

amount of space. The matters chiefly taken up, region by region, are the origins of the modern land system, the prevailing forms of ownership and tenure, the condition of the rural laborers, and the amount and character of regulation by the state. Not much is said that is really new, and one often wishes that the author had permitted himself freer range. Nevertheless for what it purports to be, namely, an outline sketch, the account given is admirable; and it will be of much value to beginners in the field.

The remainder of the book deals with the emancipation of the peasantry in the later eighteenth century and after—in Savoy, France, western Germany, Prussia, the Baltic lands, Austria-Hungary and Russia. So far as western Europe, at all events, is concerned, the motives for liberation are found almost equally in humanitarian considerations and economic necessity. The processes of liberation as they worked themselves out in the several lands are outlined, and the consequences for the peasantry are in each case described; though here again the treatment is sometimes so brief as to contain little or nothing that is new to the well-informed student of the subject. Ample references guide, however, to more elaborate or specialized discussions.

The reader who wants an orderly account, within brief compass, of the whole sweep of modern European agrarian history will find it in this book; the professional student of economic history will need only to check up Professor Sée's views on unsettled and controverted points.

FREDERIC A. OGG

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

The House of Commons and Monarchy. By HILAIRE BELLOC.
London, George Allen and Unwin, 1920.—188 pp.

Mr. Belloc sketches his argument in this fashion (pp. 13-14) :

The House of Commons, though containing a representative element, was, and is, essentially not a representative body, but an Oligarchy; that is, a small body of men segregated from the mass of the citizens and renewing itself. But no Oligarchy works (that is, can be morally accepted or exercise authority) unless it is an Aristocracy. Mere Oligarchy, the mere rule of a clique without the excuse of an imputed excellence, will never be tolerated among men. The whole meaning of Aristocracy is the provision of a sort of worship addressed to the few that govern. Therefore the House of Commons was vigorous and healthy in its function only so long as it was the aristocratic organ of an aristocratic State. . . . Upon the failure of the aristo-

cratic quality of the House of Commons, upon the decline of that body into a clique no longer respected, its moral authority disappeared, and, with the moral authority, disappeared its power of government. . . . In seeking an issue we shall find that no external reform, nor any act from within, can restore an organism so far decayed as is the House of Commons today. We shall further find that no subsidiary body, or bodies, such as a Trades Council or other Chambers, can take its *sovereign* place. It must be replaced, and can only be replaced in this Great State by that which is the only alternative to Aristocracy in a Great State, I mean a Monarchy. If some form of Monarchy does not succeed to the lost inheritance of the House of Commons, the State will lose its greatness.

Mr Belloc is an adept in the art of salesmanship. For the moment, while the spell of his fluency lasts, he can make a piece of shoddy goods look extremely attractive. Master of the old scholastic processes, he has no trouble in establishing the most extravagant positions; and in this volume, as in *The Servile State*, though the goods remain unsold in the end, we come perilously near to buying them and entertain not a little admiration for the genius that subdued our critical faculties. But why, one asks, after examining seriously the argument and the supporting facts, why does genius exhaust itself on such futilities? Why does Mr. Belloc so often give the impression that the character of his materials is unimportant to him or even that he prefers to sell shoddy as the medium best calculated to establish his superiority as a salesman?

It would be easy to uncover in this volume false premises, wild exaggerations, and distortions of fact; but criticism must lie chiefly against the lack of broad vision that disfigures the argument. It may quite well be that the House of Commons, once "the most absolute and the strongest prince on earth", is discredited and done for. It may quite well be that monarchy affords the only safe refuge. But the author, treating his problem as a purely local English problem, has overlooked the facts which in America or France or Italy, indeed throughout the Western world, might well have made his investigation something more than an exercise in dialectics. The decay of representative assemblies is a universal phenomenon; indeed the House of Commons, because of its subordination to the executive, has betrayed its incompetence less openly than other assemblies. This universal phenomenon cannot be derived from the decline of the aristocratic temper in English society. It has doubtless a complex derivation. But two points emerge above all the subjacent mass of uncertain evidence: since the Industrial

Revolution law-making has become too specialized, too technical for men of mere average ability and average experience; and, secondly, the social conflict, which dominates the serious thought of the time, has escaped the control of parliaments. Mr. Belloc can see nothing of this sort; and upon the evidence which he adduces we can believe no more in the imminence of monarchy than in the approaching depression of the masses to the servile status of ancient times.

EDWARD MCCHESENEY SAIT

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Prácticas Parlamentarias; Las Asambleas Legislativas, Tomo IV, El Uso de la Palabra y la Disciplina. By VICENTE PARDO SUAREZ. Havana, Bouza y Ca., 1921.—259 pp.

This is the fourth of a series of works on parliamentary practice by the Chief Clerk of the Cuban House of Representatives. The first dealt with the quorum, resolutions, and the three readings of a bill. The second dealt with legislative immunities, organization, and duration of sessions. The third discussed the constitutional attributes of the legislature. The present volume takes up the rules of debate and the power of discipline. It follows the plan of the earlier volumes in presenting a comparative survey of the practice in regard to these matters in the leading countries of the world. In the list of countries considered all the Latin-American Republics are included, with the exception of Nicaragua and Venezuela, and in addition Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, France, Hungary, England, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland and the United States of America.

After a summary of provisions governing the rules of debate and the disciplinary power of legislative bodies by countries, the author makes a general summary of the leading features derived from his survey, and follows this by his own conclusions as to the best regulations to be adopted for legislative assemblies with reference to these points. The limited extent of the book necessarily makes for a rather sketchy treatment both of the descriptive and of the constructive portions of the work. Nevertheless, the volume has value and interest to students of political science because of its convenient compilation of parliamentary practice, as well as because of the views of a close and first-hand student of these matters with relation to the principles involved.

HERMAN G. JAMES

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS