

in the future in conformity with the Statute of Westminster.

As a collection of documents, the book is excellent. The Status of Union Act for South Africa for 1934 is included along with the Royal Executive Functions and Seals Act of 1934 and the Letters Patent of 1937 governing the position of the Governor-General.

It seems a pity that in the case of Eire, which by state succession displaces the Irish Free State, the older acts which were succeeded by the Constitution of 1937 are not given—though they are, of course, easily available in many other places, notably in Keith's collection of documents. Similarly, it would seem useful to have included the acts repealing the oath of allegiance and the other legislative acts taken by the De Valera government prior to putting into effect the new constitution.

The most important controversial question, naturally, was settled in favor of omitting from this collection any of those interpretative documents which do not have strictly legal force. Yet in point of fact, if not of law, these are part of the whole constitutional structure of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The amendments to the Royal Styles and Titles Act, passed by the separate Dominions, might surely have been included without violating this limitation. But the announcement made by Mr. De Valera's government immediately after its acceptance of the abdication of Edward VIII and the accession of George VI, that its future policy would be conducted in conformity to the usual practice of the Dominions in relation to the United Kingdom, is, after all, a matter of extreme constitutional importance, though not of strictly binding legal force. Presumably the resolutions reached in conference prior to the enactment of the Statute of Westminster would have been of equal importance to students of the constitutional history of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The Statute itself summarizes in legal form, with some curious anomalies, only part of this Commonwealth Constitution.

The present volume does remove the difficulty which students have found of securing the latest and legally authoritative

versions of the present constitutions in force in the British Commonwealth of Nations, and it is, therefore, to be welcomed. The compilation by the Foreign Office seems to have been extremely careful, and the proof well read.

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COLE, G. D. H., and RAYMOND POSTGATE.

The British Common People 1746-1938.

Pp. x, 588, xxxiii. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939. \$4.00.

We have been waiting for this book for a long time. There have been excellent accounts of the English working classes at particular periods or in particular areas. When attempted on a wider basis, such "social histories" have been apt to be anecdotal, sentimental, and generally wishy-washy. The work here reviewed gives us a factual account of the economic conditions of the manual laborers during the last two centuries, together with a running sketch of political and economic measures by which they or their friends sought to improve those conditions. For good measure, the authors throw in occasional stimulating chapters on capitalistic organization at various periods.

The book opens with an excellent picture of the situation in the mid-eighteenth century. This part includes a "journey through England" which is quite the best thing of its sort (it runs about thirty pages) the reviewer has seen. Thereafter, nine sections deal with nine successive periods, and each of these sections contains chapters dealing with political movements (Wilkes, Chartism, franchise reform, Labour Party), economic movements (Luddites, Owenism, "co-ops," unions, socialism), wages and working conditions, and sometimes chief trends in capitalistic organization.

The "narrative" parts of the story, we are told, are primarily the work of Mr. Postgate, while Mr. Cole prepared in the first instance the portions dealing with "economic structure and development." In the earlier narrative portions there is nothing (nor is there intended to be anything) of novelty to the historian, though naturally he will find occasional statements with which he will disagree. But the chapters

are well enough written not to be dull, even to the well-informed reader; and the later chapters, dealing with contemporary matters and persons, will be read with keen interest.

Mr. Cole has earned our gratitude by collating and summarizing all the information he could find (in secondary sources) on wages and on the trends in the level of real wages through two centuries. It is so useful to have this information between one pair of covers that we forgive him the fact that we still have to work pretty hard to get it out of those covers. These chapters on wages show signs of hasty composition. The material is not well digested, nor is it arranged so as readily to allow comparisons between various periods. Some of the statistical tables in these and other chapters could do with more detailed explanations, and one or two of them would seem to defy any explanation at all.

The last two sections, on postwar Great Britain and on Great Britain in 1938, contain much of the information which Mr. and Mrs. Cole gave us three years ago in their *Condition of Britain*. In phrasing, the present book is a little less pessimistic, but not so in substance. The conclusions reached are as follows: The country has grown no poorer in recent decades. The wealth of the upper class especially is undiminished. There has been no material redistribution of wealth (the writers here seem to ignore the effects of the social services). Workers' real income (measured by wage rates) is perhaps 14 per cent above the 1914 level. But the belief is scarcely disguised that present English living standards, depending on the continuance of income from foreign investments, foreign trade, and shipping—all precarious sources—will not be maintained in the future.

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HELMREICH, ERNST CHRISTIAN. *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913*. Pp. xiv, 523. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938. \$5.00.

Hitler's reference to a "Macedonian" situation in Poland now a part of the dossier on the origins of the second world war, underlies the kinship of the political tech-

niques of Balkan nationalism in the first decade of the twentieth century with those of power politics in Central Europe in the third decade. The revolutionary societies reaching across state frontiers, and the frequent turnovers in alliance formations, were then regarded as a peculiarity of Balkan politics; now they seem more like a part of the common political heritage of Europe.

Helmreich has not only covered printed documents thoroughly, but has also interviewed a number of the direct participants in Balkan politics, and has used the Austrian *Kriegsarchiv*. His work is a model of thoroughness. He brings out the importance of the Bulgarian-Serbian treaty of 1904 as the foundation of the Balkan League. The collapse of the Balkan League and the launching of the Second Balkan War seem in the light of Helmreich's evidence to be not a result of Austrian incitement, but more a product of small-state *Realpolitik* than many writers have assumed. The Bulgarian attack was evidently designed to strengthen Bulgaria's bargaining position in the mediations then being organized by the Czar. Russia's failure to hold these small states in leash redounded to Russia's interest, for "the Serbian-Greek-Rumanian-Montenegrin coalition with its interest in preserving the peace of Bucharest" upset the balance of power in Europe. The crisis of 1914 caught Austria in the middle of a move to substitute Bulgaria in her alliance system for Rumania, which had gravitated to Russia.

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SUAREZ, GEORGES. *Briand*. Vol. I, 1862-1904, pp. xi, 468; Vol. II, 1904-1914, pp. iii, 515; Vol. III, 1914-1916, pp. ii, 499. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1938, 1939. Francs 40 each.

Georges Suarez, who has written a number of books on recent French history, among them biographies of Clemenceau and Herriot, now offers the first detailed, and to all appearances definitive, biography of Aristides Briand. He had access to Briand's Journal, and he prints many extracts from it, as well as a large number of unpublished