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ART. VI.—"THE STRENGTH OF THE PEOPLE."—II.

"Only let every worker among the poor, whatever his station may be, remember that the main good that he doeth, and by which he most emphatically acquits himself as the benefactor of the poor, is by working out this lesson in the midst of them, that their own resources are the best securities against want, and that they themselves might indeed be their own best benefactors."—*From Dr. Chalmers on "Charity."*

IN the former part of this paper we found that the great means of raising a man from the lower or animal life—that is, where life is governed merely by "instincts"—to the higher life—the rational, moral, and spiritual life—consisted in widening its "interests." We will now turn to Mrs. Bosanquet's treatment of this most important problem.

The section of the book which deals with "Interests" is a particularly difficult one to summarize, because the reasoning is so close and so condensed. The section opens with an apt quotation from Mill on "Liberty," which serves to indicate the direction of the writer's thought: "He who lets the world or his portion of it choose his plan of life for him has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation. He who chooses his plan for himself employs all his faculties. He must use observation to see, reasoning and judgment to foresee, activity to gather materials for decision, discrimination to decide, and, when he has decided, firmness and self-control to hold to his deliberate decision."

How to promote initiative appears now to be the question for solution. This leads to an interesting comparison between the way in which "intelligent" animals and "reasoning" men attempt to deal with difficulties to be overcome. The first use "the method of trial and error with the utilization of chance success—a somewhat clumsy process. . . . The second consider the problem in all its relations with a view to ascertaining the essential nature of the difficulty." Mrs. Bosanquet next examines the principle of association, long thought to be the only principle of mental development. But this principle is shown to be quite insufficient, because "it works most obviously and purely in those intelligences which never develop beyond a certain not very high limit." From this the writer proceeds to think of that factor in life which enables a thoughtful man to see a situation, not in fragments, but as a whole. This factor Mrs. Bosanquet calls a man's "interests." The term does not seem a very happily chosen one, but it is difficult to suggest one more appropriate; and Mrs. Bosanquet is careful to remind her readers that when she speaks, for instance, of "the interests which predominate in a man's mind," the term "does not necessarily mean his own interest

in the selfish sense." What the term really implies will best be gathered from a concrete example. How is rational action determined and rational life carried on? There is a result desired dictated by a man's "interests," and to that result the present situation does not correspond. "What is the missing factor which will produce what is wanted? What is the next step to take? To the man of practical ability with some object in view, the situation, seen not scrappily or dimly, but as a whole, itself suggests what is wanted to complete it, or the next step to take"—*e.g.*, "if a man is in poverty, he does not hang about waiting for something to turn up, but he seeks for work, . . . he sets himself to master the situation—in this case his particular corner of the labour market. The situation seen in this way will suggest to him the appropriate action." Now, Mrs. Bosanquet ventures upon at least a partial positive definition of the term: "The factor which gives the power to see things steadily and see them whole, which distinguishes the rational life, . . . is the 'interests' of life as distinct from its appetites."

If we know a man's interests, we know the man, for his interests will rule his actions, and we shall know whether or not the man will be an interest to us.

Here, again, arises an important question. Suppose a man has no interests; how is he to acquire these? for the "finding" of interests is generally the result of a highly-developed mind. Mrs. Bosanquet now draws attention to the contrast between appetites and interests. She shows that at every satisfaction the appetites cease, and that they recur again on the same level; "they contribute nothing towards raising the agent above the level of animal life." But suppose a man, in order to obtain his food, is driven to acquire some art or skill. The man who has to earn his living can never be entirely without interests. The responsibilities of the maintenance and education of a family should form a permanent interest to every parent, and should open his or her eyes to the importance of the future. Then, if a man is free to follow his interests, they lead him progressively to other and still wider interests.

It will at once be seen how all this bears upon the necessity of calling forth self-effort; how it at once condemns that removal of responsibilities which seems to be the inevitable result at once of the Poor Law and of private charity. The mere animal needs are temporarily or permanently satisfied. The man's interest in the maintenance or progress of himself or his family has gone.

After an extremely interesting section upon the importance of the formation of habits, in which also the effects of "routine" and "mechanical" work are discussed, we come to that

division of the introductory chapter which is entitled "Circumstances."

This section is of peculiar importance for two reasons: (1) From Mrs. Bosanquet's somewhat unusual, yet, I think, very useful, interpretation of the term; and (2) because of the very common tendency at the present time to make "circumstances," rather than nature or character, the scapegoat for the various ills from which the poor are suffering.

Mrs. Bosanquet insists that our "circumstances" are largely the result of our selective activity, and are those facts, selected from the multiplicity of detail amid which we live, which "interest" us. In her own words: "Throughout our life we are engaged in selecting from the infinite universe about us just what facts shall constitute our own little world, our circumstances; the rest we let go as irrelevant." Difference of "taste" or of "interests" she believes to be the chief element in determining a man's circumstances. This assertion is illustrated by noticing the differences, even among the poor, in the way in which money is spent, friends are chosen, and houses or "homes" (however poor) are clean and tidy, or dirty and full of disorder. To confirm the last assertion she quotes Miss Octavia Hill: "The people's homes are bad because they are badly built and arranged; they are tenfold worse because the tenants' habits and lives are what they are. Transplant them to-morrow to healthy and commodious houses, and they would pollute and destroy them." The same holds true of food, and drink, and recreation. These at present, in the vast majority of instances, are rather determined "by limited interests and desires than by any external scarcity." "If a man's interests were wider, the public-house and music-hall would not be the only sources of recreation." From experience we are driven to this conclusion: "A man's circumstances depend upon what he himself is." If he has no higher interests, his appetites and habits will make his circumstances. If we want to change a man's circumstances, we can only do this by putting some new interest in his mind.

Before closing the chapter, Mrs. Bosanquet deals with the question of the children. We all know the usual appeal of the so-called charitably disposed: "If you won't let us give to the parents, at any rate you will let us see that the children do not suffer or want." At first sight the appeal seems almost unanswerable, but a more intimate knowledge of the lives of the very poor, even of the degraded, shows how dangerous is the method suggested, viz., the relief of the parents from the responsibilities which Nature intended them to bear. Every intelligent worker of experience among the poor could give

proofs of this assertion. Here is one from my own experience. For many years I have been a manager of large elementary schools in which, in two contiguous buildings, "mixed departments" of every standard have been taught. In the one building no fees have been charged, in the other a fee varying from 3d. to 9d. has been paid. [The income of many of the parents of the children in the "free" department is quite as large as those in the fee-paying department.] In this department the average attendance of the children on the register varies from 91 to about 94 per cent.; while in the free department, even with the aid of attendance officer and magistrates, it rarely rises to 75 per cent. By the removal of fees, the sense of the responsibility of the parents for the education of their children has been weakened, and this is the result.

To-day the common cry is, "Let us try to influence the children." Mrs. Bosanquet believes "that little real effect can be produced upon the child at all except through the will of the parent." Does this, then, imply that we are "entangled in hopeless chain of cause and effect"? She thinks not, because the relation of parent and child is a reciprocal one; "the dependence of the child upon the parents is only the other side of the influence of the child as an interest in the parents' lives." Further, Mrs. Bosanquet believes that this mutual relation often fails of its regenerating effect owing to misguided interference: "The child is left under the influence of the parents, but they are tacitly or openly divested of all responsibility to it." Here again, in advising that appeal should be made to the parents rather than that concentration of effort should be directed upon the children, Mrs. Bosanquet traverses the opinion of many philanthropic workers; but the reasons she gives for this judgment are extremely strong.

To sum up the teaching of this valuable chapter: In dealing with those who need help and whom we desire to help, we seem face to face with two limits or barriers: first, the economic limit—*i.e.*, their monetary income; second, the limit fixed by their lack of interests. How are these limits to be extended, or these barriers broken down? The economic limit can only be extended by capacity and energy, and these, as we have seen, are largely governed by "interests"; so, the two limiting powers are in a very true sense only one. The powers for breaking down these barriers, Mrs. Bosanquet believes, are mainly three—viz., the "grace of God," the help of our teachers, and the schooling of our necessities. But are not these three powers again only one? What is the "grace of God" but the sum of those forces which conduce to the building up of true manhood and womanhood—the making of human life what it was meant to be? And are not "the help

of our teachers" and the "schooling of our necessities" two of the chiefest channels by which this Divine grace is ministered to us?

Here, then, seem to be indicated the lines upon which the true, wise, and well-instructed philanthropist will strive to act. One condition he will ever bear in mind—that neither any individual nor the community can "give" to any permanent advantage without at the same time *demanding* some exertion in accepting and assimilating on the part of the recipient; to give gratis is to give in vain.

I have dwelt at such length upon this introductory chapter because it contains the foundation principles upon which the rest of the book may be said to form a commentary or exposition. In chapter after chapter we have set before us proofs from experience, illustrations from history, or indications of opportunity for the application of these principles. These chapters contain records both of failure and success. Where there has been failure, it does seem as if it has almost universally arisen from neglect of the primary condition of the worker making effort to call out the response of *self-effort* on the part of those whom it has been desired to assist.

These various chapters are upon such subjects as "The Source of Poverty," where it is shown that the economic position of a class depends upon the moral qualities of individuals; "The Remedy," where the work of Dr. Chalmers is described at length; "The Economic Importance of the Family," where it is proved that the State can never be, or provide, a substitute for parents; "The Children," and their claims upon the community; "The Aged," under which the question of old age pensions is fully discussed.

The final chapter, which is very valuable, contains a summary of the argument, an examination of the principal forces affecting social reform, and a programme for social workers. Mrs. Bosanquet lays great stress on the fact that now it is in the midst of society as a whole that the industrial forces are working out their realization, and that now, owing to newspapers, books, meetings, and societies of various kinds, "society as a whole" has become an extremely sensitive medium to every movement which is taking place within it; and that what is termed "public opinion" may easily be "hasty, emotional, and ill advised" in its conclusions, whereas the problems waiting for solution are such as call for a disciplined and well-informed, because well-instructed, judgment. She believes that through the elections of those who have to administer the Poor Law it is the community as a whole who shall decide what the number of paupers in the country shall be. No one can, during the last few months,

have read the daily press upon the subject of pauperism—no one can have read the constant, almost innumerable, appeals for relief—without being struck with the fact that the attitude of the press is much more that of an advocate, whose purpose is to present a situation vividly, than that of a judge, whose duty is to see that all the evidence available is forthcoming, and who must then declare the law.

In this connection, the importance of the following words cannot be exaggerated: "Perhaps the greatest obstacle to getting a sound public opinion on matters of social policy lies in the general ignoring of the fact that scientific principles are as much involved in them as in chemistry or architecture, or any other of the arts of life."

When will people learn and recognise in practice that there are, governing the well-being of society, laws as fixed and immutable as are the laws of physics or mechanics—as the law of refraction or the law of gravity? The data, from which these laws are being proved beyond all doubt, are strewn over the pages of history, and they are still accumulating in the experience of careful workers. But many workers on behalf of the poor are either ignorant of, or they are careless with regard to, the lessons of history. So careless are they that, as Mrs. Bosanquet says, "every generation or two begins afresh; the old knowledge and experience are only regained by passing through the old suffering."

Hence we see the vital importance of trustworthy and scientific teaching on the principles of Social Science, and the equal importance of trying to get people to take up this study, which, as Mrs. Bosanquet shows, must be pursued in two directions. "In the first place, we must learn how human nature in the individual man or woman reacts under certain conditions; in the second place, we must learn how causes take effect in society as a whole." The first of these lines of study is, of course, psychological, and though Mrs. Bosanquet does not here name the word, no one who reads the book can fail to see how important she regards the provoking of those wise reactions at which the psychologist in education aims.

Towards the end of the chapter Mrs. Bosanquet speaks of the opportunity which the Church possesses in giving help towards educating people in this social work. She believes the Church might be far more helpful than she actually is, and she thinks that "while the Church of to-day certainly cannot be accused of any neglect of the people," the methods by which the Church works are not the wisest. Like others, Mrs. Bosanquet deplores the want of interest on the part of the people in the Church's work, and this, she believes, arises from the failure of the Churches generally to make claims

upon the people. "The Church which is to save the people . . . will be not only *for* the people, but *of* the people." "The great spiritual leaders have always been those who made great demands upon their followers; who knew that they could not give except to those who were strenuously exerting themselves to partake; and who knew that the less you ask of human nature, the deeper it falls into apathy and indifference."

These words may be said to contain the moral of the book, the conclusion of the matter. The book is certainly one to be studied by all who desire to help those who seem to stand in need of help. We may not agree with all the writer's assertions. Some will doubtless think she has formed too high an estimate of the strength of the people if only they could be aroused to put forth that strength wisely and in the right direction. These may regard her faith in the possibilities of human nature as too great. But the men and women of faith have history on their side; more than one nation which has seemed "nigh unto destruction" has ere now, by wise guidance, risen to a new life of prosperity and usefulness.

Of all men, it behoves the Christian—one who believes in the possibility of "man's remake in Christ"—not to despair; and I believe that those who have faith in this, rather than in merely material alleviations of human needs, will find that the writer of this admirable book is on their side.

W. Edward Chadwick.

Art. VII.—THE MONTH.

THE past month has been marked by events of unusual importance and significance in the affairs of the Church. On March 13 the Church Discipline Bill, promoted by Mr. MacIver and Mr. Austin Taylor, together with a Bill of a very different character, but with a similar purpose, introduced by Mr. Cripps, came on for second reading in the House of Commons, and, in anticipation of the debate, a remarkable movement was set on foot in the House of Commons. A deputation of more than a hundred Members of Parliament, headed by Sir John Dorington, waited on the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to put before them, in Sir John's words, "what they believed to be the views held by their constituents as to the present condition of affairs in the Church of England." "They had been brought together," he said, "in consequence of the feeling of alarm at the position into which the Church had got in the estimation of a very