

*Customary Acres and Their Historical Importance.* By FREDERICK SEEBOHM. New York, Longmans, Green and Company, 1914.—xiii, 274 pp.

These unfinished essays are a labyrinth of detail. Nowhere in the text or in a table are the facts gathered together so as to be easily comprehensible, and the cautious inferences expressed by the author are evidently but a small portion of what was in his mind. The promised chapter showing "how far further light has been shed by the facts examined upon the position of the open-field system of husbandry as an important factor in economic history," was never written.

It will be remembered that Dr. Seebohm held the view that the manor could not have been derived from the tribal systems of landholding in Britain, but was the result of conquest. The first part of this volume is devoted to the presentation of evidence of continuity between tribal agriculture and the village community. Whatever changes conquest made in the organization, the ancient system of agriculture was retained in part, at least. The eight-ox plow team serves as the connecting link between the two systems.

The most striking fact established in the second part of the book is the identity of the old English mile and the Gallic *leuga*. Seventeenth-century itineraries and old mile-stones show that the itinerary measure of ancient Britain was the same as that of ancient Gaul. Great emphasis is also given to the study of a group of customary acres which is traced through Britain and Armorica back to the plains of the Danube, and by another route into the Po Valley. The mathematical relation between these acres is such as to constitute evidence for some sort of historical connection between the peoples who settled these regions. The Armorican and British acres are equal in area but different in form. No explanation of this difference is given.

The book abounds in metrological facts whose historical significance, if they have any, is not explained. For instance, the square of the furrow of the Breton *arpent* in its normal form of 1x5 contains 9 Egyptian *khets*. This furrow is, moreover, equal to one-tenth of one-half of the diagonal of the square *leuga*. The furrows of most of the customary acres are even divisions of the *leuga* or of the diagonal of the square *leuga*. Some of these facts are undoubtedly important. It remains for a competent student to organize and interpret this collection of material before its historical value can be known.

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*The Social Problem, A Constructive Analysis.* By CHARLES A. Ellwood. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1915.—xii, 255 pp.

The social problem, as conceived by Professor Ellwood, is the problem of the relations of men to one another. All problems arising out of human association are interdependent, and in all their complexity there is a fundamental unity. As the elements of the problem are continually changing, each generation must face it anew. For our generation the responsibility is unusually heavy, for not only has the essential rottenness of some of the bases of our civilization been exposed by the great convulsion in Europe, but through the development of the social sciences we are in a position to reach a rational solution of the problem. The future course of civilization is not predetermined, and even a reversion to barbarism is within the bounds of possibility.

The social problem cannot be stated in the terms of any one set of factors, whether physical, economic, or spiritual, and an attempt to ignore or subordinate any of the fundamental elements will lead to inadequate programs of social readjustment. First of all, the historical elements must be taken into account. Western civilization has inherited its basic traditions from antagonistic cultures of the past. Its religious and ethical tradition is of Hebrew origin, its philosophic and esthetic tradition is Greek, its legal and political tradition is the outgrowth of Roman imperialism, and its tradition of personal liberty is a heritage from the ancient Teutons. In addition to the traditional elements, the problem involves the physical and biological elements, which have come into being with the development of modern science; the economic elements, which have become more numerous and more vital with the development of capitalism; and the spiritual and ideal elements growing out of the social religion and humanitarianism of the nineteenth century.

The solution of the problem must come through the education of the young; transformation of the subjective environment of ideals and values in society; and the development of a well-balanced program of social progress. Practically, the solution depends upon the finding and training of wise and far-seeing leaders.

Professor Ellwood does not attempt to elaborate a program of social readjustment. He simply calls attention to the unity of the social problem and suggests how sociology may aid in its solution.

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