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The Determination of Farming Costs. By C. S. ORWIN. Pp.144.
(Oxford : The Clarendon Press. 1917. 5s. net.)

THE Director of the Institute established recently at Oxford for Research in Agricultural Economics has published an informing study at an opportune moment. It will, we believe, give a powerful, beneficial impulse to the thoughts and acts of enlightened landlords and capable tenants. Nor, we may add, should this exhaustive review of results obtained from scrutiny at the Institute of tabulated records kept by a few keen farmers in different parts of the country prove of little use to others. Such, we think, are those responsible for the administrative action of the Government Departments concerned with rural life, and those ambitious to inspire and guide popular opinion in its quest for legislation on agrarian affairs. The work accomplished and presented in this volume has been, we must remember, conducted within the strict limits set, and under the extraordinary conditions peremptorily imposed, by the distressful period of costly world-wide war through which we are passing. It is the promise of the future in this matter, as in others, rather than the achievement of the present to which we look with hope and confidence. But we can nevertheless accept without reserve Mr. Orwin's contention in his final chapter. We will quote his words. He there says : "Not only should a familiarity with farming costs be essential to individual farmers in the direction and development of their own management, but the ability to compare the experience of many individuals is of fundamental importance in the framing of national policy. At the present time far-reaching reforms are under discussion, and the introduction of new factors in production is being urged, none of which can be stated or considered scientifically without access to reliable statistical matter upon which to base the proposed changes."

He cites as illustrative examples the legislative guarantee of a minimum price of wheat and the debated question of the size of holdings. In both matters the "determination of farming costs" is obviously desirable or necessary as a preliminary to an intelligent handling or a correct solution ; and, similarly, the banking world is likely to be more ready to lend the capital, which, available on reasonable terms in sufficient quantity, would assuredly help materially all kinds of agricultural enterprise, as it assists trade and manufacture, if the practice of accountancy becomes an integral part of farming management. The cogency of such considerations is indeed irresistible. Mr. Orwin is, we hope, forcing an open door when he pleads in his general intro-

duction that the farmer of the future must, or should, adopt and maintain approved business methods. Of these the keeping of accounts, for the purpose of ascertaining costs, is, we agree, elementary. The use of scientific knowledge, placed more fully at disposal by recent experiments in laboratories and on farms, and popularised through more active effort in instruction and advertisement by the central government or by appropriate local bodies, may rightly be considered indispensable to continued success in cultivating land for cereals or for grasses and in rearing the different varieties of live-stock. But it should also be accompanied and directed by more regular systems of buying and of selling; and the general business of production in the primary industry of the country should proceed on the lines and use the methods and the instruments which have won recognition by their merits in prosperous manufacture and remunerative trade. We now need in fact once more the assiduous enthusiasm of an eloquent evangelist like Arthur Young who will discourse as that indefatigable tourist did, in reiterated sermons up and down the countryside. But his text should be "Farmers must keep accounts."

By the full bibliography which he has furnished Mr. Orwin shows that the literature of the subject is larger than we had thought; and it exhibits signs of continuing vigorous growth, for which our author himself, by writing previous to the present book, has, as we note, been responsible in no small degree. He disarms our criticism now by the frank admission that the work which he and others have done in this matter at the Oxford Institute is "still at the beginning." It has not, he remarks, "yet reached the stage at which generalisations can be made." Nevertheless, we are sure that he is right in his contention that it is important to have "in a number of cases an exhaustive and scientific analysis of farming costs"; and he is, we are confident, no less correct in his conclusion that, "if this can be done in a number of typical farms, the results will have a value as supplying standards of comparison." It is a commonplace of statistics that from a small number of select data large inferences can be securely and advantageously obtained if the samples submitted and examined are sufficiently representative. This kind of work has been tried here, and, in spite of the disturbance in the sequence, and reduction in the number, of the records occasioned by the war, the results obtained are so interesting and illuminative as fully to justify their presentation in this timely book.

The original task indeed of the account-keeping contemplated

may, as Mr. Orwin wisely allows, be, or seem at any rate to be, "unprofitable" to an "ordinary" farmer. The expense and trouble needed to ensure the desired end may appear, and may in fact prove, excessive in his case. But nevertheless he can, and will, benefit through the experience, industry, and outlay, in this direction as in others, of the more elect, wealthy, and enterprising of his brethren. We can readily conceive that Mr. Orwin and his collaborators see avenues opening by which opportune advice may be drawn from such records, kept by progressive agriculturists, and conveyed to the general community of farmers ; and accordingly we hail him as a bold pioneer of promising exploration—such, in fact, as the Institute, of which he is Director, ought to initiate in fulfilment of the objects for which it was established.

L. L. PRICE

The Economic Development of Modern Europe. By F. A. OGG, Ph.D. (Macmillan. 1917. Pp. xvi+657.)

IN this volume Mr. Ogg, the author of *The Governments of Europe* and *Social Progress in Contemporary Europe*, has dealt mainly with the economic development of England, Germany, and France in the nineteenth century. There is also a chapter on Russia and an introduction of 114 pages sketching European development prior to the nineteenth century. The book, with its leaded paragraphs, is obviously intended for the undergraduate rather than the teacher, and is not founded on original research, but aims rather at giving the results of the investigations of the authors of many specialised books and monographs on recent economic history. Any economic history written in English dealing with French, German, and Russian development in juxtaposition is welcome, and this is the least unsatisfactory book of the kind known to me.

Its main defects are twofold. There are no leading ideas which help the student to grasp the trend of the century as a whole, and a large part of the most important happenings of the nineteenth century are either entirely omitted or so subordinated as to give a one-sided impression of the period. There is practically nothing but stray remarks about banking, finance, colonisation, the growth of modern joint-stock trading, monopolies, and combinations. The nineteenth century, judging by the space allotted (two-thirds), seems to Mr. Ogg to consist chiefly of labour organisation, Socialism, and labour legislation.

The arrangement of the book is not calculated to help the