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have unrestricted control over output, and that, because that condition holds in America, while wages are higher the output per head is greater than in England. This seems to be due to the greater steadiness of the American workman, his better education, the abundance of work to be had in the States, and above all, to the higher organising capacity of American managers. Mr. Jeans is evidently sanguine about what could be done with the average British workman if he were differently handled, if he had opportunities open to him as they are to his American fellow, and if his employers were less "stand-offish."

H. MACROSTY

*The Theory of Prosperity.* By SIMON N. PATTEN, Ph.D., Professor of Political Economy in the University of Pennsylvania. (London: Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Pp. 237. 1902.)

IF one were to seek for a brief characterisation of Professor Patten's latest work, one would be inclined, though with diffidence, to speak of it as suggestive and daring rather than profound. Much of it consists of a restatement of views which the Professor has already published elsewhere. Here, as in his earlier works, is to be noticed that fondness for wide and even fantastic generalisation which—witness the popularity of Mr. Benjamin Kidd—appeals so strongly to the philosophers of the drawing-room. But Professor Patten lacks the persuasive literary style of the author of *Social Evolution*. His book is not an easy or attractive one to read, and it gains nothing in this respect from the peculiar diagrams in which it abounds. Some of these, as for example that on p. 182, seem to serve no useful purpose whatever, while many of those in the earlier part of the book are calculated, as will be argued later, seriously to mislead the unwary reader. Nevertheless, as has been said, the book is suggestive, and it certainly does good service by the stress which it lays, especially in the first chapter of Part II, upon the biological character of economic science.

Indeed a great deal of this second part, though marred by an irritating terminology (as for example in the antithetical use of the terms "impulse" and "desire," and the adoption of Mr. Kidd's absurd identification of the "rational" and of the "self-seeking"), is exceedingly ingenious and interesting. In it the author lays great stress upon the constant interaction between the character of man and the nature of his environment. The environment does much to mould the men of one generation, but, if we take a wide enough view, we see that it is itself to a large extent the product of generations that have gone before. We are fixed in the "dance of circumstance," it is true, but of "*plastic* circumstance." In the condition in which we are at any time we need certain things and we set ourselves to procure them. With practice this work becomes easier; we adapt ourselves to it, and, very likely, mechanical contrivances suggest themselves to us which

greatly diminish the amount of labour required for a given output of commodity. This leads, according to Professor Patten, to two results. In the first place the "energy" which we expend in procuring the goods in question yields a greater quantity of them, and therefore of "utility", and therefore of future energy. At the same time a diminished expenditure of this energy is necessary to keep us supplied with the required quantity of the particular commodity, and consequently there is a surplus available for other purposes. This surplus goes out in the adumbration and pursuit of "ideals" of various kinds. The character of these is at first quite erratic, but they are gradually moulded in a certain direction by the elimination of those groups in which they do not appear in a form tending to race preservation. The form of the ideal which is to be found among dominant races is therefore not egoistic, but altruistic, for, under an industrial no less than under a military régime, the groups whose citizens, and the families whose members, love their neighbours, alone can survive. Otherwise, when wealth increases, the rich, looking only to their own interests, become dissipated, while the poor of the race remain underfed. On both sides, therefore, the selfish group undergoes physical degeneration, while the unselfish becomes stronger. In them, the rich when they feed the poor are thereby preserved from feeding themselves too much, and the provision of public libraries and so forth shows itself "twice blessed; it blesses him that gives and him that takes."

Unselfishness therefore being a strengthening, and selfishness a weakening element in national life, peoples in whom the former is developed will naturally come to assume the foremost rôle in the world. Therefore we find among the leisured classes of civilised countries an ever-growing interest in and care for the well-being of their poorer neighbours and an increasingly important place allotted to projects for enhancing their comfort, leisure, and recreation. Thus it was, Professor Patten might have added in illustration, that the aspirations of the French peasantry in 1789 found an echo among large sections of the nobility, and received from them a thoroughly unselfish support on the night of August 4th; and thus too, that Englishmen, of nearly all shades of opinion are content now-a-days to assent to the many-meaning phrase "We are all socialists now." The Professor contents himself, however, with pointing to such altruistic ideals as have, among the leading nations, been crystallised into acknowledged economic rights, the right to live, the right to education, the right to sanitary workrooms and so forth.

Though, however, the direction in which the ideal has hitherto necessarily progressed, can be described in these terms, it must not be supposed that Dr. Patten imagines it to have now come to a final resting-place. On the contrary, the "better-than-self" is always above us, pressing upwards faster than we can follow. "Each new equilibrium creates an excess of energy, and each excess forces a new equilibrium. The economic and social thus react on each other and impel men

toward a goal that is moved farther away by every effort to reach it" (p. 237).

Though, however, we never attain, we yet continually pursue our ideal, and are always forcing our "environment" towards conformity with it. Thus this environment is changing equally with our ideal, and it is therefore to a changing world that we are always striving to adapt our productive powers. The conditions, in fact, are not static, but dynamic. Were they static, production, through the routine practice of individuals and the elimination of less adaptable races, would ultimately become a wholly pleasurable process. The reason that this consummation is not attained is that men's characters and aptitudes or, in other words, their psychic conditions, change more slowly than the physical conditions with which they are surrounded. When, as in China, the environment remains constant for a long time, adaptation to it can become very complete and contentment consequently reigns. When, on the other hand, to take an illustration from nearer home, our environment is modified suddenly into the 'Black Country', our artistic temperament has not time to become adapted to the change, and a spirit of restlessness and extreme disgust results. For past environments have given us our temperaments. The irregular hand-to-mouth existence of savages is responsible, says Professor Patten, for the still prevalent gambling spirit, and who knows but that some future writer, following upon the same lines, may put down our English love of home to the inherited effects of ancestral serfdom? The slowly formed alters slowly; man lags behind his conditions; and the dream of productive processes that shall be wholly pleasurable never hardens into fact.

So much for Part II. Our description should have shown that, though not altogether novel, it contains a good deal that is suggestive; but it should also have shown ground for our original complaint that it fails to go to the bottom of things. For the vague use of terms like "energy" and "environment," are seen to serve as a cloak for difficulties that deserve a full discussion.

Turning to Part I, we must reiterate with increased force this objection to the use of insufficiently explained phrases. Take, for instance, this central doctrine (p. 42), "Goods become utilities, utilities are transformed into energy, which, as work, creates new goods"; and again, on p. 36, "The fund of energy that a man can exert should be as great as the fund of utility enjoyed in consumption." If we understand Professor Patten rightly this that "should be" will, as a matter of fact, also tend to be, because those people who direct their consumption towards "utilities" that do not convert into an equivalent of energy become dissipated and die out. But apart altogether from the unwarrantable identification of the "life conserving" with the "pleasurable," which is here implied, and which Sidgwick's criticisms of Mr. Spencer's *Data of Ethics* should have made impossible, surely this measuring of "utility" and "energy" against one another is a proceeding that, if taken seriously, cannot be defended. There are, indeed, some grounds for

supposing that Professor Patten means no more than that we ought not to eat things that will make us weak and ill. This is a laudable homiletic no doubt, but why veil it in the ponderous language of physical science? Again, there is a strange perversity about his insistence—apparently inconsistently with this conservation theory—that if work be carried to the point at which pain, as distinguished from sacrifice of opportunities for pleasure, begins, the total utility and therefore the energy resulting therefrom is cumulatively diminished. This conclusion is really contradicted by his own diagram on page 33, from which it is quite plain that work carried beyond this point might yield an addition of pain smaller than the extra pleasure resulting from the goods that it would make. It may, indeed, be answered that an equivalent pleasure cannot counteract the harmful influence of pain upon energy, but then, what becomes of the Professor's neatly rounded physical analogy? Besides, though we all know that overwork lowers a man's efficiency in the long run, surely we have no right to say *a priori*, and there is no evidence entitling us to say *a posteriori*, that overwork in this sense begins at the exact point at which sacrifice passes into pain.

There is much more in this first part that appears to us unfortunate, so much indeed that detailed criticism within the limits of a review is quite out of the question. The method of total utility diagrams, which is profusely employed, cannot but suggest to the careless that those difficulties connected with consumers' rent, which Professor Marshall faces with such courage, can be got over by the simple expedient of ignoring them. In certain other respects complications which can be avoided by considering groups of men seem to be unduly emphasized by concentrating attention, as Professor Patten does, upon the conditions of individual consumption (*e.g.*, p. 101). Again, the discussion of the "price-determining unit of supply" from page 113 onwards, though involving an element of truth, seems to ignore the fact that the production of every commodity, unless monopolized, tends to be carried up to the point at which the marginal supply price and the selling price coincide, and the diagram on page 115 serves to emphasize this error of omission. The theory of wages at the end of the first chapter also appears to be one-sided and to be illustrated by an unfortunate diagram.

Criticism, however, is a thankless task and therefore we are pleased to be able to call attention in conclusion to the very acute remarks upon disutility and its relation to pain in the chapter on 'Work and Pay.' Professor Patten has indeed himself published the gist of them before, and they are not therefore new. Neither can it be said that the difficulty dealt with has been ignored in England, for Professor Marshall, in a single sentence, weighs it accurately ("Principles," p. 217). Nevertheless economists will not turn in vain to these pages of *The Theory of Prosperity*, but will find there, as in the last part of the book, the expression of views which—for we cannot close with any other phrase—abound in suggestion.

A. C. PIGOU