

is greater than the progress of other countries. And let us enter-  
tain the further supposition that, if the new inquiries which  
Mr. Bowley suggests were carried out, the hitherto unseen economic  
hemisphere should prove less fair than that which has been  
observed. There would still remain the question whether the  
remedies proposed by Protectionists would correct the relative  
or absolute *malaise* of trade. This is a question that Mr. Bowley  
has very properly not touched. It belongs to political economy  
rather than to statistics.

*Ireland in the New Century.* By the Right Honourable Sir  
HORACE PLUNKETT, K.C.V.O., F.R.S. (London: Murray.  
1904. Pp. 300.)

SIR HORACE PLUNKETT'S book belongs to the art, rather than  
the science, of Political Economy. It is related to the ordinary  
treatises, as the prescription for a particular case is related to  
a demonstration in anatomy. The case is a very complicated  
one; the *malaise* cannot be ascribed to any single cause.

There is first "the influence of politics on the Irish mind."  
The absence of captains of industry from the councils of the  
political leaders is regretted. The methods employed for the  
attainment of Home Rule have been injurious to the industrial  
character of the people. Agitation, as Thomas Davis said, in  
a passage aptly quoted by our author, "leads to much disorganisa-  
tion, great unhappiness, wounds upon the soul of a country which  
sometimes are worse than the thinning of a people by war."  
"The practice of boycotting," observes Sir Horace Plunkett, "is  
the very antithesis of industry, creating an atmosphere in which  
industry and enterprise simply cannot live."

It is not often that one whose opinion is as valuable as our  
author's has the courage to express it as openly. When the  
Homeric prophet is urged to declare the cause from which his  
countrymen are perishing, he will not speak until he is secured  
against the wrath of a man whose power over the Argives is  
very great. But the revealer of unwelcome truths about the cause  
of Irish distress does not hesitate to offend two powerful orders  
of men, the priests as well as the political leaders. He com-  
plains of excessive and extravagant church-building at the ex-  
pense of poor communities. Referring to the multiplication of  
elaborate monastic and conventual institutions, he says: "I  
cannot believe that so large an addition to the 'unproductive'  
classes is economically sound, and I have no doubt at all that the

competition with lay teachers of celibates living in community is excessive and economically injurious." A more sweeping condemnation is based on "the reliance of that religion on authority, its repression of individuality, and its complete shifting of what I may call the moral centre of gravity to a future existence." To these causes are attributed a "listlessness and apathy in regard to economic improvement which amounts to a form of fatalism, and in backward districts a survival of superstition which saps all will and purpose."

Defects in the educational system of Ireland are pointed out with equal freedom. Education has been in Ireland too long a thing apart from the economic realities of the country; not adapted to correct "the defects in the industrial character of our people which debar them from successful competition with other countries."

Though the causes of malady are manifold, the remedy is comparatively simple: to improve the industrial character of the people. Means of effecting this improvement are afforded by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Education, of which Sir Horace Plunkett is the originator and president. As the scope and functions of this Department have already been described in the *ECONOMIC JOURNAL*, both by the Chief himself and by his able lieutenant, Father Finlay (*ECONOMIC JOURNAL*, Vol. VI. p. 205; Vol. VII. p. 131), we need not repeat what has been so well expressed. Suffice it to say that the statistics of continued progress are brought up to date in the work before us. Attention may also be called to the lively picture of the matters with which the Department has to deal, in particular the applications for assistance which pour in upon the Chief—"himself" in the racy vernacular. A stockowner from a remote district telegraphs, "My pigs are all spotted. What shall I do?" Another writes, "Al the pigs about here is dying in showers. Send down a Vit at oncet." We have not space to reproduce the interviews with typical callers—the man who has invented a method of utilising bogs, and the man who wants his daughter to be trained as a poultry instructress.

Hearing how much is done by the Department, the economist, indoctrinated with the principle of *laissez-faire*, may be seized with apprehension. But on examination he will find that the danger of doing too much has been anticipated by the Chief of the Department—that he has carefully considered what Burke calls "one of the finest problems in legislation," to determine what the State should do for the people and what it should let

the people do for themselves. Other parties too, besides the economist, who may at first have feared for their favourite cause or peculiar tenet, will find that the author's frank criticisms are directed to the improvement of industrial character, without bias in favour of Orangemen against Catholics or Unionists against Nationalists. Trojan and Tyrian have seldom been treated so "indifferently." To the even-handed criticism which has been bestowed all-round on Irish institutions it has been archly suggested that there is one exception—"The Department." To us it appears that a little parental partiality towards a successful creation is natural and venial, and not much calculated to impair the general worth of our author's judgments. If we are right in ascribing a peculiar value to these judgments as being based on a large practical experience and expressed with unique fearlessness, they cannot fail to be highly prized by such as are disengaged from party contests. In that class we may include Posterity; who will perhaps find in these pages a picture of Irish conditions as instructive, if not as artistic, as that which is presented in Berkeley's *Querist*. If our author's words prove as effectual as his work, and the effect of both is as permanent as it is beneficial, he will deserve the prophetic encomium which was bestowed upon him in a recent debate by the Chief Secretary for Ireland: the name of Horace Plunkett will be remembered, "enshrined in History with the names of Arthur Young and Thomas Drummond."

*The Theory of Loan Credit in Relation to Corporation Economics.*

By J. PEASE NORTON. (American Economic Association. 1903. Pp. 56.)

MR. NORTON is favourably known to students of abstract economics by his brilliant attempt to apply the higher theory of probabilities to the phenomena of the money market. The very competent reviewer of that essay in the *ECONOMIC JOURNAL* (1902, p. 518) was justified in expressing a wish for "more such studies." This wish is now fulfilled by Mr. Norton's method of representing the distinction—one of degree rather than kind—between the fixed and running expenses of a business. "The correct statement is that expenses may be ranged along a frequency distribution according to the ratio which they vary with output. The vertical scale [the ordinate] in the above figure [a curve of a kind familiar to the student of probabilities] represents amount of expense, and the horizontal axis [the abscissa] the form-rate at which expense