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## Review

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through the plant," he declares that the firm "saddles about all the responsibility on the foremen" (p. 13), and he proposes (p. 16) "to create a staff of men who could supplement the efforts of . . . the regular organisation."

In the second place, the efficiency engineer brings the scientific and the "practical" specialist into connection, a development already quite familiar to the German chemical industry and to American theory, but still somewhat repugnant apparently to British trade interests. Mr. Knoeppel frequently compares the efficiency engineer to a doctor, and the analogy is relevant in so far as both are applying the general knowledge of science (natural or moral) to the practice of particular cases, and that quite consciously. Unlike the modern invalid, however, the "practical" business man prefers that "leave-it-to-the-Almighty" treatment, which relies for its science on a necessarily limited personal experience, and for its practice on "inherited ability"; but how such "practice" is to survive against Mr. Knoeppel only trade wars can tell.

P. SARGANT FLORENCE

*National Guilds.* By A. R. ORAGE. (London : G. Bell & Sons. 1914. Pp. viii + 370. Price 5s. net.)

As a "camp-follower" (p. 14) who is liable (as on p. 18) to be "banished to Saturn," the economist must be wary how he handle a social reconstruction of Mr. Orage's that has already moulded labour opinion so manifestly. The safest plan will be to repeat the main argument, scoured of such barnacles of current cant as a disclosure of a gold monopoly (p. 188) or a predilection—"for some reason under the sun"—for the making rather than the selling of an article (pp. 90 ff.), or again the inevitable "The wage-earner is the real producer of wealth" (p. 91); then not as sutlers, but as the self-styled critical examiner, to consider the attack on the camp of the capitalist.

Mr. Orage's argument is briefly as follows :—Economic power must precede and control political power; while Labour politics are therefore useless, the worker can only be emancipated by economic organisation. Now the distinctive feature of the present organisation is the treatment of Labour (p. 17) as just a commodity that enters into the cost of production, and that on receiving its "wages" has no more claim on the product than have the other "ingredients."

A new organisation must aim primarily, therefore, at the

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abolition of "wage-slavery." This condition, however, is fulfilled no more under State or consumers' control than under the present capital-owners' control; it is therefore the workers themselves who must take charge.

Control by all the workers in the industry can, however, only be permanent if exercised through a democratic organisation of the workers—and such is the Trade Union. The National Guilds that are to give the worker power are just the present Trade Unions enlarged to include all the workers in each industry, from labourer to manager, and extended in their function: the Union benefits become a complete responsibility for the material well-being of the worker, and the erratic influencing of industrial conditions by the strike extends into the fixing of output and prices and the distribution of the gross receipts, undiminished by rent, interest, or profits, as "pay" to the various grades of members. To the State, which is granted a tax out of rent, is left the purely "civic" functions and also a broad supervision.

In his general offensive against the capitalist wage-system, Mr. Orage's strongest attack is not that on the economic side. So far as can be understood by such phrases as "a commodity is something that has exchange value; labour is priceless and, therefore, its value cannot be expressed" (Conclusion, p. 273), Mr. Orage uses value to denote general ethical desert, not the exchange value of Marx and the English economists; and with such terminology it is impossible publicly to prove that under any system the worker either gets or does not get his fair economic remuneration; fairness is a matter of personal opinion.

Now, Mr. Orage's opinion is that in the capitalist wage-system the worker will always get too little. "There is not room for rent and interest to live if labour absorbs its own surplus value" (p. 38); "the wage-system is the only method whereby surplus value can be secured" (p. 89). The reason for this, he considers, is that under capitalism the price of labour is based upon the cost of subsistence necessary to the maintenance of that labour power and its reproduction, and that from whatever "increased wage" is "exactd by organisation over bare subsistence" has to be deducted "the cost of maintaining the reserve of labour necessary to modern production." This theory certainly seems consistent with the actual wages paid to-day. But there are other hypotheses besides this price=cost theory capable of explaining low wages, and the abandonment of that explanation for the prices of commodities rather makes against its application to "labour as a commodity"; and if, as is usually held, labour under capitalism

can, when organised, obtain all its net marginal product, then the worker, though still far from his deserts, may yet be getting more pay under capitalism, with its ugly sacrifices to productivity, than he would within Mr. Orage's more convivial National Guilds.

This contention is no defence, however, against Mr. Orage's main attack. "The majority of wage-earners would be willing any one of them at any moment to exchange their position as wage-earners for the position of economic independence, even if the latter involved a permanent reduction of financial income" (p. 111). The fact that "when a man sells his labour power for wages he forfeits all claim upon the product," and that "he also admits, by his acceptance of wages, the right of the employer to dictate the conditions of his employment and to terminate such employment" (p. 80), are objections to capitalism to cope with which the economist is too finicky and the political scientist too haughty. Our present undoubted industrial oligarchy wants discussing, and Mr. Orage must not only be congratulated on getting in the first word, but on getting it in keen.

P. SARGANT FLORENCE

*Londres et les Ouvriers de Londres.* By D. PASQUET. (Paris : Librairie Armand Codin. 1914. Pp. 764. Price 12 francs.)

M. PASQUET's work has four main sections dealing with General Conditions, Conditions of Labour, Poverty, and Moral and Intellectual Life; and, up to a point, this bears some resemblance to the three chief divisions of *Life and Labour*, namely Poverty, Industry, and Religious Influences. But his general aim seems to have been somewhat different, and his book is rather a treatment of a number of urgent London problems than a detailed investigation and account of the life of individual trades and districts.

An introductory chapter deals generally with the gradual growth of London from Roman and Saxon times, the history of commercial development being left to a later chapter. This is perhaps a pity, since when it does come it rather breaks up the continuity of the narrative. The chapters on general conditions are four in number, and deal with the East End, Whitechapel and the Jewish Colony, the Housing Problem, and Communications; and these give the key to the whole. They deal mainly with the poorer sections of the working class, those which *Life and Labour* classified as the Poor and the Very Poor, and the well-to-do working classes receive very inadequate treatment.