

This is, in every sense of the word, a thoroughly thought-out book, abounding in indications of the rare and accurate scholarship of its learned writer. It is to be heartily commended to teacher, student, and reader. It does for the intelligent appreciation of banking business what Professor Hadley's excellent work on Railroad Transportation has been doing for the better understanding of railway problems. The only regret on closing the book is that there is not more of it.

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THE ORIGIN OF PROPERTY IN LAND. By FUSTEL DE COULANGES.

Translated by MARGARET ASHLEY, with an introductory chapter on the English Manor by W. J. ASHLEY, M. A. Pp. 153. London : Swan, Sonnenschein & Co. 1891.

Prof. Ashley, in his introductory essay, weighs the merits of M. Fustel's views on primitive property in land, and then proceeds upon this hypothesis of non-communal ownership to explain the development of the earliest productive unit in England—the Manor. There is nothing new in the theory of the manor as here given. It is simply the theory which Seeböhm has worked out in the "English Village Community," and which Ashley himself has previously given in his "English Economic History." Fustel's skepticism has left its impress upon Ashley. This is clearly apparent in the doubts the latter raises in regard to the accepted theory of the Indian village community, and is also evinced in the determination Ashley expresses of not allowing the comparative method any considerable weight in determining the course of land-ownership in England. "We see," says he, "that there is no very adequate reason, either in German, Indian, Russian or any other supposed analogies, why we should not suffer ourselves to be guided in our judgment as to England by English evidence." This is hardly consistent with his implicit faith in Seeböhm's theory of the English Manor, where it is assumed without any express evidence and merely on the ground of analogy, that the prevalent

"three-field" system was imported by the Romans into Britain. Prof. Ashley was bound in consistency to be skeptical in regard to at least that portion of Seeböhm's theory.

The essay of Fustel de Coulanges, it is generally conceded, is a useful piece of destructive historical criticism. It attempts to refute all supposed proofs of early communism in land. That its positive views are extreme, and that national antipathy accounts for the vivisection of von Maurer and Lamprecht must also be granted. But when all is said, we must allow that von Maurer attempted to build too heavy and too detailed a structure on flimsy historical grounds. Viollet, who attempted to prove communal ownership among the Greeks, was a shallow sciolist. Even de Laveleye, in his comparative method of proving primitive communal ownership of land among all nations, was undoubtedly superficial. The early history of the Jews and the Babylonians as well as the comparatively modern origin of the Russian *mir* show that de Laveleye's induction was neither thorough nor wide enough in extent. However, when Fustel comes to Mommsen, he finds an antagonist of another calibre; and his strictures on Mommsen's theory of the communal agrarian system in Rome are by no means convincing.

The chief merit of the essay lies in its clearing away a cumbrous mass of unsubstantiated hypotheses, and in demonstrating that any kind of land tenure other than individual possession, must have prevailed in very much earlier times than was formerly supposed; and second, that the trace of any earlier system in existing legal codes is certainly very faint. The chief defects are, first, its failure to appreciate the fact that the development of systems of land-holding may not have been the same among different peoples. The evidence for communal tenure among the Romans is much clearer than among the Gauls. The second defect is its failure to recognize that rights of common usage, as found in mediæval *Rechtsquellen*, must originally have had some other source than the mere caprice or liking of the individual

owner of the estate. The general verdict must be that the essay is chiefly valuable as an incentive to more critical historical work in this line, and that it demonstrates that the nature of original land tenure is still largely an unsettled historical problem.

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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON OUT-DOOR ALMS OF THE TOWN OF HARTFORD, A. D. 1891. Published for the Town, pp. lxxi.; 27 Tables; 3 Appendices.

This pamphlet is an examination into the entire system of alms administration in a city, in which, according to the evidence given, the management of poor relief has been in nearly every respect the most wasteful, not only in the United States, but in the whole civilized world. It is this somewhat astonishing fact, coupled with the highly scientific character of the work itself, which gives to this pamphlet a unique value. The facts are in the main as follows:

In Hartford every sixteenth man is liable to be a recipient of municipal bounty. This ratio is higher than that of London or Paris, where only one in nineteen is a pauper, and is exceeded only by the cities of Stuttgart and Elberfeld and the country, Norway. The amount expended for general poor relief in 1885 was \$2.07 for each man, woman and child of the population, and for out-door relief 90 cents, as over against an average in Connecticut of \$1.22 and 61 cents; in Massachusetts of \$1.16 and 24 cents; in New York of 63 cents and 43 cents; in the Middle States of 38 cents and 4 cents; in the West and South of 62 cents and 17 cents. In 1890, Hartford, with a population of 53,230 inhabitants, was paying as a gross cost *per capita* for all relief, \$1.96; for out-door relief, 73 cents; with a net cost to the tax-payer of \$1.89. This outstrips the average, not only of American cities, but of Germany, Italy and the countries of Ireland and Scotland, and, though exceeded in one or two individual instances, holds first place when compared with the average of seven-