

## BOOK REVIEWS.

## THE TRUST PROBLEM.

This is another of the many books called forth by the general interest aroused in the the trust problem, as fruitful a source of loose writing as of loose thinking. This book is not among the least valuable of current treatises on the subject, but it fails at the same time to throw real light upon it, or to guide the reader out of the tortuous paths into which current popular authorities—journalistic, political, and educational—have betrayed him.

The consideration of the trust as a phenomenon of combination rather than as a symptom of monopoly is given too large a place. We are constantly pressed with demands for the consideration of the evils of corporate combination, pooling, etc., while at the same time being assured of the inevitableness of the trend of industrial administration in this direction. When the reader is told that "The problem then is the corportion problem—but it is more, it is the great corporation," he is not being put on the right trail. For the problem is actually not one of size, nor indeed does it present itself as a corporate matter essentially. It is always a problem of monopoly, of natural monopoly. The author adopts the socialistic slogan that "competition is the mother of trusts," and from this he proceeds to a variety of loose reasoning.

The fact is, Mr. Collier talks too much; the work is full of garrulousness. We all know that specialization of labor, larger and always newer machinery, demand greater capital and larger co-operation. But the pages devoted to impressing this obvious fact upon the intelligent reader lead him to wonder what it all has to do with the real problem that the author proposes to consider. This is the defect of most of this trust literature—and of the authors who discuss remedies for trust evils.

One turns for the possibilities of promise from the indeterminate conclusions of the chapters that precede it to one entitled "Trusts and Special Privileges." Here at last, it might be thought, the author will grapple with his subject in earnest. But no. He is evidently a protectionist, and thus estopped at the very threshold of his inquiry from any sane conclusion. Note the gingerliness of the following: "The special privileges which it is generally said are the cause of trusts are railroad discrimination, certain tariff rates which happen to be excessive rather than protective, (what rare euphism!), unfair taxation, and the free granting of public franchises." For railroad discrimination our author has some words of fiery indignation, but when he comes to the tariff he says, "The Ameri-

can people have decided that their welfare is fostered by it." He says that the subject of the tariff is so important that it may be examined in a later chapter. This he does in Chapter XII.

He recoils from Mr. Havemeyer's statement that "The tariff is the mother of trusts." He says, "Coming from Mr. Havemeyer, whose efforts to secure protection when the Wilson Bill was passed caused such commotion, this assertion seems incongruous." But why incongruous if Mr. Havemeyer spoke the truth? And if he did not speak the truth why his activity when the Wilson Bill was passed?

Mr. Collier tells us with delicious *naivete* that the Republican Party in its platform denounces excessive tariffs that create monopolies. Truly, Mr. Collier is honest. But what shall be said of his penetration? This chapter which promises to be so illuminating is really a special plea for the tariff and incidentally for the Republican Party. The best things in it are the mention of the names of Lawson Purdy and Byron W. Holt. But even the value of such mention is minimized by association with that economic Cagliostro and dealer in black magic, "Prof." George Gunton.

But after all has been said there is much that is interesting and some little that is valuable in this work. The author is candid, and the book is net in the nature of a special plea. It is what it purports to be—an examination of the trust problem. It is ineffectual because its author does not know the nature and meaning of monopoly.

—J. D. M.

## \*SOCIAL PROGRESS.

This book based on the plan of the Statesman's Year Book, printed annually in Great Britain, may develop into a very useful publication. But grave defects will need to be remedied before it can be commended as the one thing of its kind to be desired.

The plan has been spoiled in the execution. There is an evidence of undue haste in the preparation of the work, where time and patient attention to details were needed to make it a useful book of reference. It would be interesting to know just how short a time elapsed from the inception to the completion of the work of getting together this mass of ill-assorted and undigested information. Surely a record has been broken.

No method seems to have been followed in the relation and arrangement of subjects. For example, it is a little bewildering to find a short essay on The Social Secretary—a half-parasitical excrecence on the indus-

"The Trusts." By William Miller Collier. Cloth, 12 mo. 328 pp. Price, \$1. Twentieth Century. 17 E. 16th St., N. Y. City.

\*Social Progress. A Year Book and Encyclopedia of Economic, Industrial, Social and Religious Statistics. Joseph Strong, Editor. Cloth, 12mo. 275 pp. Price \$1. The Baker & Taylor Company. New York.

trial body—sandwiched in between statistics on the World's Merchant Marine and the Area, Density and Population of the United States. It may be questioned, too, if it is well in a work of this character to sprinkle quotations, not germane to the subject, at the bottom of the pages. These are doubtless of great importance in some other contest, but one wonders why they were wrenched from their own indigenous soil for such obviously inappropriate transplanting.

There are omissions, too, which one may note. Surely in a statement of the opposing theories touching the concentration of wealth there was room for a mention of Thos. G. Shearman's articles on this subject along with those of Dr. Spahr, Sir R. Giffen and the worthless excursions of Mr. W. H. Mallock into the same field. Mr. Shearman's first article which originally appeared in the *Forum* is by far the most conclusive essay on the subject.

It is especially exasperating to find under the heading, *The Causes of Poverty*, no mention of the theory that holds the chief cause to be the divorce of labor from land, but only a table of Prof. A. G. Warner in which the causes of poverty are shown to be 1st, sickness or death in the families of the poor. 2nd, lack of work, and 3rd, drink. Prof. A. G. Warner is one of the humorists of the Charities Organizations, and some ten years ago printed a book on *American Charities*, in which laborious study of tons of tables from relief statistics of cities here and abroad was entered into, with the result as given above. They call this scientific investigation. Nearly all minds that are tempted to enter this field emerge decrepit. Here for instance is this grave professor telling us that the poor are poor because they get sick and die? Why you can't even make fun of a statement like that. Its imbecility is too profound. And this is the kind of table which under the general heading "*The Causes of Poverty*," is allowed to appear in this work without intelligent and appropriate editorial comment.

There are other defects, too. Why in the name of common sense are Adams Express Company and the Mergenthaler Linotype included among "Natural Monopolies" along with traction and telephone companies?

But all these defects can be remedied in future editions. And of course there is much that is valuable in the work. The spirit in which it is conceived is the true one, for its purpose is to tell the truth regarding social conditions. Information of this kind is sorely needed, and the publishers are to be commended for the attempt to provide a Year Book of this character at a price that shall place it within easy reach of the men and women who have use for the facts and figures it presents.

J. D. M.

### \*A TRUE POET.

Many of our readers are familiar with the name of James Arthur Edgerton, some of whose verses have attained wide vogue among the journals of the day, especially in periodicals of social reform tendencies. Those who have read these verses must often have been struck with their homely strength, their fine sympathetic note, and the passionate hatred of injustice that animates them. They will be glad, therefore, to welcome the publication of this volume in which these poems are presented.

Mr. Edgerton's verse leaves, it is true, something to be desired. Not always is the thought articulate; we feel that it often struggles vainly for utterance, and that often, too, the utterance is disappointing. There is more of the *soul* than the garment of poetry in the work, for on the artistic side Mr. Edgerton as a verse maker is deficient. But he has a distinctive virility that marks off his work from so much of our current verse. And Mr. Edgerton at his best—and we fancy he is at his best in such poems as the now oft-quoted one in which each stanza concludes with the refrain

"For the God who reigned over Babylon  
Is the God who is reigning yet!"—

is a singer of no mean quality of voice.

We quote the following lines on the great Russian prophet and Single Taxer, Tolstoy, not because it is among the best in the volume, but because of the shorter pieces it will interest our readers most.

He sought to follow God. The Church  
Respectable and old,  
Accustomed but to follow form  
Was shocked at one so bold,  
To follow God was blasphemous—  
It drove him from the fold.

He sought to help Humanity  
The despots in command  
Had never heard of such a thing—  
They could not understand  
They thought it must be treason, so  
They drove him from the land.

J. D. M.

### † "THE MOTHER ARTIST."

This little work by Mrs. Jane Dearborn Mills, whose name is known to Single Taxers everywhere, is a book for mothers. But every lover of children might read it with profit. The spirit that animates it lends an unusual beauty to its pages, and the author's knowledge of the child heart is spiritually clairvoyant in its peculiar intimacy. Every chapter is full of suggestion; and we should like to be able to quote

\**Songs of the People*. By James Arthur Edgerton. Cloth, 12mo. 230 pp. Price \$1. The Reed Publishing Co. Denver, Col.

†*The Mother Artist*. By Jane Dearborn Mills, (Mrs. James E. Mills). 12mo. 156 pp. Price \$1. The Palmer Co. Boston, Mass.