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The Economic Journal

Select Documents illustrating the History of Trade Unionism
 I. *The Tailoring Trade*. Edited, with an Introduction, by
 F. W. GALTON, with a Preface by SIDNEY WEBB. (Longmans, 1896.)

MR. GALTON has been extremely thorough in his search for the records of combination among tailors. When the book was coming out, the present writer went through many bundles of notes, looking for any possible references to the subject, and found four or five extracts from rather out-of-the-way sources. Mr. Galton had, however, already noted them all. A fresh reading of the completed book only detects one slip. In the Introduction (p. xx) the number of combined journeymen about whom the master-tailors complained in 1721 is given as 15,000, although in the document itself, as printed on p. 1, the number is given as "7,000 and upwards." It is important to notice that this had apparently increased to 15,000 by 1744 (p. xxx)—a number equal to the whole membership of the Amalgamated Society in 1894. The only other criticism that one feels inclined to make is that Mr. Galton has not indicated the connection between the events he is describing and the general history of the time. The turbulence of 1767 and the hasty legislation of 1768 would, for instance, be made more intelligible by a reference to the Wilkes riots. But, after all, anything of that kind might perhaps have detracted from the admirable simplicity and force of Mr. Galton's narrative.

For the student of social history this series of fresh documents throws a narrow but continuous stream of light across the two most important centuries of English development. Nowadays, in the necessary reaction from the cataclysmic view suggested by Mr. Toynbee's lectures, one is tempted to think that there never was any "Industrial Revolution" at all. Certainly the formula of a complete change about 1760 from "domestic" to "factory" industry does not apply to the tailoring trade, and yet it is obvious that during the eighteenth century a change did take place even in this most conservative industry. Every word of the men's "Observations" on the Masters' Bill in 1721 (pp. 7-12) shows a consciousness of a new state of things, from the dangers of which neither established custom nor individual good conduct was a sufficient protection.

One effect of the comparatively late date which Toynbee assigned to his Revolution is that it seemed to coincide with the appearance of the *Wealth of Nations* and the new birth of Political Economy in England. Often, indeed, it is implied by writers and speakers that the darker side of that Revolution was actually due to the economic doctrine of freedom. Mr. Galton's documents go to show that in one most important trade the rise of a new industrial spirit, and the exacerbation of the relationship between master and man, preceded by nearly sixty years the publication of the *Wealth of Nations*. The doctrine of freedom does not, indeed, make its appearance in these

documents until 1811, when Francis Place began his work of opposition to the Combination Laws; and that doctrine, coming as it does and when it does, strikes one not as the bald statement of a narrow political philosophy, but as a fundamental *ethical* revolution. In 1811, for instance, the masters' manifesto says, ". . . paradoxical and incredible as it must seem to all other orders of society, every individual to whom this is addressed knows that his servant is his master—that he is regulated by his servants' rules—compelled to conform to his servants' caprice—dictated to, not in the mildest terms—insulted, menaced, and perhaps ruined if he does resist his servants' law, assume the fit deportment of a master or the independence of a man. Is such a state to be longer tolerated?—will a master be found so cringing and contemptible as longer to submit to so degraded a situation?" (pp. 102–3). The important point about this, and the point which makes it sound so old-fashioned to us now, is its assumption of a natural inequality of right between master and man. Place replied (p. 113), "If the price of labour be left to the mutual agreement of the master and the workman, as in all other cases, the mutual benefit of both parties would be so nicely balanced that they would operate infallibly as a check upon the extortion of either, while skill and industry would be rewarded in just proportion to their deserts." And in this reply there is something more important than the industrial theory, namely, the assumption of natural equality between master and man, the conviction that the State should look upon them as individuals, with the happiness of each one of whom it was equally concerned. The doctrine stated is old-fashioned enough. The doctrine assumed has become the great motive force of European civilisation.

Nothing can be better than the form and arrangement of this book, and it may be hoped that it is only the beginning of a series of monographs on special trades. In particular, the fascinating subject of the Building Trades lies vast and unknown, waiting for the skill and patience of Mr. Galton or some other equally equipped student.

GRAHAM WALLAS

La Proprietà Fondiaria e la Questione Sociale. Studi di ACHILLE LORIA. (Verona and Padua: Drucker. 1897. 3 lire. 16mo. pp. 321.)

THIS is a republication of three papers, namely, (I.) on "The Law of Population and the Social System," an inaugural lecture at Sienna in 1881; (II.) on "Charles Darwin and Political Economy," a magazine article of 1884; (III.) on "The Land and the Social System," an inaugural lecture at Padua, 1891, followed by (IV.) a new paper on "The Nationalisation of the Land." The first is the longest and the most important, though the third is naturally to be coupled with it, if we would see how much or how little the Professor has altered his views after ten years' reflection.