

Mr. Laski's survey begins with Locke and ends with Burke. His studies of these two great figures are very well done. He has related them to their environments; brought out in clear effect the interplay of political facts and political ideas; and illuminatingly analyzed the significance of their contributions for their own and succeeding generations. But it was not to be expected that in such well-tilled fields much new information was to be supplied. It is in the arid and hitherto almost uncultivated region which lies betwixt that Mr. Laski has done his most valuable work. He has here enabled us to better understand the importance in the field of political ideas of such writers as Bolingbroke, Hume, Blackstone, Adam Smith, Price and Priestly, with whom we might have claimed at least a passing acquaintance. But even more important, he has drawn attention to the real significance of a number of other writers hitherto quite obscure, if not unknown, controversialists such as Hickee, Leslie, Shower, Wake, Hoadly, Law and Warburton. It is a period in which political ideas develop through the fermentation of controversies waged by a multitude of minor pamphleteers rather than by the *magna opera* of philosophical writers of the first importance. But political thought germinates and fructifies none the less than in the heroic epochs of Hobbes or Locke.

The age-old problem of the relation of church and state here again holds the center of the stage, and Mr. Laski has pointed the meaning for our own day of such controversies as those connected with the nonjuring schism, the question of the rights and position of convocation, the proposed repeal of the Test Act, and the deist movement. That in all these he finds valuable material for his own conception of a pluralistic state is to be expected.

In truth, this is just such an illuminating, not to say brilliant, little book, studded with forceful epigrams and reflecting a very wide and fruitful reading, as one might expect Mr. Laski to write. Like his previous books, however, it is marred by occasional carelessness of phrase.

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American Political Ideals. By CHARLES EDWARD MERRIAM.
(New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920. Pp. 481.)

In this work, Professor Merriam continues his study of the development of political thought in this country. In a previous volume he dealt with our political history down to the close of the civil war. The

present volume covers the period that has elapsed since then down to the entrance of the United States in the war with Germany.

Professor Merriam begins with a chapter on "The Background of American Political Thought" and then proceeds to examine various underlying American political doctrines, for example, the consent of the governed, the system of checks and balances, the responsibility of judges in a democracy and the methods of constitutional change. His discussion does not proceed from one theorist to another, after the fashion of most books on political theories, but from one topic to another. Towards the end of the book there is a comprehensive chapter on "Systematic Studies of Politics" in which the author lists and comments upon the more important books which have been written by American scholars in this field during the past half century.

The most striking feature of the present work is its comprehensiveness. The author's studies have penetrated every field of his subject, and so numerous are his references and citations that they furnish a complete bibliography of the literature of American political thought for the period 1865-1917. Even the poets and novelists are not disregarded, but their contributions to the movements of political thought in this country are noted and appraised.

The purpose of the book is such that the treatment is necessarily descriptive and expository. Hence there is little in the way of valuation. It occurs to one at times to ask just what are democratic principles, just why interpretations of democracy vary so much in time and place, and what is the explanation of the marked difference in the institutional deposits made by the democratic movement in various countries. To such questions Professor Merriam does not attempt to give answers, but he has performed thoroughly and well the task of making an orderly classification of American data; and his work is an indispensable guide to anyone undertaking a systematic consideration of political developments in the United States.

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Democracy and Assimilation: The Blending of Immigrant Heritages in America. By JULIUS DRACHSLER. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1920. Pp. xii, 275.)

The Unfinished Programme of Democracy. By RICHARD ROBERTS. (New York: B. W. Huebsch. 1920. Pp. 326.)