

*The industries
of mediæval
England.*

A book of undeniable "human interest," and far less technical than the title would suggest, is Mr. L. F. Salzmänn's "English Industries of the Middle Ages" (Houghton). Whether the reader be an antiquarian, or a member of the I. W. W., or a mere unclassified layman, he will find distinctly absorbing and instructive matter in this volume. The chapters discuss Mining, Quarrying, Metal-Working, Pottery, Cloth-Making, Leather-Working, and Brewing, with a final word on "The Control of Industry." The author's method is "to treat the leading mediæval industries one by one, showing as far as possible their chief centres, their chronological development, the conditions and the methods of working." He appeals frankly to "the general reader, equipped with interest in the history of his country." The book is authoritative, precise, based upon careful study of documentary evidence, and is surprisingly comprehensive. There is no lack of specific facts and figures, yet these are all presented in an engagingly lucid style, entirely free from any tendency to apotheosize statistics. Important questions regarding labor are discussed; and little matters of custom, honest and dishonest, are revealed. The reader feels that the author has selected and arranged his material with great economy, never missing a significant item, or failing to perceive the varied appeals that small facts may make. The account of glass-making, for instance, will interest artists, tourists, and students of literature, as well as craftsmen. Whether by design or by accident, almost no references to the contemporary literature of the Middle Ages are included, although readers familiar with that period will find this volume an illuminating commentary on many passages. There are pages in the book where refer-

ences to "Piers Plowman" would have been valuable,—for instance: on page 155, where the nefarious practice of stretching cloth overmuch is described, an apt comparison may be made with "Piers Plowman," B text, Passus V, lines 212–14. It is to be hoped that Mr. Salzmann will continue to publish his researches in economic fields, for he has the gift of knowing what is significant.

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