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these two authors implicitly allow or explicitly contend, to argue from the position in the countries they have been examining to the case of France without taking into due account the actual modifying circumstances. L.L.P.

15.—*Gold, Prices, and Wages under the Greenback Standard*. By Wesley C. Mitchell. xv + 627 pp., large 8vo. Berkeley: The University Press, 1908.

This first volume of the University of California publications in Economics contains a painstaking and thorough examination of the effect of the greenback depreciation on prices, wages, and the cost of living. On the war-period Mr. Mitchell has previously written, and the present volume is an extension and completion of those earlier studies at Chicago.

The material available is neither very extensive or ideally adapted to the purposes of the inquiry, but good use has been made of unpromising data, and confirmation indirectly secured for conclusions based on a foundation rather too narrow to justify complete confidence without such support.

Very free use is made of medians and deciles in preference to arithmetic means as indices of the movements studied, though the arithmetic means are used in certain cases where they are deemed more helpful. Some of the irregularities which call for explanations put forward by the author are due to the narrow range of his material, and the fact that he takes the actual median item in his enumerations as representing the true median of the grouping of which he can present only a small sample. Possibly a recourse to methods explained by Mr. Bowley in his writings, and used by him and others in this country, whereby a calculated median replaces the median item of the sample examined, and similarly for the deciles, might have obviated the necessity for some of these discussions of irregularities.

Mr. Mitchell, among his criticisms of Professor Falkner's handling of the data presented in the well-known Aldrich report, sets forth the advantages of grouping related items in the list of goods whose prices are quoted in that report. The present writer has, in some cognate studies, found that such a grouping produced a quite surprisingly small effect on the result; so that, proper as it may be from the theoretical standpoint, it may not be assumed without proof that the grouping plays a large part in modifying the results attained.

But few of the results can be referred to, and the description of methods and materials must be limited to the preceding brief references to them. The general nature of the conclusions reached is quite in accord with what the study of problems of like nature would lead us to expect. The premium on gold advanced at first more rapidly than average prices of commodities, and these more rapidly than wages. In course of time the slower movements overtook the more rapid one, which had been reversed in the meantime. In the downward movement, again, a relative retardation similar to that noted for the rise is demonstrated. Minor

details of the relative movements are set forth, and their significance debated.

The critical discussion of the statistical material, which is presented at great length, leads to the conclusion that, were green-back prices corrected by the gold premium, the resulting course of calculated gold prices would show variations generally similar in kind, if somewhat greater in extent, than those shown in European countries having a metallic standard definitely related to gold. In other words, the premium on gold may be concluded to have been shown to affect prices, wholesale and retail, and also wages somewhat as accepted theory would lead us to expect. There is nothing startling or novel in such a conclusion; the service rendered by the investigation is rather to provide further support, from the records of the market, for principles sometimes asserted to be too much the outcome of abstract reasoning.

In bringing out the differences of the movements in the eastern and western parts of the northern States, in the study of women's, as well as men's, wages, and in a number of other ways, the author has shown himself to be capable of making the best use of the data which happen to be forthcoming, and of dealing with not a few difficulties of a serious nature presented in their analysis. He has provided much valuable material for his fellow-students of economic problems to use.

A.F.

16.—*The Fall in Consols and Other Investments since 1897.* By A. H. Gibson. iv + 93 pp., 8vo. London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1908. Price 5s. net.

Bank Rate, the Banker's Vade Mecum. By A. H. Gibson. viii + 69 pp., 8vo. London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1908. Price 2s. 6d. net.

These two volumes, produced in Halifax, are, in a sense, companion volumes. The first discusses the fall in the return on high-class investment securities, and maintains that the conversion of Consols in 1888 was a mistake in that it effected a reduction of interest justified only by temporary conditions, not by the permanent level of the loan-market. The author holds that this state of things calls for a remedy, though we cannot follow him in his argument in favour of a moral claim of the fund-holder on the nation for a security yielding at par about 3 per cent. He foretells a fall in the market quotation to the neighbourhood of $77\frac{1}{2}$ if the stock remains a $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. stock.

Why the demonstration that, averaged over long periods of the past, the return to the purchaser of Consols, setting aside the loss or gain due to changes in the market value of his security as loss or gain only effective through realisation, has been about $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., should carry the conclusion that recent deviations from that level were due to temporary and artificial causes, and that the old level will be restored before long, we confess that we cannot understand. The relations of supply and demand in the market for loan capital may well undergo changes of an enduring nature, or they may show periodic fluctuations about a changing level.