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rubber, dairy produce, tea, coffee, peas, beans, potatoes, fruit, and a multitude of other agricultural products."

In my opinion, after these fresh investigations, the connection between the solar periods and the state of trade can no longer be doubted, though the degree of this connection remains to be estimated, and it has not been proved that the purely psychological, or economic, explanation is not also partially true. Indeed, in the first passage quoted above, and in other places, Professor Jevons leaves an opening for its introduction.

S. J. CHAPMAN

Land and Labour: Lessons from Belgium. By B. SEEBOHM ROWNTREE. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1910. 8vo. Pp. xx. + 633. Price 10s. 6d. net.)

MR. ROWNTREE has followed up the deserved success of his previous study of poverty in York with the larger inquiry, conceived in the same comprehensive spirit and executed with the same intelligent pains as that applied before to a single town, which is presented in the present volume dealing with the economic condition of the inhabitants of Belgium. At different stages of the investigation we are reminded, often by direct comparison of the statistical results obtained, of the earlier book; and, in spite of the criticism aroused by Mr. Rowntree's former conclusions respecting the inadequacy of the incomes of certain sections of the population of the English cathedral city to meet an expenditure dictated by the bare necessities of physical efficiency, he pursues a similar course of reasoning in the chapters in the fifth part of his new work, where he handles the general standard of comfort of the Belgians and the cost of living. He sees, it is evident, no cause for employing a dissimilar test.

As far as the town workers are concerned, it may be noted, that, while in England no budgets were obtained for a class whose earnings are as small as those of the lowest class for which such information of income and expenditure has been secured in Belgium, in the class above, where comparison is possible, the Belgian is better fed than the English family, because a larger percentage of the receipts is expended on food in the Continental country. In the lowest class of all, indeed, in Belgium, the choice by the people of nutritive food stuffs seems to establish their superiority in this respect, at least, over the class in York, whose earnings are comparable, not with this lowest class, but with the class above.

No. 79.—VOL. XX.

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But it is not only in this particular feature of his inquiry, but also in the general characteristics of the methods of collecting and digesting the material obtained, that Mr. Rowntree has adhered to the high tradition set by his previous monograph. He has used with discriminating care all the official information which he could procure; but he has added to this, as occasion has required, independent investigation instituted by himself) and conducted largely through his own responsible agents and assistants, into special points of interest, where authoritative statistics were defective or non-existent. Such, for instance, were the inquiries made into the number of landowners and the size of their holdings, into the extent of the mortgage-debts of the peasant proprietors, into the wages paid in the principal industries, into the selling-price and rent of land throughout the country, into the incidence of local rates, and into the conditions of housing, both urban and rural; and all these diligent and elaborate scrutinies were undertaken in addition to that collection and examination of some seventy family budgets to which we have already alluded. The result of the four years of study, thus occupied, is an elaborate account full of interesting detail, and suggestive of certain general conclusions, which no English economist can henceforth neglect, who desires to know the conditions of Belgium or to compare that country with his own.

For, as Mr. Rowntree states in his Preface, his hope has been, and is, to contribute to the solution of the problem of poverty in Great Britain by throwing some light on its relation to the system of land tenure. For that reason he is more concerned with the agricultural than with the industrial life of the Belgian people. Part I. of his book is devoted to the consideration of "some fundamental factors in the social and economic condition" of the country; and here the history of land tenure, the number of landowners classified according to the size of their holdings, and the laws of succession and inheritance, and the methods of land transfer, occupy three chapters of the five contained in the section; while in the remaining two a description is supplied of the geographical and physical characteristics of the country, and of its history and constitution. After some forty pages occupied in the succeeding part with "industrial" life, we return in Part III. to "agricultural" life; and of this a very complete examination is attempted. In Part IV. "some factors influencing agricultural and industrial prosperity," such as (i.) education, which in the author's opinion suffers severely from being made a party question, and, in the case of primary education at least, has not

passed beyond a low standard, or as (ii.) the means of transport, on the cheapness and abundance of which Mr. Rowntree has little but appreciative admiration to bestow, or as (iii.) the system of taxation, which does not meet with such unqualified approval at his hands, are considered. Part V. is concerned with a survey of the "standard of life," beginning with the family budgets we have mentioned and passing on to such topics as co-operation, the drink problem, betting and gambling, housing, thrift, pauperism, unemployment, and vital statistics; in Part VI. certain general "conclusions" are set forth; and numerous Appendices contain an abundance of Tables dealing with various topics treated in the main body of the text.

From this summary it will be seen what industry has been judiciously bestowed upon the preparation of this valuable and bulky work; and it will also be noticed that the space assigned to agriculture is predominantly large. It would be impossible within the limits of this review to do much more than instigate our readers to consult Mr. Rowntree's pages for themselves, where they will find a veritable storehouse of accurate and instructive information; and we may add that the concise repetition of the chief results obtained, which is conveniently given at the end of each chapter, facilitates the grasp, and aids the recollection, of the main conclusions reached. We do not think, however, that we should misrepresent the general purport of Mr. Rowntree's own belief if we said briefly that, while he holds that Belgium has something to learn of England in the improvement of industrial life, Belgian agricultural conditions afford some instructive lessons which may be studied with advantage by Englishmen. In some respects the example set might, he thinks, be profitably imitated.

Industrial life in Belgium is, as he puts it, "at a low potential." Wages are "very low"—being in the building and engineering trades about one-half of those paid in England; and this lowness is due, apparently, to the small productivity of the workmen, and to the inconsiderable proportion of their number engaged on the manufacture of goods of the highest quality; but it is still more largely due to the weakness of trade unions. In this last respect, here as elsewhere (as, for instance, in the matter of Co-operation), the bitterness of the Belgian political parties results in ineffectual action. Catholics, Liberals, and Socialists, must, it would seem, have their separate societies and organisations, and they will not combine for common action. The consumption of alcohol, moreover, is large, while poor relief is badly organised. But, on the

E E 2

other hand, the burden of taxation is not heavy, if it is mal-adjusted; and there is probably less unemployment in Belgium than there is in Britain. House-rent is not high, partly because the cost of building is low, and partly also because the excellent and abundant means of cheap transport render it possible for the population to be "more diffused." Workmen engaged in the towns can thus practically live in the country; and there is a good system by which capital for providing housing accommodation for the poor is easily forthcoming in sufficient quantity.

The system of transport, in which light railways fill a prominent rôle, while the canals are not neglected, contributes also to the undoubted success of Belgian agriculturists; and the State, which owns most of the railways, plays no less beneficent a part in afforestation, which affords opportune employment in the winter when other work becomes slack, and also in the active help it gives towards extending the knowledge of agricultural improvements. The light-railway system receives Mr. Rowntree's especial commendation. For, in spite of a soil naturally poor, which needs constant manuring, the yield obtained per acre from the cultivated area is higher in Belgium than it is in any other country of Europe. To an aptitude for agriculture is joined the necessity for intensive cultivation imposed by the subdivision of the soil. That subdivision is promoted by the French law of succession and by the density of population; and, in consequence, the price and rent of agricultural land in Belgium are about twice as high as they are in England. One in every ten of the population owns a plot of land, while the average size of a farm is $14\frac{1}{2}$ acres, compared with the average of 63 acres in Great Britain; and 63 per cent. of the agricultural population consists of farmers and members of their families working with them, and only 35 per cent. of labourers, while in Great Britain the figures are reversed. Yet the small holder, Mr. Rowntree admits, "lives roughly," and "except in winter, works unreasonably long hours for low pay," while the peasant proprietors' mode of life is very similar to that of the tenant. "Both have to live sparsely and work extremely hard to make a living."

And hence, while our author thinks that Belgian experience shows that we could establish a great number of small holders upon the soil of England, who would succeed, if, as in Belgium, adequate means of cheap and rapid transit were provided, co-operative methods of purchase and sale were encouraged, and agricultural education systematically diffused, he nevertheless does not believe that all is for the best in Belgium. He considers

that she has failed hitherto to devise a proper means of intercepting, for the benefit of the community, the increase which has taken place most markedly in land values in that country. The controversial question of the taxation of "unearned increments" derived from landed ownership seems to us, we must confess, to be dragged into the quiet course of this disinterested narrative, rather after the fashion of King Charles's head in Dickens's well-known story; and neither in the case of urban nor of rural land is it by any means certain that all the beneficent consequences which Mr. Rowntree manifestly expects to flow from this single expedient will be realised in fact. But such is the final moral he would enforce. There are also some other occasions where he allows his political predilections to obtrude themselves with unnecessary prominence; but those of his readers who do not agree with the particular solution of such debated questions which he favours, will nevertheless be grateful for the scrupulous care and the unwearying pains he has freely lavished on the conception and the execution of this *magnum opus*. He has, in truth, conquered in this venture a new area for statistical research; and for the strategy and tactics alike which he has employed in his scientific work we entertain a sincere, respectful admiration.

L. L. PRICE

FOUR COBDEN CLUB PAMPHLETS.

Political Economy and Fiscal Policy. By PROFESSOR BRENTANO.
The Fiscal Policy of International Trade: Summary of Marshall's Memorandum. By J. M. ROBERTSON, M.P.

The Empire Aspect of Preference. By SENATOR PULSFORD, of Australia.

The Revolt of the Protectionists in Germany against their own Tariff. By ANONYMOUS.

(London: Cassell. 1908-9.)

PROFESSOR BRENTANO draws a parallel between the present position of the German Empire and the state of our own finances on the eve of the reforms of Peel and Gladstone. Whilst England under Free Trade pays off debt, Germany under Protection contracts it. In Germany now, as in England before 1840, the community is taxed very heavily for the benefit of organised minorities, whilst the State itself goes empty away. As a broad view of the position of the two countries and their fiscal histories,