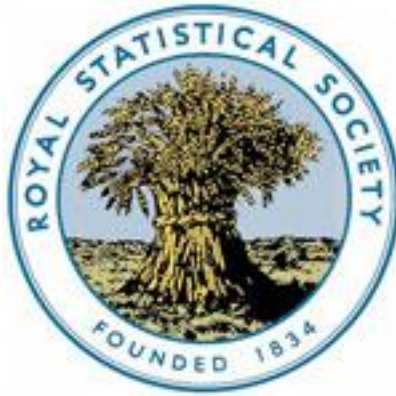


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Review

Author(s): B. L. H.

Review by: B. L. H.

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agriculture, he claims, has no reason to be jealous of manufacture in this respect, and can find borrowed money at low rates since the Bank of France placed at the disposal of the regional banks 40,000,000 frs. without charging them interest. A large extension of co-operative methods is also recommended, a direction in which considerable strides have been made. Relief from oppressive taxation of the land in France is yet another remedy demanded to make farming again popular, a claim which is echoed very widely in England. But the statistics M. Méline quotes surely require some detailed revision, for they put the existing incidence of French land taxation as high as 36 or even 41 per cent. on the revenue, while he warns his political opponents of the aggravation of the farmers' burdens which the threatened direct income tax would impose. Education, as with ourselves, is needed to be yet more fully spread, and the return of women to a love for and interest in agricultural work is advocated if men are to be retained on the farms. Insurance measures, savings banks, free hospitals, almshouses, and the enactment of a "Homestead Law," securing a *bien de famille*, inalienable and not to be mortgaged, is demanded to benefit social life and guarantee tranquility. These and many other reforms are pleaded for as still needful to stem the exodus ascribed to the undue growth of industrialism and to secure a successful re-settlement on the soil. This list of what has still to be done is at least sufficient to prove, on the evidence of the ex-Premier himself, that neither the French land system nor the French protective duties have by themselves sufficed to meet the difficulties which still impede a revival of complete agricultural prosperity. P.G.C.

7.—*La Femme dans l'Industrie*. By H. Gonnard. Paris: Armand Colin, 1906. Price 3 frs. 50 c.

M. Gonnard's interesting study of women's industrial work shows, among other things, that the distribution of women in occupations in France is curiously unlike our own. Dressmaking and other kinds of work connected with clothes, including millinery, umbrella making, and the laundry, occupy over 1,000,000 women in France, greatly exceeding the numbers employed in domestic service (737,000); whilst with us, on the contrary, domestic service is far the largest women's industry (1,285,000), those employed in dress—including laundry workers, to correspond with M. Gonnard's figures—numbering less than 900,000. Perhaps one explanation of the alleged scarcity of servants with us is that the servant-keeping class is here either larger or more luxurious than in France, and demands a larger proportion of servants to population. It is curious also to find that M. Gonnard, writing for a French public, stops to explain why the proportion of men in domestic service is *only* about 1 to every 3 women. This proportion seems very large to us in England, who keep only about 1 manservant to every 27 women, and can reckon more than five times as many women as men in "domestic offices and services" generally. Whatever be the explanation of the fewer servants in France, the preponderance

of dress and needlework trades is easily explicable as due to that special genius of the French nation which has turned the craft of clothing into a fine art. It is disappointing, however, to see that the supremacy of French dressmaking is not reflected in the workers' wages. Although the day wages of *couturières* (robes) rose 66 per cent. in the provinces and 14 per cent. in Paris between 1853 and 1881, they were only 1 fr. 80 c. and 2 frs., respectively, at the latter date. There is reason to hope that a further rise has taken place since 1881 (p. 102). In some large houses in Paris 4 frs. 50 c. to 5 frs. can be earned, but only by experienced hands who have served a considerable apprenticeship. In most trades the maximum day's wage is 3 frs. Even a skilled hand making 4 frs. 50 c. a day is subject to periods of unemployment, which reduce her annual earnings to about 1,350 frs. (p. 106). In some trades the workers are out of work four to six months per annum, with a daily wage when in work of 2 frs. to 2 frs. 50 c. Some very hard and repulsive employments are the worst paid: as fur sewing, 2 frs. a day, which can only with difficulty be earned; sugar refining, about the same, for work done in great heat, and with much injury to fingernails and skin. In artificial jewellery wages are lower still, 1 fr. 25 c. to 1 fr. 75 c. a day.

M. Gonnard ascribes the miserably small earnings of women to their low standard of life, their capacity for restricting wants, and their incapacity for organisation. He is not hopeful that a fixed minimum wage could, if enacted, be enforced, but thinks some good might be done by legislation against truck, fines, and deductions, and by requiring wages to be paid at short intervals, not greater than a fortnight, and preferably a week. He looks forward, however, mainly to organisation, association, and technical training as the means of rectifying the evils due to the woman worker's isolation, and of checking the competition of the countless unskilled or half-skilled workers whose earnings are merely supplementary.

M. Gonnard is also greatly impressed by the prospect that some branches of manufacturing industry may be decentralised through the introduction of electric motors in small workshops, a change which he thinks, if properly directed and organised, may open up a new field of employment for women in their homes under conditions more humane than in the factory. It is difficult to feel quite so optimistic as M. Gonnard about this movement, recollecting, as we must, that for the most part domestic industries are the least amenable to inspection and regulation, and the most prone to exploitation by the sweater. It is to be hoped, however, that the French will be able to make good these serious drawbacks by suitable methods of organisation and co-operation. In this connection an interesting story was told by M. Raoul Jay at the recent International Conference at Geneva of the homeworkers at St. Etienne, who agreed together to work 10 hours a day only, and in order to prevent unfair competition arranged to have the electric power cut off the workrooms daily at the expiration of the period of employment.

We must not omit to indicate the excellent account (in Chapter III) of recent factory legislation in France, the trend of which shows that our logically-minded neighbours are steadily moving towards the enactment of a normal day for all workers, men as well as women. M. Gonnard's book has the distinguished merit of being eminently readable and interesting, and composed with more regard to literary form and style than is always given to books on this class of subject.

B.L.H.

8.—*The Coal Question : an Inquiry Concerning the Progress of the Nation, and the Probable Exhaustion of our Coal Mines.* By the late W. Stanley Jevons, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S. Edited by A. W. Flux, M.A. Third Edition, Revised. L + 467 pp., 8vo. London: Macmillan and Co., 1906. Price 10s. net.

Forty years have passed since the previous edition of this very remarkable book was issued, and Professor Flux is to be congratulated on the occasion he has selected for placing the new edition before the public. The recent optimistic report of the Coal Commission has tended to lull the nation into a false security in respect to the duration of our coal supplies, and it would therefore seem to be a particularly opportune time for reminding those who control the destinies of the country that there is another side to the picture. Few works on economics have aroused so much interest as did that of Jevons' on the coal question when it was first published in 1865. So highly did John Stuart Mill think of the arguments advanced by the author that in the House of Commons he described his "treatment of the subject as almost exhaustive. He seems," continued Mill, "to have anticipated everything which can possibly be said against the conclusions at which he has arrived, and to have answered it." Gladstone was so impressed that he devoted four columns of *Hansard* to the book and its author in his great Budget speech of 1866, and based his scheme of terminable annuities for reducing the national debt upon the necessity of using moderate and reasonable efforts to reduce obligations for which those who come after us are not responsible, and may find it difficult to meet when coal, to which our prosperity is so largely due, has become more costly to obtain. Finally, to set the controversy as to the duration of our supplies of cheap fuel at rest, upon the motion of Mr. Hussey Vivian (afterwards Lord Swansea), a Royal Commission was appointed, which reported in 1871. Unfortunately, the members of that Commission, like those of the Commission which reported last year, quite failed, as Professor Flux points out, to appreciate the argument advanced by Jevons, and so wide a currency has been given to their misinterpretation of his views that it is rare to find anyone who understands the position assumed by the talented author of the work now under review. So far was Jevons from ever even suggesting that the coal resources of the United Kingdom would be exhausted within a century from the time at which he wrote, or indeed within any definite period, that from first to last he insisted to the contrary. His whole contention was that the rate of progress in production existing in 1865, which, if continued, would