seem more conducive to the well-being of the nation as a whole to take measures for increasing the material means of a noble and refined life for all classes, and especially the poorest, than to secure a sudden and very great diminution of labour of those who are not now weighed down by their work. . . . It is the young whose faculties and activities are of the highest importance, both to the moralist and the economist." The author of the *Principles of Economics* yields to no utopian Socialist in the ardent desire that the curse of poverty should be remedied. But he is slow to adopt the nostra in which ready writers deal. However anxious for the health of the body economic, he does not rush for the "potent medicines of the charlatan." Before adopting the violent constriction recommended by the quack bonesetter, the skilful anatomist considers what strains will be transmitted through the whole frame. He desires with the desire of an enthusiast that the opportunity of a life worthy of man should be obtained by all; he deliberates upon the means to that supreme end with the cautious sagacity of an economist whose work is probably freer from mistake than any other equally extensive investigation in the most bewildering of the sciences.

The Elements of Politics. By HENRY SIDGWICK. (Macmillan & Co.), 1891.

POLITICS and political economy have more than a name in common. Politics include what Dr. Sidgwick has called "the Art of Political Economy." There are indeed who maintain that the only action of the statesman respecting the production and distribution of wealth is to refrain from action: that the art of political economy is to suppress art. But this unqualified principle of *laissez-faire* is far from Dr. Sidgwick. Even assuming that to maximise the amount of wealth irrespectively of its distribution were the only object, he denies that the policy of let alone would be the best means of realising the end proposed. He brings up again against the position of the extreme individualist the weighty masses of argument which were marshalled in his *Political Economy*. There is first the consideration that "the individualistic argument, even if fully granted, would only justify appropriation to the labourer, and free exchange, of the utilities produced by labour; it affords no direct justification for the appropriation of natural resources." Again, individuals may not be able to remunerate themselves by the sale of utilities which it

is for the general interest that they should render to society, in cases like the following: forests maintained by private landowners who cannot exact any return for the benefit conferred on the community by the favourable influence of the forests upon the climate; or advances in scientific knowledge which are not likely to remunerate the discoverer if treated as marketable commodities. Again, there is the waste of time and trouble in forming business connections which seems inevitable under a competitive system—the sums spent in advertisements and in the promotion of joint-stock companies. Again, in the absence of governmental control the evils of monopoly may become rampant; especially in these days of trusts and combinations. Again, it may be the interest of all shopkeepers to close their shops on Sundays and holidays, provided the closing were universal; but, without the enforcement of that proviso, it may be the interest of a few to steal custom by keeping their shops open; Sunday labour being taken as representative of a class of cases among which our author would perhaps, like Mill (*Political Economy*, Book V. ch. ix. p. 12), include the regulation of the hours of labour. Again, the Government, being financially more stable than private individuals and companies, can give completer security to creditors. Again, it may be profitable to the community to spend public funds on the education of labourers, but not the interest of the labourers themselves or their parents to trench upon a narrow income for a gain so distant. By these and other arguments, stated more fully in his earlier work, Dr. Sidgwick establishes the conclusion thus announced in his particularly lucid Table of Contents: "Abstract theory shows several cases in which the individual's interest does not tend in the direction most conducive to the common interest—even assuming that utility to society is accurately measured by market value." The bourgeois doctrinaire is overthrown even upon the ground which he has himself chosen.

But of course that is a very narrow ground, in which the philosophic mind cannot consent to rest. The end of politics according to Dr. Sidgwick is the greatest quantity, not of wealth, but of happiness. In applying the greatest happiness principle Dr. Sidgwick follows Bentham rather than recent utilitarians. Like Bentham, Dr. Sidgwick derives his precepts from the pure fount of utilitarian first principle, without admixture of turbid elements from alien sources. J. S. Mill, when the question rises why equality should be aimed at, affirms, rather than demonstrates, "the equal claim of everybody to all the means of

happiness" (*Utilitarianism*, p. 93). But Dr. Sidgwick follows Bentham in deducing the equal distribution of wealth from the principle of greatest happiness combined with the law of diminishing utility, to use Jevons' phrase; or what Bentham calls, in a passage quoted by Dr. Sidgwick, the "pathological propositions upon which the good of equality is founded," viz. that *ceteris paribus* "each portion of wealth has as corresponding to it a portion" or rather a "certain chance" of happiness: that "of two individuals with equal fortunes he that has the most wealth has the greatest chance of happiness," but that "the excess in happiness of the richer will not be so great as the excess of his wealth." This reasoning has appeared foolishness to some—too simple for the metaphysician, too moderate for the demagogue [1] —but it is the reasoning of Bentham and Dr. Sidgwick.

The Bentham-Sidgwick argument would lead direct to socialism, but that the measures commonly proposed for equalising wealth are fatal to the other factor of the utilitarian end, quantity of wealth. Dr. Sidgwick is of opinion "that—leaving out of account the disturbance of the transition—the realisation of the collectivist idea at the present time or in the proximate future would arrest industrial progress; and that the comparative equality in incomes which it would bring about would be an equality in poverty:—even supposing population not to increase at a greater rate than the present, as it must be expected to do if work and adequate sustenance were secured to all members of the community, unless measures of a novel kind were taken to prevent the increase." Accordingly, like the Benthamites, Dr. Sidgwick is jealous of the rights of property. He more than once observes that the proposal to confiscate existing vested interests in land is unworthy of serious discussion.

However, he goes so far as to admit "that at least a removal of the extreme inequalities, found in the present distribution of wealth and leisure, would be desirable, if it could be brought about without any material repression of the free development of individual energy and enterprise, which the individualistic system aims at securing." Especially when it is taken into

[1] In a passage of profound ethical and political interest (ch. xxx. p. 2), Dr. Sidgwick says: "I do not think that Bentham, when he said, 'everybody to count for one,' intended to deny (1) that one person may be more capable of happiness than another; or (2) that, if so, the former's happiness is more important than the latter's as an element of general happiness. . . . To aim at equality in distribution of happiness may obviously be incompatible with aiming at the greatest happiness on the whole, if the happiness of one person can ever be increased by diminishing to a less extent the happiness of another already less happy."

account that, as above observed, property in natural resources has upon strictly individualistic principles no direct justification, some expenditure of public money on objects which may be considered socialistic is defensible "so far as this is done without such heavy taxation as materially diminishes the stimulus to industry and thrift of the persons taxed."

It follows that the interposition of Government may be required not only to increase the amount, but also to improve the distribution of wealth. Which motive predominates it is often difficult to decide. Thus the expenditure of public funds in educating the children of the labouring poor both conduces to efficiency of labour and promotes the equality of opportunity. No handy rule, no simple method for weighing the evils and advantages of governmental action, can be given. "I do not think that any general rules can be laid down for determining the limits of such interference: all we can say is that a milder degree of interference, if effective, is generally to be preferred." For example, with respect to "the burning question of Free Trade," it is not to be denied that it may be economically gainful to a country to resist by import duties an industrial change which might lead to the emigration of its population and wealth; and to introduce an industrial change by protecting young industries. But, as such cases are practically rare, upon the whole it is concluded that modern states had better refrain from attempts to protect native industry, "not because it is impossible that such protection, if judiciously introduced and limited, might not be occasionally advantageous to the protecting country, but because a really judicious protection of native industry implies a wisdom and strength on the part of government which we cannot practically expect to obtain." Retaliatory duties are even less amenable to general rule: how far they may be advisable is "not a question to which a general theoretical answer is possible."

We have been considering governmental regulation with reference both to production and distribution. But is not the sum total of happiness, the end of government, a function of the number of population as well as of the amount and distribution of wealth? What says the author of the *Methods of Ethics?* We shall find that under this head another large debt is incurred by political economy to ethics, through the agency of Dr. Sidgwick.

Discoveries are hardly possible in ethics, practical principles have grown slowly; but we hold that the nearest approach to

an absolutely new idea of first-rate importance in morals was made by the following momentous passage which occurs in the fourth book of the *Methods of Ethics* (ch. i.): "Political economists of the school of Malthus often appear to assume that no increase of numbers can be right which involves any decrease in average happiness. But if we take Utilitarianism to prescribe, as the ultimate end of action, happiness on the whole, and not any individual's happiness, unless considered as an element of the whole, it would follow that, if the additional population enjoy on the whole positive happiness, we ought to weigh the amount of happiness gained by the extra number against the amount lost by the remainder. So that, strictly conceived, the point up to which, on Utilitarian principles, population ought to be allowed to increase, is not that at which average happiness is the greatest possible, but that at which the product formed by multiplying the number of persons living into the amount of average happiness reaches a maximum."

Bentham was not led to regard the "lot of happiness" enjoyed by a nation as a function of the number of population considered as variable. J. S. Mill was so preoccupied by the evils of over-population as hardly to have indicated whether there is an opposite extreme. "Even, if innocuous, I confess I see very little reason for desiring it," he says with respect to the increase of population. Cantillon, indeed, had stated, but did not attempt to answer the question, "whether it is better to have a large population poor and without comforts, or a smaller population with more affluence; a population of a million consuming the produce of six acres (*arpents*) per head, or of four millions, each living on an acre and a half." And Cournot, in his later writings, had pointed to the insolubility of such questions as the rock on which economic optimism foundered. But the question is not regarded as unanswerable, nor is it left unanswered, by Dr. Sidgwick. "I regard," he says, "the increase of the amount of human life in the world under its present conditions of existence in civilised countries, as a good and not an evil." Accordingly "in the present condition of the world" he would disapprove of measures tending to restrict the growth of population. As we interpret, Dr. Sidgwick, like Aristotle, would regard according to circumstances at one time the expansion, at another the contraction of population expedient. But in the present state of the world he is not prepared to move in either direction.

When we compare Dr. Sidgwick with other eminent writers, ancient and modern, who have maintained the desirability of a

large population, it is to be noticed that this object is sought by him as good in itself, part of the utilitarian end, not for the sake of defence against, or competition with, foreign nations. But these latter considerations, rather than what is "a benefit to humanity" (p. 305), have perhaps the first claim on the attention of the statesman; being must be secured before well-being. Now there is likely to be a difference between that degree of populousness which is in the utilitarian mean between excess and deficiency, and that degree which is prescribed by the exigencies of military and commercial rivalry, so far as degrees so dimly visible, so imperfectly marked, can be affirmed to differ. Large populations might be comparable to large armaments; which it is the interest of all, but not of each, to discontinue. Thus the proximate end, the πρακτὸν ἀγαθὸν in respect of populousness, may be even further from J. S. Mill's extreme Malthusianism than the position to which the first principle of pure utilitarianism has conducted Dr. Sidgwick.

It will be understood that we are here considering only those parts of Dr. Sidgwick's new work which touch upon political economy. Of the immense additions which he has made to political philosophy a great part lies beyond our province.

Capital, Labour, and Trade, and the Outlook. Plain Papers by MARGARET BENSON. (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), 1892.

THE epithet "plain" has seldom been better deserved. Miss Benson rivals Miss Martineau in the art of simple illustrations. Take, for instance, the following lesson on efficiency of money:—

"Two men went to the Derby with a barrel of beer to sell. One man had a threepenny-bit in his pocket. They were partners in the barrel, and as they went they added up the profit they would make at threepence a glass. But the day was hot, and the first man wanted a glass. So he paid the second man the threepence, and drew himself a glass. Then the second man began to be thirsty too, so he drew a glass, and paid back the threepence to the first man; and as the day grew hotter and the road dustier, the first man paid back the threepence, and the second man paid it back again; and it is needless to say that finally the barrel did not get to the races. Well, the point of the story is this—Was the value of that barrel only *threepence*, because there was only *one threepenny-bit*—paid for it over and over again?"