

ence of a large number of criminals, paupers and impotent members.

Two or three slightly sarcastic allusions by Mr. Stubbs to "orthodox" political economy suggest an inquiry. Considering the movement in economic thought at the present time, and the recognition by leading writers that altruistic motives may in the long run be as truly economic as those of self-interest, and that many phases of industrial relations show attempts at conscious practical application of altruistic principles—in view of such facts, is it not time to grant that this newer thought has become so well established that it may itself be called "orthodox?"

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THE EIGHT-HOURS DAY, by SIDNEY WEBB, LL.B., and HAROLD COX, B.A., Pp. viii, 280. London: Walter Scott; New York, A. Lovell & Co.

THE perusal of this little work suggests the conclusion that joint authorship, unless subjected to the vigorous revision of a dominant editorial control, is seldom appropriate to a continuous argument. The subject of this treatise is one of the most important in the entire domain of applied economics, and its treatment, to inspire respect with the contending advocates of apparently clashing interests should be logically sustained and dispassionately stated. The volume before us is distinctly polemical. It is devoted to the advocacy of a compulsory eight-hours day for all industrial employments except domestic service and agriculture; and it aims to further its cause by a careful review of the attainable historical evidence and a temperate discussion of the leading arguments urged by opponents as well as by partisans of the movement.

This creditable scheme is very unevenly accomplished. The writer of the argument comprised in chapters IV to IX inclusive has succeeded admirably in reviewing dispassionately the probable results of a reduction to eight hours of the normal working day.

Throughout this discussion a logical and scientific method is consistently adhered to, a dispassionate tone is adopted, and the utmost adverse criticism that may be urged is that the practical difficulties of the proposed change are somewhat slightly treated, while the advantages are amplified in great detail.

But after so candid a review of the controversial part of the discussion it is disappointing to observe a tone of extreme partisanship in the purely historical portions of the work. Adverse parliamentary reports are characterised as disingenuous, attention is called to flaws in such evidence as does not confirm the authors' views, while equally obvious flaws in confirmatory testimony are passed over in silence ; legislative bodies which have not responded to the demands of the agitators are innuendoed ; "political economists" are referred to with contempt, and Mr. Herbert Spencer is assumed to "blaspheme" at the theories which the author evidently imagines he is quite bold in so vigorously upholding. When it is stated that the Chicago riots of 1886 were "savagely" repressed by the police and when men who work during strikes are characterized as "blacklegs," it is, we submit, time to call attention to the fact that extravagance and partiality are not the weapons with which doubters are convinced, and that in the present instance they do much to create distrust of the array of facts which they interperse.

The authors have added a copious appendix of facts and statistics relating to the discussion, and have supplied an excellent index whereby the labor of reference is greatly abridged.

The possibility of a shorter working day, which masters as well as men equally desire, depends, in modern competitive production, upon the comparative efficiency of its instruments.

In continental Europe, where as yet the productivity of each producing agent is comparatively small, long hours and small pay are the result. Shorter hours would imply the restriction of home production to home demand ; and, by loss of the export market, a diversion of both capital and labor into new channels. Such diversion is always accomplished with great distress to all classes of the community ; and it is a question

whether this distress would not so far outweigh the advantages of greater leisure to the working classes that an attempt at shorter hours under such conditions would effectually postpone them for an indefinite period.

Where individual productivity is great and labor cost small, the opportunity for the reduction of hours is apparent ; but in this process none but moderate measures will accomplish the desired object without disturbing the delicate conditions of production. The Massachusetts manufacturers were this year ready to concede a working week of fifty-eight hours ; the agitators demanded fifty-four, and as a result the mill wheels still turn sixty hours, and the reform is postponed. That it will come eventually cannot be doubted , but any progress which is so radical as to seriously disturb the condition of modern competition can only be disastrous to those whom it directly affects, as well as to the community at large

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