

Only at the very end of his 20-page discussion does he suggest that "Greek civilization itself was based upon and made possible by slavery"—in a footnote that catches the reader entirely unprepared and leaves him untouched.

And always there are the false analogies with the contemporary world. In the case of the demagogues Michell of course misses the key points. In antiquity their promises were sometimes fulfilled; today never. Secondly, they operated under totally different circumstances and faced totally different problems and forces from their alleged modern counterparts. There is more truth in Sismondi's epigrammatic remark that the ancient proletariat lived at the expense of the state while the modern state lives at the expense of the proletariat, than in all the theories of the apostles of unchanging human nature.

Michell is professor of Political Economy in McMaster University (Hamilton, Ont.). There was a time when economists and sociologists still retained a feeling for historical change even if classical philologists did not. When Eduard Meyer published his fantastic essay on *Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung des Altertums*, perhaps the first major instance of the collapse of German historical science, Karl Buecher and Max Weber (and others) tore it to shreds. Weber's work in the ancient field had many weaknesses to be sure, yet his *Agrarverhaeltnisse im Altertum* is still far and away the ablest study of the economy of antiquity available to the western world. Significantly enough, Michell makes no mention of it that I could find. Even Buecher and still later Sombart saw that there were fundamental qualitative distinctions between the major historical periods, unable as they were to define them correctly. With Michell, however, we find an economist (like Andreades and others before him) revealing the critical failing charged against the classicists and historians of an earlier era.

F. N. HOWARD (New York).

Gilson, E., *Dante et la philosophie.* Librairie philosophique J. Vrin. Paris 1939. (X, 341 pp.; fr. frs. 50.00)

Gilson's book not only covers the entire problem of the philosophical implications of Dante's work but also examines Dante's relation to the decisive theological and political doctrines of his time. A great part is taken up with a discussion of the supposedly Averroistic traits in Dante's philosophy. Gilson holds that Dante's entire conception is directly opposed to that of Latin Averroism. This is not to deny, however, that some of the Averroistic ideas did jibe with Dante's own, as was the case with the Averroistic separation of philosophy from theology. Although Dante, in contrast to Averroism, did not understand this separation to be a contradiction, he felt the affinity between his own view and the Averroists strongly enough to elevate Siger of Brabant to Paradise in his *Divine Comedy*, where he stands for "pure philosophy" separate from and on the same footing as pure theology.

Gilson shows how the liberation of philosophy from theology governs Dante's whole work and how it culminates in his doctrine of the independent secular Reich, as elaborated in the *De Monarchia*. This conception involves a far-reaching change of the traditional Christian scheme, for it is based

upon the assumption that man has two different ends which cannot be subordinated one to the other: that man's beatitude here on this earth stands, as a genuine Christian goal, side by side with his eternal beatitude in the world hereafter.

HERBERT MARCUSE (Los Angeles).

Clapham, John H., and Eileen Power, ed., *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*. I. The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages. The Macmillan Company. New York 1941. (667 pp.; \$7.50)

"The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages" is the product of a truly international division of labor. From its very beginning the work was beset with severe difficulties. Eileen Power, its learned co-editor, died suddenly. Many of the contributors originally scheduled lived in countries invaded by Hitler and could not finish their assignments. The present fate of many of them remains unknown so that last minute replacements were necessary.

Despite these unusual difficulties, the work as finally published will serve for a long time as a reliable and informative account of agrarian conditions in the middle ages. It may seem astonishing that the labors of fifteen scholars with the most varied outlook and background have produced results that are more often than not in harmony with one another. This becomes understandable, however, when we realize that the majority of the contributions lean toward description of ways of life rather than to interpretation of institutional factors.

One significant point that comes out very clearly in the volume is the almost universal failure of the most varied measures designed to check the squeezing out of the small independent landowning classes. Professor Ostrogorsky's chapter on the Byzantine Empire is especially instructive on this point. Also noteworthy is Marc Bloch's study of the transition from late Roman to medieval society.

Some of the chapters describing the state of affairs in the different countries at the height of medieval society suffer from the rigid separation between agricultural and urban society inherent in the plan of the series. The reader must wait until he reaches Nabholz' final chapter on medieval society in transition to find clues for some of the preceding narrative. But that was perhaps an unavoidable feature of such a carefully planned work. We earnestly hope that the succeeding volumes have been only temporarily deferred, not abandoned.

OTTO KIRCHHEIMER (New York).

Trinkaus, Charles Edward, *Adversity's Noblemen*. The Italian Humanists on Happiness. Columbia University Press. New York 1940. (172 pp.; \$2.00)

Trinkaus has hit upon one of the most fundamental problems in the history of the ideological origins of modern society, namely, the part played by the Renaissance in the so-called emancipation of the individual. The humanistic doctrines of happiness are appropriate instruments for under-