

free competition in the Labour Market, and maintains that the weight of evidence is overwhelmingly "against unfettered competition among wage-earners for employment" (pp. 5 and 6). But would it not be a more correct account of the result of Factory Legislation to say that it has fettered the competition among employers? It has, as Mrs. Webb says elsewhere, ruled out the "downward way" of competition and compelled employers to take the "upward way." But with few exceptions, such as the prohibition of women's work in the mines, it has never yet created a monopoly in the Labour Market by excluding any class of workers from offering their services. The Trade Unions have, of course, done this by rejecting those who cannot work up to a certain standard; and for the State to carry out this policy would be the introduction of class legislation of a kind more oppressive than we have yet seen in England.

HELEN BOSANQUET

1. *Democracy versus Socialism*. By MAX HIRSCH (Melbourne). (London: Macmillan & Co. 1901. Large 8vo, pp. ix., 481. 10s.)
2. *The Political Economy of Humanism*. By HENRY WOOD. (Boston: Lee and Shepard. 1901. Large 12mo, pp. vii, 319).

THE subject of Mr. Hirsch's volume falls into two sections—a criticism of socialism and an exposition of the "Single Tax doctrine," as an alternative and sufficient policy of social reform. It is doubtful, however, whether the argument of *Democracy versus Socialism* fulfils the purposes either of criticism or of construction. The author seems to regard socialism as the lion in the path of the Single Tax, just as Marx, with more reason perhaps, regarded the single tax as the last ditch of the capitalists. Mr. Hirsch has a somewhat simple and ready method of criticism: socialism must be logical and systematic, or it is nothing. Whatever, therefore, appears to be socialism, but is not of its essence, may be rejected; and the result is—socialism, not as it is spoke or imagined by socialists themselves, but as it is defined by Mr. Hirsch. Since the "Marxian" type of socialism best lends itself to this treatment, it is "Marxian" socialism, pure and unadulterated, that serves as the *corpus vile* for our author's strictures upon socialism generally. Socialism must be understood to be "Social Democracy," whatever unauthorized or opportunist programmes may suggest or even affirm to the contrary. This being assumed, it only remains to exhibit socialism as a perfect symmetry of all the conceptions, ethical, political, and economical, that our author thinks wrong. But the result, as might be expected, can hardly be effected without a certain amount of "contamination." Thus it has often been supposed that Social Democracy rested, to no slight degree, on certain ideas of "abstract right," or again, that, to a social democrat, State Socialism

was anathema. It is, therefore, somewhat surprising to receive the following as a "comprehensive definition" of socialism—

"Socialism is an empiric system of organisation of social life, based on certain ethical and economic conceptions. Its ethical conceptions consist, generally, of the denial of individual natural rights and the assertion of the omnipotence of the state; specially of the denial of the right of the individual to the possession of the products of his labour, and the assertion of the right of the State to the possession of the products of the labour of all individuals."

It is perhaps less surprising that it should be made a subject of complaint against Socialists that this definition "does not prevent them reasoning about natural rights as if no such denial had been given."

In justification of Mr. Hirsch's method it may fairly be urged that socialism must stand or fall by its authoritative exposition, and that it does not do to have one socialism for the chair and another for the street, as has sometimes been suggested. As against the policy of judicious vagueness, Mr. Hirsch's method certainly makes for clear, as well as honest, thinking. On the other hand, our author, as a practical politician, is scarcely justified in discounting the modifications to which not only socialism generally, but even Marxian socialism, has been subject in recent years. Socialism loses nothing of its integrity by being presented, not so much as a finished scheme or system of society, but as a principle or regulative idea of social reform. It is much more important to see whither that principle is likely to lead, than to construct pictures of the unbearable state of things that would ensue if socialism were to be introduced by a short and simple Act of Parliament. I do not wish to suggest that Mr. Hirsch's criticism is not good of its kind, or that it is not instructive, or that it may not be good reading for socialists: but it is a kind of which we have already too much. The ethical part of the argument fortunately does not concern the economist directly: it is of a character, perhaps, to send a shiver through a too delicate philosopher: but the doctrine of "Natural Rights" is in need of friends, and Mr. Hirsch is a good one. It is, moreover, a recognised basis of the Single Tax.

It is to this method of reform that the argument mounts: and it is defined as "the gradual appropriation of the rent of land and of natural monopolies, and the similarly gradual removal of all other taxation and charges for the use of equal, natural, and social opportunities." Readers of this *Journal* are sufficiently acquainted with the nature of this proposal, and with the kind of reasoning by which it is supported. Mr. Hirsch does not do much more than add to the original statement an examination of the principal objections that have been brought against the ethics and economics of the Single Tax; a whole chapter being devoted to Professor F. A. Walker's objections "and admissions." At the end the author sees signs of

grace even in socialism, inasmuch as the final argument, in favour of the Single Tax, is found (rather oddly) in its "confirmation by Socialists."

The principle of our author's social and economic philosophy is given in the following words—

"Equal rights and social opportunities, these the state can secure. Beyond this, not only can it do nothing, but every step beyond involves a curtailment of opportunities for the happiness of all and an infringement of the equal rights of some. This truth, so clear, so simple, so obvious, must guide all attempts at social reform."

With this conclusion many economists might in general terms agree: whether, however, they will be convinced by Mr. Hirsch of the "sufficiency" of the Single Tax method of reform, is open to grave doubt. It is to be wished that more space had been given to the working out of the economic results which our author anticipates from its adoption. The discussion certainly tends to be in the air, and the argument is for the most part too general—even for economic reasoning. Mr. Hirsch, however, is at home in the literature of the subject, and writes with the full force of conviction.

Mr. Wood's book is well intended, but it does not seem to possess any other distinctive merit. It aspires to be "usefully suggestive to the popular mind": but it is not easy to see to what useful results such propositions as—"Labour and Capital, when deeply defined, melt into each other," or that "Ideal political economy is the pure natural system unmarred by the clouded consciousness of its daily multiform infractions"—can guide the popular, or any other, mind. Like Mr. Hirsch, Mr. Wood also appeals to "Natural Law," but not for any purposes of reform: for "all human infelicity, whether physical, social, economic, moral, or spiritual, comes from a disregard or violation of the established order"—in other words, Natural Law. Apparently, however, it is not an easily discernible order: for "intellectual logic is inadequate to the delicate interpretation of natural law. . . . Intuition alone is able to put its ear to the ground and distinguish between discordant, and even faint, far, concordant vibrations." Under the circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that Mr. Hirsch's reading of Natural Law should differ in some important points from Mr. Wood's intuitions, and that what Mr. Hirsch discovers to be a dictate of Nature, Mr. Wood should regard as one of "the attempts—often well-meaning—to over-ride or disregard the established order." It is indeed to be feared that the mere existence of such a proposal as Land Nationalisation would be diagnosed by Mr. Wood as symptomatic of the "general moral delinquency" which is the source of all economic evil in an otherwise best of all possible economic worlds. It may be true that "Natural Law can be invariably relied upon," but the same can hardly be said of its human interpreters. Mr. Wood's book may be

edifying—we are not sure that it is—but it is certainly far from being as clear or “unclouded” as we might expect from a writer who aims at “outlining a political economy which is practical and natural” as opposed to one which is said to be “scholastic” and comparatively useless.

SIDNEY BALL

*La Teoria del Salario nella Storia delle Dottrine e dei Fatti Economici.* By GIUSEPPE RICCA-SALERNO. (Palermo: A. Reber. 1900.)

PROFESSOR RICCA-SALERNO is already known to students by his work on the History of Financial Science in Italy. The present work will not fail to add to his reputation. It is learned and thoughtful. The critic feels disposed to grumble at the book for being too long. Were 687 pages necessary for the task? The difficulty and importance of the subject are no doubt Professor Ricca-Salerno's justification for his full treatment of it; but a smaller book might have been more useful, and might have been scarcely less complete. A graver defect is the absence of an index; a short table of contents giving the headings of the chapters is the only—and by no means adequate—guide which the reader has to the theories discussed or the figures quoted in the book. For a motto the book has the well-known line from Dante's “Inferno,” “*Perchè una gente impera e l'altro langue,*” and it may not be unfair to suggest that owing to the absence of an index much in this book is liable to be *oculto come in erba l'angue*.

One cannot fail to be struck with the completeness of the author's study on the subject. Indeed, the only authority which he does not seem to be familiar with is Lawrence's *Local Variations in Wages*, but probably that was not published until *La Teoria del Salario* was being printed. To English readers it is especially interesting to see how much of the information contained in the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Labour has been requisitioned, and to find that English books and articles are more frequently used than those of any other country. Professor Ricca-Salerno's method is to study the facts and then to consider the theories in the light of the facts. By this means it is possible to understand why such theories as the “iron law” or the “wages fund” have been held. It is evident that a theory may have some approach to correctness in one state of economic evolution when it has little or none in a later stage. Four main theories of wages are distinguished by Professor Ricca-Salerno. They are, (1) wages depend on the demand for labour, or the quantity or the increase of capital, or of the circulating capital, or of a part of it; (2) wages depend on the value of the labour, on the supply, or on the cost of production of the labour; (3) wages depend on the product or its value, that is on the general productivity of industry; (4) wages are determined by the relative utility of the labour from which that part of product which is due to it is derived.