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argument of Rodbertus admits of fairly simple summary. Society is treated as consisting of two classes, those who labour and those who receive rent or unearned income or revenue, these terms being for the present purpose convertible. Owing to the superior competitive strength of possession in the conditions of production over labour the proportion in which the total produce is divided is continually changing, to the detriment it need hardly be said of the working class: in other words the share of labour is ever diminishing. Lastly the direction of production lies in the hands of irresponsible individuals whose only guide to what they should produce is the experience of the past. The result according to Rodbertus is obvious and inevitable. Any improvement in productive power naturally leads to an increase in the production of what may be termed revenue goods and working class goods in the same proportions which these originally held. But during this very time labour has been exploited and subjected to a decrease in its proportionate though not its absolute share, so that the goods when finally in the market exist in wrong proportions to the power of purchase then resident in the two classes. Owing further to the recurrent or rather continuous nature of this change adjustment never has time to take effect before a new depression occurs with a demand for a new adjustment. The cause of over-production then is not inequality but increasing inequality. This feature must be emphasised here because it is on it that the argument turns. Despite its importance, it receives far too little notice on many criticisms on Rodbertus. Thus, though not overlooked by Professor Clark, its particular conditions and consequences are insufficiently taken into account in the somewhat summary conclusion at which he arrives.

The true importance of Rodbertus, however, lies not so much in his treatment of this or that particular point as in the extraordinary suggestiveness of his writings and the central conceptions set forth as to the growth of society and the relationship of economic and social life.

E. C. K. GONNER

Reflections on the Formation and the Distribution of Riches, by Turgot, 1770. Translated and Edited by Prof. W. J. ASHLEY. (New York: Macmillan. Pp. xxii, 112. 1898. Price 3s. net.)

THIS volume, in the series of Prof. Ashley's Economic Classes, deserves more notice from the reviewer than could be given to some of its predecessors, like the reprints of chapters from the writings of Malthus and Richard Jones. Turgot's sketch first appeared in the form of articles in the *Éphémérides*, 1770, then edited by Du Pont de Nemours. As is well known, Du Pont revised the articles before they were published, and this led to a passing tiff with Turgot. The alterations made by Du Pont were, if an editor of an Economic Journal can judge, small and unimportant compared with the fuss

which has been made over them; but, in a critical edition, attention must necessarily be called to them. Prof. Ashley has hardly attempted a critical edition. He suggests that the task should be left to the modern French school, but it is permissible to express regret that he has not himself undertaken it. Any one who attempts the task will not perform it satisfactorily without carefully collating Turgot's *Reflections* and Cantillon's *Essai*.

In a short but interesting preface the editor gives us the main facts of Turgot's life. He incidentally expresses the opinion that Du Pont was in chronic want of copy for the *Éphémérides*. After reading, perhaps, more of Du Pont's writings, published and unpublished, than I am ever likely to find useful, I feel very doubtful upon this subject. Too prone to write in his own journal, too dilatory and unpunctual to be ever up to time, Du Pont can hardly ever have been really short of matter for publication; and any reader of the *Éphémérides* must be struck even now with the small amount of padding which they contain. And the strong sectarian spirit of the *Économistes* have caused the rejection of a grèat number of manuscripts which an editor, if hard up, would not have hesitated to accept.

The only previous English translation of the *Reflections*, reprinted by McCulloch, was, as Prof. Ashley points out, a miserable performance. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Harvard professor for his very careful and close rendering of the latest text.

HENRY HIGGS

Bilanci di Trenta Famiglie di Contadini in Provincia di Treviso.

By FELICE MANTOVANI. Pp. 60, 8vo. (Torino: Roux Frassati e Co. 1898.)

SIGNOR MANTOVANI gives us an excellent study of thirty Metayers' families in the North of Italy. Coming after the late Prof. Rabbeno's Metayers' Budgets in the *ECONOMIC JOURNAL* (vol. iv., pp. 545 *et seq.*), and the earlier budgets of the Comtessa Pasolini, they add much to our exact knowledge of peasant life in Italy. The statistics of expenses of cultivation, of the ages, cost of living, receipts, &c., are minute in themselves, and are completed by particulars about the members of each family, which make the portraits live and throw light upon the figures themselves, *e.g.*, how many members of the family can read and write, how many go to the inn, how much capital has been saved, and—for nothing is unimportant in the family budget—such details as the mention of a mother and daughter who take it in turns to go to mass, because they have only one pair of boots between them, and wear slippers in the house. Those who have attempted to compile a workman's budget, and few others are competent judges, will warmly appreciate the industry and ability which Signor Mantovani has lavished upon his interesting work.

HENRY HIGGS