

ASPECTS
OF THE
SOCIAL PROBLEM

BY VARIOUS WRITERS

EDITED BY
BERNARD BOSANQUET

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK

1895

All rights reserved

PREFACE

THOUGH the public mind is full of the problems of social reform, it is remarkable how little literature, combining trained observation in the social field with reasonable theory, is available for the general reader. The present volume of studies has been brought together with the view of helping to fill this gap, and of indicating, however imperfectly, the sort of work by which it should further be filled. The contributors may claim that they have all attempted to qualify as social students in two definite ways. They all possess prolonged and systematic experience in practical efforts to improve the condition of the poor, and they have all paid careful attention to the methods and principles of social reform. Their studies, written on different occasions, with different purposes, and drawn from different fields of observation, appear, when compared together, to have a single principle at their root. The writers have seen and felt as well as reflected that the individual member of society is above all things a character and a will, and that society as a whole is a structure in which will and character "are the blocks with which we build."

Among the influences which operate upon the will, they of course take note of some that are due to material or economic conditions. At any given moment such circumstances are apt to present themselves as fixed quantities and irresistible causes; but in watching the

social process, life by life and generation by generation, the skilled observer becomes aware that circumstance is modifiable by character, and so far as circumstance is a name for human action, by character alone.

It is this principle which operates in the following papers through all the differences of their subject-matter. It shows itself in the sympathetic scrutiny of the skilled helpers of the poor, who, in their analyses of causes of distress or methods of reform, insist on entering into the mind, habits, and feelings of the classes under consideration, and on comprehending their lives from the beginning to the end. In the treatment of history and statistics the same tendency may be noted. The statistical student especially, who is trained by practical contact with the effort to help the poor, is led to plead for better statistical instruments and a finer use of them, because the human mind is so delicate and so complex a growth. Not even the ways of birds can be understood from mere books and measurements, and man "is of more value than many sparrows." If political economy is to form part of a true social science, its abstractions must be criticised in the light of a more complete and a finer experience. No science of organisms can dispense with highly-trained observation of life. The scientific logician will corroborate this view. To count means to count something, and all inference from enumeration depends on the precise nature of that which is enumerated. It is long since Lotze drew attention to the readiness with which this fact is forgotten.

The student of ethics, if he has any practical training, will confirm the principle which experience teaches. Some readers will indeed remember how, in Goethe's play, a son cannot be got to understand that the grand titles which he has learnt at school belong to his own father who is standing before him; and so the ethical teacher, who argues all day

long that ethical forces are the real powers of the world, is apt to shrink and turn aside when he is assured by the student of life: "Only give scope to character, and it will unfailingly pull us through." And yet this is simply the fact which he has continually been proving.

It should be definitely recognised as the extreme of folly to despise the material conditions of life. The principle here suggested is not, as often misrepresented, that some undefined miracle of moral agency is loftier and better than any intelligible causation. The point is simply that all conditions practically mean human action, and all human action issues from the *whole* disposition of human minds. Therefore the disposition of the mind as a whole is the determining condition of all conditions, and though men may suffer through the character of others, they can gain and retain no permanent advantage excepting through their own. Now characters or dispositions react altogether differently to conditions which are quantitatively and materially the same, according to the means by which they come, and their consequent relation to the feelings and expectations of the persons concerned. Help from a dutiful son may put heart into a man to struggle through his distress; the same money, thrown to him by a stranger, may crush him to the earth. And thus a well-meaning attempt to effect an improvement may quickly quadruple the evil, and such a result is observed with terrible frequency; whereas, when approached in a different way, the evil may vanish before a sure and persistent growth of good. The difference between two such attempts will be found to depend mainly on the different relation of the methods adopted to the character both of those to be benefited and of any who have been accomplices in the mischief which it is desired to arrest.

In social reform, then, character is the condition of

conditions, and this is the principle which the following studies illustrate in observation, in criticism, and in theory. In the statistical papers the numerical tables have been reduced to a minimum, and it is hoped that these articles will be found as attractive as they are important.

The thanks of the contributors are due to the editors of the following periodicals for permitting the republication of articles which have appeared in them:—*The Contemporary Review* (1), *The National Review* (1), *The Economic Journal*¹ (2), *The International Journal of Ethics* (1), *The Charity Organisation Review* (2). Nine of the papers are now published for the first time; two have appeared in Reports of Poor Law Conferences.

BERNARD BOSANQUET,

Editor.

¹ These appeared as three separate articles.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. THE DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP	I
By B. BOSANQUET	
2. THE DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP— <i>Continued</i>	14
By B. BOSANQUET	
3. THE CHILDREN OF WORKING LONDON	28
By H. DENDY	
4. THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN	46
By M. M'CALLUM	
5. THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRY	63
By H. DENDY	
6. MARRIAGE IN EAST LONDON	75
By H. DENDY	
7. THE INDUSTRIAL RESIDUUM	82
By H. DENDY	
8. CHARACTER IN ITS BEARING ON SOCIAL CAUSATION	103
By B. BOSANQUET	

x	ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL PROBLEM	PAGE
9.	OLD PENSIONERS	118
	By H. DENDY	
10.	PAUPERISM AND OLD-AGE PENSIONS	126
	By C. S. LOCH	
11.	THE MEANING AND METHODS OF TRUE CHARITY	167
	By H. DENDY	
12.	SOME ASPECTS OF REFORM	180
	By M. M'CALLUM	
13.	ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH POOR LAW	195
	By H. DENDY	
14.	SOME CONTROVERTED POINTS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF POOR RELIEF	226
	By C. S. LOCH	
15.	RETURNS AS AN INSTRUMENT IN SOCIAL SCIENCE	268
	By C. S. LOCH	
16.	SOCIALISM AND NATURAL SELECTION	289
	By B. BOSANQUET	
17.	THE PRINCIPLE OF PRIVATE PROPERTY	308
	By B. BOSANQUET	
18.	THE REALITY OF THE GENERAL WILL	319
	By B. BOSANQUET	
	INDEX	333