restrictions imposed on her sex; it is not a consideration of the questions how these restrictions arose, to what extent they are justified by fact, and what effect might be expected from their abolition. John Stuart Mill's famous pamphlet, *The Subjection of Women*, is a mere one-sided and rhetorical outburst, composed under the immediate influence of Mrs. Taylor. Mrs. Stetson's clever little book is rather the brilliant suggestion of a new hypothesis than its careful working out through the actual study of fact. In short, all the books on this subject have been composed under the auspices of the abstract and destructive liberalism of the beginning of the last century, of that individualism which believed so fervently in the prescience and power of "nature" that it expected the happiest results from the mere abolition of all artificial regulations. The rise of the new economics, which bases its conclusions rather on historical study and on patient investigation of existing conditions than on abstract reasoning, has resulted in the description of many economic institutions. It has produced monographs on mediæval craft guilds, on trade unions, on the organization of modern business, on the growth of trusts. But, save incidentally, no economist of this school has condescended to investigate the economic aspects of the position of women. There is, indeed, Bebel's work, but it is too much permeated by the doctrines of the German Social Democracy to be accepted as an outcome of serious research into the actual facts.

But the book before us is of quite another stamp. True, we dis-

cover in the last chapter that the author is in sympathy with the views of the Social Democrats. But each page bears the impress of careful and independent thought, and of thorough study of all available material, coupled with very considerable ability in the employment of statistics. This is by far the most impartial and the most far-sighted work on the position of women which has yet seen the light, and presents some new and interesting views to the reader. Its full title is *Die Frauenfrage: ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung und wirtschaftliche Seite*, and we are told in the preface that it is to be followed by another volume dealing with women's civil and public rights, and discussing the ethical and psychological aspects of the question. The present work is devoted entirely to the economic side. It begins with a section giving a brief historical summary of women's position prior to the nineteenth century. Frau Braun points out how the older histories, dealing almost exclusively with wars and politics, took naturally very little notice of the work of women, and it was not until the proletariat, freed from slavery and serfdom, and awakened into some measure of self-consciousness, aroused interest in the study of economic history, that any attention at all was devoted to the position of women.

There are two assumptions here, both of which demand justification. The first is that the study of economic history was first stimulated by the growing interest in the demands and discontent of the working classes of Germany. On this point the reviewer cannot speak; but the assumption certainly seems to hold true of England. The two earliest investigators of English economic history were Arnold Toynbee and Thorold Rogers, and their attention was certainly first directed to the matter by active interest in the condition of the working class of their own days. The second assumption is one which Frau Braun's later chapters show to be only partially justified; namely, that the agitation for an improvement in the position of women is closely connected with the argument for an improvement in the position of the manual workers.

Beginning with the period of the *Mutterrecht*, the author shows how at every stage it was economic conditions, the methods of producing and distributing wealth, that decided the position of women. In the period when food was won by hunting, the man had no use for the services of the woman beyond mere sexual enjoyment, nor for the children. The mother therefore possessed full rights over the child; mother and child at this period were the germ of the future civilization. But with the oncoming of the agricultural period, woman lost

her freedom and passed into the child-bearing chattel to be bought from her father in exchange for arms or cattle. For under this more settled form of life her services were useful in many ways, and the possessor of cattle and lands desired a lawful son to be his heir. Therefore the tie of marriage originated in no lofty ethical motive, but arose, like slavery and at the same period, for economic causes. The discussion next briefly touches the status of women in the oriental nations, in Greece and in Rome. And here Frau Braun's writing is less clear and impressive than usual. She seems for once to be working with secondary material and to have little first-hand acquaintance with the subject which she treats.

Her description of the Middle Ages, on the other hand, gives distinct evidence of original investigation. She discusses with much skill the relation between Christianity and the position of women; showing that at first Christianity aimed no more at emancipating the woman than at freeing the slave, and that indeed the fathers of the church and the canon law treated the woman as an unclean temptress, and therefore rightly subordinate to the man. But in two ways this attitude was modified: First, by the influence of the German views of women. The *Wehrgeld* of a murdered woman was twice that of a murdered man, "because" says Frau Braun, "they honored the mother in every woman." In the second place, the sight of many holy women living useful and even learned lives in the cloisters increased public opinion of women's powers and capabilities. The chapter specially devoted to the economic position of women in the Middle Ages is unusually interesting. It shows that the concentration of many workers in one establishment is not an invention of the industrial Revolution, as people so often assume, and it traces the close connection between the waxing and waning of prostitution and the economic prosperity of the independent woman worker. Another well-written chapter deals with the women of the French and American Revolutions. A short account is given of Mercy Otis Warren and Abigail Smith Adams, *Die ersten Vorkämpferinnen der Gleichberechtigung des weiblichen Geschlechts*; and there follows a somewhat detailed narrative of the work and writings of Olympe de Gouges, and of the woman's movement during the French Revolution—a movement, it may be noticed, which greatly influenced Mary Wollstonecraft, and so through her the world of educated English-speaking women.

But while this sketch of historical and economic development is well done, by far the most interesting part of the book is that which

deals more in detail, and with a fuller employment of economic discussion, with the woman's movement in the nineteenth century. This falls into two divisions: the first describes the fight of the middle-class woman for employment, *Der Kampf um Arbeit in der bürgerlichen Frauenwelt*; the second discusses the allied, but in some respects divergent, movement among the working-class women — *Die Arbeiterinnen*.

The first question taken up is the reform in education, and Frau Braun shows how this comes about from the need of earning a livelihood. The changed economic conditions of the beginning of the last century, the break-up of the domestic industry, the disappearance of the semi-patriarchal family of earlier times, also the absorption of men by the great wars of the period, left many solitary or widowed women face to face with the necessity of providing for their own wants. For the women of the working classes, the first steps were easy. The growth of machine industry demanded more and ever more cheap labor. The women of the middle class, on the other hand, found this path blocked alike by their lack of general education and special training, as well as by their definite exclusion from those fields of work wherein their fathers and brothers gained their incomes. Accordingly, the one cry of the middle-class woman is for equality with men, equality of opportunity, equality of education, equality of political rights. Frau Braun traces the progress of women's education in the various civilized countries of the world, noting at the same time the different professional careers open to them. In both these matters America leads the world; but, says Frau Braun, "one must take into consideration that not merely the greater generosity or the deeper comprehension of the American man for the strivings of the feminine sex is the cause of this, but to a much greater extent the fact that the United States looked back upon only a short period of economic development, and that there was no thought of an overcrowding of professional careers which would inevitably have called forth the opposition of men." One is tempted to conjecture that the present movement against coeducation is due to the fact that this overcrowding of the professions has now begun to appear, and that therefore American men are instinctively endeavoring to check the nascent competition of women in these spheres.

The author next proceeds to discuss the compelling motives of the middle-class women's movement. She gives some useful statistics showing the proportion of women to men in the different countries

and population-classes of the world, and discusses the causes why marriages in the professional classes take place now at a later age than formerly. She considers the question of the number of women engaged in industry and the proportion of occupied married women.

Another chapter treats some more general questions in connection with the labor of professional women. The author evidently firmly believes in women's intellectual power and holds that many of their physical disabilities have been exaggerated. She thinks also that when once the first ardor of revolution, with its inevitable tendency to mannishness, has passed by, women who work need lose none of their proper grace and charm—a view which is certainly borne out by facts. It is quite remarkable how the younger generation of professional women differ in this respect from the older. If a teacher or doctor is dressed without taste or tidiness, if her manners are rude or brusque, it is ten chances to one that she is well over forty, and so must have been among the pioneers of the women's movement. Frau Braun also discusses at this point, solely with reference to the professional woman, the difficult question of the extent to which her economic activity may interfere with home life and the proper care of children. We gather that, provided the work of housekeeping can be taken off her shoulders, Frau Braun thinks that a professional career is not impossible for a childless woman, or one whose children no longer need her constant attention, though apparently even in this case she would, under present circumstances, advise that such a woman should enter on charitable work, on poor-law and school administration, rather than attempt to earn her own living. She treats with great contempt the tales sometimes told of American women, "who as physicians or lawyers have large practice, in addition personally manage their houses, and care for and educate successfully a dozen children." These are "fairy-stories, and only the lecturers of the middle-class women's movement, who are unfortunately so frequently unmarried or childless, would be naïve enough and spread them abroad." But she cherishes the hope that the development of more modern methods of housekeeping, coupled with the co-operative employment of trained nurses and kindergartners for the care of children, may bring about the solution of this difficulty. But it must be admitted that she puts the drawbacks of married women's labor much more forcibly than its possible development under these hypothetical new conditions.

Finally, she discusses the question of the mental caliber of women, and gives utterance to a prophecy that women will in future win

special renown for themselves in the sphere of economics. In England there is evidence to bear out the truth of this belief; in this country, on the other hand, economics seems to be looked on to a marked extent as a masculine field of work.

In turning to the second branch of the nineteenth-century women's movement, we find ourselves in an entirely new atmosphere. Among middle-class women the agitation is entirely for equality with men and for freedom from restriction, and the presence of these restrictions or social prejudices often producing a legal or virtual masculine monopoly of certain branches of work gives rise too often to fierce antagonism to men. Hence the middle-class movement is definitely a woman's movement. Among the manual workers, on the other hand, there is only rarely the question of the right to entrance on a trade. The growth of machinery facilitates the employment of women outside their own home, and the women of the proletariat find no lack of opportunity for work. Unfortunately they bring with them the customs and habit of mind bred by centuries of a lonely and dependent existence. Their standard of life is lower than the man's, and too often their wages are subsidized by their parents, their husbands, or their lovers. Therefore, says Frau Braun, such a woman "seeks to conquer her masculine competitor, not by better work, but by lower demands." Hence she was an easy prey to the exploiting force of modern capitalism, and on page after page Frau Braun paints the low wages, the long hours, the wretched conditions of work found in one woman's industry after another. She gives statistics, which have every appearance of being carefully selected and put together, concerning the numerical proportion of the *Arbeiterinnen* to professional women, the increase in the number of working-women, the proportion of men to women engaged in manual industry, the growth of home work, etc. Among other unexpected facts which appear from these figures, we learn that the employment of working-women is greatly increasing in Austria, and that the proportion of wage-earning women to men is lower in America than in any other of the countries cited, the numbers being :

United States	-	-	-	24.7 per cent.
England	-	-	-	36.7 per cent.
Austria	-	-	-	54.9 per cent.

For middle-class workers the corresponding figures are :

United States	-	-	-	18.75 per cent.
England	-	-	-	22.33 per cent.
Austria	-	-	-	12.23 per cent.

The following chapter, the longest in the book, is devoted to an exceedingly interesting and carefully worked out description of the position of women in various branches of industrial life—in the “great industry,” in house industry and home work, in trade, in agriculture, in personal and domestic service. The sections on home work and on domestic service are particularly original. Home work, Frau Braun points out, has today little resemblance to its earlier namesake. The growth of home work does not mean a return to the independent producer; it by no means signifies a reversal of the industrial revolution, as charitable ladies among the English aristocracy sometimes imagine. It is rather an unfortunate growth springing from the very stem of factory industry itself. Home work increases because by its means the employer avoids the expense of rent, up-keep, lighting and warming his factory; because among home workers he can find cheaper and more docile labor; because the very irregularity of the labor is to him an advantage, since when employing it he can increase or decrease his staff at will, without having to take into consideration the item of fixed charges. Home work is, indeed, “a bastard child of the great industry which it has produced with its concubine, grinding poverty.”

The question of domestic service is very carefully studied, both from its descriptive and statistical side; wages, board, lodging are discussed, and the picture drawn of the maids' rooms in a German household is very unpleasant. But Frau Braun, like many others who have studied this subject, comes to the conclusion that the greatest drawbacks to domestic service are to be found in its still semi-feudal character, in the lack of free time, and in the moral dangers which, by the statistics of prostitution, she shows undoubtedly exist. According to one American reckoning, 47 per cent. of prostitutes had been domestic servants. The remedy, she thinks, is appearing before our eyes, if we would but see it. The gradual removal of much housework from the sphere of the home, as, for example, in the greater employment of steam laundries, is gradually bringing washing, cooking, and cleaning into line with the development of modern industry, and so freeing domestic service from its semi-feudal character. But here, like most other thinkers on the subject, Frau Braun appears to the reviewer too optimistic, when she at the same time believes that the increase of married women's labor is a desirable development. To a large extent the problem of domestic service can be solved as suggested; washing can be transferred to steam laundries; the use of prepared foods in cooking is increasing; the employment of experts

for thorough cleaning will certainly appear before long. But so long as home-life continues—and the love for it is too deeply rooted among the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic races to vanish before even a revolution of our economic conditions—so long will every family require the major part of the time of at least one woman in order to keep its home running smoothly and to foster that atmosphere of rest and recreation necessary if the workers in the outside world are to be properly invigorated for their toil. And this conclusion seems rather to lead to the view of several notable English women economists (*e. g.*, Mrs. Sydney Webb and Miss Clara Collet) who believe that, while it should be our aim to foster independence among unmarried women, and to encourage them in every way possible to earn their own living, the married women should be counseled rather to devote themselves to the task of home-making and of bringing up their children; they should not by accepting a pocket-money wage bring down the wages of the woman who has only her own exertions to depend on. But if this conclusion be adopted, we cannot hope ever to see women's work attain anything like the same level of efficiency as men's, nor again can we expect more than a partial introduction of scientific and up-to-date methods of housekeeping, which depend on a concentration and gradation of labor impossible in the single household.

The remaining chapters are devoted to the working-women's movement (*e. g.*, the enrolment in trade unions and clubs) and to the relation of the middle-class women's movement to the questions of women's labor in the manual working classes; and, finally, there is a chapter on factory and other social legislation and its problems. The author returns again in these chapters to the note which she struck at the beginning of the treatment of women's work in the nineteenth century—the difference in the attitude of the professional and working-class women. The one has to fight for an opportunity to work at all, and therefore her cry is for equality. She distrusts the law, and her attitude toward men is mostly antagonistic. The other finds work in plenty, but she is forced by poverty and lack of power to combine to accept work at wretched prices and under miserable conditions. Therefore to her the law, prescribing by factory legislation the minimum conditions of employment, is not an enemy, but a friend, and she combines more readily when grouped with her masculine fellow workers (as Frau Brown points out, following Mrs. Sydney Webb, it would rarely be accurate to call them her competitors) than with her own sex.

Therefore the conclusion is reached that it is very unwise for the professional woman to assume hastily that her own experience holds good for her working-class sister, and in particular it appears that the establishment of women's trade unions under the patronage of "ladies" has been a complete failure. The working-woman should rather cultivate solidarity with her own class, by acting, not in opposition to, but in concert with, the men of it. And for the same reason factory legislation is not to be considered, as it frequently is in England, in the same light with the restrictive legislation which now shuts out middle-class women from so many spheres. It is, Frau Brown maintains, in reality a restriction, not on women's labor, but on the power of exploitation of capital—a power which has fewer terrors for the brain-worker, with her higher standard of life, and her "rent" of ability and education. She discusses at some length the question of married women's labor in factories, holding that, save in some few trades, it would be both unwise and impossible to exclude them altogether, since such a course would lead to increase of home work and to concubinage and concealment of marriage. It may be noticed that the latter result is said to have already come about in the post-offices of England and America, as a consequence of the civil-service rule forbidding the employment of married women. She would instead advise stringent regulations concerning work before and after confinement, combined with a generous payment from the sick-insurance fund. In England and America this might be replaced by the provision of lying-in hospitals—a method more in accordance with our traditions. The general sketch of factory legislation is very well done, being both full and readable. It is accompanied by several tables showing the condition of factory legislation and of insurance in the various countries.

In short, this is by far the most thoughtful, thorough, and comprehensive work that has appeared on the subject, and, though we may not always agree with the author, especially when in the last chapters her bias toward Social Democracy becomes evident, her treatment always shows accurate knowledge of the facts and a careful consideration of general principles. Her book is also remarkable because it for the first time sets forth and endeavors to reconcile the different motives and aims which underlie the women's movement in the middle and the working classes, respectively.

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