in taking this point of view, and in regarding each one of the complex conditions of the health of a civilization as simply another form of what he takes to be the fundamental condition, the success of his proof is only a question of his ingenuity in covering up the tracks of a logical fallacy. A *sine quâ non* is seldom the sole determining factor; but where the field of choice ranges from China to Peru—both countries are much in Gobineau's mind—and from Adam to the nineteenth century A.D., the acute mind can be sure of ample material on which to appear to apply the method of difference. Gobineau is acute, though inaccurate in the second of these respects, and for the most part, gloriously indifferent to the first. His work is brilliant, learned, and often bewilderingly inconsequent. If anyone doubts the justice of this last opinion, let him study say pp. 174-5, and ask himself what is proved, and what is shelved.

This is not to say that Gobineau's work is not valuable or that his point of view matters little. It only means—perhaps it is our spiritual pride—that by the wickedest kind of paradox we have progressed far enough beyond Gobineau to see that his doctrine of the illusoriness of progress does not settle all our doubts. Of course, what he was chiefly concerned to prove,—the reality of innate differences in individuals and in peoples,—has largely passed into the common stock of our political ideals and perhaps his relentless pessimism was good for the Europe of the '50's and '60's. But the world of the early twentieth century cannot hope to see things quite so simply, or to find in this plain tale of its inevitable destiny, a direct cut through its sad and acknowledged "confusion of moral values."

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HISTORY OF MEDIÆVAL POLITICAL THEORY IN THE WEST. By R. W. Carlyle, K.C.S.I., C.I.E. and A. J. Carlyle, M.A., D.Litt. Vol. III, Political Theory from the Tenth Century to the Thirteenth. By A. J. Carlyle. Pp. xvii, 201. London and Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons. 1915.

This volume marks the third stage in the progress of the large task which the authors have undertaken—to write the history of the political theory of mediæval Western Europe. Like the first two volumes, it is the work of Dr. A. J. Carlyle; and like

them also, it is an admirable achievement. So far as can be judged from the first installments, there is no doubt that the completion of the series will enrich English political philosophy in a substantial and important history, worthy of Oxford scholarship.

The present part begins with a brief resumé of the conclusions of the earlier books, explaining the inheritance of the middle ages from antiquity and the influence of mediæval Roman and Canon law. The discussion of its proper subject falls into two parts—the examination of the principles of feudalism from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, and a consideration of the prevailing political conceptions in the general literature of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Dr. Carlyle finds that the principles of political organization were “substantially the same in all the European communities.” Hence his studies cover all the then existing political groups in the West. And this important conclusion is reinforced by the remarkable unity of the ideas which are to be found both in feudal institutions and law, and in the literature of that period.

Feudalism, we are apt to suppose, was a system of purely personal relationships. But that view, Dr. Carlyle points out, is due to the literary rather than to the legal or historical tradition; and within the literary evidence, there has been a common failure to distinguish between the realistic epic and the conventional romance of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The truth is that alongside the personal relationship of lord and vassal, there was both in theory and in practice the recognition that the loyalty of the vassal depended on the fulfilment of certain obligations by the lord. The relationship, though profoundly personal, was also definitely contractual; and the contract could be enforced by a well regulated machinery of courts, or by an appeal to the overlord. Every grade of the feudal world, indeed, was subject to law, which originates not in the will of a king but in “the custom and consent” of the community, and which grows with its growth.

And this recognition is historically important because it is at least part of the explanation why feudalism did not result in the disruption of Europe into a very large number of small communities. Its natural tendency, of course, was in this direction: but it was checked by the operation of those larger principles which brought the feudal groups under the control of the national systems.

It is possible to discover the same governing principles in the general mediæval view of the state. Dr. Carlyle reduces them to three. First, the purpose of the state is moral,—“the maintenance of justice and righteousness.” It may, indeed, have “originated in sin” but that means simply that it was a divinely appointed instrument for the restraint and removal of human wrong-doing. It was, therefore, the creation of God: and its ruler was God’s vicar by divine right, but only when and in so far as he carried out God’s purpose of justice. Hence secondly, the law of the state, the embodiment of justice, was the supreme principle of its constitution.

“Decet regem discere legem,
Audiat rex quod præcipit lex,
Legem servare, hoc est regnare.”

And finally, consequent on these two, the relation between king and subjects depended on the mutual obligation to maintain justice and law.

This is the barest summary of the conclusions which Dr. Carlyle backs by a wealth of learning in the jurists and lawyers of these centuries. But it will serve to show how systematic his treatment is, and how vital the thought with which he deals. It is not the least of the merits of this book that it decisively saves us from thinking of the Middle Ages as a kind of death in life. It was rather a period when high intelligence tried to formulate and to apply great political principles to a most complex and changing social world.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS. By G. A. Johnston, M.A. Macmillan & Co., 1915. Pp. x, 254.

This small book consists of Mr. Johnston’s lectures to students in training at Glasgow. Among the many odd subjects which the government requires teachers to have heard about, ethics is included. It is rarely that these unfortunate beings get really good lectures from a really good lecturer such as those who listened to Mr. Johnston’s course have enjoyed.

The book seems to me to be an admirable introduction to ethics. Mr. Johnston has, from the nature of his audience,