WILEY

Review

Author(s): W. J. Ashley

Review by: W. J. Ashley

Source: *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 39 (Sep., 1900), pp. 374-375

Published by: Wiley on behalf of the Royal Economic Society

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2957222>

Accessed: 26-06-2016 01:56 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Royal Economic Society, *Wiley* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to
The Economic Journal

read at Oxford, both as good prose and as good history. The future critic will hardly know which half of this statement is most surprising.

W. J. ASHLEY

Ouvriers du Temps Passé (xv^e—xvi^e siècles). Par H. HAUSER, Professeur à la Faculté de Lettres de l'Université de Clermont-Ferrand. (Paris: Félix Alcan.) 1899. Pp. xxxviii 252.

THIS is a useful book; it is based upon independent research in the craft archives preserved in Paris, and it adds to our knowledge of an obscure period in the history of industry. But it shows either that M. Hauser's preliminary reading has been somewhat limited, or else that certain notions about the craft organisations of the middle ages are more widely prevalent in France than I had supposed. For M. Hauser throughout assumes an attitude of protest against what he repeatedly calls the "idyllic" view of his subject. He again and again tells us that people will be surprised to learn that everything did not work quite smoothly in the *métiers jurés*, and that their members were not always actuated by brotherly love and civic patriotism; he seems somewhat surprised himself. I must confess my ignorance of the works of MM. Blanc ("tout imprégnés de socialisme chrétien") and du Bourg, who seem to be arch-idyllists. But I suppose the well-known treatise of M. Émile Levasseur, the *Histoire des Classes ouvrières*, is still the most considerable French work on the subject. M. Hauser, who dedicates his treatise to that "illustrious master," does little more, on several of the topics of which he treats, than "develop and confirm some pages of his history." But certainly no student of M. Levasseur's work would be likely to have an exaggerated belief in the symmetry and moral beauty of "the gild system." And the books of M. Fagniez—whose name would perhaps be the next to occur to one—are certainly not open to that particular criticism. As M. Hauser, therefore, had no need to cool the emotions of the serious student, we must hope that his work will find its way to the sentimental public, if it really deserves the cold water he is so ready to bestow.

Another observation M. Hauser's book suggests is that it would be well if French scholars would learn enough German to acquaint themselves with the literature of their subject in that language. On this matter of "Zunft-wesen," there are in German several excellent treatises and piles of specialist monographs; and if M. Hauser could have given two or three days to this literature, he would have gained some valuable ideas as to the significance of his own material. He would, for instance, have found that the tendency of the "masters" to monopolise the advantages of the *métier* is a perfectly well-known and almost universal feature in the development of the fifteenth century all over Western Europe: "die Entartung der Zünfte" is by

this time a well-worn phrase. What is even more to the point, he would have become familiar with the distinction between "the gild-system" and "the domestic system"—the *Hausindustrie* or *Verlags-system* of the Germans. And if he had been familiar with it, "la soierie de Toulouse" in 1553 would have been more to him than "une organisation très curieuse": he would have discovered in it the beginnings of one of the great typical forms of industrial structure.

However, if M. Hauser dissents from the sentimentalists, he dissents equally from "the economists" (as, unfortunately, that term is still understood in France, thanks to the Academy of Moral Sciences!). He has even the courage to express his utter distrust of M. d'Avenel's pretentious averages. This is an encouraging feature: it shows that M. Hauser's "purely historical" attitude is not a mere euphemism for doctrinaire liberalism; and it makes one anticipate more illuminating work in the future, when he knows more round and about his special theme. But it is amusing to observe one point in which M. Hauser and M. d'Avenel are at odds. M. d'Avenel maintains that the corporations did not affect wages—meaning that they did not keep them *above* their "natural" level; M. Hauser maintains that they did affect wages—meaning that they kept them *below* the "natural" level. But is not M. d'Avenel thinking chiefly of what the "customer" or other employer among the public paid to the master-craftsman? and is not M. Hauser thinking of what the master-craftsman paid to the "compagnon"? The fact is, we can make little progress unless we distinguish between the various kinds of occupation and their relations to the public. To lump together the pastry-cook, the goldsmith, the weaver, and the mason, because they all belonged to *métiers*, is to produce a blurred picture which corresponds to no reality. This, I think, those who have given their attention to the problems of mediæval industry, are coming more and more to realise.

W. J. ASHLEY

Select Charters and other Documents illustrative of American History, 1606-1775. Edited, with Notes, by WILLIAM MACDONALD, Professor of History and Political Science in Bowdoin College. (New York and London: Macmillan.) 1899. Pp. 401.

IF imitation is the sincerest flattery, Dr. Stubbs has good reason to be satisfied with at least one of his achievements. The two volumes of Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Prothero have carried the method of the original *Select Charters* into the later periods of English constitutional history; and now Professor Macdonald, with this collection and his previous book of *Select Documents for United States History, 1776-1861*, applies it to the daughter commonwealth. And as half of his colonial documents really are charters, he is able to use the same hallowed title. May it carry with it a like good fortune! It is

No. 39.—VOL. X.

C C