

ART. V.—METHODS OF SOCIAL ADVANCE.¹

THIS should prove an exceedingly useful book. It consists of a number of papers which have recently been read at meetings of the Charity Organization Society, together with an introduction by the secretary. All the subjects dealt with are, from a social point of view, of pressing importance. Some of the papers are of more general interest than others, but all are of value, and all are the work of men and women who write from experience, and who may be regarded as experts in the special department of social effort with which they individually deal.

The introduction by Mr. C. S. Loch is nominally upon "Distress and its Prevention," but is really a preliminary treatment of some of the subjects dealt with more fully in the papers which follow. The true object and method of social work is at once indicated. The *object* is, "to make and keep our people competent. We would add to their ability, energy, and resources, strengthen their affections, and increase their pleasure in a healthy, robust existence; and, as we do this, it would follow that their power of preserving their independence in all the ordinary contingencies of life and in the strain of hard times would increase proportionally." The *method* by which this much-to-be-desired result is to be attained is by making "an appeal, not to their weakness, but to their strength, however elemental or undisciplined that strength may be. We must add strength to strength. This view is of vital importance. It affects the whole question of relief and the use of means. Relief or even increased wages or income will not help the people (of whatever class they be), but will rather weaken them, if it does not coincide with some movement on their part which makes for better social habit" (p. 1).

Effort on the part of social workers to arouse effort on the part of those for whom they work may be said to be the keynote of the various policies outlined, and of the different suggestions made throughout the book. And we are convinced that all who have any really intelligent experience of social work are becoming more and more certain that this method is the only right one, and the only one by which we can hope for any permanent results.

As examples of efforts by which the social habits of the people may be improved Mr. Loch instances, (1) careful

¹ "Methods of Social Advance: Short Studies in Social Practice, by Various Authors," edited by C. S. Loch, B.A., Secretary of the Charity Organization Society. London: Macmillan and Co., 1904.

instruction to mothers upon the right methods of rearing children ; (2) greater care on the part of municipal authorities in providing in crowded centres of population adequate playgrounds for boys and girls ; (3) increased opportunities for physical and military drill, as tending to make both men and boys harder physically, cleaner, more temperate, more adaptive, and self-reliant, etc. He believes that "the Friendly Society as well as the Savings-Bank might be organized in the closest relationship to the school system." He strongly advises the general adoption in poor neighbourhoods of "the collecting bank," because "the power of husbanding is usually a first step to civilization," and because it "enables many people who would never think of putting by to harvest the fruit of their labours, and it opens out to them a better life than that of hand to mouth hopelessness" (p. 3).

Mr. Loch then notices another subject, with which he deals at length later in the book in a separate and very valuable paper—viz., the great and rapid increase of local or municipal taxation. This increase of taxation is, of course, in one sense self-imposed by the people, but it is, probably, in the vast majority of cases imposed through ignorance, arising from the fact that many of the poor pay rates only indirectly—*i.e.*, through their rent. They do not notice that the higher rents, at which they complain, and which are a very serious consideration to many of them, are largely due to increased rates which the landlords pay, and for which they have to recoup themselves by raising the weekly rents of their tenants. As examples of the increase of rates Mr. Loch quotes the boroughs of St. Pancras, Poplar, and Camberwell, in which, in nine years, the total rates have increased 34·2, 52·7, and 66·7 per cent. respectively ; whereas the populations of these boroughs have in the same period increased by only 0·4, 1·2, and 10·2 per cent., while in West Ham, in the same nine years, the increase of expenditure on "the relief of the poor and purposes connected therewith has been 102 per cent." Unfortunately, the poor, as a rule, do not notice the incidence of indirect taxation ; and they do not realize that high rates, besides raising rents, have a tendency to drive industries into other less heavily rated districts. "The remedy lies largely in the collection of the rates from the individual occupant. An increase in the rates will then be expressed definitely as the equivalent of so many pence collected periodically by, or on behalf of, the rate collector. And a sense of responsibility, one of the first safeguards for the good use of means and so against distress, will thus be created" (p. 4).

The next subject upon which Mr. Loch touches, and to which Mrs. Bosanquet and Mr. George Livesey devote separate

papers, is indicated in the following sentences: "Trades unions may aid skilled labour; they cannot benefit unskilled labour permanently. To improve his economic position the unskilled labourer must have recourse to some other method. With him progress lies in the better use of wage (*vide* Mrs. Bosanquet's paper on "Wages and Housekeeping"), or if it can be arranged, in profit-sharing, or in similar co-operative relations between employer and employee. . . . As a matter of justice, should not workers share in profits according to some estimate of the extent to which they have helped to create them? Were this possible a new element of security would be given to life, which, accruing as a reward of work done, would bring with it alike self-restraint and economic hopefulness" (p. 5).

Lastly, Mr. Loch deals with "the two great evils of the present system of Poor Law administration. These are, first, the way in which the "ins" and "outs"—that is, the class now within the scope of the action of the Poor Law and now just bordering upon it—are for ever coming and going. Years—we might almost say generations—pass, and little of any material or social improvement in this class seems to be effected. For them "social neglect does not carry with it the penalties or the discipline of social reform." If the social reformer is tempted to despair, it is in his dealings with this, alas! numerous class. Mr. Loch believes that this section of the community "might be largely modified by even the prospect of committal for a period of laborious and wholesome detention as an alternative to 'in and outing.'"

The second great evil connected with the Poor Law is the allowance system, or outdoor relief, which is "contrary to all the canons of charity. The key to success in charity lies in the persistent care for the individual in close connection with the family, and in discerning and friendly aid suited to the needs of the particular case. Few realize how great this success may be. But a statutory and rate-supported allowance system reduces all remedies to one—the granting of money. It then deprives the people of one of the most useful means of social education—the personal responsibility of charity—and it prevents any large growth of that responsibility" (p. 5).

These are wise words, and they deserve to be remembered by all who are called to the work of helping those who stand in need of help. As assistance is now too generally given its effect is rather to weaken still further the already enfeebled powers of its recipients. In other words, it does more harm than good. The cynical see this and find in it a welcome excuse for refusing to help in any way. It is not less expendi-

ture that is needed, but expenditure of thought and personal service along with expenditure of money. Those who would help to good effect must help with knowledge and discretion. They must study both before and while they work. They must educate themselves for the task they undertake. To quote Mr. Loch's final words, our "cardinal want" at the present time is "education in social life and economics," and that "those who undertake the duties of administration or of charity will learn that to promote competence in others they must first make themselves competent; and that without intelligence and a clear purpose neither personal devotion, nor religious feeling, nor excited philanthropy, nor large communal expenditure, can prevent or remove our distress."

Of the other sixteen papers in the volume, those of most general interest are that upon "Agriculture and the Unemployed Question," by Mr. H. R. Haggard; those upon "Past Experience in Relief Works" and upon "Wages and House-keeping," by Mrs. Bosanquet; that upon "The Separate Payment of Rates," by Mr. Loch; that upon "Poor Law Reform," by Mr. T. Mackay, and that upon "A School of Sociology," by Mr. E. J. Urwick. All the papers are valuable, but these I have named will, from their subjects, interest a wider circle of readers.

Mr. Rider Haggard pleads for a more active agricultural policy on the part of the Government, in order that a greater number of persons, whether as owners or workers, may be established on the land. He also pleads for the wider establishment (under the authority and control of the Government) of "Credit Banks," such as have proved so widely useful in Austria and elsewhere on the Continent. They have so far been tried in very few places in England, but where the experiment has been made it has proved to be most beneficial. Mr. Haggard draws attention to this strange and painful fact: that "while in England we have a land which was never more fertile, while we have men who would be willing to work and a very hungry market, yet three-fourths of the agricultural produce we consume comes from abroad." Whether regarded from the physical or the economical point of view, Mr. Haggard believes that the countryman is superior to the dweller in towns. "The young and strong who come to the town may do better than those who remain in the country, for they earn a better wage while they are young and strong, but how the results work out for those of the ages of, say, between fifty and seventy is another matter. My own opinion is, taking them over the average, that the economic competence of the inhabitants of cities is not in

any way equal to the economic competence of the ordinary dweller in the country" (p. 67).

The problem of the "unemployed" threatens to become permanent, and with the approach of every winter, in most of the great towns, there is a demand for "relief works" of one kind or another. Those who are inclined to enter upon such schemes should read Mrs. Bosanquet's paper, which is simply a plain and unvarnished record of results, financial and otherwise, of several such efforts made in different ways and in various localities. Upon one and all, we fear, the verdict of "failure" must be pronounced. Some of the figures given are very remarkable—*e.g.*, in St. Pancras work done by the unemployed to the value of £12 cost the Guardians £100; in St. Olave's every ton of stone broken cost the Union £7, the market price for the same being at the time 12s. 4d. At Wanstead the work done by the unemployed was found to be worth 1d. per hour; the work done for the Metropolitan Gardens Association by the unemployed cost just four times what the same work would have cost if done by contract.

Mrs. Bosanquet's second paper should be of special value to that numerous body of Christian workers who visit among the poor. Those who are constantly dealing with its many "problems" know that "poverty" arises from two main causes—(1) insufficiency of income; (2) ignorance, or carelessness, or want of self-control in using what income there may be as wisely as possible. It is with the second of these causes that Mrs. Bosanquet deals. In reply to those who "point to the returns of pauperism and to the flagrant cases of poverty so familiar to those who work in large towns as proof of the insufficiency of wages," she "concedes at once that in many instances, and notably in the case of unskilled women, wages are still insufficient even to supply the necessities of an efficient life, though not nearly to the extent popularly supposed. But we also maintain that the more flagrant cases of poverty, which are generally supposed to be evidence of this, are, on the contrary, comparatively seldom due to insufficient earnings. In the great majority of these cases a wise economy is all that is needed to remedy the poverty" (pp. 133, 134).

I have not space to enter into the evidence by which Mrs. Bosanquet substantiates each of these statements; I can only advise my readers to weigh most carefully the excellent advice she gives to those who work among "the poor" as to how to teach them to spend their earnings so that they obtain the maximum benefit from them. The whole paper is full of the results of a most carefully con-

sidered experience, and it cannot fail to be of the greatest usefulness to all who will take the trouble to study it.

The last paper I propose to consider is that by Mr. Urwick, on "A School of Sociology," and in some respects this is, perhaps, the most valuable contribution to the volume. Mr. Urwick begins with a note of hopefulness. He believes that at last it is dawning upon the minds of many that "training is as essential for social service as for other kinds of service"—in other words, that "some experience and some knowledge are useful adjuncts to the equipment of the reformer and social worker." But in this very fact he sees a danger. He believes that in regard to this knowledge we shall be content with a too limited ideal. It is something (1) to have taught people to regard the "poor" as persons, as members of a society normally related to each other; (2) to have "a right estimate of social 'values,' most of all of the relative importance of comfort and character"; (3) to have "a right knowledge of present conditions—at any rate, of the localized conditions of the industrial and social life of some one district." But what we need is that, besides being mere administrators—in whom there is always a tendency to work by "rule of thumb"—the workers of to-day shall be "apostles of true doctrines," and that they shall, like all apostles who wish to be effective, preach in the language, not of their grandfathers, but in that of their contemporaries.

Mr. Urwick pleads for a study of the science of social life, or "sociology," a knowledge of which he believes must be brought into the scheme of education for social work. But the science is a many-sided one, and we shall have to determine what branches we think it necessary to include. Mr. Urwick believes that these "must embrace four main departments of thought and inquiry." The first of these is "Social Science," which includes "the natural history of society, the analysis of the various physical conditions of social life, the development of natural and racial characteristics and habits, etc. From this point of view, sociology is concerned with society as a growth, and aims at the interpretation of social evolution" (p. 183).

But the social reformer cannot be content merely to watch the natural evolution of society. The principle of *laissez faire* is inconsistent with all measures of reform. With the reformer enters the warfare between ethics and evolution. We are then led to the second view of society, which is idealistic as the first was natural. Mr. Urwick calls this the view of "Social Philosophy." "In this aspect society is regarded less as a natural growth than as an embodiment of ideas or an expression of purpose and will." We are here "concerned with

the structure of society . . . as subservient to some ideal of human life."

The third aspect of society is the "Economic." Here "inquiry is directed to the economic framework of social life and to the effect upon all social relationships of economic needs." As Mr. Urwick shows, a knowledge of this particular aspect would be most valuable at the present time of "hasty socialist theories" and of "dangers from over-municipalization." Our administrators have forgotten to study the "economic effect of the collective expenditure and enterprise on the productive capacity of the individual." In other words, we have raised the rates without thinking of their effect upon either the trade or the workers in our great centres of population.

The last aspect is the "Psychological." It is only of recent years that a knowledge of psychology has become recognised as a very useful element or factor in the equipment of those who wish to deal wisely with those for whom they are making effort. As Mr. Urwick says, the relation of psychology to the problems of social life may not as yet be clearly defined, but "the social relations among individuals . . . are themselves always and only thought-relations and feeling-relations. . . . The bases of social action—habit, example, imitation, initiative—even character itself, the root of all good and all evil in social being and doing; turn where he will, the sociologist must look to psychology for the first steps on the road to understanding" (p. 185).

There are several other papers in the book to which I should have liked to draw attention—*e.g.*, that upon "Physical Education," or that on "Emigration and Want of Employment," or those upon "Apprenticeship" and upon "Poor Law Reform." But I trust I have proved the truth of the assertion with which I commenced—that the book cannot fail to be a most useful one.

Its chief merit seems to consist in the fact that it is the work of men and women who write from experience, and who, from the experience which they have themselves gained, state principles of action which may be helpful to others who are faced with the same difficulties which they have at least tried, honestly and thoughtfully, to lessen or to overcome.

W. EDWARD CHADWICK.

