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on the socialistic literature of France and Germany, which he treats with discrimination and sympathy, though it is too broad a proposition to lay down, as he does, that 'the common feature of all socialistic literature is found in its purpose: the improvement of the condition of the labouring masses.' In fine, the pamphlet is not one to be lightly recommended to young students until they are tolerably acquainted with the subject and are able to read with a critical eye, when they will find what Professor Cohn has to say about the Germans and their influence equally interesting and suggestive, whether or not they share the author's conclusions.

H. H.

Il Malthusismo e i Problemi Sociali, Saggi Critici. VITTORIO LEBRECHT. (Torino: Loescher, 1893.) 157 pp.

La Population, les causes de ses progrès et les obstacles qui en arrêtent l'essor. PROF. VAN DER SMISSEN. (Paris et Bruxelles, 1893.) 550 pp.

La Popolazione e il Sistema Sociale. FRANCESCO S. NITTI (Torino-Roma: Roux, 1894.) 202 pp.

Die künstliche Beschränkung der Kinderzahl als sittliche Pflicht. 'HANS FERDY.' (Berlin-Neuwied: Heuser, 1894.) 122 pp.

'*Difficile est proprie communia dicere,*' and the difficulty is growing greater every year, in regard to Malthus and population. The books of Lebrecht and Nitti seem from their titles more akin than they are. The books of Van der Smissen and 'Hans Ferdy' are less unlike the rest and less unlike one another than their titles would show. The inevitable commonplaces are reduced to their smallest dimensions in the books of Lebrecht and 'Hans Ferdy,' and these volumes have really furnished fresh contributions to the discussion.

However threadbare the theory of the subject, says Lebrecht, its direct and present practical bearings on social interests have not been enough considered. He goes over the old ground, discussing the validity of the 'biological tendency demonstrated by Malthus,' and acknowledging the truth of it, not allowing that Malthus has been in any true sense refuted (ch. i.). Though he has good knowledge of the early literature and points out at least one 'anticipator' (Rev. Mr. Mann of York) who had escaped even Roscher's notice, he professes to deal chiefly with modern writers. His enumeration of them is very useful, and his comments are very apposite.

It is, as he remarks, no longer possible to divide the views about population simply into Malthusian and Anti-Malthusian; nobody now really ignores the law of population (p. 31). The Socialists are rapidly coming to terms with it (ch. ii.). The Sociologists are not wholly on the side of Malthus. Physiologically Malthus was in error when he recommended late marriages; they would bring about the degradation of the race (p. 89). But Spencer and other Sociologists are wrong in imagining that the greater development of brain will bring an automatic

cure of excessive multiplication. First, as Mohl says, only a few philosophers have leisure to develop their brains (p. 93, compare Smissen p. 41, and note). Second, in the United States there is great mental activity but great multiplication, just as there is great *labour* here among our industrial classes without prejudice thereunto. Third, the ideal end of all our progress is surely not a *harder* struggle of the faculties than now, and yet if it means a *harder mental* struggle (including anxiety) men will not be the happier (94). Finally, if the blessed result can be obtained in the future by an automatic means, why not obtain it in the present by deliberate means? The French seem to be making the attempt (ch. iii.). Even under the Second Empire there were laments over slow increase (uttered by Lavergne, the elder Bertillon, &c.). But since 1871 there have been more of them and louder.

Lebrecht's own opinion on this burning question of French population is that in the future, when great European leagues have brought to an end the system of great armies (p. 121), it will be clearly recognized that quality is more important than quantity. Even now, he considers, France is the stronger for her slow increase; she has a lower infant mortality and a greater proportion of adults than other nations (102, 122, 123). No doubt her people are led by avarice to go too far in the direction concerned (128). But practically 'Malthusism' (moral restraint and late marriages) is too hard for human nature, and the other kinds of prudential checks ('Malthusianism' including Neo-Malthusianism) present fewer practical difficulties. The temptations of extreme poverty are a worse real evil than the supposed one which Malthus would avoid (137). Lebrecht admits that Malthus has been more cautious than his followers in judging the conduct of men in this matter (139).

The last part of the subject is the main, if not the only, theme of Hans Ferdy's book. Lebrecht quotes Diderot: '*Aie toujours à l'esprit que la nature n'est pas une machine.*' Nay, say in effect Hans Ferdy and the other Neo-Malthusians, it *is* a machine, and one that we can drive. The pseudonymous writer, however, is free from a great many of the faults of the school to which he belongs. He is temperate and honest in argument, and careful to be an accurate historian. He takes pain to be at peace with religion and ethical theory as well as with the ordinary proprieties (chapter i.) It is only when dealing with his own country that he betrays, perhaps, a little passion. He is candid enough to show the falsity of two stories circulated by his own friends, the first that Malthus retracted, or at least did not repeat the hard things he had said about Neo-Malthusian teachings; the second that Robert Owen, after a conversation with Francis Place, introduced Neo-Malthusianism into New Lanark. The former is refuted by a reference to the editions, and the latter by a reference to dates (pp. 57-63). Of Professor Nitti and Van der Smissen we hope to say more on a future occasion.

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