

Facts Are Only Facts After All

CREATIVE EXPERIENCE. By M. P. Follett. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. \$3.

THE statistical type of mind we have always with us. It delights in the collection of "facts," the preparation of tables. It believes that any problem can be solved if only enough experts and specialists can be secured.

Professor Follett's mind is not of that sort. He does not believe that human relations are static, but that there is a constant interweaving of activities between individuals and groups, that situations cannot be judged and handled by looking at them from without, but only by living in them. He believes that out of the experience of men will be created new values, that human conduct regulates law, not law conduct.

In his present book he has pointed out a few of the fallacies which control ordinary thinking, especially in the field of sociology. One of these is the belief that if enough so-called facts can be collected about any question or problem a solution follows as a matter of course. But, Follett has pointed out, facts are often only so in name. They are only one way of looking at a subject and often are unconsciously selected

by the expert. Thus, in defenses of insanity at murder trials, one set of experts relates one series of facts: that the accused had relatives who were insane, that he had convulsions as a child, that he did or said this or that queer thing as he grew older. Another set of experts gives another series of facts: that he got along well at school, that he made a good living, that his sanity was never questioned until the murder trial, &c.

Just so in labor disputes does Mr. Follett find both sides presenting apparently irreconcilable demands; or in law courts an apparent conflict between two sides. The solution of such difficulties, he holds, is not in compromise, not in each side giving up something, but in integrating the situation; that is, in arriving at a settlement which will give both sides what they want.

He also takes a shot at "applied psychology," so popular nowadays. We all know the magazine pictures of the forceful, dominating male with some such caption as "Develop Will-Power," or "Learn to Govern Others." The secret of the success of such advertising lies, of course, is the universal will to power, but that will to power is conceived of in its simplest terms; that is, in terms of

power over others. So that the repressed or inferior individual is likely to choose forms of activity of a compensatory nature. The farmers for many years have suffered from that attitude of the urban mind which had found its expression in such terms as "hayseed," "rube," "hick," &c. This has gradually caused an inferiority complex which is manifested in their present self-assertion and attempts to control legislation. Follett has shown, however, that actual power is not power over some one, but a force growing out of collective experience and universally valuable.

In the second part of his book Mr. Follett has pointed out the application of his ideas to a democracy. In doing so he has exposed the essential hollowness of such ideas as the "consent of the governed," and also the idea that representatives should follow blindly the political ideas that were nascent when they were elected. For in the affairs of the nation, as in those of individuals, the situation is always changing. Experience is constantly creating new values, and the course which seems most desirable at the time of election may not be so later.

Not the least interesting part of Follett's book is the application to

jurisprudence of his ideas. He has shown how law is not a set of rules arbitrarily set up for the people to follow, but, on the contrary, that the endless interplay of human relations creates law. The housewife who directs a domestic to perform a task or to work for a length of time for which she is unwilling, creates a situation out of which and others like it grows a law on the subject. So that law must get away from a strictly logical mode of thinking and become psychological. The new dynamic psychology tends to a creative jurisprudence.

Professor Follett has maintained his thesis admirably. It is, briefly, a plea for behavioristic sociology, although it goes a step further than the behaviorists. Watson and his followers observe what the individual does. Follett calls attention to three things in a social situation: what the persons concerned are doing, what they think they are doing and what they say they are doing.

He looks upon human relations as a vast interweaving of ideas, out of which must come customs and laws. These need not mean compromise, a resignation of individual titles to power, but a state where the various parts coordinate for the greatest good of all.

JOHN E. LINL.

The New York Times

Published: June 8, 1924

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