

The Instinct of Workmanship. By THORSTEIN VEBLEN. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1914.—ix, 355 pp.

Teleology is Veblen's specialty. Let any other scientist produce a generalization, however abstract, Veblen will extract a teleological element, an ulterior motive from it. He is like a skilled pathologist, competent to prove that all the world is suffering from his pet disease, however rare it may have seemed before. Such a pathologist usually ends by taking the disease himself, if it is communicable; and even if it is not, he is likely to reproduce the symptoms. So it has befallen Veblen. If in *The Instinct of Workmanship* he is not smitten with teleology, he does at any rate marvellously counterfeit the symptoms. What shall we say to the argument that the conception of God as a Creator, instead of a Most High King, is the product of handicraft experience? That handicraft experience is responsible for the popularity, the existence even, of the principle of cause and effect? That the law of conservation of energy is derived from the practice of double entry book-keeping? One can only shake his head and mutter: "Too bad, too bad." It must be a case of teleology past recovery that produces symptoms so ominous as these.

What Veblen is bent on proving is that western civilization is plunging headlong toward the pit. The leading European races—at least the dolicho-blond race—are to be conceived of as late products of mutation. They are what they have always been, if we may apply forthwith to the evolution of man the tentative conclusions of DeVries on evolution among evening primroses. Thus there was no period when the dolicho-blond had to get on without domesticated animals, tools, and some form of social order. He was created—by mutation—into the possession of these good things. It follows by some not very obvious logic that the neolithic environment into which he was created was the one to which he would be best adapted. He must therefore be very ill adapted to the modern pecuniary, urban, machine-technology environment. His situation is essentially identical with that of the American in the Philippines or the Englishman in India, assaulted at once by excess of heat and of light, by tropical diseases and tropical customs. The conclusion would appear to be that either we must revert to the neolithic scheme of technology or we must evolve a new mutant type fitted to the conditions of the epoch of the machine. There is no hope even in adaptation through selection from among us. Veblen does not, however, draw this conclusion. He expects us to rest satisfied with his proof that we are marked for destruction.

Where in this process does the instinct of workmanship come in? This is somewhat difficult to say. Indeed, it is not the easiest thing in the world to determine exactly what Veblen means by the instinct of workmanship; still less easy is it to make sure for oneself whether there is any such instinct. We are told to take this instinct "to signify a concurrence of several instinctive aptitudes each of which might or might not prove simple or irreducible when subjected to psychological or physiological analysis" (page 27).

Its functional content is serviceability for the ends of life, whatever these ends may be. . . . So that this instinct may in some sense be said to be auxiliary to all the rest, to be concerned with the ways and means of life, rather than with any one given ulterior end [page 31].

This instinct is sometimes in abeyance, but, given a fair degree of mental ease, it springs forth to our service. Unfortunately we are always permitting it to become contaminated with other instincts, to the impairment of its efficiency. It ought to be free to face the materials it manipulates as brute fact. But in the periods of savagery and barbarism man perversely imputed anthropomorphic character to brute fact—a tendency everywhere injurious, but less serious in the domain of plant and animal breeding than in handicraft. This is the reason, according to Veblen, why neolithic man made so much greater progress in agriculture and stock-breeding than in the mechanic arts. The dolicho-blond mutant has always been relatively free from mysticism: this is why the people of western Europe have made greater mechanical progress than any other stock of men.

In the handicraft era of early modern times the instinct of workmanship gradually disentangled itself from anthropomorphic and mystical bias and built up its technology on a matter-of-fact basis. This, one infers, was the dolicho-blond's golden age. But his technology got away from him. It generated more and more complicated mechanisms, ownership of which was beyond the reach of the simple craftsman. Thus the advent of the capitalist entrepreneur became inevitable. Technology remained with the worker, but its usufruct and control passed into the hands of the capitalist. But the capitalist cares nothing for human serviceability. His concern is with money-making alone, and money is to be made out of disaster as well as out of service to humanity.

How does it stand now with the instinct of workmanship? It is obviously hanging in the air. The workman still has it, but whether he can use it lies in the discretion of the money kings. The instinct is

ineradicable, to be sure, but deprived of its opportunity for natural functioning, it falls into abeyance. Other instincts, such as those leading to competitive expenditure and conspicuous waste, become dominant even among the workers. In the circumstances, how shall we survive?

Fortunately, conviction is not necessary to the enjoyment of Veblen. One may follow him through the trackless jungles of his anthropology, epistemology and universal history without necessarily getting lost. After all, there is something in all this. You cannot read this book without becoming aware of hosts of problems on which you would gladly have more light. And it goes without saying, you cannot read the book without conceiving an admiration for the sheer intellectual power of the author. Your admiration extends even to his style, baffling and shiftily as it is. You gasp at his facility in handling polysyllabic and recondite words, as at the feats of a sword-swallower. And you pray that his style may not spread as an infection among the social philosophers to come.

ALVIN S. JOHNSON.

LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY.

Civilization and Climate. By ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON.

New Haven, Yale University Press, 1915—xii, 333 pp.

From the days of Aristotle to those of Montesquieu and Buckle there have been men who believed that climate, if not the most important factor in determining the status of civilization, is at least one of the most important factors. Apart from expressing certain obvious relations between climate and civilization, these beliefs, for the most part, have merely attained the position of interesting hypotheses. The new science of geography, however, is making an earnest attempt to test both old and new hypotheses of this nature. In this attempt the author of *Civilization and Climate*, Mr. Ellsworth Huntington, has taken a prominent part. For two years he was a member of the Pumpelly expedition sent to Turkestan in 1903 by the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Later he joined the Yale Expedition to Palestine. Still later he conducted special investigations in the drier portions of North and Central America. In his earlier books, *The Pulse of Asia*, *Palestine and Its Transformation* and *The Climatic Factor*, Mr. Huntington has set forth many important theories derived from these investigations. Possibly the most important theory is what he terms the "pulsatory hypothesis." This hypothesis is that, although in general the past was moister than the present, changes in the amount of humidity have taken place irregularly in great waves. A shifting of the earth's climatic zones