

*Economics of Fashion.* By Paul H. Nystrom. The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1928, pages 521.

This most readable volume is a welcome study of one of the most puzzling and pervasive of modern problems. As national magazines grow in circulation, as movies, radios, and chain stores spread their influence, and as means of communication extend further and become more instantaneous, fashion becomes of vast and increasing industrial importance. The subject has a narrower business aspect and a wider social and economic bearing. The former is, in the main, the point of view in Dr. Nystrom's excellent contribution, which is an elaborate study with regard to the following four points: (1) What fashion is, and how it operates; (2) What the causes of fashion are and what factors influence its movements; (3) How methods may be developed to determine what present fashions are; (4) How knowledge of the current trends of fashion may be used in a practical way by concerns to predict coming fashions, and thus to avoid some of the enormous losses which the problem continually forces upon industrial firms.

Dr. Nystrom is unusually well equipped for his task because of his knowledge as an economist, and because of his experience and contacts as Director, during 1921-1927, of the Retail Research Association. He has combed the field for his data, has supplied an interesting historical background, has sprinkled the book with illustrations that are appealing, and has succeeded in making the volume as interesting to the chance reader as it is to the serious student.

The author has made a splendid beginning in a field which needs more attention from economists and social scientists. Questions of even greater significance from a general standpoint suggest themselves. Is it desirable to bring the style element under more sensible social control? What are the evil effects on industry and on individuals from the excesses to which competitive style changes are carried? What are the practical possibilities of securing a rational direction of the forces that are increasingly subjecting utility and production to whim? A companion volume to that of Dr. Nystrom's study, dealing with style as a social problem, would now be timely.

HERMAN FELDMAN\*

*The Strike.* By E. T. Hiller, Ph.D., The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1928, pages xvi, 304.

This is a study of the sociological and psychological aspects of the strike, based upon a detailed examination of the documentary and historical material covering a considerable number and variety of strikes. Its keynote is "the behavior characteristic of the striking group and the techniques used to direct and control it." The strike cycle is analyzed into its successive phases and each is described in detail, separate chapters dealing with organization of the strikers, beginning the concerted action, maintaining group morale, controlling strike break-

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ers, neutralizing the maneuvers of the employer, manipulating public opinion, and demobilization. Chapters are also added on "strikes and industrial reorganization," "political strikes," the "mythical general strike" and "when will strikes cease?" The net result of all these chapters of detail is a generalized account of the psychology of a striking group, showing how human nature behaves under these conditions.

This kind of analysis shows how, in order to develop the necessary degree of emotional tension, all kinds of devices of exploiting the immediate grievances of the group involved are used, and by unifying these with those of other workers and with long-past historical wrongs, resentment is aroused and the group is made to feel its authority as the protagonist of all the oppressed. This analysis also brings out certain frequently neglected points such as the fact that a strike may be worthwhile to a group for the sense of importance which it gives the group even though the original stake for which it was called is not won. A corollary of this proposition is the necessity under which the leaders of the strike must work, of changing the demands from time to time to fit the actual working out of the process.

Especially interesting chapters are those which show how the net result of strikes is always industrial reorganization since they give rise to "new assumptions as to rights which must be conceded or which may be safely demanded"; political strikes as affecting the equilibrium between social classes; why the general strike is mythical; and the conclusions of the author as to the possibility of the substitution for the strike of other methods of securing economic security and social status.

The author has maintained throughout his discussions an objectivity of treatment which permits the acts of the human beings described to speak for themselves without any suggestion of coloring from his own ethical evaluations. Under such and such conditions human beings do such and such things, is the tone of the study, and it is a tone that makes it difficult for the reader to take any but a similarly objective attitude. On this account this should be an especially valuable text for classroom use, for the use of adult discussion groups and for those managers of industry who desire to understand the why of strike behavior.

F. A. SILCOX\*

*The First Annual Report of the Employment Center for the Handicapped* should be of interest to all social engineers as it deals with one of the big human problems of industry. It describes the work that the Center is doing to help those handicapped by various types of disabilities to make vocational adjustments. Those interested in a careful study of the Report should address Miss Louise C. Oden-cranz, Director, Employment Center for the Handicapped, 407 Second Avenue, New York.

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