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he used to attain them." Not until the voluminous correspondence of Polk shall have been subjected to the same criticism which has recently been devoted to his *Diary* will it be possible justly to estimate the man.

ST. GEORGE L. SIOUSSAT.

The Struggle for Self-Government. By LINCOLN STEFFENS. (New York: McClure, Phillips and Company. 1906. Pp. 294.)

This volume comprises a collection of magazine articles, having for their purpose the portrayal of political conditions in selected cities and States. The aim of the author is to show that these conditions are not local but widely distributed and deep-seated. Mr. Steffens contends that the loss of "self government" is due to a systematic attempt on the part of the "system" to control legislation and administration; and because of its activity in local, State and national affairs, the people must likewise be alert if they do not desire to abrogate their rights of self-government. The purification of our city governments is not the solution, for the "system" will go to the State government and secure its ends for the reason that the cities are dependent upon the State legislatures for their powers.

The attempt of the larger commercial and corporate interests to control legislation and administration is probably not wholly incident to our American political system. In any period of great industrial and commercial activity, the influence of government upon business undertakings must necessarily be great, and it is natural that the business interests should attempt to control the legislative and administrative policies. If it is true, as is so stoutly contended, that morals in commerce and in industry are low, this condition is certain to affect politics, because of the intimate relations of government to business. Permanently higher standards in public life must obviously be accompanied with higher standards in business life. The alertness of business interests in politics, coupled with the supineness of the people, has done much to make possible the conditions pictured in this volume. Professional politicians have played their part in the plan for the control of government in the interests of corporate wealth. They have been ready to enter into compacts which involved the rights of the public. It is not surprising that our party system has been employed as an instrument for the perversion of the rights of the people.

The conditions discussed by Mr. Steffens have long been known to

the students of government, but a service has been rendered by bringing them to the attention of the public with the realism of a trained reporter. Surface conditions in other States seem to indicate that the corruption and perversion of public rights are not incident to the States and cities described in this volume. In fact, events have transpired elsewhere since its publication that indicate a wide operation of the "system."

One gains the impression that Mr. Steffens has not told all that was found in the conditions described, on the ground that all the truth might engender a pessimism which would be fatal to wholesome results. In fact there is hopefulness for the reason that the powerfully entrenched "system" has been overthrown where a proper leader of the people has taken up their cause.

But the most hopeful indication is that the corporate interests are now changing their attitude toward government. In those States where the people have come to their rights and effectively control the situation—notably in Wisconsin—no longer do corporations attempt to secure legislation or to prevent it by the devious methods of former days. Open, fair discussion and consideration of measures upon their merits is now the rule. This change of front is largely due to the fact that all interests, private and public, are considered with fairness and justice. When the former antagonisms, the offspring of a predatory system, are broken down, self-government will be realized, upon a basis of justice in which the rights of all will be fully protected. In the meantime some drastic work must be done in many of our States and cities in order to lay the foundation for constructive legislation already under headway in a few of the States and cities.

The value of Mr. Steffens' volume consists largely in a vivid portrayal of conditions which have made possible the work of the system—a composite of social, political and business interests. The author came to this task with the training of a reporter, and while some of the defects of this training are apparent in style and method, still the main purpose of the volume is fully realized.

S. E. SPARLING.

The France of Today. By BARRETT WENDELL. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1907. Pp. 379.)

Some years ago Mr. Bodley published his elaborate work in two volumes on France. He had been engaged on it over seven years. The present volume is not a work of the nature of Mr. Bodley's. It consists