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L'Habitation a Bon Marche. by M. Lucien Ferrand; M. Jules Siegfried

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double functions of dealing with criminal and county business ; to the practice of grand juries ; to the hundred juries, whose existence and duties have now been almost forgotten ; and to the presentments by constables to this ancient court. In the county, as in the parish, the authors trace the development of an extra legal constitution ; they describe the gradual increase in the work and decline in the position of the High Constable from 1689 to 1835 ; the establishment of the offices of county treasurer and county surveyor ; the gradual delegation of the work to committees ; the special sessions for licensing ; and the silent evolution of what are practically legislative functions. The story of the inevitable reaction is told with effect. It began in the breakdown of the Middlesex Bench. The scarcity of justices outside that county contributed to it. Their interference in poor law administration, and the severity with which they administered the Game Laws, embittered it. They are still, however, "the rulers of the county, unchanged in their unrepresentative character, unchecked in their irresponsibility, unfettered in their powers of expenditure, and unreformed either in the method of their appointment or in the secrecy of their procedure." The authors are of opinion that "the survival of the justices of the peace, unchanged in constitution, and with only a partial curtailment in their powers—whilst the parish vestry was strangled and the municipal corporation was revolutionised—is due, in the main, to the fact that, in spite of all the extra-legal developments that we have described, both quarter sessions and petty sessions still seemed to the public, not county administrative authorities, but essentially courts of justice."

Three copious indexes, of subjects, persons, and places, facilitate reference to the contents of the volume, and indicate the great variety of sources from which the wealth of information that it contains has been drawn. It is an indispensable work for the student of economic and institutional history.

E.B.

14.—*L'Habitation à bon marché*. By M. Lucien Ferrand, with a preface by M. Jules Siegfried. 10 in. by 6½ in., 307 pp., appendices, and plans. Paris: Arthur Rousseau, 1906.

In examining and estimating the value of a work which deals with a living social question one naturally looks, first, at the facts and figures marshalled to demonstrate the position of affairs, and, secondly, at the proposals made by the author for remedying any or all the evils which his investigations disclose. M. Ferrand has provided an ample supply of material on which a judgment may be formed as to the state of France in regard to one of the most important social questions of the day—that of the housing of the working classes. The whole of his first book, consisting of 97 pages, is devoted to the collection of the material necessary to an understanding of this question. His investigations show, as might be expected, the existence of a striking similarity between cause and effect in France and in England. And M. Ferrand's examination of the facts and their causes proceeds upon a highly practical, albeit somewhat specialised, basis. It shadows forth in

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method and in substance the steps which at a later stage are put forward as affording, or as having already to some extent afforded, the remedy. He justifies the intervention of the public authority, and many of the arguments used are not unfamiliar on this side of the Channel. He contends that the answer to the question whether a percentage is earned upon outlay, which is the ultimate criterion of the success or failure of a purely speculative or individualistic undertaking, is not the test which can properly be applied in the case of a municipal authority, whose object is not pecuniary gain, but the security of the public weal. M. Ferrand's book, however, is not a mere collection of facts and statistics designed to justify the intervention of the municipal authority as owners of land and builders of wholesome dwellings. This point necessarily demands and receives considerable attention from the author, who supplies many useful and suggestive plans showing what has been and can be done; but the whole question is treated from a far wider point of view. Detailed accounts are given of the aims and achievements of numerous associations and societies, philanthropic and otherwise, which in France, as in England, have so largely entered upon the solution of the grave social problem involved in the elevation of the standard of living of the wage-earner by the improvement of his home. A critical examination of the statute law in France affecting the formation of building societies and the assistance given by the State is undertaken, and many shrewd suggestions are made for their improvement, with a view to the further stimulation of enterprise in this direction. Might not the English legislature accept a friendly hint from our French brothers, and authorise the investment of the savings of the people which accumulate through the National post office savings bank in the provision of more wholesome homes for the people? No less a sum than 3,457,902 francs were thus invested in France at the end of December, 1904.

M. Ferrand's advocacy of the training of girls and adults in the duties and responsibilities of married life may be appropriately instanced as an example of his larger treatment of the question. Such training he conceives to be a potent factor in the amelioration of the lot of the poorer classes, and in this respect at least English opinion has not lagged behind. The London County Council, to which M. Ferrand refers not infrequently, has recognised the truth of M. Ferrand's proposition, and has established throughout the county evening classes in health, home-nursing, and infant-care which provide just the instruction necessary. These are, of course, in addition to the cookery and housewifery classes which have for some years been conducted in connection with the ordinary public elementary schools and which form part of the education provided for all girls in those schools who are of an age to profit by them.

These, however, are auxiliaries—important, no doubt, and of growing importance; but the main question is really the improvement of dwellings. For Lord Shaftesbury's opinion, given before our own Royal Commission which sat in 1884,

was that a great number of people have been permanently degraded by the condition of the houses in which they live. The provision of a wholesome dwelling for every worker is therefore the great question to be solved, and one of the most pressing needs in this connection is, it appears, better met in France than in London. More has been done in France than in England to secure suitable and cleanly lodgings for the thousands of single female workers whom stern necessity has of late years created so rapidly amongst us. London, it is true, has homes for working girls, notably those provided through the instrumentality of Miss Cons, but the phase of the problem here presented has been comparatively neglected. Municipal activity has so far been inclined to avoid undertaking this provision, which even philanthropic effort has shown to be difficult and costly of management. Far more has been attempted in Paris. Curiously enough, however, similar provision for single men, so plentifully supplied in London both by Rowton Houses and municipal hotels, appears to have received in France but scant attention—at all events from M. Ferrand's pen.

It has been said that the conditions of life of the poorer classes and their causes are essentially the same in all countries. Certainly a comparison of the statements made by M. Ferrand with those made in the report of the Royal Commission to which reference has already been made would render such a conclusion difficult to resist were no other evidence available. The causes which lead to exorbitant rents are the same. The same system obtains of private enterprise building solely for pecuniary profit; the same consequent disregard for the interests of the occupier; the same difficulty in securing the adequate provision of stability, sanitary convenience, and even light and air. It can only be hoped that M. Ferrand's exhaustive analysis and common-sense views will produce the effect to which their cogency entitles them. In any case, such a book as the one now under review cannot fail to leave its mark on the progress of the solution of the problem with which it deals, and it should be read with profit not only by every student of social subjects, but by every practical reformer. M.H.C.

15.—*Report on the Physical Condition of Fourteen Hundred School Children in the City* (of Edinburgh); *together with some account of their Homes and Surroundings* (Edinburgh Charity Organisation Society). London: P. S. King and Son. Price 5s. net.

The title of this work may appear clumsy and awkward; it has the merit, however, of accurately describing its contents. It represents the results of an investigation recently made into the physical and mental condition of some 1,400 children attending a certain school in Edinburgh, and the character of the home conditions in which these children live. The details of the investigation, the method by which it was carried out, the nature of the questions, and the authorities consulted, all show that it was assumed—perhaps unconsciously—that conditions of “children” and “homes” were strongly correlated. Though few may be