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La Mortalità Secondo L'Eta, e la Durata Della Vita Economicamente Produttiva by G. Mortara
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considerations governing the low Belgian wages. No reviewer would be justified, however, in attempting to exhaust the many spheres of enquiry here opened, such as the relatively large alcoholic consumption, which we are here told makes the Belgian workers toil for more than two months out of every twelve simply to pay their drink bill.

Emphatically, however, should the student be advised in his perusal of this book to turn to the weighty statistics given of the distinctive and most valuable aid which Belgium enjoys in the matter of internal transport over all her competitors. Not only does her intensely-developed mileage of ordinary railways put her well ahead of other States, but she possesses, in her remarkable system of light railways and cheap transport rates, facilities which perhaps have as much as anything to do with the profitable growth of intensive cultivation. The striking advantage of a light railway system—which, relatively to area, is nine times as extensive as in Germany, fourteen times as great as in France, and more than thirty-eight times as great as we can show in this country—is a very material addition to the growing knowledge and practice of scientific manuring, and the development of co-operative methods in largely helping the progress of the Belgian effort to make the most out of a soil which has no special advantages for the maintenance of a densely-packed population. P.G.C.

7.—*Histoire économique de la propriété, des salaires, des denrées et de tous les prix en général depuis l'an 1200 jusqu'en l'an 1800.* Par Le Vicomte G. d'Avenel. Tome v. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1909.

This addition to the series of substantial volumes on the history of prices in France covers the same ground as the smaller volume, "Les Riches depuis sept cent ans," recently noticed in these columns (see *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, September, 1909). It is, therefore, unnecessary to survey the conclusions at which the author arrives. The present volume, in a wealth of footnotes and in a bulky appendix, supplies much of the material which has served as the basis of the statements in the text. The appendices, as in the preceding volumes of the series, give in detail the references to the original sources of information. Tables setting forth the estimated classification of French families, both according to the amount of their income and that of the property they possess, the latter based on the statistics of inheritances, are included, as well as extracts from ancient documents. A further table compares the grouping of families, in accordance with their wealth, in England and in France. The author criticises the views of Mr. Bernard Mallet laid before the Society in 1908, and contends that they result in an underestimate of British capital wealth. A.W.F.

8.—*La mortalità secondo l'età, e la durata della vita economicamente produttiva.* By G. Mortara. 84 pp., 8vo. Rome: Co-operativa Tipografica Manuzio, 1908.

The numerous collections which have been made lately of the life-tables of different countries materially facilitate the investigation of various interesting problems which have not hitherto been

treated otherwise than on the comparatively narrow basis of observations in a single country. In the work under notice, for instance, Dr. Mortara is able to start at once from the wide basis provided by the labours of not only his compatriots, who have long been in the van of this branch of statistics, but also of those working in the same field in most other countries of Western Europe. Our author goes even further abroad, and includes in his survey the tables for Japan, India, and more than one of the States of Australia. It is not apparent, however, that he materially strengthens his argument by the introduction of the facts relating to populations living under conditions of life so different from the circumstances affecting communities nearer home. Speaking generally, the author seeks to ascertain in the first instance, the relative effect on mortality of extrinsic influences, or the influence of external circumstances, and of intrinsic, by which he denotes the organic power of resistance, making use of tables prepared at considerable intervals of time for the same community, re-computed into the longer age-periods selected for his purpose. He then reviews the life-chances of the various populations from the standpoint of economic productivity. Here he groups his material, in accordance with precedent, into, first, the population under 15 years old, which he counts as costing more than it produces; secondly, from 15 to 20, during which, according to Pareto, the production is equal to consumption; from 20 to 60 the productivity exceeds the consumption, whilst over 60 the population again tends to be not self-supporting, though less burdensome than the young. In regard to this last category, it may perhaps be remarked, that there is likely to be a considerable difference between a population mainly agricultural and one which is more concerned in factorial industries, the former passing into the non-effective ranks later than the operative in the towns. Dr. Mortara discusses the effect upon the economic position of the population of a decline in the mortality, wisely beginning with the qualification "all other conditions being equal." He notes, for instance, the lower "cost of producing" an adult; the increased productivity of the adult due to an extension of the mean after-lifetime, and the greater number attaining and fulfilling the productive period, not to mention the less effort in obtaining these results under a smaller mortality. He examines the somewhat dogmatic conclusion of Lexis, that a decreased infantile mortality due to improvement in external circumstances tends to prolong life no more than a few years, and then amongst an enfeebled population; the conclusion being that this "compensation for over-production theory" is not established, though the evidence on each side is at present inadequate. In this view Dr. Mortara is in accord with several of his predecessors, and also as to the fact that an increased natality is not necessarily followed by an increased mortality in the community as a whole. Reverting to the earlier question, that of the influence of external conditions, the author considers his evidence to indicate that such influence is more prominent amongst children of over 5 than amongst the younger; that it tends to increase between 20 and 60, and to fall off as compared to the

gradual failing of resisting power in old age. There are, of course, several points in this work, referring to both method and conclusions, on which differences of opinion exist among experts, such as Ballod, Westergaard, and the author's own fellow-countrymen, Benini and Beneduce; but, in the main, the work is a useful and praiseworthy attempt to solve the difficult questions with which it deals. J.A.B.

9.—*The vagrancy problem: the case for measures of restraint for tramps, loafers, and unemployables; with a study of Continental detention colonies and labour houses.* By William Harbutt Dawson. xv + 270 pp., sm. 8vo. London: P. S. King and Son, 1910. Price 5s. net.

In the first three chapters of this book the author reproduces, with some supplementary information, three articles written by him in 1900, advocating detention colonies and labour houses and other methods of solving the problem of how to deal with the urban loafer. Even in these ten years, however, progress has been made in the direction of the measures then urged by him, by the establishment of public labour registries and by the prohibition of child vagrancy, under the Children's Act, 1908, which he rightly qualifies as a humane law. The new matter relates to (1) the Belgian beggars' dépôts; (2) the German labour houses and tramp prisons, with special reference to the Berlin municipal labour house; and (3) the treatment of vagrancy in Switzerland. Mr. Dawson points out that, prior to the enactment of the German Imperial Penal Code, poor-law authorities in several of the States constituting the German Empire had power to enforce labour on the "work-shy." The municipal labour house at Leipzig is for the detention, suitable employment, and moral improvement of that class, as well as of persons under 18 years of age who are demoralised, children under 15 who are in danger, homeless persons, persons condemned to simple detention with hard labour, and persons condemned to simple detention who, though not condemned also to hard labour, wish for employment. The Dresden labour house adds to these classes that of fathers of illegitimate children who neglect to provide for them. These provisions appear to go beyond anything that a British legislature would be likely to depute to poor-law authorities.

In a final chapter Mr. Dawson reviews the recommendations of the recent Royal Commission, the Viceregal Poor-law Reform Commission for Ireland, and the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy. He finds in them evidence that a new spirit has come over public opinion on these questions. His remarks are acute and judicious. Some useful appendices are added. E.B.

10.—*Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress. Appendix, vol. xixa. Report on the effects of employment or assistance given to the "unemployed" since 1886 as a means of relieving distress outside the Poor Law in Scotland.* By the Rev. J. C. Pringle. xii + 193 pp., fol., and 18 plates. [Cd-5073.] 1910. Price 3s. 6d.

This report is preceded by a letter of transmissal, addressed to Lord George Hamilton, as Chairman of the Commission, containing