

condition of things does not exist at present in any society.

Everywhere we find smaller or larger developments progressing slowly or rapidly, verging sometimes almost upon revolution and anarchy, but in every case presenting problems which claim immediate attention. Even where constitutional questions do not exist, or are at least not pressing, we have the great labour question in its many aspects, not to mention a variety of other problems, commercial, legal, fiscal, educational, &c. Confronted with this difficulty, the absence of any generally acknowledged normal condition or standard, it is not surprising that many social philosophers and reformers have thought it necessary to construct for themselves an ideal standard wherewith to measure or whereon to remodel existing social conditions.

In most cases such models of social organisation have not stood the test of criticism but have been speedily relegated to the region of romance and unreality. There are, nevertheless, a few examples of reasoning on such lines which have produced even in modern times a marked impression. More as samples than with any attempt towards completeness, I mention two of them—they both belong to the sociological or economic literature of Germany. The first came from that German thinker who, in the beginning of the century, had probably the greatest popular influence, and who, of all the leading German philosophers, took the greatest part in the national and political life of his country. This was Fichte.

80.
Examples of
efforts
towards
economic
reconstruc-
tion.

It is indeed remarkable how Fichte combines through-