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The Economic Journal

The Public Health Agitation, 1833-48. By B. L. HUTCHINS.
(London : A. C. Fifield. Pp. 150.)

EDWIN CHADWICK was a remarkable man, and merits at the hands of posterity a more generous recognition than he has hitherto received. Known best for his work as a Poor-Law Commissioner, his memory has come down to us clad in that rather sombre garb of austere dogmatism which has enveloped the labours of those who build their social theories on the foundations of the famous Poor-Law Report of 1834. Miss Hutchins has done well to rescue his name from an undeserved imputation by defending in this little volume his claim to a high place among those who struggled against what someone has called "vested interests in filth and dirt."

Chadwick's mind was essentially a mind of high constructive ability. If he destroyed, it was only that he might build something better on the vacant place. His theories on the Poor Law were of this character. The famous "less eligibility" phrase applied only to the adult pauper, and further, to the adult pauper in agricultural districts. It was indeed, as Chadwick believed, an essential principle to be observed in the work of securing to the labourer the elements of a decent existence, but it was the first, and not, as so many have supposed, the final principle.

More than any other man of his day he recognised the truth, which even now is only by slow degrees winning general acceptance, that a man is largely the creature of his environment. Miss Hutchins tells a story of how "he once attempted to remonstrate with a workman who, though apparently a sensible man, expended what he (Chadwick) considered to be too much of his income in drink. The man's reply was, 'Do you, sir, come and live here, and you will drink whisky too!'"

The lesson sank deep, and turned his thoughts in the direction of Public Health. Curiously enough, he arrived at the positions, clearly defined in the Minority Report and dimly glimpsed in the Majority Report of the Poor-Law Commission, that pauperism is largely a question of Public Health, to be remedied not by the deterrent attitude of a relieving officer, but by the cleansing vigour of the medical officer and the sanitary inspector. It was his driving power, not always displayed in the most conciliatory manner, that led to the establishment of a General Board of Health, and so to the first beginnings of reform in drains, water supply, and housing.

Chadwick forms the central figure of Miss Hutchins' able and

interesting book. Other persons, such as Southwood Smith, appear as fellow-combatants in the struggle, but to Chadwick belongs the honour of the final victory. Miss Hutchins has done her task well; she has not spared labour in the collection of materials, and her book should be in the hands of all those who are beginning to study the history of the Public Health Agitation.

R. A. BRAY

Le Socialisme Conservateur ou Municipal. Par ANDRÉ MATER.
(Paris : Giard and Brière, 1909. Pp. 622.)

THE main object of this work is to protest, so its author tells us, against existing prejudices regarding municipalism. This he wishes to do by proving that the different institutions, which may now be grouped under the title of municipalism, have been evolved in the course of centuries out of various social groups : the family, the domain, the parish, and the town ; and that this movement is but a rational adaptation of the past to the needs of the present. No political party should, therefore, necessarily be opposed to it. In order to indicate that all we now see in municipal life has its roots in the past, over 200 pages are devoted to an historical study of the origin of villages, of towns, and of municipal and communal institutions and rights, from the Middle Ages down to modern times, the information given being largely based on the works of Viollet, Sée, and Ashley. After a few observations on the United States, we make rather a startling leap to the development of garden cities in England, a movement of the highest importance in the author's opinion. Many of us wish we could follow him in his assertion that English experience indicates that "*une commune ordinaire pourrait facilement se transformer en garden-city*" (p. 253). Thence we pass on to a description of various public services with a view to indicating how ancient are their origins. Almost every incident of municipal life comes under consideration, as well as many forms of co-operation, such as co-operative stores and trades unions. Under the title "the means of realisation," the theory of the unearned increment and betterment is discussed. Then follows a brief history of socialistic ideas, from "Thomas Morus" to the Fabian Society. The recent campaign against municipalism is noticed, and here only do we find some of its disadvantages discussed (p. 430). Lastly, certain statistical proofs of the financial success of municipal trade are quoted, exclusively drawn from English sources, and based chiefly on the Municipal Year Book. We are, however, frankly warned