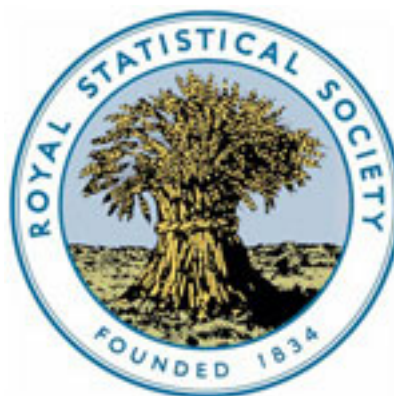


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The Homeworker and Her Outlook: A Descriptive Study of Tailoresses and Boxmakers by V. de Vesselitsky; R. H. Tawney

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will have to pay for that, and justice to land seems to mean injustice to men. Then where are the historical facts from which Dr. Cunningham deduces the doctrine that "conscious co-operation" between the governments of different countries "will be more stable" and lasting than the haphazard intercourse, with its incidents of "glutted markets and occasional interruptions, which arise when international commerce is left entirely to be conducted by private capitalists"? In these days we sigh for the glutted markets of the past as the Israelites did for the fleshpots of Egypt. We would gladly forgive the private capitalists if they brought them back, and the "occasional interruptions" of ordinary commerce seem not very alarming beside those which have been produced by the efforts of Germany, who "is not perhaps to be blamed if she has pursued German interests and consciously exploited other countries for her own advantage" (p. 130). Was there ever wilder "pure theory" more contrary to all experience than this doctrine that conscious co-operation between states will be steadier than individual commerce?

In the final paragraph of the book the Archdeacon of Ely says it is only in religion that we find the condition which is most favourable to the creation of a federation of the world. We may hope, however, that the rising generation of economic historians, freed from the obsessions derived from successful Germany in the post-1870 period, may be able to assist by the adoption of less particularist views than those which have characterized their predecessors.

E.C.

6.—*The Homemaker and Her Outlook: A Descriptive Study of Tailoresses and Boxmakers.* By V. de Vesselitsky. With an Introduction by R. H. Tawney. viii + 118 pp., 8vo. London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1916. Price 2s. net.

The inquiry on which this report is based began in May, 1913, and lasted until the autumn of 1914. During this time 877 tailoresses and 330 boxmakers were visited, many of them more than once. The tailoresses were living principally in the borough of Stepney, the boxmakers in Bethnal Green, Hackney and parts of the adjoining districts. A "credible guess" estimates the number of home workers in the tailoring industry as between 15,000 and 22,000, while in the boxmaking industry "they number approximately 2,000, that is roughly in the one case 11 to 16 per cent.; in the other 7 per cent. of the total number of women workers in the two trades." It should be added that the output per head of these home workers is considerably smaller than the output per head in the factory and workshops.

In the tailoring trade the home workers are to be found mainly in the south, south-east and south-west of England, while the boxmaker is rarely to be found working at home except in London and Birmingham. "Home work tends to spring up in those districts where the bad conditions of male labour make it almost indis-

"pensable for the wife to supplement the husband's earnings." Out of a group of 330 boxmakers, 258 were married and 53 were widows, while out of 877 tailoresses, 610 were married and 171 widows. Out of 353 married tailoresses who were visited 150 were "pocket-money" earners, 121 had to supplement the husband's and children's earnings, 82 were the chief breadwinners for their households. Of the first named, 76, or 50 per cent., managed to secure well-paid work and another 30 per cent. obtained fairly good prices; but of those who had to support their families by their earnings only a fourth obtained good pay, while no less than one-half had to accept the least remunerative work.

Miss de Vesselitsky describes the different classes of work, and then examines her evidence to discover the effect of the Trade Board regulations on rates of payment. Out of 554 tailoresses 134 had had their piece rates raised, 414 reported no change, and 6 reported a lowering of piece rates. "About a quarter of our tailoresses and considerably more than half of our boxmakers have had their piece rates raised in consequence of the Trade Boards Act."

A different question is whether even with higher piece rates the home workers are able to earn the minimum rate fixed for the "ordinary" worker. A table is given on p. 44 distinguishing between home workers under and over 45 years of age, the able bodied and the delicate or infirm, and the trained and untrained. "It will be seen that 54.4 per cent. of the tailoresses and 42 per cent of the boxmakers are unable to earn the minimum rate fixed by their respective Trade Boards." Miss de Vesselitsky emphasizes the fact that of the able-bodied and trained workers under 45, "who must presumably be held to be at least equal to 'ordinary' workers 25 out of 121 in the case of the tailoresses and 43 out of 151 in the case of the boxmakers are not earning the minimum." But it is a defect in an otherwise excellent study that no account is taken of the extent to which work is hindered by the attention required by young children.

"While workers have, of course, been busy travelling from one employer to another, and employers in their attempt to get rid of the slowest workers have been busy in exchanging their employees, we nevertheless found very little—if any—permanent loss of employment. The most careful inquiry was not able to reveal more than 10 tailoresses (out of about 600) whose cessation of work could be ascribed with certainty to the Trade Boards Act" (p. 55).

"On the whole, homes in which women work compare rather favourably with those in which they remain inactive, and naturally are a great improvement upon those which the mothers are forced to desert for the advantages of the factory. . . . The fact that home work deprives the children of too much of their mother's care is hardly an argument for depriving them of it altogether" (p. 63).

One chapter is devoted to the home worker's point of view on "this 'ere menial wage," and the rest of the book to the consideration of difficulties of administration and suggestions for its improvement and for the amendment of the Trade Boards Act.

Finally "both boxmakers and tailoresses were agreed that a sincere desire to benefit the condition of home workers, and to free them from the incessant fear in which they live would find expression in an attempt to regularize the employment of men whose uncertain earnings are at the root both of their necessity to work, and of the low rates of payment obtained for that work" (p. 111). C.E.C.

7.—*The Empire and the Future*. A series of Imperial Studies delivered in the University of London, King's College. 110 pp. 1916.

The Problem of the Commonwealth. By L. Curtis. 248 pp. 1916.

World Commerce in its Relation to the British Empire. By Norman R. Byers. 104 pp. 1916.

The first of the essays in the volume entitled *The Empire and the Future* is a short one by Professor Sadler on "The Universities and the War," and its most striking portion is a plea for freedom in thought and teaching. It is followed by "The Empire and Democracy," by Sir Charles Lucas, consisting largely of a discussion of the applicability of the dictum of Thucydides: I have remarked again and again that a democracy cannot manage an Empire. Sir Charles Lucas first considers the British Empire and points out its political diversity, the form of government varying with the varying conditions of the colonies and the dependencies, and sees practical wisdom in the lack of a uniform system. He then considers modern democracy, "as represented by the rise of the Labour Party," and obviously fears that if and when the "workers" gain power they will fail to manage the Empire because of a want of mutual trust, discipline, and political vision. Much the same problem is dealt with by Mr. A. L. Smith in his essay on "People and the Duties of Empire," but the people are seen with greater sympathy, and although the dangers of democracy are noted, yet corresponding advantages and opportunities are pointed out; moreover, the future political education of the workers and their leaders is taken into account and proposals are made for an interchange of working class students between the Home Country and the Dominions, so that this essay ends on a note of hope and good courage. Dr. H. A. L. Fisher writes on "Imperial Administration," discussing the Civil Services of the Dominions and particularly of India; in regard to this latter there is a very enlightened and enlightening study resulting from Dr. Fisher's investigations in connection with the Royal Commission whose report has just been published. Mr. P. H. Kerr, the editor of *The Round Table*, writes on "Commonwealth and Empire" in an essay which deserves very wide circulation, for it puts a sane Imperialism before the reader in a way which