

superseded a freer system which they had already granted to the province. Really, it was by the creation of a nobility that they sought to transform both the executive and the legislature. That legally they had the right to do this, and to seek its enforcement by instructions to their governors, one can scarcely doubt. Its wisdom or practicability is another question.

H. L. OSGOOD.

*A Short History of British Colonial Policy.* By HUGH EDWARD EGERTON, M.A. London, Methuen & Co., 1897.—xii, 503 pp.

One is naturally prepossessed in favor of a work introduced by so modest a preface as that of Mr. Egerton. Nor is this favorable impression lessened by a careful reading of the book, whose unpretentious and truly scientific spirit will commend it to all students of the subject. Mr. Egerton has a calm, judicious mind; he has searched for the truth with no ulterior object in view; and he has based his work on an extensive study of original sources, of which some have never before been used. His work is, however, in no sense of the word a final history of the subject; for he has by no means digested all the facts he has gleaned from the records, nor has he studied exhaustively the large mass of available original material. Besides, some important publications of recent years have escaped his attention. But when we remember that we have no other work covering the ground, we should be grateful for what Mr. Egerton has given us.

As the author points out, it may be objected at the outset that the work is an absurdity, because England has never had any definite consecutive colonial policy: "there has been no premeditated advance to a definite goal." But this is by no means the exception in historical development: in fact, it is the general rule. If we look at the general ideas back of any process of social evolution, we shall find that they group themselves into a consistent whole, with the line of development as clear as the evolution itself. In this case, the author has certainly made good the title of his work.

Mr. Egerton has divided his subject into five natural periods: the beginnings, 1497-1650; trade ascendancy, 1651-1830; systematic colonization and the granting of responsible government, 1831-60; the zenith and decline of *laissez-aller* principles, 1861-85; Greater Britain, 1886 onwards. The second period, containing about two-fifths of the pages of the book, deals in the main with our colonial

history. It contains some new facts, but does not add in any marked degree to our knowledge. We think also that these two centuries should have been divided into characteristic periods, for there were more changes in British colonial policy during these years than during the last sixty years, which are divided into three periods.

The value of Mr. Egerton's work consists principally in his treatment of this century. It is the only work we have of value on the subject. Incidentally, it shows how untenable is the claim so often made by responsible publicists, that the immediate effect of the American Revolution was a fundamental change in England's colonial policy, resulting in greater freedom to the colonies. From Mr. Egerton's pages we can see that, if there was any change, it was towards reaction, and that England's present most liberal policy is only of very recent date. Prof. G. B. Adams has shown this already in a general way, but to Mr. Egerton belongs the credit of giving the first clear account of England's colonial policy during this century.

In the beginning of his work Mr. Egerton carefully defines a colony as "a community politically dependent in some shape or form, the majority or the dominant portion of whose members belong by birth or origin to the mother country, such persons having no intention to return to the mother country." This definition excludes India (and naturally also the purely military settlements), because Englishmen rarely make their permanent home in India. Consequently, Indian affairs are not treated at all in this work. The definition has scientific value, distinguishing, as it does, between colonies and dependencies; but an arbitrary definition is no adequate reason for omitting all treatment of India from a history of English colonial policy.

Especially noteworthy is Mr. Egerton's attitude toward the American Revolution. He has departed from the traditional Whig and American standpoint, and looks at the matter from the scientific point of view only very recently adopted by our historians. Speaking of the policy of England after the Peace of Paris, he says:

It is a strange irony which has fastened the epithet tyrannical on the conduct of England towards her colonies. Incapable, weak, causing the maximum of friction with the minimum of result, colonial policy may have been; but to call it tyrannical is to travesty either language or facts.

Attention should be called to occasional inaccuracies and to the failure of the author to appreciate the connection between home and colonial policy. For instance, Mr. Egerton's account of the Naviga-

tion Law of 1651 is absolutely wrong, probably because he never saw the full text in Scobell. Then, when speaking of the policy of "enumeration," Mr. Egerton mentions, as if in palliation of it, that grain was not included among the articles that had to be shipped to England. He seemingly fails to understand that, above all, England wanted to keep out colonial agricultural products which competed with her own industries. It was no benefit to the colonists to be able to export their surplus products of the soil to foreign countries, since legally no manufactures could be taken back on the home voyage. In fact, it would have been of great benefit to the colonies if wheat had been enumerated. Ultimately England, and civilization in general also, might in that case have been benefited, for then the American Revolution might have been averted.

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*L'Évolution du commerce dans les diverses races humaines.*

Par CH. LETOURNEAU. Paris, Vigot Frères, 1897. — xxiii, 581 pp.

Professor Letourneau's present work on the evolution of commerce is in continuation and further elaboration of his former books on the origin and development of property and on the evolution of slavery. The range of this volume is perhaps even broader than that of the works the author has already published on the evolution of various social institutions, and there appears to be no race of men whose trade and commerce are not in some way described.

Professor Letourneau does not find Adam Smith's "propensity in human nature to truck, barter and exchange" existent among the lower races of man. So long as men lived in "anarchic hordes" and "communal clans," there was no incentive to exchange, as the only private property consisted in weapons and utensils which were invariably burned or buried with their owner upon his death. Survivals of this "pre-commercial age" — which, according to the author, lasted many generations — are to be found among the primitive Fuegians, Hottentots and some of the lower American Indians.

Professor Letourneau agrees with Herbert Spencer in thinking that commerce originated in the exchange of presents between savages. Out of this custom grew the widespread practice of trading through "depots," where one tribe set out what it had to exchange, and then withdrew until another tribe appeared and placed what it regarded as equivalent alongside. If the former tribe was satisfied, an exchange was effected — without the party of the first part having