
BOOKS

THE HOW AND WHY OF SERVICE.

Social Service. By Louis F. Post, Author of "Ethics of Democracy," "Ethical Principles of Marriage and Divorce," etc. Published by A. Wessels, New York. 1909. Price, \$1.00.

I was reading a Presidential plea for ship subsidies when my mind discourteously interrupted me and asked: "Do you suppose he would have written that if he had read—and understood—Post's book on Social Service?" I didn't reply, for how can a man answer all the absurd questions thrown at him by his mind? But that question kept dancing over the newspaper page, and made the rest of the Presidential message taste like scorched spinach.

This is a "built-up" book. The foundation is carefully laid, and the structure grows upon it. A lawyer and a doctor are dining in a restaurant. The conversation turns to a discussion of the question, "How did we get this dinner?" That question opens up the world-wide panorama of social service, takes us into near and remote markets, into factories of many kinds, then back to the forests, the grain fields, the mines, the cattle ranges and the restless water fields that yield fish. Trace "back to the land" all the food, utensils and servers necessary for the serving of a dinner, and you are well along towards the answer to the question, "How did we get this dinner?"

The real answer is involved in the economic law that men seek to satisfy their desires with the least exertion; and in the discussion of uneconomic, unnatural and immoral social conditions we find an answer to the question, "How do so many men get no dinner?" That question is really as important to us as to them. It is not directly discussed in "Social Service," but it couldn't have been kept out of this book, which makes it plain that no man can live in society unless he is served by others, and—what is just as important—that no man should be tolerated in society unless he gives an equal service for every service he receives.

"Social Service" is a brain-made mosaic of twenty-one essays. No reader of *The Public* will be frightened when I add that they are scientific essays; that is, they are essays that deal with social and economic truth; they de-dismalize certain phases of political economy, and one can read them without having an "unabridged" at his elbow. They should be read by the man in business, because he thinks he's in business to get "money"; by the men who put "Oregon boots" on trade, because they forget that a man who makes what others want is employing the others to make what he wants—and the exchange of

these things is trade. A man trades in order to serve himself.

Competition, the alternative of monopoly and the help-meet of co-operation, is "the natural regulator of the line of least resistance," and business, which is "the art of adapting means to ends for social service," follows that line of least resistance when it is not restricted by absurd laws. But, "business is so saturated with monopoly poisons, the business mechanism is so clogged with monopoly obstructions," that the business man should read this book to see that "business is co-operation in general activity—world-wide division of labor in working harness."

This book explains, lucidly, the derangements of the mechanism of social service, analyzes the artificial and natural instruments of social service, shows how feudalism has been superseded by capitalism, gives a clear explanation of capitalism, and then, in a chapter on Karl Marx and Henry George, there are thoughts for persons who swear at as well as for those who swear by Socialism.

The last six chapters of "Social Service" will not appeal to captains of cunning, nor to regulators of private monopoly, because they lead to the truth that for harmonious social service through equal freedom we must abolish privilege by the natural method so clearly stated by Henry George, and so ably advocated by Lloyd George and other British Liberals.

W. G. EGGLESTON.

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THE RIGHT USE OF THINGS.

Human Equipment. By Edward Howard Griggs, New York; B. W. Huebsch. Price, 50 cents.

In this compact little volume Mr. Griggs gives another creditable contribution to "The Art of Life" series of which he is the able editor. The realities, not the shams and appearances of life, are presented as the true basis of thought and action. All vexing problems may be solved by the question as to what human service they involve. Money, as a power, is good or harmful as it is made an instrument to elevate or debase the individual or social life. In the course of his economic argument the author incidentally gives some light on the causes of "panics," though there are other viewpoints that remain, we think, to be discussed.

The conclusion of the matter is this: "Nothing can ever be economically desirable that is morally wrong." And it is further added:

To dare in a society such as ours, to disregard conventions that merely hamper life; to refuse to dedicate one's life to the accumulation of material things; to avoid all display dictated by selfish vanity; to cherish friendship rather than society; beauty and not adornment, reality and never appearance; to hold wealth as obligation and all opportunity as