

REVIEWS

Social Evolution and Political Theory. By LEONARD T. HOBHOUSE, Professor of Sociology in the University of London. The Columbia University Press, 1911. Pp. 218. \$1.50.

In fundamental conception of the scope and method of sociology, Professor Hobhouse has more in common with the American school than any other English writer. The present volume contains the substance of eight lectures (expanded into nine chapters) given during April, 1911, on the Beer Foundation under the faculty of political science of Columbia University. It detracts nothing from the writer's originality to say that the main line of thought running through the book is substantially an independent version of the leading thesis in Ward's *Dynamic Sociology*, viz.: the possibility of "artificial progress." On the other hand, Professor Hobhouse's discussion helps the reader to realize how much contested ground has been occupied by the sociologists since 1883, and how much, in place and direction, the fighting front has meanwhile shifted.

The most intimate revelation of the book is not contained in it, but it may be derived by comparing its mode of treatment with the general plan which nineteen out of twenty American sociologists would probably have adopted in handling the same subject. That salient feature is the contrast between English and American sociological thought in the degree and manner in which attention has been occupied by reckoning with evolutionary theory. American sociology seems to have felt no serious need of going behind Ward's vindication of evolution as a secure basis for sociology. English sociology seems still embarrassed by lingering doubt as to whether evolution and sociology are compatible. One of the reasons for this difference is connected with the fact that the terms *sociologist* and *eugenist* are interchangeable in England to an extent not at all the case in the United States. Discussions of eugenics in England appears to have been, among other things, partly cause and partly effect of persistence of the impression that evolution is exclusively a matter of physical causation; that psychical and moral factors have no evolution of their own; and consequently that no modification of the predestination of physical tendencies through the collaboration of psychical and social factors is possible. It may be a prematurity and

it may be that Americans must retrace their steps and develop their conception from the rudiments, or it may be a mutation which omitted or abbreviated an intermediate stage. At all events, from the present American point of view the question whether evolution makes purposeful social progress unthinkable is *res judicata*. It would hardly have occurred to an American, therefore, to distribute the emphasis as Professor Hobhouse felt to be expedient. Much of the ground-laying argument might have been assumed without danger that many Americans would have challenged the assumption. It is unnecessary, even if it were possible, to decide whether the American or the English standpoint is the more commanding. It is certainly stimulating to view familiar things from the outlook of this book, and to learn things not familiar which are incidental to this particular argument. The case for and against eugenics, for example, has never been weighed more judicially than in the chapter (iii) "The Value and Limitations of Eugenics."

In the closing paragraph of the book Professor Hobhouse epitomizes the argument of the course in these words:

The conclusion to which I have sought to lead you . . . is simply this: that the conception of social progress as a deliberate movement toward the reorganization of society in accordance with ethical ideas is not restricted by any contradiction. It is free from any internal disharmony. Its possibility rests on the facts of evolution, of the higher tendencies of which it is indeed the outcome. It embodies a rational philosophy, it gives scope and meaning to the best impulses of human nature, and a new hope to the suffering among mankind.

Reflection on this book has given me a more credible explanation than I have ever found before of the reason why sociology has flourished in the United States and languished in England. Not only am I unable to name an American sociologist who has any doubt about the conclusion thus formulated, but I am unable to imagine how anyone capable of deriving conclusions from premises could have a sufficient motive for becoming a sociologist if he had not first satisfied his mind about this preliminary. Professor Hobhouse's argument as a whole, when considered as addressed to the sociological students of this country, affects me as analogous with a possible address by a German professor of political science to students of that subject in this country for the purpose of vindicating the thesis that self-government is a rationally defensible political experiment.

Professor Hobhouse is in his own right in the front rank of the sociologists of the world. To state bluntly the reaction which I fancy will be general among American sociologists, he is a Gulliver exhibiting to us

the ways in which he has been forced to deal with a sociological Lilliputia. There is no question among American sociologists about his resources for leadership in a more advanced constituency.

Accordingly the present volume will be valuable among us, not chiefly for the reason that was uppermost in the author's mind but because of contents which were incidental. The book will furnish a considerable list of references which clarify some of the most important sociological concepts. "Progress," "co-operation," "social harmony," "social mind," "social morphology," "social evolution," "social control," "social order," "tradition," are some of the categories which it makes either more vivid or more precise. I have recently been discussing with my colleague, Dr. Woodhead, the necessity of making more of the category "social bonds"; and this book shows that Professor Hobhouse has anticipated me with that suggestion.

In spite of the reservation expressed, the book has given me a welcome sensation. It will have a place at my elbow with our growing literature of sociological insight. Every teacher of sociology ought to get acquainted with it for his own benefit as well as for the sake of his students.

ALBION W. SMALL

L'Italie contemporaine. Enquêtes sociales. By HENRI JOLY, membre de l'Institut. Paris: Bloud et Cie, 1911. Pp. vii+314. Fr. 3.50.

While this book is not an exhaustive inquiry into Italian conditions conducted with the aid of complete statistical data and an elaborate bibliography, it must be pronounced a sane and intelligent contribution which derives its chief merit—and a considerable personal charm into the bargain—from its being written, as it were, put of doors, face to face with the agricultural phenomena it describes. For, in spite of the title which suggests a wider scope, the volume deals exclusively with the Italian soil and the owners and cultivators thereof. And seeing that the author may reasonably claim that the bulk of the population as well as of the material resources of the peninsula falls within the circle of his investigation, no one will quarrel with the limits he has imposed upon himself further than to venture the opinion that he might have frankly indicated those limits on the title-page. The presentation hints throughout a fresh, keenly inquiring personality which never fails to recognize the immense complexity of even the simplest phenomena on a historical soil like that of Italy, and is happily moved to avoid dogmatism and infallibility. The various conditions, theories, and parties that are com-