

does not mean less work for the student ; because the man who is preparing himself for political life, or for journalistic or other work, has no easy task. We hope that our Senate will soon recognize this important factor of college work, and will identify itself more with the means taken for its accomplishment.

A SUGGESTIVE SERIES OF ESSAYS.

ANY book which clearly indicates the direction in which the stream of thought of the present day is flowing, or is likely to flow, deserves the careful attention of students. Especially is this the case when the book proceeds from the cultured youth of a country, for the thoughts of the thinking young men of one generation are not unlikely to be the prevalent views of the next. For these reasons readers of the JOURNAL will no doubt be interested in a forthcoming volume of essays, written by a little group of young Englishmen, which will show among other things that the sway of the depressing school of thought represented by such names as Spencer, Bain and Lewes is not quite so universal in the land of its birth as people are apt to suppose. There are to be nine writers in all, by each of whom a special task has been undertaken, and their essays while reflecting individual divergencies of thought will have this common bond of union, that they are all written from the point of view of what for want of a better word may be called Idealism. The unity underlying all the endeavours of men, and making them human, will be brought out by a discussion of the literary, scientific, economical, social and political aspects of life. The work is also to contain a preface by Professor Caird, of Glasgow University, in which he will take occasion to say a word about the late Professor Green, to whom the work is to be dedicated.

In one of the essays, advanced sheets of which have been received, Mr. James Bonar, a graduate of Glasgow and Oxford, treats of "The Struggle for Existence" in a way that is well fitted to make the reader look impatiently for the rest of the series. Its general aim is to show that the desire of gain or well-being, while it is a legitimate end of human endeavour, is only truly viewed when it is regarded as one of the aspects of social life. A sketch of the Modern State is accordingly drawn, and an attempt is made to indicate the limits of State interference with the individual. Mr. Bonar is too wise to adopt the extreme Individualism which would make the State merely the supreme Constable, and allow the 'struggle for existence' to rage unchecked. At the same time he says that 'laissez faire' or 'hands off' is the true principle of government in all the strata of society except the lowest. "Modern Society," he says, "instead of letting the struggle rage itself out in the lower strata, takes every possible pains to end it. It recognizes the claims of

weakness even more than the claims of strength, knowing that old strength can see to itself, while young strength, no less than young weakness, may be powerless without its 'Great-heart.' It 'honours all men,' and its schools and hospitals and charities are designed to raise the lowest of them to the true level of their manhood, and give to all the 'open career.' Like a wise parent, society will keep a tight hold on its children in their tender years; and it will gradually relax its hold as they grow mature and strong enough to take care of themselves."

The following extract will give some idea of the vigorous way in which the writer handles his theme. His style is always nervous and forcible, and compels the attention of the reader, but perhaps it carries to an extreme the method of allusion which young Oxonians have caught from the Master of Balliol.

"It is well to note that the phrase 'struggle for existence' is by no means free from ambiguity. We must not allow its great biological prestige to win it any uncritical indulgence in a region that is above biology. There is, undoubtedly, a sense in which the 'struggle for existence' is the essential condition of all progress. There is another sense in which the same statement is entirely false. It is false if 'existence' means 'bare life,' Starvation is no stimulus. The mere struggle for a bare existence, the effort to save oneself from starvation, never leads to progress, either in a society or in an individual. Wherever there is progress, there is something more spiritual at work than frantic or even deliberate efforts after self-preservation; and that is ideals, or at least ideas. If we throw a man into deep water and leave him there, his terrified struggling will not teach him to swim, though it may enable him to clutch the bank. The effort to make both ends meet, and the consciousness that even half a day's holiday would defeat the purpose, does not stimulate a man. He may become perfect through, that is to say, in the teeth of this suffering, but not by means of it. When people are told not to trust to the Poor Laws or to their neighbors to save them from destitution, this does not mean that if they are once thoroughly destitute they have the smallest power to save themselves. It is a common phrase that 'those nearest pauperism take least pains to avoid it.' The destitute man may never happen to become a pauper, and the habitual pauper may never allow himself to become destitute; but the wings are as effectually clipped by destitution as by indolence. Carry depression beyond a certain point, and it kills the power of effort by killing all hope; and the point is reached, if ever anywhere short of death, at the moment when the struggle of the human being becomes an endeavour not to gain abundance of life but an escape from death."

The new philosophical society could not do better than take up, and thoroughly discuss, this admirable essay.

W.

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