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of the price of coal unaccompanied by a decline in the money-cost of getting it. But we may rest assured that if the value of the pound sterling should rise again to anything like its old amount, money-wages and other costs in money will fall whether they are paid by capitalists, bureaucrats or syndicalists.

The decline in the output per person employed which has been going on for many years is, of course, an unsatisfactory feature. But it is, after all, very much what a well-informed inhabitant of Mars might expect in the absence of any great mechanical improvements. The country is getting old : all the coal easy to get at has long ago been removed. Its people are getting more refined, and a natural result is that it becomes more difficult to get men to work long shifts under ground, even in a "warm and well-ventilated" atmosphere," and shorter hours (after a limit long since passed) mean less output per man. Recently, of course, the situation has been made much worse—we may hope only temporarily—by the shortage of new capital, which is the consequence of the great disturbance wrought by the war in the distribution of wealth. The new rich save nothing like as much as the old rich did ; the money taken by the State from the old and the new rich alike, and poured out in useless and hampering expenditure, deprives not only coal but all other industries of the new machinery which they require.

It is regrettable to find once more the old story of the great economy of transport effected by the division of the country into districts to be supplied by particular coalfields. Somebody seems to have told the Commission that 700,000,000 coal-ton miles were saved by it, and the miners' and so-called consumers' representatives on the Commission flaunted the big figure as a triumph of government management without noticing that it meant at most a trifling reduction of three or four miles in the average haul of coal trains, and that against this was to be set enormous loss and inconvenience to consumers unable to get the kind of coal which suited them. While in one part of the country steam coal was being supplied for open grates, in another the Oxford municipal waterworks was carting it back from Littlemore station (three miles by road) after it had passed through Oxford station (one mile by road) on its way—Littlemore being in District 8 and Oxford in District 7—and such devices were common all over the country. This precious "economy" was dropped long ago, and it is surprising that Mr. Hodges should revive its unhonoured memory.

The book is very pleasantly written, and it would be well if controversialists on both sides would follow Mr. Hodges' example in the avoidance of mud-slinging.

E.C.

9.—*The Case for Capitalism*. By Hartley Withers. ix + 255 pp., 8vo. London : Eveleigh Nash Co., Ltd., 1920. Price 7s.

Thucydides provides a text "For men and not walls make a city." From this, and whether our own humble rendering of it is that we cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, or that the

Kingdom of God must first be within us, a hundred pulpits can be eloquent as to the impossibility of getting a better constructed world without better dispositioned, more industrious and unselfish folk than now inhabit it. But few of them will announce that for such a world we need less want of thought as well as less want of heart, and that the new order must ensure as great scope for individuality, freedom, initiative, invention and enterprise as the one to be replaced. In spite of the poet, it is not "But just the art of 'being kind is all this sad world needs.'" It needs so much more than sentiment and goodness, though if these are *not* present, then perhaps the other qualities cannot do their best for life. Few of these orations would contain that fine combination of high ethical purpose, strong moral sense, profound and simple economics, and balanced judgment as to the aims and possibilities of society that mark this work. When a writer publishes frequently, we are, by experience, apt to suspect that he is over-writing himself and that his work must suffer. Despite Mr. Withers' great literary activity, this work is as spontaneous and as fresh as anything he has done, and seems to be written with inimitable ease. The first part is a simple exposition of the place and function of capital in the economic sphere and the true inwardness of the "right to the whole produce of labour." This has been done before—notably by Mr. Mallock—but it has never been better done, and it is here dressed in its most modern garb. The only proper way to review such matter is for the reviewer to try it on the sort of person who requires the treatment and to watch the effect, for he can never judge the effect truly alone. The tale is told with such spirit and such humour that it should carry the reader in spite of himself. No good writer less great than this would venture upon Robinson Crusoe economics, but he does so with such novelty as to silence the scoffer, and scores with the universal appeal of it.

Finishing this section with a chapter on the achievements of Capitalism, in an outlook upon life that is both a little wistful and whimsical, has a strong love of its wholesome joys, something of an Alpine spirit, and a logic that is ruthless but never materialistic, Mr. Withers touches some levels which the social reformers who write high-toned ethics for the improvement of society seem to miss. We have the true Ruskin spirit without the well-dressed rant, the social sympathy of William Smart, Marshall's catholicity, with more humour than them all. "Under Capitalism all these millions saw 'the light of the sun, smelt the scent of spring, knew love and 'friendship, made and laughed at good and bad jokes, ate and 'digested their meals, made their queer guesses at the secret of life, 'played games, read books, cherished their hobbies and their 'prejudices, knew a little, thought they knew much more, and went 'their way leading others behind them to take up the thread of life 'and spin another strip of its mysterious cloth. . . . Just 'because it has not created an earthly Paradise for us, we throw 'it down and put an untried system in its place. It is true that

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"part of our population has lived and continues to live under circumstances of which our civilization has every reason to be ashamed."

In the second half, Mr. Withers deals with the constructive proposals of State Socialism and of its rival and opponent Guild Socialism, and is about as trenchant and devastating as any critic has yet been. His haunting fear is that life will cease to be an adventure and become a drill. Standardisation, Prussianist regimentation, and an appalling loss of personal liberty, with no real increase in material welfare, must be our lot. If we cast out seven devils we shall certainly get seven others just as restless. "No rearrangement . . . will do any good that fails to produce good and sound men and women, any more than the most cunning cooking-stove will make a good omelette out of bad eggs." In a fair criticism of the virtues and possibilities of bureaucracy, he shows that we have no reason to suppose that either now or by future development within our age can we expect to be equal to the gigantic task of the wise and detailed direction of our economic life, our likes and dislikes, our rewards and punishments, that either of these great alternatives to modern society would demand. J.C.S.

10.—*National Guilds and the State*. By S. G. Hobson. xvii + 406 pp., 8vo. London: Bell and Sons, 1920. Price 12s. 6d.

Mr. Hobson has already written on "National Guilds" and "Self-Government in Industry." The present book, though mainly a reply to critics, tells its own story in sufficiently plain language, much being ordinary economic doctrine disguised in the terminology of the Guild Socialists. Continuous thinking does not come easily to the man in the street, and working men are neither better nor worse than other folk in this respect. Yet it appears from this book that to be guildsmen they will need to think seriously and continuously, with a larger outlook, and more public spirit and wisdom than are common anywhere among us.

The ideal of Marx was a society of free men, with common ownership of the means of production, consciously employing their individual powers of labour as a social function, with a view to use, not profit (*das Kapital* I, Section 4). This remains the typical modern socialism, but it takes different forms. There is the bureaucratic, with the State all-important; there is the decentralizing, with the emphasis on the constituent groups, even as in the political philosophy of Figgis and Mr. Laski. In the language of American politics, the one is Republican, the other Democrat. Guild Socialism is of the latter class. Holding that the State should own all material property, it holds also that the whole body of workers in a particular trade should be a guild, owning, controlling, and disposing of their own labour. Employment for wages is to cease and each self-governing craft is to place the necessary surplus (which we dare not call profits) at the disposal of the community for the various services thereof (*e.g.*, 9, 48, 57 note, 77). The details of the proposal are not a subject for this journal. The author himself is not always