



*From the portrait by Sir William Rothenstein, 1923. (Photograph by de Normanville Studios (Hemel) Ltd.)*

JOHN LAWRENCE LE BRETON HAMMOND

## J. L. HAMMOND

1872-1949

THE death on 17 April 1949, of John Lawrence le Breton Hammond deprived the Academy of a fellow distinguished by his combination of a gift for original work in history with unusual literary power. Born on 18 July 1872 in the Yorkshire village of Drighlington, where his father, the radical scion of a Jersey family, was vicar, Lawrence attended Bradford Grammar School from 1886 to 1891; entered in the latter year St. John's College, Oxford, as a classical scholar; and ended his academic career with a Second in Greats in 1895. Later, as an author, he found his chief field of work in the early phases of the social problems inherited by his generation from the age of the first Reform Act; but the Clio of his devotion, for all her preoccupation with the vicissitudes of English rural and industrial life, did not on that account cease to be a Muse. His humanity, imaginative insight, and unobtrusive wisdom, even more than his impressive range of knowledge, are the traits which those privileged to know him will first recall.

### I

Hammond's undergraduate friends included Hilaire Belloc; J. S. Phillimore, later Professor of Greek at Glasgow; the well-known economist, F. W. Hirst; and the future Lord Chancellor, J. A. Simon; but the Oxford personalities whose mark on him was deepest belonged to an older generation. They were a fellow and tutor of his college, Sidney Ball, and Professor Gilbert Murray. It was partly to the former, a member of the Fabian Society in the days when academic Socialists were few, that the Liberalism of the Hammonds owed its strong social bent. Their life-long friendship with the latter strengthened the devotion to the literature and civilization of classical antiquity which remained to the end a vital element in their outlook both on the past and on contemporary affairs. An historian, Lawrence once remarked to a younger colleague, requires an intellectual and moral base outside the prevalent assumptions of his day and his special sphere of work. No reader of the Hammonds' books can remain long in doubt as to the influences by which, in their case, that independent standpoint was principally supplied. Whether reflecting on the horrors of the pre-Chadwickian

age of English urban life; or on Nationalism as a constructive and destructive force; or on the debt owed by civilization to France, it is to lessons learned from the sages of the Graeco-Roman world that the authors constantly recur.

It was natural that a young man with Lawrence's tastes and powers should see his future in some form of literary work. He entered adult life at a moment when the mentality and policies conventionally epitomized by the word Imperialism laid a spell on the imagination of ardent youth. Five years were to elapse before, in 1902, Mr. J. A. Hobson's analysis of the movement's economic aspects saw the light; but, apart from such exposures of its seamy side, a doctrine which idealized as a mission the extension of British rule over subject peoples, seemed to Hammond, the spiritual father of whose Liberalism was Gladstone, a lie in the soul. Confirmed by the shock of the South African War, that attitude found expression in *Liberalism and the Empire* (1900), in which, in conjunction with Murray and Hirst, he examined the assumptions and tendencies of the fashionable creed. The views then advanced continued to be proclaimed by him after an unforeseen change of circumstances had given him a pulpit of his own from which to preach. On leaving the university, he had combined journalism with the position of secretary to Sir John Brunner, whose multifarious interests included the ownership of a weekly journal, the *Speaker*. It is not surprising that, on the acquisition of that paper some years later by a group of Liberals of the Left, and the resignation of its first editor, Wemyss Reid, Hammond, as a leading figure among the younger intellectuals of that persuasion, should have been invited to take his place.

Judged by the distinction of the contributors whom he gathered round him, as well as by the commendations of such pillars of Liberal orthodoxy as Morley, Courtney, and Bryce, Hammond's six years editorship more than fulfilled the hope raised by his appointment. He crusaded for unpopular causes; challenged the policies which had led to war; gave publicity to the facts of disease and mortality in South African concentration camps which Miss Emily Hobhouse, the sister of his friend, Professor Leonard Hobhouse, had been among the first to expose, and welcomed with modest elation the odium which his refusal to suppress unpleasant truths entailed. His heart, however, was in scholarship. He had contrived, amid his other preoccupations, to produce a study of Charles James Fox; but he was increasingly conscious that systematic historical work could not easily be

reconciled with the duties of an editor. It was partly, therefore, as a step towards a future promising ampler leisure for historical research and writing that, on the conversion of the *Speaker* into the *Nation*, he accepted in 1907 the post of secretary to the Civil Service Commission, which he held till 1913. His marriage in 1901 with Miss Lucy Barbara Bradby had given him a partner who not only shared his interests and sympathies, but co-operated on equal terms in the production of their books. Of the results of their labours something is said below. Here it is sufficient to note that the first of their joint works, *The Village Labourer 1760-1832*, appeared in 1911, and that three years later, by the summer of 1914, a sequel to it was virtually complete. But for the outbreak of war, it would have been published in that year.

Hammond, a hater of violence, worked to the last with those who strove, as the crisis deepened, for the maintenance of peace; but he was not a pacifist in the conventional sense of that ambiguous word. 'The right of a nation', he had written, in describing the political creed of Fox, 'to choose and develop its own civilisation was a fundamental article of his political faith.' His hero's views on that point were his own, and his conviction of the duty to defend the right in question, if all else failed, by arms was stronger than his loathing of war. His gentle and unassuming manner, unfailing courtesy, and frail physique concealed, as in the case of Falkland, of whom at times he reminded one, a chivalrous, ardent, and, where principles were concerned, uncompromising spirit. Convinced by the invasion of Belgium that a cause deemed by him sacred was at stake, he insisted, at the age of forty, on obtaining a commission in the R.F.A., only, after several months of training, to be pronounced, much to his chagrin, unfit on grounds of health for service abroad. Later, he used to express his gratitude to the Army for having taught him how to ride and groom a horse; but his momentary disappointment was keen. It is to the credit of the authorities that, having bestowed those accomplishments on him, they smoothed the way for his return from non-combatant duties to civil life.

Hammond's release from the forces enabled him to discuss with historically minded friends the proofs of *The Town Labourer*, and to see that work, together with, two years later, its companion volume, *The Skilled Labourer*, through the press; but his concern for the international and social issues looming ever more insistent as the war dragged towards its close would not

let him rest. They carried him first into a post in the recently established Ministry of Reconstruction; then, as special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* from December 1918 to April 1919, to the Peace Conference at Paris; and finally, into participation in the struggle for freedom, as he thought it, of a nation nearer home. His letters from Paris struck from the start a sombre note. The greatest peril, he insisted, to a constructive peace had its source not, as often thought in England, in French frontier policy, but in the refusal of Britain and the United States, who alone possessed the means, to come promptly to the rescue of a Europe in danger of relapsing from 'a family of nations' into 'a cockpit of maddened tribes fighting for food'. If disaster was to be avoided, the economically viable states, he wrote in April 1919, 'must put their credit behind the victims of the war . . ., must be ready to renounce debts . . ., must feed the countries where want and hunger are raging . . ., must lend money and raw materials so that industry may revive'. A year or two later these truths were widely held. Stated by Hammond within barely six months of the Armistice, they fell on stony ground.

Returning to England in the early summer, he quickly found himself involved in a second crisis. Sharing the views of those who held that the government's Irish policy sowed the wind to reap the whirlwind, he thought it his duty to throw himself into the campaign launched in England for the adoption of a more generous and far-sighted course. The result was a visit to Ireland, his attendance, on behalf of the *Manchester Guardian*, at the Conference of October to December 1921, and between the two a series of articles, principally in that paper, which made it the leading advocate of a negotiated peace. In a moving pamphlet published in the spring of 1921 he had pleaded for reconciliation before it was too late. The principles and methods expounded in it did not differ greatly from those by which in December a settlement was at last achieved.

## II

Hammond's connexion with the *Manchester Guardian* continued throughout his life. Except, however, at moments of unusual stress, his principal preoccupation during the twenties and thirties consisted in the execution, in collaboration with Barbara Hammond, of their programme of historical work. Of the ten volumes, exclusive of their minor writings, produced by them between 1911 and 1938, the last and longest, Lawrence's *Gladstone*

*and the Irish Nation*, stands in a class by itself. The remainder include, in addition to the biographies of Lord Stansfield and C. P. Scott, the seven studies of the consequences for English society of the economic transition under way between the accession of George III and the Great Exhibition. It was these books, and in particular the opening trilogy on the three generations before the first Reform Act, which made their authors' influence most widely felt.

On the forces accelerating the growth of an economy of a novel type they do not, save in one work, dwell at length. They were concerned less with causes than effects, and the principal aims inspiring their treatment of the latter were two. The first was to reveal the characteristic features of the social order emerging from the Great Divide; the second to aid their readers to approach that order with criteria in mind more discriminating and humane than it had been easy, in the first flush of its economic triumphs, for the classes floated to fortune by them to apply. Regarding the modernization of the land system and the rise of the Great Industry, not as decorative fringes on more majestic themes, but as fraught with issues as momentous as any which even the England of the long war had been called upon to meet, they thought that, with all their virtues, historical treatments of those aspects of the age had suffered from one disastrous, though remediable, fault.

That defect—a weakness as conspicuous then than as unusual now—could, it seemed to them, be simply stated. It consisted in the inability or reluctance of most previous writers to give their proper prominence to the sufferings and achievements of the much-enduring British people. 'Many histories', they remark, 'have been written of the governing classes which ruled England with such absolute power in the last century of the old régime. These histories have shown us how that class conducted war, how it governed the colonies, how it behaved to continental powers, how it managed the first critical chapters of our relations with India, how it treated Ireland, how it developed the parliamentary system, how it saved Europe from Napoleon. One history has only been sketched in outline. It is the history of the way in which this class governed England.' Toynbee's well-known lectures (1884), Mantoux's *La Révolution Industrielle au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (1906), the Webbs' two books on Trade Unionism (1894-7) and the successive volumes of their great history of English Local Government (1906-13)—to mention nothing else—had, in their different ways, contributed to redress the

balance. The social histories of the Hammonds, though much else as well, were partly an attempt to serve the same neglected cause. They would do something, their authors hoped, to bridge the gulf between history and common life, by revealing 'what was happening to the working classes under a government in which they had no share'.

Few writers could have been freer than the Hammonds from the controversial spirit. But their work made some cherished legends look dim, and their first three volumes, in particular, touched on occasion sensitive nerves. The discussion caused by their books—it is not the least of their services to have started it—has been fruitful, and, a few exceptions apart, has been conducted with politeness and good sense. If it is easier today than a generation ago, not only to appreciate the importance of the Hammonds' contribution, but to grasp the points at which their picture needs amendment, it is chiefly they themselves to whom gratitude is due. In addition to possessing a knowledge of the voluminous printed sources unrivalled in their day save by Sir John Clapham and the Webbs, they were among the first to use the Home Office papers to throw light on aspects of social history previously little known. They were not, of course, infallible, but no one who has travelled even a few steps in their wake will speak lightly of the conscientious labour on which their generalizations rest. Whatever the verdict on their conclusions, their courage in grappling with the jungle of official and private papers, and their candour in interpreting the data brought to light, earned, as they deserved, respect.

The Hammonds' choice of the rural problem as the point from which to start should not cause surprise. Not only did the treatment between 1760 and 1832 of the issues composing it impress them as peculiarly characteristic of the closing decades of the old régime, but an almost topical interest belonged to it at the moment when the authors wrote. In the early years of the present century, when the long depression of cereal farming seemed to have run its course, questions relating to the country's agricultural future were much in debate. Lord Ernle has described in a striking passage the crop of competing specifics in which it was suggested that salvation should be sought. It was natural that the discussion of these and kindred topics should stimulate an interest in agrarian history, and, in particular, in the last great reconstruction which, over an extensive area, had fixed the framework of farming and rural life. Thus *The Village Labourer 1760–1832* was not a lonely landmark. In

reality, it was one of a group of not far short of a dozen works published on allied themes in the decade and a half following 1905, and pointing to the need for a reassessment of verdicts and policies long accepted as beyond dispute.

Apart from the book's literary power, its distinctive characteristics were two. It was designed, in the first place, not as a history of agriculture, but, in the words of its sub-title, as '*A Study in the Government of England before the Reform Bill*'. Dealing, as it does, not with one sphere of life alone, but with the tangled frontier-region where political, economic, and religious interests meet, it omits much that a more strictly economic history would include, and includes more for which such a history ought, perhaps, to find a place, but commonly does not. A second feature is partly a corollary of the first. The thread of continuity which holds the book together consists in its account of the changing level of popular well-being during the three generations preceding 1832; of the diverse forms which those vicissitudes assumed; and of the activity or inertia on the part of the powers of the day with which the social situation produced by them was met. Thus—to give a summary illustration—the subject of the first chapter is the virtual monopoly of political and social power wielded by a minute ruling class of substantial landowners, and that of the two last the employment of that power by the same class, when its day was drawing to a close, to crush in 1830 the agitation of despairing labourers in parts of southern England. The intervening links are supplied by four chapters on different aspects of inclosure and other causes of distress. They include, in addition to an account of the procedure involved in passing and applying the required Private Acts, two on the wage-earner's loss of subsidiary income, the food-riots of 1795, and the rejection by Parliament of one of the few constructive social policies brought before it—Whitbread's minimum wage bills of 1795 and 1800—and these passages, again, are followed by the description, among other morbid symptoms, of the expansion of poaching, in spite of savage game laws, from a local custom, half-sport, half-expedient to eke out short supplies, into a business enterprise financed at times from London. Comedy and tragedy mingle in the prescriptions for poverty commended by the rich, from cheap soups and other substitutes for wheaten bread as the labourers' staff of life, to the by no means novel, but rapidly expanding, administrative opiate known after 1795 as the Speenhamland system. Finally, it should be noted that the authors are



concerned, not only with changes in popular well-being in terms of money, food, and clothes, but with the attitude of the masters of wealth and power, at a period of unusual stress, towards matters of vital moment to their poorer fellow countrymen. Cobbett once remarked that the former 'Commons of England' were spoken of in his later years 'by everyone possessing the power to oppress them . . . in just the same manner in which we speak of the animals which compose the stock upon a farm'. It was necessary, in short, for the Hammonds, in addition to depicting the conditions in which the lower orders lived, to interpret also the assumptions and aims of their more philosophically minded betters. Taine's *La Révolution* has been called a study in the psychology of Jacobinism. Parts of the Hammonds' work might be described with equal propriety as an essay on the social philosophy of the English ruling classes.

*The Village Labourer*, therefore, is not of the books from which a reader rises with the conviction that, in spite of tragic episodes, all was for the best. In view of its range, of the diversity of conditions in the regions covered by it, and of the intricacy of certain of the topics treated, it was to be expected that differences of opinion should arise as to the validity of some of the conclusions reached. On the minor points of controversy it would be unprofitable, even if space allowed, to dwell. The more formidable criticisms have had as their targets less particular errors or omissions than the impression left by the volume as a whole. To judge, for example, by the expansion of the cultivated area, the advance of more intensive farming, and the rise of rents and profits, agricultural progress during much of the period covered by the Hammonds, though not in the post-war years, was more than ordinarily pronounced. It is true, no doubt, that their attention, like that of Cobbett, was fixed, not on improving landlords and capitalist farmers, but on the mass of small landholders and, still more, of labourers dependent on weekly earnings; but, even so it might be asked, was not the scene of deepening gloom depicted by them the product less of harsh realities than of jaundiced eyes? It is a commonplace, again, that a growing and increasingly urbanized population, together with the blow to imports dealt by war, made a larger cereal output an urgent need, and equally a platitude that, in meeting that emergency, the accelerated speed of the changes epitomized as inclosure—over 1,900 Acts in the war years alone—played an important part. Yet on that point *The Village Labourer* spoke, it was thought, not merely in indifferent, but in

hostile, tones. What could be more irresponsible than for historians sensitive to popular distress to frown on improvements which, by augmenting the food supply, might do something to blunt its edge? Were not the Hammonds' Balaams in reverse, who cursed when they should have blessed?

At the time when *The Village Labourer* was on the stocks, the first of these questions—that of agricultural wages—remained, for lack of evidence, in suspense. Relying on a return prepared by the Poor Law authorities for a Select Committee of 1825 on Labourers' Wages, Sir John Clapham estimated that a not negligible increase had taken place between 1795 and that date. Lord Ernle, while printing the figures, had described them as 'very defective and unreliable', and the Hammonds also had put them on one side.<sup>1</sup> A courteously conducted discussion between Sir John and Lawrence Hammond ended in each making a slight concession to the other, but left the central issue much as before. Controversy on the second problem has enjoyed a more continuous and, at times, exciting life. Less than a quarter of the book was occupied with inclosure; but it was largely, nevertheless, on its treatment of that topic that verdicts on it turned. Its analysis of the legal and administrative procedure involved in carrying through the changes in question was generally recognized to be the most thorough yet produced; but there agreement ceased. At one extreme were those who deplored the distorted vision which minimized the benefits of the new order and maximized its incidental ills. At the other, so eminent an authority on European, and particularly English, agrarian history as Professor—later Sir Paul—Vinogradoff, was not alone in praising *The Village Labourer* as an outstanding work, which stated with courage and cogency truths too long ignored. The questions at issue had behind them centuries of argument, as well as of contentions not confined to words; and much water has flowed under bridges since the Hammonds and their critics added a further chapter to the great debate. How do their conclusions look today?

The most obvious tendency of recent work can be simply stated. It has been to lengthen the perspective in which innovations formerly assigned to the later eighteenth and early

<sup>1</sup> See the following: J. H. Clapham, *Economic History of Modern Britain*, ed. of 1926, vol. i, pp. 123, 127-8, and ed. of 1930, reprinted with corrections 1939, Vol. I, *second preface*, pp. ix-x; J. L. Hammond, 'The Industrial Revolution and Discontent', in *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, Jan. 1930; Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present*, ed. of 1927, App. IX, n. 1.

nineteenth centuries must be seen. The evidence of land-tax assessments, the pioneers of whose use were Mr. H. A. L. Johnson and Dr. E. Davies, has pushed the crisis in the history of the small occupying owner farther back, from the period when parliamentary inclosure was at its height, into an age in which inclosure by Private Act had hardly yet begun. The progress of Local History has yielded somewhat similar results on a broader front. The open-field village of mid-eighteenth-century England was rarely, it seems, either the Sweet Auburn of the poets or the perverse miracle of squalid petrification denounced by duller pens. More often it was an institution behind whose traditional facade of command, organization and control changes profoundly affecting, not only its economy and structure, but its vitality and capacity for collective action—changes in the distribution and size of holdings, in the management of commons, and in the growth and dimensions of a wage-working proletariat—had long been under way. Not a few, in short, of these rural communities have the air of crumbling from within, under the pressure of heightened economic strains, before dismembered by the parliamentary hatchet from without. In such cases a Private Inclosure Act remained, of course, of great importance, but it was less the precipitate supersession of an old order by a new than the climax of a process of piecemeal modifications, readjustments, and decay already far advanced.

Verdicts on the social consequences of inclosure, with which the Hammonds were primarily concerned, must depend in part on the view taken of the conditions obtaining before that decisive and irreversible event took place. The disposition of the authors to touch lightly, if at all, on those crucial antecedents, and to write at times as though the fall of man occurred in the reign of George III, is among the weaker features of their book. In their treatment of another aspect of their subject, and one of greater practical moment, they stand on firmer ground. To reopen ancient controversies would be pointless, but one neglected commonplace, which continues to be relevant to a judgement on their work, may not be out of place. It is that the beginning of wisdom is to distinguish between two issues still too frequently confused. The first is the merits of inclosure as a system of land utilization; the second, the verdict to be passed on the procedure by which, in the regions where open-field farming had been the rule, an economy based on inclosure was established in its place.

With the former of these questions the Hammonds do not deal at length. The technical advantages of inclosure were a

thrice-told talé, which they thought it useless to challenge and needless to repeat. It was the latter point—the particular methods employed in England to effect the transition—on which their attention was principally fixed and to which the strictures voiced by them referred. The critics, on their side, have not always been careful to distinguish between ends and means. The statement, for example, still sometimes heard that the choice was between inclosure and starvation is a case in point. Its air of hard-boiled realism takes the unwary reader off his guard; but what precisely does it mean? If it merely asserts that, other things being equal, a larger yield per acre could be obtained from a compact holding than from neglected or overstocked commons and strips in open fields, it is a platitude which few, and certainly not the authors of *The Village Labourer*, would dispute. If, on the other hand, it is advanced in justification of the English procedure of inclosure by Private Act, it begs the question. Its suggestion that only by that method could the required changes have been effected is, in fact, an insular solecism which assumes conclusions requiring to be proved.

In judging the Hammonds' treatment of a contentious theme two obvious considerations may, with advantage, be borne in mind. It should be remembered, in the first place, that their condemnation of the methods of inclosure commonly employed was not an emotional eccentricity peculiar to them, but had behind it contemporary opinion of unquestioned weight. Sir John Sinclair, the President of the Board of Agriculture; Arthur Young, its secretary and probably the most influential writer of the day on agricultural questions; Marshall and Kent, both experienced land-agents; Eden and David Davies, whose books on social conditions are still not out of date, were neither sentimentalists nor ignoramuses. All of them advocated inclosure carried out with due regard to the interests of all concerned. All of them condemned a procedure which deprived cottagers of the measure of independence conferred on them by rights of grazing, cutting turf, and gathering wood, or which, in Lord Ernle's words, caused 'previous occupiers to be . . . reduced to landless labourers'. Nor, in weighing that conclusion, should a second point be overlooked. England was not, of course, unique in inheriting from a distant past a landed lay-out which, if rarely so static as it was formerly the fashion to suggest, required, as conditions changed, a controlled reconstruction in order to keep in step with novel facts. It is significant, however, that, though applauded by foreign agriculturalists for her precocity in

initiating and her resolution in carrying through a reorganization elsewhere long delayed, she was none the less a pioneer whose methods of effecting the transition most of her continental admirers, when they modernized their land systems, were careful to avoid. A comparative study of the procedure of inclosure in different countries is still to seek; but foreign examples of the English policy of throwing the reins on the neck of powerful local interests, with the minimum of central control, appear to be few.

In some, perhaps many, of the States concerned, inclosure was accompanied by measures designed to break the shock to the smaller men. In England the experts of the Board of Agriculture, mindful of the future and with no private axe to grind, had endeavoured for a time to achieve by less imperious methods a similar result. The Hammonds rightly, therefore, devote some instructive pages to the provisions inserted by them in the General Inclosure Bill of 1796 in order to ensure that, when inclosure took place, part of the waste should be vested in perpetuity in a corporate body acting for the village as a whole, to be used by it for the grant of rent-free allotments for terms of up to fifty years to labourers who could point to cottages built and fenced by them in substantiation of their claims for land. Unfortunately, while some of the continental peasant-protection policies were destined to bear fruit, their solitary English analogue, mild though it was, sent a shudder through the House of Commons and was deleted from the Bill. Toynbee long ago remarked that the distribution of landed property in the England of his day was to be explained less in economic than in political terms, and later authorities, such as Mantoux, Hasbach, Slater, and most emphatically Sir William Ashley,<sup>1</sup> have said in different words the same. In endorsing that conclusion the Hammonds did not propound a novel heresy, but confirmed with further and more detailed evidence a well-established, if at times reluctantly admitted, truth.

### III

*The Village Labourer* remained its authors' last word on rural questions till the time, a quarter of a century later, when

<sup>1</sup> Ashley's views will be found in his article, 'Comparative History and the English Landlord', in *The Economic Journal*, xxiii, no. 90, June 1913, pp. 165-88, and in the *Report of the Agric. Tribunal*, 1924, App. For those of other authors of the same period, see P. Mantoux, *La Révolution Industrielle au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, 1959 ed., pp. 165-83; W. Hasbach, *History of the English Agricultural Labourer*, 1900, chaps. i-iii *passim*; G. Slater, *Growth of Modern England*, 2nd ed., pp. 126-7.

Lawrence's study of Gladstone's Irish policy compelled him to face the problems of peasant poverty in a harsher and more tragic form. During the intervening years, the social transformation under way in pre-Reform Bill England continues to be the Hammonds' central theme; but the particular aspect of the movement which claims the lion's share of their attention undergoes a change. Henceforward, it is not the dissolution of an old régime, but the emergence of a new, on which their eyes are fixed.

The immediate successors, therefore, of the Hammonds' opening volume consisted of two further works, resembling it in spirit but primarily concerned to make intelligible the social consequences of the rise of the Great Industry, by stating them in human terms. And these books, in their turn, required a sequel to drive their lesson home. Whatever view may be taken of the industrial leviathan's crude and sanguine youth, the speckled record of that early phase of his career—beneficent achievements, needlessly inflicted casualties, here and there atrocities too long condoned—is not open to dispute. Hence the authors, after disposing of that chapter, found a further task awaiting them. It consisted in an analysis of the efforts of pioneer reformers to domesticate the serviceable, but undisciplined, monster by forcing a bit and bridle, in the shape of Factory, Mines, and Public Health Acts, between his reluctant jaws. Finally, when only the first of those later studies, that on Shaftesbury, had seen the light, a background was provided for the series as a whole by an essay in a different vein. A combination of imaginative insight with breadth of culture was not the least among the Hammonds' gifts. The long perspectives, rich in illuminating comparisons and contrasts, of *The Rise of Modern Industry* exemplify that power. A work of synthesis in which the industrial capitalism of the opening decades of the nineteenth century is displayed against the background of earlier economic civilizations, it remains at once the most instructive and the most original introduction to the social and economic aspects of history available in English. Successive generations of students have been captivated by its spell; but the influence wielded by the authors has had its principal source in their graver, more original, and more intensive works. Its secret has been the conviction inspired in their readers that, in the struggle of conflicting policies depicted by them, issues, not only of material well-being, but of profound, and not yet exhausted, moral significance, were at stake.

*The Town Labourer* and *The Skilled Labourer* illustrate in different ways that quality of the Hammonds' work. Originally planned as parts of a single volume, they supplement each other, and the reader noticing in the former an apparent error or omission will be prudent, before voicing his criticism, to make sure that the latter does not make the seeming defect good. The subject and period treated are the same in both. Both take the economic aspects of the Industrial Revolution for granted, as topics sufficiently expounded by other pens. Both, therefore, turn their search-lights primarily, not on the mobilization of productive power on a scale previously unknown, but on the reactions to it of the increasing proletariat of hired employees by whom its pressure was most continuously felt. While, however, the theme of these books is, at first sight, the same, their methods of treating it are far apart. *The Town Labourer* is concerned, in the words of its preface, with 'the general features of the new civilisation', and offers the reader a synoptic view. Opening with an account of the dehumanizing rigours of factory discipline in the days when employers, uncontrolled by trade unions or the law, were responsible to themselves alone, it continues with a description of the antiquated local machinery for the maintenance of order, and then, having analysed the policies on which, at moments of agitation, apprehensive ministers relied to keep rebellious workers in their place, climbs to a loftier plane of principles, aspirations, and ideas. It concludes with half a dozen chapters depicting the intellectual and moral chasm dividing, in the phrase shortly to be famous, the two nations of the rich and the poor. *The Skilled Labourer* makes no similar attempt to scale the heights, but examines the chequered fates of particular groups of workers struggling for a foothold in, as it seemed to the authors, an increasingly unfriendly world. The series of miniature industrial histories contained in it has a double value for the reader. It at once illustrates in detail the vicissitudes of different trades and reveals the nature of the evidence on which the generalisations of the preceding volume, as well as its own more intensive analysis, are based. Of the four concluding chapters three tell the tragic story of the Luddite Movement of 1811-14; the fourth is in a lighter vein. Its subject is the instructive, scandalous, and entertaining career of Oliver the Spy.

*The Town Labourer* was probably that of all the Hammonds' works on social history which made the most immediate, if not the most enduring, mark. Published at a moment when dreams

of post-war reconstruction were in the air, it moved a reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement*<sup>1</sup> to pay tribute to the prophetic gifts of historians who had 'helped towards a better understanding, not only of the early nineteenth century, but of the problems of today'. In the cooler atmosphere of peace the spirit animating the book, the premisses from which it started, and the conclusions to which it appeared to point, were scrutinized with less indulgent eyes. Granted the accuracy of the authors' facts, did not, it was asked, their deductions and interpretations require to be buttressed by statistical data of a kind for which their eloquent pages had failed to find a place? Had not their humanitarian indignation at the incidental miseries of the new order closed their eyes to the blessings which, however questionable its principles, in practice it conferred, and caused them at moments of emotion to write

*as when a painter dips  
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse?*

Was not, in short, the Hammonds' magic mirror too often a distorting glass?

It may readily be conceded that wage statistics are rarely cited in the Hammonds' works. It must be remembered, however, that, in spite of the pioneering labours of Sir Arthur Bowley and Mr. G. H. Wood, data on wage-history were still scanty at the time when *The Town Labourer* and *The Skilled Labourer* were on the stocks, and that Bowley himself had uttered an emphatic caution on the unreliability of wage figures for the period with which those works were principally concerned. Since that time knowledge has increased, and a recent book by a scholar of unquestioned weight<sup>2</sup> gives grounds for thinking that, from 1780 or so onwards, the wages of skilled workers showed an upward trend. He again, however, is careful to point out that, in the absence of evidence as to the growth or decline of fines, overtime, unemployment, allowances in kind and—a not less crucial deficiency—reliable indexes of alterations in the cost of living, mere figures of wage-rates or earnings leave us not much wiser than before. Attempts to derive from them conclusions as to changes in standards of life are not, in Professor Ashton's judgement, a hopeful task.

An author might be pardoned for hesitating to build on so

<sup>1</sup> 19 July 1927.

<sup>2</sup> T. S. Ashton, *An Economic History of England: the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 233-4.



precarious a foundation; but, even had the data been more convincing, to base their work on figures was not the Hammonds' line. 'On what men enjoy and what they suffer through their imagination', wrote Lawrence in a characteristic passage, 'statistics do not throw a great deal of light'; and the truth is that the Hammonds and their critics were concerned with different aspects of life. The primary interest of the latter was in movements of pecuniary income. The former did not forget the importance of rising and falling wages; but they regarded as of equal or greater significance the physical environment and moral atmosphere in which men passed their lives. It was the effect of that environment on human sensibilities and emotions, rather than its economic aspects, which haunted the Hammonds' minds. They thought that, in the case both of individuals and peoples, additions to money income could be bought too dear.

The first question asked by them, therefore, in considering the effects of industrialization, is always the same. It is in what surroundings, and with what opportunities for the enjoyment of nature and art, does the population in question live and work? They were far from disparaging the improvements which, on certain sides of life, had taken place; but, comparing the lot of children employed in cottage industries with that of their fellows in mills and mines; or the make-shift hovels of squatters on commons with the urban slums which were apt to take their place; or the hearty turbulence—violent work and violent play—of the Middleton of Bamford's youth with the factory-town of his later years, they felt some doubts whether the argument was quite so much one way as the Babbages and Ures proclaimed. It was true that, thanks to the modernization of productive methods and communications, the age-old spectre of famine was in most parts of Europe in retreat; but could not, the authors asked themselves, that economic triumph have been won at a lower and more equitably apportioned human cost? The evidence of official inquiries proving the injury done to children by—to mention nothing else—excessive hours of labour in factories and mines could hardly, save on points of detail, be contested, nor could the ravages of disease among both young and old resulting from conditions resembling, in Chadwick's words, those of an 'encamped horde or undisciplined soldiery' be simply waved aside. Was it a convincing apologia to retort that in unindustrialized regions mortality from hunger reached, when crops failed, an even more appalling height?

It was natural, in pondering such problems, to turn for light

to a figure whose achievements suggested the quarter in which solutions might most hopefully be sought. The Hammonds' *Lord Shaftesbury* sounds throughout a dual note. The portrait of a lonely, self-tormenting, ascetic is combined with salutes to the hero of a score of public causes, from Ragged Schools, Public Health, and the humanization of obsolete Lunacy Laws to the rescue of child chimney sweeps, and from that again to the defence of evangelical truth against Unitarian heresies and ritualist corruptions, on both of which the reforming fundamentalist waged unceasing war. But, if admiration and distaste find in turn their voice, the former takes the lead. The passages of Shaftesbury's career of most interest to the authors were the chapters concerned with his struggle for an effective mining and factory code, which produced in 1842 the first Coal Mines Regulation Act and later, in 1847, the unsatisfactory, but seminal, measure for textiles, miscalled down to 1874—when further legislation made the title apt—the Ten Hours Act. It was that long drawn-out campaign, together with his subsequent crusade to end the scandal of climbing boys, which caused Ashley, for all his extravagances and morbidities, to win the Hammonds' hearts.

The conflict was one in which passions have at times run high. In the first decade of the present century when the smoke at last had cleared, 'Sadler's Report'—the Report, that is to say, of August 1832 on the 'Bill for regulating the labour of children and young persons in the mills and factories of the United Kingdom'<sup>1</sup>—was commended by the authors of the standard *History of Factory Legislation*<sup>2</sup> 'as one of the most valuable collections of evidence on industrial conditions that we possess'. The Hammonds shared that view; and recent attempts to discredit, not only the document in question, but both the principle of legal restrictions on freedom of contract between employer and employed and the writers' account of the lions' den of hostile interests through which for long it had to fight its way, have not been happily conceived. It is true, no doubt, that Sadler, a religious humanitarian, regarded with horror the abuses accompanying the exploitation of children, and that, in his efforts to move Parliament to stamp such evils out, he showed less than would have been prudent of the cool detachment becoming in the chairman of a Select Committee. A

<sup>1</sup> H.C., 1831-2, XV.

<sup>2</sup> B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison (Mrs. F. H. Spencer), *A History of Factory Legislation*, 1903, 3rd ed. 1926, p. 34.

detailed examination, however, of the charge of sharp practice brought against him is not here in place, since he dropped out of public life on the loss of his seat in the election of December 1832.<sup>1</sup> It is not with Sadler, but with the chapter that opened when,

<sup>1</sup> As the Hammonds have been criticised for their appreciative references to Sadler, the reader may be assisted by a brief statement of the part played by him in connexion with the Bill and Committee of 1831-2:

(a) Sadler obtained permission to introduce his Bill on 15 Dec. 1831. He was opposed to the appointment of a Select Committee as involving needless delay, but agreed to that procedure on learning that otherwise the government would oppose the Bill. Hence on 16 Mar. 1832, after a lengthy speech (Hansard, 3rd ser., vol. xi, pp. 340 et seq.), in which he moved its second reading, he also moved that a Select Committee be appointed. Both resolutions were carried.

(b) The committee then appointed numbered 36. It appears to have been in close touch with employers, as well as—presumably—with employees. According to R. B. Seeley (*Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Michael Thomas Sadler*, 1842, p. 381) it was 'amply supplied by the Factory Interest with zealous and able advocates of their view', and 'eight at least [of its members] were the earnest guardians of the interests of the mill-owners'. It is possible that Seeley, who, after Sadler's death in 1835, published a volume containing selections from his works, was biased in his favour. It should also be noted, however, that R. H. Greg (*The Factory Question*, 1837) who disapproved of Sadler's Bill and strongly resented the Report of the Select Committee, does not suggest that the latter was unrepresentative or packed.

(c) The point most emphasized by Sadler in his second-reading speech had been the injury to juvenile workers caused by excessive hours of labour, over-pressure, and in some cases inhuman treatment. In the ensuing debate attention was directed by critics also to the economic dangers of his bill; but it was on the charge of his alleged gross over-statement of the evils of child labour that the heaviest stress was laid (see, e.g. the first speaker, Lord Althorpe, 'Some of the Hon. Member's statements appear to be almost incredible', Hansard, loc. cit.). It was natural, therefore, that the greater part of the evidence called by Sadler should be such as to substantiate his assertions on that point. It is also not surprising that the witnesses summoned should have consisted largely of relatives, friends, fellow-workers, overlookers (i.e. foremen), together with some doctors, as the persons most likely to have first-hand knowledge of the conditions in which the children worked, and of the effect of those conditions on 'their physical and moral health.

(d) The committee is stated (Seeley, op. cit., p. 300) to have met on forty-three days between 12 Apr. and 7 Aug. On 8 Aug. it laid the result before the House (*C. J.*, vol. 87, p. 566), in the shape of a brief statement that it had made progress with the matters referred to it, together with a mass of evidence taken by it, which composes the bulk of its Report. In considering the harvest of its labours, two points often over-looked should be borne in mind. *First*, 'as an arrangement for mutual convenience and to save money' (Greg, op. cit., p. 7), the committee had agreed at an early stage of its proceedings, that Sadler should take his witnesses first, and that 'the other side' (i.e. the opponents of the Bill) should then take theirs. *Second*, Parliament was pro-

early in 1833, he was succeeded by Ashley as the spokesman of the cause, that the Hammonds' volume is principally concerned.

In reality, of course, the suggestion that its authors derived their opinions on child labour from one Report alone is a mare's nest. The melancholy truth is that evidence from other sources to much the same effect is only too abundant. The Commissioners of 1833, appointed at the instance of the employers and led by a hard-headed economist, Thomas Tooke, the unemotional Chadwick, and a physician with industrial experience, Southwood Smith, denounced 'hired agitators' and rejected allegations of cruelty as unproved; but on the larger issues they had little new to say. 'They too', in the words of Sir Llewellyn Woodward, 'realised the need for legislation, and their report confirmed the existence of the evils reported by the first inquiry.'<sup>1</sup> The limitations on juvenile employment recommended by them were in some respects, indeed, more stringent than those contained in Sadler's—later Shaftesbury's—Bill, while the government was sufficiently impressed to establish special machinery of enforcement in the form of an inspectorate appointed by the Crown. The analogous, though different, scandals of child labour in collieries and mines shown to exist, though not equally in all coal-fields, by the Commission appointed on Ashley's initiative in 1840, and depicted by the Hammonds in a moving chapter, are a further case in point. Finally, the extension during the twenty years following 1847 to other factory industries of the principles of the Act of that year reveals both the prevalence in unregulated trades of abuses needing treatment and the conversion by experience of public opinion to protective policies of a kind formerly opposed. If, in short, the authors were guilty of

rogued on 16 Aug. to 16 Oct., and subsequently, after a further prorogation to 11 Dec., was dissolved by a Proclamation dated 3 Dec. 1832. A prorogation brings the life of Select Committees to an end. For the former of these decisions—the order in which witnesses were to be heard—Sadler presumably bears part of the responsibility; for the latter—the prorogations—he has, as far as is known, none. Given these conditions it was hardly possible for the Report on his Bill to be other than one-sided in the literal sense of deriving its *data* predominantly from supporters of the measure, though it should be remembered that, on the subject of child labour, several leading industrialists in the regions most affected held similar views. It may well have been the case that some of the witnesses heard by the committee exaggerated the prevalence of the evils to be overcome. For the charge of wholesale mendacity, as distinct from inaccuracies and over-statements, little convincing evidence appears to exist.

<sup>1</sup> E. L. Woodward, *The Age of Reform* (*The Oxford History of England*, vol. xiii), 1939, p. 144.

an error, it was one for which they may, perhaps, be pardoned. It consisted in an over-sanguine assumption that their critics would be as conscientious as themselves in mastering an official literature at once voluminous, painful, and dull.

The lesson deduced by the Hammonds from this chapter of history can be simply stated. It was that, in an industrial civilization, the welfare of the majority of its members depends on the existence of conditions, physical and moral, which only collective action can create. The validity of that truism, however, was not confined to relations between employer and employed, with which Ashley had been principally, though not exclusively, concerned. The warning voiced by it was equally relevant to the legacy left by the early years of the Industrial Revolution in the shape, not only of factories, but of towns. Hence their *Lord Shaftesbury* led to further works. The authors had begun by analysing the inevitable dehumanization of an industrial system dominated, as it seemed to them, by a single-minded concentration on pecuniary gain, and had pointed to the prophylactic by which the resulting evils could be held in check. Two later studies, *The Age of the Chartists, 1832-1854*, and a revised version of it entitled *The Bleak Age*, are concerned with a second aspect of the same general theme.

Few books, it is probable, on the domestic history of nineteenth-century England introduce that subject by a chapter of preliminary reflections on Graeco-Roman life. The reason which led the Hammonds to that agreeable innovation is characteristic of their thought. It is that they interpreted Chartism not, in the conventional manner, as a struggle of contending classes, with, as its distinctive feature, the first political appearance of the industrial proletariat as an independent force, but as an upheaval of a more fundamental kind. Its essence, in their view, was rather ethical than economic. It was, in short, a moral revolt against a conception of society which, while showering luxuries, and the leisure to enjoy them, on the few, relegated the mass of their fellow countrymen to the position—surprising phrase—of ‘a necessary part of the social system’. The civic life of classical antiquity, the authors suggest, for all its servile taint, had been prodigal in its provision of the means of refreshment for body and mind—baths, theatres, temples and other noble buildings—with the result that a large proportion of the population could share in the enjoyment of the art and culture of the day; while medieval cities had rivalled each other in architectural magnificence and in the encouragement of festivals, pageants, and

plays. The English town of the first half of the nineteenth century, with its lack of common amenities and its precipitate class divisions based on wealth, stood at the opposite extreme from both. Cut off by the growth of population, as well as by Inclosure Acts, from the contacts with nature which once they had enjoyed; too often devoid of the necessities of decency and health; without public parks, gardens, galleries, libraries, museums, or even an adequate supply of schools, what could the Manchester or Liverpool of the 1840's offer to its inhabitants but the hope, if victorious in the scramble for pecuniary success, of ultimately escaping from its grim and depressing self? The Churches might have played, and in some localities, the writers remark, did play, a unifying and humanizing role; but too often both Anglicans and Methodists continued to defend abuses, such as pew-rents, which kept rich and poor apart. In spite of notable examples to the contrary, it was rarely, it seems, that Christian teachers, whatever their denomination, challenged the prevalent idolatry of wealth.

Thus the Hammonds' study of Chartism avoids the beaten track. It is primarily concerned, not with the struggle for the famous Six Points, but with the more important question, as they thought it, of the environmental conditions which, for half a century, made working-class resentment, not merely an intermittent episode in the life of industrial England, but endemic. Challenged to explain the transition from the political fevers of the thirties and forties to the comparative tranquillity of the two ensuing decades, they did not, of course, ignore the growth of a more propitious economic climate; but they laid their main emphasis on developments in the sphere of policy resulting from the long-delayed emergence of a genuine, if rudimentary, social conscience. They saw as the crucial turning-points the Factory Act of 1847, the doctrineless collectivism of the Public Health Acts of 1848 and 1875, the gradual extension from the forties onwards of such sources of common enjoyment as public libraries, museums, galleries, gardens, and parks, and finally—the wizened seed of a mighty tree—the Elementary Education Act of 1870.

#### IV

Hammond did not write for choice on individuals, unless, like Shaftesbury, they were identified with a cause. It was with three such personalities that his subsequent biographical studies were concerned. Sir James, later Lord, Stansfield, a friend of Mazzini,

had devoted the first part of his career to the struggle for Italian freedom, and then, after holding office during the years 1871-4 as President of the Poor Law Board in Gladstone's first cabinet, abandoned the broad highway of political success to throw himself into the agitation for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864-9, which attained its goal in 1886. Hammond's account of him was a tribute to one to whose sacrifice of personal ambitions to a crusade of mercy in an unpopular, and to some repellent, field, public life has not too many parallels to show. In the second, and more intimate, study of his former chief, the ethical appeal to which Lawrence responded was equally pronounced. C. P. Scott was not only a shrewd political observer, but a man of lofty principles, who viewed the *Guardian* not primarily as a means to money or power, but as an organ of education in the broadest sense, and whose character, together with the paper's influence, made him one whose opinions political leaders of varying views were glad at critical moments to ascertain. In the view of persons better qualified to judge than the present writer, Lawrence's success in doing justice to both these aspects of a noble personality was not the least of the achievements of his literary career.

Four years later, in 1938, appeared the last, and to some the most impressive, of Hammond's major works. Among the topics treated in *Gladstone and the Irish Nation*, two will not surprise the reader of his earlier books. The English industrial wage-earner had been the theme of all but one of his and Barbara Hammonds' previous social studies. The Irish counterpart of that figure was the peasant. In the former case the edge of notorious evils had been, in the authors' view, blunted by legislation designed to improve conditions of employment and the health of towns. Might not, in the latter, different, but equally constructive, policies relating to the ownership and use of the land, of a kind made familiar since the Revolution by the experience of large parts of peasant Europe, have yielded in Ireland equally beneficent results? Intertwined with that economic problem was a second, and even graver, issue. The suppression of the individuality of a weaker by a stronger people was, in Hammond's eyes, an unpardonable wrong; nor could he persuade himself that foreign critics erred when to Poland and unemancipated Italy they added Ireland as a case in point. The relations between Ireland and England before and during the age of which he wrote seemed to him an example of the nemesis which that wrong entailed.

Since the publication in 1903 of Morley's *Life*, not only had the Gladstone papers been made more usable by students, but new material had become available in the shape of biographies, correspondence, and memoirs. That additional evidence was grist to Hammond's mill. His volume, however, is primarily a study, not of Anglo-Irish relations, but of a figure unique, as he thought, among English statesmen in its imaginative insight into Irish needs. Political strategy and tactics, therefore, are not its central theme. Gladstone more than once remarked that politics were not his true vocation. The words were those of one whose lightning speed in unravelling economic and legal complexities astonished his officials hardly less than did his eloquence the crowds that hung upon his lips; but in neither of those regions does his biographer find the secret of the magician's spell. It consisted less, he thinks, in Gladstone's mastery of means than in his vision of large and lofty ends, less in his acumen in grappling with financial technicalities and the mysteries of Irish land-law than in the long perspectives and distant horizons which, amid the dusty details of office, were rarely absent from his mind, and in whose significance, because he himself believed in it, he caused others to believe. The impression left by Hammond's pages is that, if at times Gladstone bestrode the political world like a Colossus, the reason was partly that politics were only half his life. He was, in short, for all his parliamentary ardour and ministerial zeal, less interested in the practice of the politician's art than in the moral principles by which, he held, men and states should live.

These principles, as expounded with sympathetic insight by Hammond, form the kernel of the book. They include, to mention nothing else, Gladstone's reliance on Greek civilization and Christianity as the compasses by which to steer his course; his conception of Europe as a family of nations united by an ethical code derived from both, whose member states should pursue 'objects which are European by means which are European, in concert with the mind of the rest of Europe and supported by its authority'; his reverence for Aristotle, St. Augustine, Dante, and Butler as oracles of political wisdom in preference to Locke, Bentham, and Mill; and the religious convictions which caused him to see Ireland as 'the minister of God's retribution upon cruel and inveterate and but half-atoned injustice'. The author does not directly comment on the contrast between Gladstone's indignation at the afflictions of the Irish peasant and his comparative unconsciousness—to judge by the paucity of his allusions



to them—of poverty and economic oppression beneath his eyes at home; but he underlines a characteristic of which that apparent indifference might be held, perhaps, to have been the shadow side. 'Gladstone', he writes, 'became the greatest popular leader of his age, although he never mastered or seriously studied great social problems, because he offered the working classes something that satisfied their self-respect. . . . He was a most sincere democrat because he believed that free discussion and self-government were essential to human dignity.'

## V

Shortly before the First World War the Hammonds had abandoned London for a house near Hemel Hempstead. It was there, at Piccotts End, amid the animals, tame and wild, whom they loved, but within reach of the Record Office and British Museum, that their books were written, and that the bulk of Lawrence's work as a journalist was done. To them, as to others, the events of 1939 brought a revolution in their way of life. To strengthen its hand for the crisis, the *Guardian* invited Lawrence to exchange his position as an occasional, though frequent, contributor for that of a full-time member of the staff. He responded to the appeal, and started work on the new conditions on 1 September. From that date till six years later, in 1945, he and Mrs. Hammond made Manchester their home. 'They lived', wrote a friend describing a visit to them shortly after their arrival, 'in a couple of rooms in a students' hostel, with four chairs and a table covered with press cuttings. . . . Mrs. Hammond cut out for Lawrence anything that might deserve comment in the *M.G.*, and he carried off in the evening his selection. They were both very gay about the austerity. She made us tea on the floor.'

Hammond's war-time work on the *Guardian* was not confined to one department of affairs; but events, as well as his own inclinations, caused the greater part of it to be focused on themes which he had made in calmer times his own. French history and culture were near his heart, and, in his case, the saying *chacun a deux patries, la sienne et la France* was not mere sentimental rhetoric, but the voice of a conviction deeply felt and firmly held. With all his faith in France, he was haunted by the fear that, at a moment when sympathy, encouragement, and confidence in her future were among her most urgent needs, a cold or condescending attitude on the part of uncomprehending allies might prolong both the miseries of the occupation and the period during which she was unable to resume her proper place

among the leaders of the common cause. If that disaster was partially avoided, it was largely, in the opinion of one equally at home in France and England, to the warmth and understanding of a section of the British press that the credit for averting it was due. 'Continuously, for more than four years', writes Professor Brogan, 'the leading articles on French themes in the *Manchester Guardian* were the sanest, best informed, most generous and so most wise lead given to British public opinion, which was in real danger of going wrong. . . . To the human temptation to error they opposed reason, understanding and truth.'<sup>1</sup>

Professor Brogan's words are a fitting tribute to the Hammonds' services in time of war. On their achievements as historians the weightiest testimony is that of scholars who have worked on the period and problems of which they wrote. George Unwin had seen in youth too much of poverty and over-work to be accused of the exaggerated sensibility to the thought of these afflictions with which the Hammonds were sometimes charged. Individualism—good sense and absurdities at once—was in his bones, and he cherished an ineradicable conviction that, whenever governments start to improve the lot of man, they kill more patients than they cure. He was delighted, however, by the Hammonds' first three volumes of social history, which—since he died in 1924—were all that he had a chance to read, and was emphatic in his hope that *The Town Labourer* would be followed by a complementary study of the lives, thoughts, and achievements of contemporary entrepreneurs. The admiration of their work expressed by Mr. A. P. Wadsworth, joint-author with Miss J. de L. Mann of a book on Lancashire and the rise of its cotton industry described by Sir John Clapham as the best industrial history to be produced by English scholars, was equally warm. A native of Rochdale and a master of the story of his county's economic growth, he was an authority to whom Lawrence turned for counsel on aspects of the subject alive in local memories, but sometimes overlooked in books. The Hammonds, he remarked, were the humblest and least opinionated of people, and accepted corrections with an alacrity not always shown by authors; but the points requiring amendment were, he added, few, for the reason partly that the writers were 'thorough and honest scholars', partly that their view both of the agrarian

<sup>1</sup> A selection from the articles in question was subsequently published under the title *Faith in France*, with a preface by Professor D. W. Brogan (Manchester, John Sherratt & Son, 1946).

innovations of the later eighteenth century and of the accelerated industrialization at the same time under way 'rested on evidence of a kind which later research had done little to rebut'. Professor T. S. Ashton has written of them more recently in different, but equally enthusiastic, terms. While welcoming the Hammonds' recognition that the Industrial Revolution increased the material welfare of the masses, he is careful to set that conclusion in the right perspective by emphasizing that an upward movement of money wages did not necessarily imply a corresponding advance in the quality of their recipients' lives. Their *Lord Shaftesbury*, with its illustrations of that truism, was ranked by him among 'the greatest of English biographies'. 'Few', he remarks, 'have done so much to make ordinary men and women understand that a study of the past may be the best preparation for an understanding of the present. . . . Their place in English historiography is secure.'

The educative influence applauded by Professor Ashton was not the least of their gifts for which gratitude is due. Its most obvious aspect was the addition to historical knowledge which the authors made, but even more impressive was their genius for stimulating thought and disseminating ideas. It is not an exaggeration to say that during the early years of the present century economic and social history continued to be regarded as an unprofitable by-path, which might be of interest to specialists but did little to illumine the major issues of human life. If today it is seen in a less depressing light, as a study concerned with large, central, and permanent interests of mankind, the Hammonds' part in effecting that conversion has not been small. And that, again, if the most conspicuous of their contributions, is not the most profound. Important as has been their achievement in widening mental horizons, it is in the ethical rather than the intellectual sphere that the secret of their power must be sought. *Habemus publice egestatem privatim opulentiam* was a warning rarely absent from their minds. Like Morris and Ruskin, in their different ways, they regarded 'wealth' and 'riches', not as synonyms, but as terms denoting antithetic aims and styles of life, of which the second, when pampered and given its head, inevitably undermined and finally destroyed the first. Honours came their way, the honorary degrees of D.Litt. conferred on both by Oxford, the election of Lawrence as Hon. Fellow of his College of St. John's and as Fellow of the British Academy, the Hon. D.Litt. bestowed on him by the University of Manchester, and, in the year before his death, the compliment

paid to him by France in making him *chevalier* of the *Légion d'Honneur*. His reason for declining a Companionship of Honour was characteristic. It was that, as a working journalist, he ought not, he thought, to compromise his independence by accepting a decoration from a British government of whose policies it was his duty to take an impartial view.

Dr. Gilbert Murray once described the political Liberalism of his day as blessed with two incorrigible deviationists, himself on the international, and Lawrence Hammond on the social, plane. In reality the latter's version of the faith was less the doctrine of a school or party than an ecumenical creed, to whose humanitarian sympathies some ideologies labelled liberal were hardly less repulsive than the cynical opportunism, as he was apt to think it, of his Fabian friends and the truculent hyper-intellectualism of Marx. It led him, in considering social policies and systems, to scrutinize assumptions as keenly as results, and to challenge, not only failures, but standards of success. These people, had written long before; a shrewd observer of the peasant farmers in the Isle of Axholme, 'are very poor respecting money, but very happy respecting their mode of existence'. The imponderables of life were seen by the Hammonds with equally discerning eyes. Their first question, in the words of an appreciation of Lawrence published on his death, was always 'not what would pay, but what was true, what was right, what was human'. Their politics, in short, were based on moral premisses, not on economic expediency or on visions of future Elysiums to be purchased at the price of present wrong. In a world in retreat, not only from particular principles, but from the very idea that political principles exist, it is natural that such convictions should seem a remote and worn-out creed. It is, however, that quality in the Hammonds' works, even more than their learning and the mingled charm and power of their style, which causes them to live.

R. H. TAWNEY

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