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the book without gaining a clearer notion of the nature, scope, and history of Socialism.

F. M. BUTLIN

Socialism and Modern Thought. By M. KAUFMANN. (London : Methuen. 1895. 180 pp., crown 8vo, 2s. 6d.)

THE contents of this little book are hardly as profound as the title and the headings of the chapters would lead one to expect. 'The Philosophy of Socialism,' 'Socialism and Darwinism,' 'Socialism and Positivism,' etc., are rather large subjects to be dealt with in the few pages allotted to them. The author modestly states that he does not presume 'to treat exhaustively the various aspects of these vast conglomerate themes'; but neither is his treatment of them sufficiently definite to throw much light on the connection between Socialism and Modern Thought. While the pages are filled with long quotations from the works of various Socialists, no definite attempt is made to show how far these opinions form an essential part of Socialism; yet, probably, with the exception of economics, there is no aspect of modern thought on which Socialists could not be found to disagree with one another. To sort these views and to show for which Socialism can be held responsible, and why, is surely the duty of an author who entitles his work 'Socialism and Modern Thought.' Mr. Kaufmann has not done this; instead, he has taken the far easier course of merely quoting from the works of different Socialists, and then commenting on these quotations. The result is that in spite of the conspicuous moderation with which he criticises the movement, the conception of Socialism as conveyed in these chapters is both confused and misleading. Socialists are accused of treating labour and thrift with 'supreme contumely,' of 'political hypocrisy,' of a desire for 'material indulgence,' of a want of due appreciation of art and poetry. The reason which is given for this last accusation is worth quoting: 'There is one test, and it is an infallible test, by which we may discover how far some form of Socialism, introduced in the course of social reforms or otherwise, may eventually prove the true friend or enemy of culture; and that is the work done already in literature and art by Socialists coping with their individualist rivals.' It is not surprising that, reasoning in this way, the author should arrive at the conclusion that 'the instinctive fears of the literary class lest the progress of science, art, learning, and the general development of man's capacities might suffer in the event of Socialism carrying the day, are not altogether ill-founded.'

But although the author's researches into the relation between Socialism and Modern Thought are too slight and indefinite to be of much value, the practical lessons which he draws from them are interesting, while the conclusion is worthy of attention. 'We saw how as critics Socialists are pessimistic, while in the construction of their own

scheme of social reconstruction they are optimistic overmuch, from which it is not unfair to conclude that there must be some fault in their analysis of the present social system, and some error in their forecast of the society of the future.' From this the author concludes 'That we must set about to reform society on the principle of positive fact, avoiding the fictions and fallacies of a distorted pessimistic imagination and feverishly excited optimistic expectancy.'

F. M. BUTLIN

The Better Administration of the Poor Law. By W. CHANCE.
Charity Organisation Series. (London : Swan Sonnenschein.
1895. 260 pp., 6s.)

THERE is really something pathetic in this admirable little book, coming as it does at the present time when the new poor law franchise, the so-called popular election of guardians, has given an impetus to everything that is bad in poor law administration, and reduced almost to extinction all opportunities of thoughtful, helpful work. It is not too much to say that any board of guardians which should carefully follow the methods advocated in this work would, before six years had passed, have attained an almost perfect administration, whilst at the same time we may be sure that no board of guardians which made the attempt would survive the first election after this experiment began. It scarcely therefore requires to be added that, as far as present results go, all the care and trouble which Mr. Chance has spent on his work are as good as wasted, and we must look for a period of waste and maladministration, longer or shorter, according as the people are more or less easily educated, which shall disgust the electors themselves with bad methods, and, by bitter experience, produce the public opinion necessary before popularly elected guardians can put Mr. Chance's precepts into practice.

It is difficult not to speak with some bitterness, for just when it is too late, the long-required book has appeared. Aschrott's *English Poor Law System* contains a vast mass of detail, mostly accurate; Fowle's admirable little work, in the English Citizen Series, contains a lucid, if rather sketchy statement of history and principles; but no work, with which we are acquainted, supplied a ready answer to the thousand and one practical questions which arise round the board table. This is what Chance's work does, though it does much more as well. The busy guardian has no time to digest Aschrott, and Fowle requires too much application of first principles. In the work before us we find a mass of information on every point, indoor and outdoor relief, medical help, special cases and what not, all carefully classified and with the pros and cons. so plainly stated that the most hasty reader need accept nothing merely on the author's authority, but can give a reason for the faith that is in him.

Beginning with a useful sketch of Poor Law History and first