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Capital, Labour, and Trade, and the Outlook by Margaret Benson

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The Economic Journal, Vol. 2, No. 6 (Jun., 1892), pp. 342-344

Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of the [Royal Economic Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2956159>

Accessed: 16/12/2014 20:03

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particularly great among the negroes. The double fact throws light upon the probable cause and significance of the increase of divorce among hitherto uneducated classes. We shall let our author speak for himself :—

Imagine society as a huge pyramid in which the position of each individual is determined by his knowledge and wealth. Imagine a horizontal plane intersecting the pyramid to represent the divorce law of the community, and all persons above the plane as possessing so much knowledge and money that divorce is to them a theoretical possibility, which to those below it is not. If the plane be motionless, the rate of increase of divorce may be found ; but if it be gradually sinking towards the base of the pyramid, and making divorce a practical possibility to an increasing proportion of the whole number, this change must affect the calculation. Such a descent of the divorce plane has been in progress in this country apparently for the past twenty years.

Two other less satisfactory explanations of the increase of divorce are adduced. The proportion of divorces granted for desertion has steadily risen, from 34 per cent. in 1867 to 40 per cent. in 1886. Again, ‘ divorces are most frequent where women are most emancipated, and the percentage granted to the wife in such communities is excessive. For the whole country the percentage to women is increasing.’ On this point it may be interesting to hear more at large the opinion of one who has studied the whole subject so carefully.

The economic emancipation of women, in the forms it has thus far assumed, is attended by an assimilation of the work of wage-earning women to that of men. Marriage, however, is fundamentally grounded on the differences, physical, intellectual, and moral, between the sexes. . . . So far as the training of the two sexes prior to marriage has been identical, one or other must be ill-fitted for that life ; so far as woman’s work has become masculine, her ability to make and keep a home happy is diminished. The result appears most clearly in the wage-earning population, where a girl’s marriage is less often a change from one home to another, and more often a change from a factory into a home. It is in just these cases that divorce is most frequent.

F. Y. EDGEWORTH

Capital, Labour, and Trade, and the Outlook. Plain Papers by MARGARET BENSON. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

THE epithet ‘ plain ’ has seldom been better deserved. Miss Benson rivals Miss Martineau in the art of simple illustrations. Take, for instance, the following lesson on efficiency of money :—

Two men went to the Derby with a barrel of beer to sell. One man had a threepenny-bit in his pocket. They were partners in the barrel, and as they went they added up the profit they would make at threepence a glass. But the day was hot, and the first man wanted a glass. So he paid the second man the threepence, and drew himself a glass. Then the second man began to be thirsty too, so he drew a glass, and paid back the threepence to the first man ; and as the day grew hotter and the road dustier, the first man paid back the threepence, and the second man paid

it back again ; and it is needless to say that finally the barrel did not get to the races. Well, the point of the story is this—Was the value of that barrel only *threepence*, because there was only *one threepenny-bit*—paid for it over and over again ?

An equally lively lesson on the truths and fallacies connected with the notion of ‘giving employment’ is thus wound up :—

Suppose yourself to have waked up one morning and found . . . that a law had been put into operation that no one was any longer to have any luxuries. How you would rub your eyes when you looked round the room and found that all your pictures had gone ! The photograph of your son at sea, where is it ? you ask. “ Oh, the Inspector took that yesterday,” says your wife ; “ he said it was only a luxury.” “ But where are the chairs and tables ? ” you say, surprised. “ Oh, those are going to be used for firewood.”

And so on.

The end of it would seem to me an immense population working all their days living on the bare necessities of life, no little comforts, no amusements, no learning except what will help you to produce faster, no religion.

In fact, like a community of ants.

Solomon said, “ Go to the ant,” but he never said you were to *stop* there ; “ Consider her *ways* and be wise,” but he never told you to consider her ends.

Miss Benson, while as simple as Miss Martineau, is more accurate. She teaches the modern doctrine of ‘ final ’ utility and sacrifice ; mostly by way of short statement rather than parable, which is perhaps less suited to those very abstract principles. For instance, the gist of one lesson is—

Labour and Capital are paid out of their joint produce according to their comparative efficiency, and this rate of payment measures the Cost of Abstinence of the final supply of Capital, and is determined by the labourers’ Standard of Comfort.

In her admiration for the principle of competition Miss Benson seems to recall an earlier age.

We cannot get a distinct notion of what is ‘ fair ’ payment, what the ‘ real work ’ or value of work is, or what return for it is ‘ just,’ except by determination of market value.

It is ingeniously argued that an intuition as to the just rate of wages, the labourer’s share of the total produce, involves an intuition as to what is the just rate of interest. ‘ Would my instinct on this point coincide with that of all fair-minded people ? I confess I should not like to trust my moral sense in this matter.’ This severe doctrine is qualified by the distinction between ‘ competition ’ and the ‘ hindrance to competition.’ The outcome of a full and, as it seems to us, fair discussion of the issues between Socialism and *laissez-faire* is : ‘ What we must do is not to do away with competition, but to make it really free and fair by equalizing opportunities as much as possible.’ It might have been well to state more explicitly the relation between this unfettered competition and ‘ organization,’ or trades-unionism, which

in the case of female labour, at least, the writer recommends as a panacea. This difficulty might have been cleared up, and the usefulness of an excellent primer would have been enhanced if references to original authorities had been given less sparingly. The writer of a text-book should both point to higher worlds of knowledge, and lead the way. Miss Benson does the latter only.

F. Y. EDGEWORTH

The Grasshopper in Lombard Street. By JOHN BIDDULPH MARTIN.
(Simpkin, Marshall & Co.)

Μακαρίζομέν σε, τέττιξ. We pronounce 'The Grasshopper' happy in its design and execution. 'The annals of a business transacted from a time almost immemorial, on a spot which has for very nearly seven centuries been the centre of the commerce and the finance of England,' are traced by one of the inheritors of that long-established business, one of the partners of the time-honoured bank at 68 Lombard Street. In tracing the origin of this city bank and its rustic emblem we are carried back to the age of Sir Thomas Gresham, whose family crest was the grasshopper. Mr. Martin rejects the legendary explanation of the crest: that Sir Thomas Gresham, having been exposed as a castaway infant in a field, was discovered by a casual passer-by, whose attention had been attracted by the chirping of a grasshopper. Gresham was a college friend of Dr. J. Caius, and it is probably not accidental that the account of Gonville and Caius College is inscribed in the books of the bank from a very early date to the present time. After Gresham the next considerable figure in the annals is Sir Richard Martin, Master of the Mint in the reign of Elizabeth, who, if not a direct ancestor, at any rate used the same armorial bearings as the Martins of the Grasshopper, and is the eponymous hero of a race who, both in practice and theory, have dealt so successfully with money. Next we read of 'Charles Duncomb and Richard Kent at the Grasshopper in Lombard Street' among the 'goldsmiths that keep running cashes' in the reign of Charles II. Thomas Martin, the direct ancestor of the present ancestor of the annalist, entered the business about two hundred years ago. A grateful posterity still cherishes his maxims or 'proper considerations for persons concerned in the banking business'; among which we read—'Not to boast of great surplus or plenty of money,' 'Avoid unprofitable business, especially when attended with trouble and expense.' There are other more technical maxims; and indeed the particulars which Mr. Martin extracts from the records of his ancestors as to the banking business of earlier ages will be of great value to the specialist. The chapters relating to the premises in Lombard Street will reward the antiquary. The work, primarily a family monograph, possesses interest for wide sections of the public.

F. Y. EDGEWORTH