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The parts of a nation are not held together by the reflection that the government is worth what it costs, and will not fly asunder because the government is corrupt and wasteful. That modern governments, especially in France, frequently undertake what they had better let alone is true. But many persons who are not socialists will demur to M. de Molinari's view that art, science, and learning will flourish all the more if not assisted by government. Compare art in the United States with art in France, or learning in the United Kingdom with learning in Germany. What everybody earnestly desires, and what everybody can test for himself, will be supplied in the best possible way by free competition. We would rather obtain our food and clothing from the private trader than from the government. But it is different with things which are often most wanted by those who feel the want least and with things which can be tested only by experts. In short, the controversy between freedom and protection, between state action and individual enterprise, is in its nature interminable. We should agree with many of M. de Molinari's strictures on the present tendency of European politics, and yet we do not feel convinced that the simple remedy of unlimited competition would be effectual.

F. C. MONTAGUE

Aspects of the Social Problem. By Various Writers. Edited by BERNARD BOSANQUET. (London: Macmillan and Co. 1895.)

At first sight the essays which make up this volume strike the reader as singularly heterogeneous. Some, such as the Duties of Citizenship, Character in its bearing on Social Causation, or the Reality of the General Will, are almost purely philosophical. Others, such as the Children of Working London or the Industrial Residuum, are short studies of common life based on close observation. Others, again, on Old Age Pensions and Points in the Administration of Poor Relief, handle economic questions in a strictly argumentative fashion. It may be said, however, that all these essays are pervaded by one tendency and insist upon one principle. 'The writers,' as the editor tells us, 'have seen and felt, as well as reflected, that the individual member of society is above all things a character and a will and that society as a whole is a structure in which will and character "are the blocks with which we build".' They are familiar with that dilemma which no serious philanthropist can elude. How are you to do human beings any permanent good unless by rendering them more capable? And how can you render them more capable unless you first improve their condition? The answer may fairly be summed up in Mr. Bosanquet's words. 'Material conditions are necessary to existence; but they are themselves dependent to an enormous extent on the energy of the mind which they surround and their deficiency, of which there are innumerable degrees, constitutes in a way which would be

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incredible but for definite experience, a difficulty rather than an insuperable obstacle in the way of good life' (p. 111). Therefore the contributors to this volume protest against the current formula that something must be done, and urge that we should do nothing without some rational forecast of the probable consequences of our action.

Incompetence of one kind or another is the chief source of extreme poverty and wretchedness, yet the incompetent do not die out and cannot be exterminated. What is to be done with men and women like those described in Miss Dendy's paper on Marriage in East London, who marry whilst they are yet immature in body and mind, before they have acquired strength or useful knowledge or even saved a few sovereigns wherewith to buy the bare necessities of a decent home. 'An old bedstead and bedding, two rickety chairs and a table to match, a strip of greasy carpet and two or three cracked cups and saucers—these will be collected from sympathising neighbours or picked up for a few halfpence from the costermongers' stalls and will satisfy the highest expectations of the young people. There are thousands of such homes which have not cost 10s. to get together and would not realise 5s. if sold, and these afford all of decency and comfort at which their owners aim' (p. 79). Above all, what is to be done with the children of such marriages? Are they to be left to their fate, or are they to be brought up by the community—in other words at the expense of those who will not marry unless they can live in a civilised manner? Is the State to lay fresh burthens on those who are most fit to be parents of the next generation in order that the most unfit may be relieved from the last check to their multiplication? Again, consider the difficulty presented by that class which Miss Dendy terms the Industrial Residuum, the class which has no regular employment and no fixed standard of living. This class has no tendency to disappear. It receives those who descend from the classes above, but there is no lower depth into which its members can descend. In this class 'the absence of the economic virtues is of course only one aspect of a very strongly marked type of character; it accompanies a low order of intellect and a degradation of the natural affections to something little better than animal instincts.' . . . 'Take for instance their frequent inability to give the number of the house in which they live or even the name of the street; when this is combined with their complete ignorance of the points of the compass and failure to distinguish between the right and left hand, the rational man has dropped very low on the scale towards the sagacious animal' (p. 84). This helpless class is largely maintained, Miss Dendy tells us, by the poor rates, by charity, and by the good nature of neighbours little richer than themselves. When payment of rent becomes pressing they flit. For provisions they go on credit so long as the tradesman's patience lasts. When that fails, they have still many chances of food, even in the poorest quarter; for liberality is the characteristic virtue of the poor. We cannot wish it otherwise, nor can we very severely blame 'the

residuum.' But when we come to the practical question, What should be done with them? we must acknowledge its difficulty. Are they to be left in their inefficiency and squalor? Are they to be ensured a satisfactory livelihood at the charge of those who are efficient?

Miss Dendy's paper on the Children of Working London is also full of good sense. The life of such children is not, she thinks, generally unhappy, but it is generally unwholesome. They learn in the Board Schools, it is true, habits of order and obedience which are far more valuable than the slender instruction possible there. But these habits are too often extirpated in the interval between leaving school and coming of age. In this interval casual employment is as common as it is pernicious. One of the worst evils of London life is its exciting character. 'If you look closely, you will see that London children are always tired; the dark rings under the eyes tell of the nervous strain which is breaking down their health, and their very restlessness is the restlessness of nervous fatigue and exhaustion' (p. 36). Better sanitary conditions, more regular occupation, and an abundant supply of good literature are, in the writer's opinion, the most urgent wants of young people in London.

Mr. Loch's paper on Points in the Administration of Poor Relief is already known to readers of the *ECONOMIC JOURNAL*. His examination of the projects for providing old-age pensions is marked by his usual force of conviction and acuteness in argument. The moral to be derived from these essays generally is one not of indifference but of circumspection. If the action of the State or of the benevolent rich is not to supersede individual responsibility, a close study of all the circumstances of distress is absolutely necessary. 'As a rule accurate knowledge, perseverance and gentleness, confining yourself closely to the matter in hand and working out your principles rather than flourishing them, is the way to do business' (p.12).

F. C. MONTAGUE

Geschichte des Socialismus und Communismus im 19 Jahrhundert.

III. Abteilung: Louis Blanc. Von PROFESSOR DR. OTTO WARSCHAUER. (Berlin: Hermann Bahr. 1896. 163 pp.)

LOUIS BLANC is the subject of the third part of Professor Warschauer's *History of Socialism and Communism in the 19th Century*. The arrangement of the book is biographical, but no attempt is made to describe the personality of the great Socialist, or the times in which he lived. The events of Louis Blanc's life are given in their chronological order: for this purpose the book is divided into four parts; the three first dealing respectively with the beginning of his career as a journalist and writer, the February Revolution, and the years of exile and return to France, while the last part is devoted to a criticism of his socialistic theories. This arrangement is not altogether satisfactory; the separation of the criticism from the history leaves the latter a

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