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Review

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whether, if so, the redistribution is likely, either for a time or permanently, to cause an important diminution in the supply of fresh capital. He quotes Mr. W. H. Mallock to show that a levy on capital which caused greater equality of wealth would be likely to diminish savings. But surely the essence of a capital levy is not the redistribution of the total of net incomes but the liquidation of debts on which individuals pay interest (collected by the tax-gatherer) to themselves and each other. Any little difference which a capital levy might incidentally make would, we may safely say, be a trifle compared to the redistribution which has already been made by the new taxation and which would be simply maintained by the levy. It is no doubt extremely tiresome to have to remember that £500 a year nowadays means about £450, while £1000 a year means about £800, and £20,000 a year means little over £10,000 after income-tax and super-tax have been taken out and before any provision for death-duties is thought of. But we find it necessary to have the smaller figures before us in real life, and we shall have to treat them and not the gross figures as more nearly indicating the distribution of economic goods.

EDWIN CANNAN

The Economic Development of France and Germany. By J. H. CLAPHAM, LITT.D., Fellow of King's College. (Cambridge: University Press. 1921. Pp. xii + 420.)

MANY economic books fall into one of two classes: there are books which determine the future scope of academic instruction, and there are books which are themselves called into existence by academic requirements. With the growth of economic departments and commercial faculties in modern English and American universities—to say nothing of other countries—this second class is bound to increase. Subjects are put into programmes of instruction or made examination requirements because they are deemed desirable for the purpose, even though there are no available textbooks. The material may be scattered over a multiplicity of books, reports and journals, difficult of access to the undergraduate student and many of them in foreign languages. If the right sort of man is appointed to teach the subject, he selects and combines and generalises in preparing his lectures. The outlines of a textbook are sketched in; and finally the teacher earns the thanks of generations of students and

furnishes a basis for further scientific advance by issuing his collection as a book.

Such is the genesis of Dr. Clapham's treatise. It is the outcome, evidently, of the part assigned to nineteenth-century economic history, as to "realistic" studies generally, in the Cambridge Economics Tripos. For some years, he tells us, he has "lectured at Cambridge over the ground covered by this book"; and he "was urged by friends to put his material into book form, for the use of the growing body of those at Cambridge and elsewhere who now study European economic history, and are handicapped by the lack of books in English, and of comprehensive books in any language."

Cambridge "and elsewhere" ought to be very grateful to him. The work is most competently performed: it is based on wide reading; the author is impartial and judicious. There was once an Oxford bursar so sage and moderate that his contemporaries knew him as *ὁ φρόνιμος*: to no one among economic writers is the epithet more appropriate than to Dr. Clapham. It was a heavy and cumbrous task which he undertook: to put together in only four hundred, not too closely printed, pages all the really big facts about all the sides of the economic development of France and Germany for a hundred years—with some necessary incursions into Belgium and Holland and Denmark. Such a book was bound to be "facy." Dr. Clapham has a pleasing gift of illuminating phrase, when he gives himself time and space to "let himself go"; as, for instance, when he says that all through de Lavergne's book on the Rural Economy of France "the whistle of the locomotive can be heard" (p. 158). If such touches are rare, and if the book occasionally reminds us of the style of the Handwörterbuch articles he has found of so much service, that is partly due to the fact that this is the first attempt in English to cover so vast a field. The book is to be read bit by bit, side by side with lectures; or consulted by the general reader for particular topics or periods. I do not suppose the author ever imagined that any one but a reviewer would try to read it through in a few days!

The modest duty of a reviewer in a case like this is first to make it quite clear that here is an indispensable textbook; and then to offer some suggestions towards the improvement of the inevitable later editions. Some of the suggestions in this case are called forth by one feature in the plan of the book. "Footnotes have been reduced to a minimum." I am inclined to think the parsimony of footnotes has gone a little too far. In future

editions the Cambridge Press will not want to have the pages pulled about. But would it not be possible, for some dozen or so of the conclusions which Dr. Clapham knows to be controversial, to have a series of brief notes in an Appendix, indicating, in summary fashion, where the evidence is to be found?

The value of the study of economic history for the better type of student is the opportunity it can be made to afford him for the use of his own reasoning powers. If economic theory calls for mental exertion of one kind—the exertion of following a sequence of cause and effect, economic history calls for mental exertion of another kind—the weighing of evidence and the formation of quantitative or proportionate judgments. Doubtless it is the function of a lecturer, going over the same ground subsequently, to criticise what seem to him faulty conclusions. But even the ordinary student in a university is benefited by having doubts, and the ground for doubts, occasionally indicated to him. In most cases he will perhaps be inclined, if he looks up the evidence, to agree with Dr. Clapham; but it would be for him an instructive experience to learn, here and there, how the author has reached his conclusions.

Dr. Clapham, as I have before observed, is as a rule eminently careful and precise and fair-minded. But *aliquando bonus Homerus dormitat*; and there are, I think, occasional passages where literary phraseology will give an impression beyond what, in his quality of scientific historian, Dr. Clapham would probably care to assert.

For instance, in the account given of the resort by Germany to agricultural protection (pp. 211–214), and the reference to Bismarck, there is not one sentence that is not defensible. But is not the reader in danger of thinking Bismarck rather more of a selfish landowner than Dr. Clapham intends? Dr. Clapham might perhaps refresh his memory of what Mr. Dawson says (*Evolution of Modern Germany*, p. 239). And ought the reader not to be emphatically reminded that the Agrarian party rested quite as much on the substantial peasants of the south-west as on the large landowners of the north-east? “Whether the balance was fairly held as between the various rural classes is much more doubtful,” we are told, than the general effectiveness of the protective policy. True! but the ordinary reader will understand the sentence to imply Dr. Clapham’s opinion that it was *not* fairly held. Of course Dr. Clapham knows that no subject was more hotly debated in Germany than the effect of the corn laws on the peasants, and that there were high authorities among the

“agronomes” who thought the peasants had quite sufficient reason for supporting the Agrarian policy.

There is even more reason for a very mild protest when the literary phrases are not Dr. Clapham’s own, but are quoted. Thus what somebody “said in 1908”—that “the co-operative societies had done more for the small farmers than all the agrarian and protection laws together”—is actually quoted twice (pp. 221, 224). Now the force of the remark depends on the authority of the speaker. If Dr. Clapham would give us the reference we could judge of its weight: until he does so, he really fathers the opinion. And yet his own cautious estimate of the effect of co-operation certainly would not have suggested anything like so sweeping a judgment.

From another writer—in this case the reference is given, to a work which has created some stir of late—is quoted the saying that “the German Empire was built more truly on coal and iron than on blood and iron.” Our author says that the iron figures of the sixties and early seventies do “*something* to confirm” this pleasing literary collocation of words. The reader will take this to mean that they do *much* to confirm. But, of course, Bismarck’s famous phrase of 1862 cannot be got round like this. It was “blood and iron,” in Bismarck’s sense, which turned Austria out of the old Confederation and created the North German Confederation; “blood and iron” which hastened the adherence of southern Germany to the new Empire in 1871; blood and iron which gave Germany the iron ore of Lorraine. How far the Germany of 1914 was the creation of “force,” from the time when Prussia coerced its neighbours into the *Zollverein*; how far it was the creation of “natural resources”; and in what way “force” and “resources” were related—this is a problem which, if touched at all, deserves to be handled seriously.

But a few such passages are, after all, only spots on the sun. The book is a thoroughly satisfactory one, and a great boon to students in all English-speaking lands.

WM. ASHLEY

Napoleon’s Navigation System. By FRANK E. MELVIN, Ph.D.
(University of Pennsylvania: New York: Appleton. 1919.)

DR. MELVIN’S thesis deals with the clash of Napoleonic and British maritime laws and customs; and for it he has studied with good effect British and French archives relating to the