to be treated so shortly that the treatment becomes thin and commonplace. This second fault is seen most markedly in the second part of the book, where much of the material is of such stock character that we are in danger of missing various remarks of real value which lie imbedded in the commonplace. Several of the topics in this book have already received at other hands, especially in America, such excellent treatment that we have a right to expect from a person of Professor Read's reputation something better than we have in this book.

With regard to one other point, we cannot help thinking that it is inadvisable for the layman to attempt too premature an application of scientific theories for the purpose of supporting or illustrating reflections on history or social affairs. In the Introduction, Professor Read admits that certain reflections, influenced by the Galtonian theory, would now in the light of Mendelism have been differently expressed by him. When so little Mendelian work has been attempted in the complex question of human character, when so many things are still indefinite, it is well to wait in matters where the scientist himself suspends judgment.

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DIE STETIGKEIT IM KULTURWANDEL. Eine soziologische Studie von Alfred Vierkandt, Privatdozent an der Universität Berlin. Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1908. Pp. xiv, 209.

The tendencies of present-day social and political thought commonly called 'realism' and 'pessimism' have not had least effect in Germany, where indeed both first received their names. Strangely, it might seem, they have been intensified by general acceptance of the doctrine of evolution. Yet, on consideration, this is not surprising; for as applied to society that doctrine was elaborated not in opposition to a creed of fixation, but to the belief in progress by catastrophic change under the impulsion of ideals. With the decline of this belief there has associated itself still another tendency now permeating European thought, which Dr. Vierkandt calls 'irrationalism,' and which he himself regards as a true expression of the historian's point of view. This, of course, does not mean repudiation of reason as the necessary instrument of historical investigation. What

it means is disbelief in the predominant influence of intellectual preconceptions as a factor of social change; the really predominant factors being held to be the emotional and volitional ones. Working consciously under the sway of all these drifts in contemporary thought, Dr. Vierkandt naturally takes a sober view as to the possibilities of rapid improvement in the type of European or of any civilization. The fundamental thought of his book is, he says, the "want of spontaneity" in human progress. The help of all sorts of trivial factors is needed for any effective advance. Necessary conditions are these three: the society must be ripe for a change; there must be a felt need for it; and finally there must be either a powerful individual initiative or a sufficiently determinate 'culture-contact' with some other society (*Akkulturation*). One or more of these conditions may fail. In particular, a leader may not appear when he is wanted. Also, changes when introduced are apt to be disappointing; for the all-pervading social continuity described involves reactions from the old upon the new, and these have the effect of lowering the type under which the new order was conceived by the great innovators. And, even when these do not fail to appear, their ideas may be ineffective because not conceived in emotional sympathy with the general mind. To carry through his reform, the innovator must have fought his own way with difficulty out of the traditional ideas, and these must still retain a hold on him. This the author illustrates in an interesting way in philosophy by the contrast between Hume and Kant. Hume, the more radical thinker, could not effectively overthrow the old structure of metaphysics till his thought had passed through the half-scholastic medium of Kant, to whom the inherited type of thought had meant far more and who retained some of it to the end.

This being the line taken, it is gratifying to find in the result so much encouragement on the whole for the reformer. Neither the fact of catastrophic change nor the efficacy of individual initiative is denied. What is insisted on is merely that all apparently revolutionary advances have a long 'pre-history'; every initiator being dependent on this pre-history both in his own mind and in the society within which it is his lot to work. Genius is as much receptive as creative; and nowhere is there "creation out of nothing." If social change, in accordance with historical 'irrationalism,' often seems to be without law, in the

sense of an intellectual construction showing its necessity in relation to an end, this is after all true rather of the more external kinds of good that constitute our civilization than of the most intrinsic and deeply founded "goods of culture." For these last, laws of progress are discoverable. And the sum of the small changes due to all causes taken together is really something great. If this is not the result simply of the motives we call 'ideal,' these motives still exist and have their effect. In the great initiators they predominate, though even in those they do not act alone.

All this is illustrated throughout the book from a rich knowledge which lays under contribution the most various kinds of improvement in culture, from emergence of new philosophies and new literary forms to technical modifications in material civilization. Of one somewhat despondent conviction it is impossible not to recognize the justification for the present. The rationalizing spirit of modern civilization, the author finds, has shown itself almost impotent except in the realms of science and economic direction. Ideal motives are too weak to apply it to the reorganization of personal and social life generally; and the drastic impetus needed to make these effective by association is so far wanting.

Yet there is perhaps ground of hope in the very 'irrationality' of the apparent process. The requisite conflux may arrive in a way that no one can predict. Dr. Vierkandt himself notes the apparently 'accidental' way in which, by the most singular combination of factors, the mediæval type of social order passed into its opposite. No innovator willed this; and yet by convergence of factors precisely at the time when the Western world was ready, the change came.

Having said so much about the generalizations of the book, I can only add, by way of more definite indication to the reader, that it is especially valuable for its details and its method. Of these I do not attempt to give any adequate notion. Dr. Vierkandt's work may be commended to students as one of the most sound and circumspect on the general subject of sociology, and at the same time as full of enlightening suggestions on all sorts of particular points.

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