

had said plainly what she understands by this doctrine, and how precisely it differs from other "isms" to which Miss Sinclair is opposed. Sometimes she speaks as though the enemy were the New Realism, sometimes Pluralism, sometimes Pragmatism, sometimes something else. To be definite is not to be dull, necessarily; it would not have detracted from the readability of Miss Sinclair's book if she had made plainer just why she disagrees with William James, M. Bergson, and Mr. Bertrand Russell, to mention three of the contemporary names which figure most frequently in her pages. However, let us take the book as we find it. To a vague and there-or-thereabouts doctrine one can offer nothing but a criticism correspondingly inexact.

It is manifest that Miss Sinclair is, above all, anxious to safeguard the higher elements of our world, the reality of moral experience, the reality of religious experience, and our hope of existence in a future state. Miss Sinclair holds that these valuable elements are gravely threatened both by Pragmatism and by the New Realism. In her quarrel with the New Realists the present reviewer would not wish to intervene. Frankly, he has never been able to understand the logical basis of the New Realism, nor what bearing (if any) that doctrine has upon the vital problems which thoughtful people expect philosophy to illuminate. But in regard to Pragmatism Miss Sinclair seems to have gone gravely astray. The basis of the Pragmatist's belief is a kind of optimism, or, to speak more accurately, a kind of meliorism—that is, a belief that the constitution of the world is good upon the whole; and this implies that the world is such that the higher needs of man's nature are sure to receive satisfaction. If the analysis of human nature goes to show that man needs assurance of the reality of moral and religious experience, and needs belief in a life after death, then that is *pro tanto* a reason for holding that the universe will satisfy those needs. Is this illogical, as Miss Sinclair seems to think? If so, where is the flaw in it? It is quite a mistake for Miss Sinclair to think that "Pragmatism has no logic," and that "it is spineless." On the contrary, it has all the logic that is worth having.

#### OUR BOOKSHELF.

*An Ethical System Based on the Laws of Nature.*  
By M. Deshumbert. Translated from the French by Dr. L. Giles. With a preface by Dr. C. W. Saleeby. Pp. ix+231. (Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1917.) Price 2s. 6d. net.

HUXLEY maintained that ethical progress depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, but on combating it. M. Deshumbert proclaims a not less exaggerated theory that the whole duty of Man is to bring his conduct into harmony with Nature. Organisms are rich in adaptations which secure self-preservation and the perpetuation of the species; and if man is to continue to survive, he must become increasingly fit in these directions.

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Organic Nature, historically regarded, shows, on the whole, a progressive differentiation and integration of the nervous system; and man must follow this trend. But among animals it is often clear that success has rewarded not merely strength or cunning, but sociality and care for the offspring as well; and Man must vie with Nature in parental care and mutual aid.

This is familiar good sense, well worth restating in the author's picturesque way, with a pleasant *note personnel*; but we cannot pretend to see any stability in the thesis that "the Good is everything that contributes to the harmonious expansion of the individual and of the groups of which he is a member." For the "harmonious expansion" includes, for man, goodness; and one of the evidences of an evolutionary process being progressive or integrative is just that it leads on to the good. The author seems to wander round in a circle; but it is not a dull circle. His book contains an interesting collection of examples (not always quite accurate) of self-preservative adaptations and parental care; and quite a feature is made of what the Rev. J. G. Wood once gathered together in a suggestive volume—anticipations of man's devices by animals.

Much salutary counsel, sometimes a bit prosaic, is given, by attending to which the sum of human happiness and effectiveness would be greatly increased. It is obvious that man may strengthen his hands and avoid many gratuitous hindrances by regulating his life biologically or physiologically, but we should not call this an ethical system. The book has appeared in at least seven languages—and it cannot but be useful practically. But it does not rise to its title.

*The Munition Workers' Handbook.* By Ernest Pull. Second edition. Pp. 158. (London: Crosby Lockwood and Son, 1917.) Price 2s. 6d. net.

THIS little book opens with a brief treatment of workshop arithmetic, mensuration, and geometry, presented in a simple manner suitable for those who have taken up munition work temporarily, and probably forgotten, through disuse, most of the mathematics acquired at school. The composition, mode of manufacture, and strength of iron, steel, and other common materials are then explained. This section of the book should certainly encourage the worker to take a more intelligent interest in workshop processes. Illustrated descriptions of workshop tools are then given, including a good account of the use of micrometers. This section of the book should prove very useful. The following chapters are devoted to workshop operations, such as lathe work, drilling, tapping, screwing, bench work, planing, shaping, milling, and gear-cutting. The author clearly has intimate knowledge both of the subjects dealt with and of the requirements and limitations of the class of worker addressed, and has been successful in producing a book well adapted for the purpose in view. Its merits are such as to lead us to believe that the book will outlast the special conditions created by the war.