

AMERICAN CHARITIES. By Amos G. Warner.  
Revised by Mary Roberts Coolidge. 541 pages.  
Crowell.

Amos Warner was in his day, a half a century ago, almost as much of a pioneer as the lamented Carleton Parker of our generation. The two men had much in common in their connection with the academic and industrial life of the Pacific coast, in their important but unfinished work, and their untimely death. It is a happy thought that Carleton Parker, a generation hence, may seem as old fashioned as Amos Warner does today, even decked out in shreds and patches of our contemporary costume. Mrs. Coolidge, in attempting another revision of "American Charities," has set herself a well nigh impossible task. The world has moved too fast and too far since the revision of this book in 1908 and is in too transitional a stage just now for this hour to seem the one appointed for such a formulation. The book is hardly of sufficient contemporary interest for the general reader, but for the social worker it is instructive and entertaining—and somewhat bewildering. To a reader capable of such discriminations, these variations on the theme of Warner appear to be written, as it were, in three keys at once, if such a figure is permissible. First, we distinguish the original basis of the Warner of the early nineties, discoursing on Pauperism, Institutional Care, and Charity Organization Principles, then the note of the revisor's interpolation of 1908, harping on the then new and all important science of Eugenics; finally the discordant tones so inharmonious with the old systematizations of the developing sciences of Mental and Social Hygiene, Health Insurance, and the Improvement of Industrial Conditions. On the whole, the point of view seems somewhat limited and the emphasis already somewhat obsolete—on old and dreary problems of institutional administration and pauperism, unilluminated by the interpretation of modern psychology and psychiatry, with their emphasis on the individual. One puts down this book with the sense that admirable as were the motives of the revisor in devotedly attempting to perpetuate the memory of a pioneer in social work, the net result falls short of justice to a man who was a progressive spirit in his time and who if he had lived today would have written a book radically different from anything that can be made out of his work of a generation ago.