

To those interested in civic advance, a portion of the preface to this fourth edition of Mr. Robinson's standard work will be cheering. Writing of the great changes that have occurred in the twelve years since the first edition of his book was published, Mr. Robinson says:

On page after page it has been necessary to amplify data and to recast the statements relating to conditions so that an expression of hope or expectation might be changed into a chronicle of facts, that what were described as experiments might be transformed into a record of achieved successes, and that isolated instances should be shown as now significant of a trend or to have become already typical. although the book was written with much confidence in the awakening of a popular wish for city and town improvement, it was not realized that in a dozen years so much progress would have been made.

As already stated, Mr. Robinson's book is a standard of American practice in town and city improvement. It touches upon the site and the street plan as well as the elementary construction of cities, and as well deals with the familiar but too often unsolved problems of careless community life. It is especially strong in its references to the aesthetic relations of the city, and in its comparisons of American and European conditions.

Indeed, if one might venture to express a wish, it would be that Mr. Robinson in 1913 had seen and reported more of America and less of Europe in this presumed revision of his book. It is true that we may and need to draw many lessons of value from the great and old communities of England, France, Germany and Italy; but it is also true that there have been things done in civic betterment within the last dozen years in the United States which are without parallel abroad, and which might well have been mentioned or more particularly set forth in this book. Mr. Robinson has not noted certain facts, for instance, in the advance of street lighting, in state laws controlling shade trees, and in definite instances of improvement achievement, which are most valuable, encouraging and useful.

Nor does the term "revision" seem fully justified for this edition. For instance, the

spoliation of Niagara Falls for private power advantage is virtually commended as of 1901, though the title page reads 1913, and the casual reader might claim that Mr. Robinson approves of the scenic outrage now existing there! The National Municipal League, certainly a force in civic advance, has escaped mention, and only a footnote reference to an addenda saves the reference to two societies extinct for ten years from seeming active to-day. The trammels of old electrotype plates have evidently interfered with that completeness and timeliness which one expects of an authority so well informed as Mr. Robinson.

Yet, as a whole, this "revised" edition is a book indispensable to the student of or the worker in civic advance. It touches so many points so well and so clearly that it is sure to continue and to enlarge the effective usefulness that has always been its characteristic.

J. HORACE MCFARLAND.



MODERN CITY PLANNING AND MAINTENANCE. By Frank Koester. 329 pages royal octavo, with numerous engravings and diagrams. New York: McBride, Nast & Co. \$6.

The author, in his introduction, gives as his purpose "to present, in a concise and comprehensive form, the principles of the art of city planning as they have developed in modern times." This, he observes, "has not before been attempted," and he expresses the belief that "nowhere else is to be found the summarization of principles and practice as here presented."

That the reader may not be unconscious of the importance of this work, Mr. Koester says as well that "this volume treats of numerous important factors in city planning and maintenance not yet introduced in this country, but which have stood the test of time and of practice abroad, and which are certain to be adopted here sooner or later."

Among these "important factors" he mentions the zone system, "a new system communal industry to supplant the trusts," as well as new systems of street

illumination, of police and fire signalling, and of the use of waste exhaust steam. He promises also to tell of "new methods of raising municipal revenues and dividend payments to citizens instead of tax collections."

It will be admitted that this is "rather a large order," and that Mr. Koester's modesty is not the distinguishing character of his ambitious work. He has undoubtedly gathered in this one good-looking volume a great mass of city-planning and city-maintenance material, very largely from abroad, and quite frankly from the standpoint of German efficiency. Indeed, he asserts that modern city planning "is of purely German origin." He sees in London "the greatest spot of confusion today on the face of the globe," and in Washington "admittedly the most beautiful city in America." This latter accident, however, is because "L'Enfant, who planned Washington . . . enjoyed the double good fortune of having . . . support . . . and an unencumbered site upon which to build." Further on, he disapproves of the plan of Washington. He has either not known or has overlooked the fact that George Washington, and not Major L'Enfant, was really responsible for the plan of the federal city, and that it long antedated either the admired and somewhat imitative Haussmann revision of Paris or the first thought of orderly planning in any "modern" German city.

As a gathering of valuable data and pictures relating to city making and city maintenance, the book is both desirable and important. Its conclusions and somewhat naïve suggestions are less valuable, mostly because they are not at all from an American standpoint. In his twelve years of American residence Mr. Koester has not come to realize, seemingly, the vital difference in point of view, in character of domination, in units of citizenship which differentiate Germany and the United States. Neither he, nor any number of very properly admiring visitors to the orderly and clean cities of Europe, can make over the communities of the United States into similar appearance. It

is more the part of wisdom, it might be urged, to see and to consider all that is good anywhere in city making and keeping, and then to adapt and to originate according to our abilities, our opportunities and our needs, rather than to imitate slavishly.

In many of his rather didactic directions (the word "should" is somewhat overworked), Mr. Koester runs counter to thoughtful and successful American practice. For example, he commends among "trees which are useful for city purposes," presumably for street planting, "evergreen pines and cedar," which must be a joke! And he insists that in street lighting "the best results are obtained with arc lamps placed from thirty to sixty feet in height," telling us that "very few American streets would pass muster as to illumination in Germany," while he proceeds to say that "could a city be lit by a single lamp the result would be the most nearly ideal obtainable." This seems quite interesting, just as the very able electrical engineer of Washington, Mr. Allen, has succeeded in giving to that city superb and decorative illumination at low cost by doing exactly what Mr. Koester deprecates!

It seems evident that as a manual for American operating practice Mr. Koester's book would not be a safe guide, while as a comprehensive gathering of European city conditions and methods it is excellent and useful. The publisher has done his part well, for the book is sumptuous in appearance and in illustration.

The really great book on city planning and city working in America is not yet written.

J. HORACE MCFARLAND.

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THE AMAZING ARGENTINE. By John Foster Frazer. New York: Funk Wagnalls Co., 1914.

A portion of this book is taken up with personal observations on characteristics of the country and people which differ but little from the general impression already held by readers of other books on the subject. A portion of the work is