

They descend from little mounds and high peaks and lofty altitudes, through wide roads and narrow paths, down noble marble stairs and creaky stairs of wood, and some go down to the street, and some go down to the cellar, and some down to the pits of shame and infamy, and still some to the glory of an unfathomable abyss where there is nothing but the staring white stony eyeballs of Destiny.

And again other footsteps climb. They climb to life and to love, to fame, to power, to vanity, to truth, to glory, and to the gallows; to everything but Freedom and the Ideal.

And they all climb the same roads and the same stairs others go down; for never, since man began to think how to overcome and overpass man, have other roads and other stairs been found.

They descend and they climb, the fearful footsteps of men, and some drag, some speed, some trot, some run; the footsteps are quiet, slow, noisy, brisk, quick, feverish, mad, and most awful is their cadence to hear for the one who stands still.

But of all the footsteps of men that either descend or climb, no footsteps are as fearsome and terrible as those that go straight on the dead level of a prison floor from a yellow stone wall to a red iron gate.

BOOKS

"THE SUPER-RACE."

The Super Race. An American Problem. By Scott Nearing, Ph. D. B. W. Huebsch, 225 Fifth Ave., The Art of Life Series. 50 cents net.

Professor Nearing's book differs from other works on race culture in two rather important particulars: it is well written, and it recognizes that environment and education are as necessary as eugenics to the furtherance of that better grade of human stock which the author christens the Super-race. The demerit of the book, on the other hand, and this time its quality is shared by practically every other book on eugenics, is its trustful optimism.

Mr. Nearing has read all the authorities on eugenics and apparently his politeness and reverence for science have led him to swallow their statements whole. He actually thinks that Positive Eugenics is a practicable programme. "What prospective parent," he asks his readers, "does not fondly imagine that his children will be at least near-great? Yet how many individuals, in their choice of a mate, set out with the deliberate intention of securing a life-partner whose qualities, when combined with his own, must produce greatness?" Like Mr. Nearing, the writer cannot answer and is reduced to wondering "How many?" but he sincerely hopes that if ever answer was vouchsafed from any oracle that answer would be "None."

It would seem unnecessary to labor the point, but the idea that the bond of love is not a personal matter, not a union of sympathetic spirits—regardless of whether they both be mathematicians or both painters—but a breeding proposition only, is an idea negated by every instinct of the human heart. Only a sophisticated academician who has wandered far from Life in her first intention could so confuse his values. That Nature does not approve of any such thing is shown by the indubitable fact that she always plunges the man and woman whom she would mate into a temporary insanity—witness the poetry of people in love. Having thus put their troublesome intellects out of the way, her mysterious plans are not interfered with by any clumsy eugenic matchmaking of men.

Of course, Nature not being a personal or observing power, needs the help of the eyes of men, and so when men see that two people are victims of a few—and they are only a few—really transmissible and general diseases such as feeble-mindedness, then they can prevent mating, in the interests of society. But as has been shown by Professor Hobbouse of London, such interference is not necessary in the case, for example, of tuberculosis, which can be taken care of very adequately by the gradual improvement of the environment. Or, if the case be epilepsy, then the eugenicist should not forget that epileptic strains produce more than their share of geniuses, and so he should not be too ready dogmatically to interfere.

Mr. Nearing's discussions of the environment and of education are stimulating and suggestive, but throughout them he constantly returns to his eugenic note with a touching faith. His optimism is occasionally rather excessive. "War, however, has practically ceased," he tells us. Has it? Improvements in the art, at least, still seem to find a very ready market, and certain of our industrial situations look as if something very like civil war may some day be precipitated if the scientists and social observers can think of nothing better than eugenics as the path of humanity's emancipation from its present narrow cell of injustice, unspirituality, greed and want.

LLEWELLYN JONES.



THE PROBLEMS OF THE POOR.

One of the Multitude. By George Acorn, with introduction by Arthur C. Benson. New York. Dodd, Mead & Company. Price, \$1.25.

Perhaps "One of the Multitude" is hardly a title to apply to the very exceptional youth who tells his own story of life in the London slums with a simplicity that is like a photographic copy of the characters and scenes presented.

George Acorn, with his honest ambitions and soaring aspirations, could hardly claim heredity from the low, vulgar, brutal father and mother

who strove to hold the boy down to their own debasing level. His whole story is a testimony to the power of human nature to rise above the most hopeless environment of poverty and ignorance, if the desire is persistently cultivated.

As Mr. Benson says in his introduction:

The book, in spite of its sad and sordid experiences, leaves us hopeful and encouraged . . . with a firm belief that the enigma is solving itself, and that the surest sign of this is the fact that such a life as is here described can pick its way without stain through the mire, and successfully claim its share in the best and richest inheritance of men—the inheritance of light and beauty and truth.

A. L. M.

BOOKS RECEIVED

—Gutter-Babies. By Dorothea Slade. Published by Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston. 1912. Price, \$1.25 net.

—Fire Prevention. By Edward F. Croker. Published by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York. 1912. Price, \$1.50 net.

—Man or Machine—Which? By Al Priddy. Published by the Pilgrim Press, Boston. 1912. Price, 75 cents; postage, 8 cents.

—Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist. By Alexander Berkman. Published by Mother Earth Publishing Assn., New York. 1912. Price, \$1.50.

—Natural Money: The Peaceful Solution. By John Raymond Cummings. Published by the Bankers Publishing Co., New York. 1912.

—The Work of the Bond House. By Lawrence Chamberlain. Published by Moody's Magazine. Book Department, New York. 1912. Price, \$1.35 net.

—Marriage, Considered from Legal and Ecclesiastical Viewpoints. By Lewis Stockton. Published by the Huebner-Bleistein Patents Co., Buffalo, N. Y. 1912.

—Himself: Talks with Men Concerning Themselves. By E. B. Lowry and Richard J. Lambert. Published by Forbes & Co., Chicago. 1912. Price, \$1.00.

—Assessor's Manual: A Guide to the Assessment of Taxes under the New Jersey Revised Tax Act of 1903. By Thomas B. Usher. Published by Soney & Sage, Newark, N. J. 1911.

—Citizens Made and Remade: An Interpretation of the Significance and Influence of George Junior Republics. By William R. George and Lyman Beecher Stowe. Published by Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston. 1912. Price, \$1.25 net.

—Preliminary Report of the Factory Investigating Commission of the State of New York. Transmitted to the Legislature, March 1, 1912. Volume I: Creation of Commission and Scope of Investigation with a Summary of Work Done, including General and Special Reports on Fire Hazard in Factories, Factory Inspection, Occupational Diseases and Manufacturing in Tenements. Volumes II and III: Minutes of Public Hearings. Published by the New York State Factory Investigating Commission, Room 1332, 22 E. 17th St., New York City.

PERIODICALS

Stenographers Organizing.

Helen Marot in *Life and Labor* (Chicago) for October reports progress in the organization of stenographers, a task in which the Women's Trade Union League is active. There are now stenographers' unions in seven cities. The New York Union "has created a minimum wage of \$12 per week, 7 hours for a day's work and two weeks' vacation with pay." In Chicago, through the co-operation of the Women's Trade Union League, "a down-town office has been established as an employment department free to members." "A Thousand Members by January 1," is the slogan of this Chicago Association.

A. L. G.



The Somers System News.

Published by the Manufacturers' Appraisal Company of Cleveland, "The Somers System News" is a quarterly trade journal of the kind known as "house papers"—that is, papers openly representing a private business interest. It is designed, however, "to promote equity in tax assessments of real property." Ten American cities are named in this first issue as having "been assessed by the Somers System with equitable results"—all other cities having "inequitable valuations." The Somers System of land value appraisal was favorably noticed by *The Public* more than ten years ago. It seemed at that time to be a necessary prerequisite to any very useful effort at land value taxation. Since then it has given substantial proof of its utility for assessment purposes, and without evoking any substantial criticisms. Tom L. Johnson was the first to give it a fair trial. He did this in his first administration as Mayor of Cleveland. Through his introduction its fame spread, and its utility appears now to be established. A very complete and lucid explanation of the system, illustrated with practical diagrams, is given in this issue of *The Somers System News* at page 9, preceded by a discussion of its merits at page 3.



The World's Work.

An article entitled "Beef" in *The World's Work* for October gives two reasons for the high price of porterhouse. (Neither of which, by the way, will in the least hurt the Beef Trust's feelings.) First: "There are not as many cattle as there were and there are more people demanding beef. And long before there are enough cattle being raised to supply the demand for beef there will be millions more people in the cities demanding beef. You will probably not live long enough to buy porterhouse steak for less than 32 cents a pound." And second, stated briefly: The consumers do not proportion their demand for choice and common cuts of beef as nature proportioned the animal. Therefore steak is very expensive; soup meat very cheap. There is in this same magazine an inspiring record of one man's achievement. Tom Walker, born a slave just when the Civil War was ruining his section of old Virginia, has redeemed