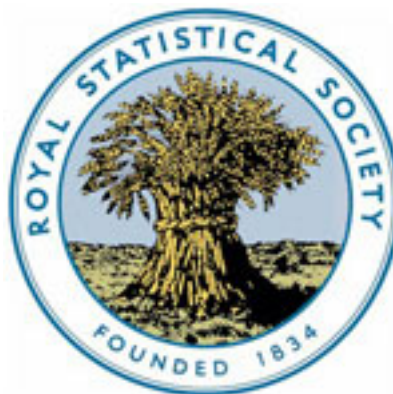


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Housing, 1907. by P. Alden; E. E. Hayward

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16.—*Housing*, 1907. By P. Alden and E. E. Hayward. Social Service Series. 2nd edition. 176 pp., 12mo. London: Headley, 1907. 1s. net.

Messrs. Alden and Hayward, in what they modestly call "an introduction to the study of the problem," have not attempted to cover a wide field of statistics or to produce large total results. Their method is to quote individual facts in illustration of their arguments, so that the statistical student will need sundry blue books—particularly the census returns—in order to carry the inquiry forward. The book is written from the practical point of view, and does not greatly concern itself with past legislation, but it contains a clear and succinct account of existing powers and a useful little summary of the recommendations of last year's Select Committee on the rural side of the question. Appreciating the cardinal point that the first difficulty is financial, it devotes attention to the standard of rent. Perhaps the most interesting chapter is that entitled "the Land Question and Taxation Reform," in which is shown the effect upon rents of the transfer of local taxation from land and buildings to land alone. The importance of this branch of the subject is becoming more and more widely recognised, and further space might with advantage have been given to its exposition. The dearth of houses has never been any serious difficulty. The root of the evil is, and has always been, the inability of the very poor to pay rents which shall yield a fair commercial return upon the accommodation they need in the interests of health and decency. Let this inability be removed and there will be an immediate competition among the house-builders to supply the demand thereby rendered effective. If, therefore, as its advocates contend, the rating of land values will tend to reduce house rent and increase the opportunities of employment, nothing could be more efficacious as a remedy. For it would thus, at one and the same time, increase the earnings and reduce the necessary expenditure of the poorer classes. In other words, it would increase the ability to pay rent, while reducing the standard by which rent is estimated.

Another useful section of the inquiry is that as to the comparative suitability of different types of buildings. Common lodging houses, family homes, block dwellings, tenement houses, cottage flats and single cottages are studied from all points of view, especially the financial. A strong opinion is expressed against block dwellings, and this fact may be taken as a good indication of the progress made in the course of the last twenty-five years. In 1880 "Peabody Buildings"—the typical block dwellings—were regarded as a wonderful advance upon the then existing conditions. Now we see them condemned (and on sanitary grounds mainly) by the advocates of healthy dwellings for the people.

The system of administration is also shown to have a material bearing upon the success or failure of housing schemes, the example of Miss Octavia Hill being warmly commended. The question of transit forms the subject of a separate chapter, as also does the garden city movement. In considering the province of private enterprise, it is to be regretted that neither Messrs. Alden and

Hayward nor Professor Dewsnup appear to have had access to the returns (published annually since 1900 by the London County Council) of the new working class accommodation provided in the County of London and the adjacent districts, showing the comparatively small part borne by public authorities, notwithstanding their recent activity, in the provision of house accommodation. E.J.H.

17.—*Le Surpeuplement et les Habitations à Bon Marché*, 1907. Par H. Turot et H. Bellamy. 258 pp., 8vo. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1907.

The chief interest of MM. Turot and Bellamy's work on overcrowding and cheap dwellings in France lies in the evidence it affords that, in this important branch of social reform, England is far ahead of her friend and neighbour south of the Channel. It appears that overcrowding in Paris was greater in 1901 than 1891, notwithstanding an improvement which has been in progress since 1896. The authors practically give up the idea of suburban dwellings for town workers on account of the cost of transit, and direct their energies mainly to advocating the removal of insanitary conditions, the abatement of overcrowding, and the provision of dwellings by public authorities. They give a lucid account of French legislation on the question, and add for comparison short statements of the legislation of England, Germany, Italy, and Belgium. Among the inducements offered to private enterprise by French authorities are the exemption of workmen's dwellings from certain items of taxation for a period of twelve years; and societies formed to provide such dwellings are given special additional concessions, including borrowing facilities on very reasonable terms. The results achieved are not, however, considered satisfactory. Recently the Municipal Council of Paris has appointed a Special Commission to deal with the matter, and Lord Rothschild has given 400,000*l.* for the building of dwellings. Parisian reformers, it may be noted, appear to share Messrs. Alden and Hayward's objections to block dwellings. The book contains valuable overcrowding statistics, compiled by M. Bertillon. E.J.H.

18.—*Le Socialisme Municipal en Angleterre et ses Resultats financiers*. Par Raymond Boverat, docteur en droit, diplômé del' Ecole des Sciences politiques, Avocat à la Cour d'Appel. 687 pp., 8vo. Paris: Arthur Rousseau, 1907.

Dr. Boverat adds to the qualifications set forth on his title page the hereditary interest that he is the grandson of the late M. Ernest Brelay, whose intimate acquaintance and genuine sympathy with English economic movements were well known. A work of 687 pages on a question of English finance is in itself a testimony to the indefatigable industry of the author. He opens his historical summary of municipal undertakings with a kind of apology for his title. He holds that the French expression "municipal socialism" and the English "municipal trading" mean the same thing, but are neither of them adequate to express the whole meaning; the one omitting to denote its industrial and commercial element, the other its social signification.