

FEMINISM. By BELFORT BAX.

THE NEW AGE

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, AND ART

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

It is significant that more than half the Liberal Party had the cowardice of their principles, and abstained from sharing in the honour of voting with Mr. O'Grady against the visit of King Edward of England to the Tsar of Russia. Where the rest of the Party of Liberty, etc., etc., ad nauseam, was on the same occasion the division list fails to show. Nineteen of them we can answer for, with the admirable Mr. Harwood among them; but the odd hundred or so were hid among the Tory Opposition, with whom, not for the first or last time, they have unspeakable affinities of soul.

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Not a man in England worthy the name but will have a word of praise and thanks to the Labour Party for raising the discussion. Twice last week the only notes of ancient Liberalism were struck by the Labour Party; once on the occasion of the debate on the scandalous and illegal treatment of Dinuzulu, imprisoned and deprived of the officially guaranteed salary by half-a-dozen narrow-minded Natalian beadles; and again, on the occasion to which we have already referred. The "great" dailies of this Imperial realm, with the single exception of the "Daily News," had nothing but mud—their most plentiful produce—to throw at the only men who in these days of sycophancy and indifference to principle had the courage to maintain by speech and action the genuine traditions of England, and to assert the claims of democracy. But verily both will have their reward, the aforesaid dailies in the eternal ignominy of history and the Labour Party in the gratitude of generations of free men yet unborn. We offer thanks now, and the admiration of Englishmen to the 59 Labour, Irish and Liberal, who voted against the accursed proposal of national friendship with the Autocrat of all the Russias. The Labour Party is once more in the van of progress. The Labour Party is saved from a Liberal grave.

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Of the debate itself we have a few words to say.

The attack of Mr. O'Grady, dignified, earnest, and well-informed as it was, failed, in our opinion, to probe the vital weakness of the official defence. The defence, in a word, was the honour of England. That honour, it was argued, would be stained by going back on a promise made and advertised to the world. Moreover, there was the insult to the Tsar (as if, by the way, the Tsar's feelings ought to be an object of reverence in England), an insult rendered certain by the proposed withdrawal of an official visit once promised. Yes, but that was the very point at issue. Who first initiated the damnable visit? Out of what sinister mind did the proposal spring full armed upon a nation that, with a moment to think, would have repudiated it with acclamation? That was the secret which Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Balfour, and, we grieve to add, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, conspired to maintain inviolate. Mr. Belloc it was, indeed, who gave the cue for the miserable defence. Hinting of perils and delicacies unknown and unknowable to mere Labour members, he raised the bogey of international disasters at the thought of the cancellation of the visit. It would be unwise, he said, in view of the specially delicate state of affairs; the Russian democracy would unite with the Russian bureaucracy to resent it. Hush! hush! Let us walk warily. Let us lay low and say nuffin. We must be polite even to sanguinary tyrants, when they are as powerful as the Tsar.

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Sir Edward Grey, we say, followed the cue. So, too, most obsequiously, did Mr. Balfour. Was ever a defence worse planned, more ignominiously stated? Sir Edward Grey's twitching hands revealed the sweat of terror into which his mind was cast by Mr. Belloc's Fat-Boy device. It was almost as if Sir Edward heard the guns of the confederate armies of Germany, Russia—and poor little Ireland—thundering behind Mr. Belloc's chair.

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But of word of explanation, of satisfactory explanation, we get not a single syllable. Who advertised the visit? Who made it official before ever Parliament could say No. Who, who, we ask. We are told that the Cabinet accepted full responsibility. But the responsibility was plainly thrust upon it. We deny that the Cabinet initiated this masterpiece of reaction, so contrary to English feeling. We deny it for the sake of the Cabinet itself. It cannot surely

be that Mr. Asquith, though a Liberal Imperialist, taught to lap milk from Lord Rosebery's bowl; or Sir Edward Grey, fellow Liberal Imperialist and milk-lapper, did of themselves invent, propound, and advice a visit of a character to shock the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, now, if ever, of almost blessed memory! No, we are certain that somewhere else the secret lurks, not in the innocent pigeon-holes of the Cabinet's mind, but far off, very far off—perhaps as far off as St. Petersburg itself.

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For notice that when once the idea was broached how painfully feeble and inadequate the official reasons given for it appear! Did that nervous, halting, trembling figure, our Secretary for Foreign Affairs, boldly devise and advise a policy that in a robuster age would by its very name have brought about his instant dismissal with dishonour? It is inconceivable. We refuse to believe it. Somewhere, as we said last week, the veils of secrecy are hung, veil upon veil upon veil; and not all the members of the Cabinet have found their way yet into the sanctum sanctorum of crooked diplomacy. Sir Edward Grey's account of Russia was no less ignorant than that, say, of the "Daily Mail." We might almost suppose the "Daily Mail" had inspired Sir Edward, if we could believe the Carmelites capable of inspiring anybody. Emphatically it is not true, that the main body of opinion in Russia is Liberal in the sense in which Sir Edward Grey misnames himself Liberal. The bulk of Russian opinion is Social-Democratic, revolutionary, Labour, what not; anything, thank God, but evolutionarily Liberal. Think of what Stolypin said of the First Duma and of the Second Duma. Elected as they were on an extended franchise by millions of voters, the "majority of both Dumas were overwhelmingly Social-Democratic." On that very account they were dissolved to be replaced by a body, Liberal this time, elected on a restricted franchise by thousands instead of by millions. And it is this body, if you please, that Sir Edward Grey would have us regard as the centre, the true expression of the mass of Russian opinion! But even that centre, what of it? Its leader is insulted because he resents the remark of a Minister dear to the Tsar; "Thank God we have no Parliament in Russia!" What would Sir Edward Grey say of a speaker who apologised for calling an English Minister to order who said such a thing in the House of Commons? We can only conclude from his speech of Thursday that he would, like the Tsar, have said nothing, acquiescing in the expression of an opinion too much like his own to appear reprehensible.

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Or consider Mr. Balfour's gibe at the Labour Party, that they had accepted the Anglo-Russian Agreement without protest! True, most unfortunately true. THE NEW AGE, we happily can say, protested week by week while the thin end of the wedge was being inserted into the rock of English liberty; but the Labour Party, we remember to our sorrow, was dumb, dumb as a sheep before its shearers. Mr. Balfour was right to gibe. But we ask, is the Labour Party the sole defender of English honour? Is there no group of men in either the Liberal or Tory parties with wisdom enough and courage enough to dispense occasionally with the Labour Party? No, we remember rightly, neither Liberal nor Tory protested; but are we to swallow the camel because we endured the gnat without complaint? Was the Agreement a feeler out after a rapprochement, and is this rapprochement a herald of an alliance?

We can believe anything of a Cabinet that has no more to say or do for liberty than Sir Edward Grey said and did on Thursday. It is denied, of course, that the King's visit means anything diplomatic, has any ulterior motive beyond a morning call on his distressful nephew. But can we believe it? Mr. Belloc hints of complications in the Chancelleries of Europe. What new ghostly complication may not afford an excuse for a new and closer form of official rapprochement? A Cabinet terrified out of half its wits by one rumour may lose the rest of its wits by another rumour. But again, we confess we know nothing of these things; England knows nothing of them; even the "Daily Mail," the confidante of kings and convicts, knows nothing of them. But we cannot trust the Cabinet, the Cabinet that glozed the horror of Denshawai, exercised coercion in India, and now fawns before the Tsar. We repeat that the Cabinet which contains Sir Edward Grey is not to be trusted to be even Liberal.

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But one of the most ludicrous defences was the plea that the friendship of England might hasten reforms in Russia. What a smile will ripple over the intelligent face of Europe when that naive piece of insular complacency is read in all its naked absurdity. If France, the Grand Master of Liberty, by an alliance of ships and men and money cannot save the Russian reformers from the horrors of Siberia, is it likely that King Edward, with not a ship to launch or a gun to fire at need, will weigh in the balance with the Tsar in favour of liberty? King Edward is a great king (may he live for ever!) But King Edward cannot work miracles. Besides, what inspiration for reform is there for the Tsar in the spectacle of an English Cabinet prostrate before the Tsar of the Black Hundred! No, Sir Edward Grey, lay not the flattering unction to thy party's soul that England can do what France cannot do. A nation, like a man, is known by the company it keeps; and Russian bureaucracy is too intimately aware of its kinship with English bureaucracy to care a snap of the finger for all the official pretences of reformatory zeal.

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But when all is said, and we have eased our minds by saying it, there remains the one fact that we do not know who initiated this visit. Mr. Keir Hardie made a single attempt late in the debate, but by that time the defences were prepared. There the secret is, and there, we fear, it will remain; another blot of black upon the grey records of the Liberal Government. Denshawai, Dinuzulu, India, Egypt, Ireland—and now Russia! What a page of history! What a shameful page!

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If we could turn with any pleasure to the Social and Domestic Affairs of the present Government, we would gladly do so. But not the most obliging evolutionary Socialist will derive satisfaction from the Old Age Pensions Bill as now actually printed. Mr. Asquith's account of it in his Budget speech made it appear humiliating enough; but he has since profited by the criticism of reactionaries and anarchists like Lords Avebury and Balfour of Burleigh—in plain words, he has rattled—with the result that the Bill as printed is infinitely worse than the bad of the Bill as described. We do not know whether the rank and file of the Liberal Party will take it lying down; but we sincerely hope the Labour Party will riot rather than accept the changes meekly. It is scandalous beyond precedent for a Premier to introduce a Bill (on the eve of an election, too), and afterwards deliberately maul it before printing it. Three promises Mr. Asquith has already broken in his brief period of high office. But we intend this promise of Old Age Pensions to be kept.

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Apart from financial machinery, the Old Age Pensions

Bill as promised by Mr. Asquith contained the following provisions: it was to be non-contributory, there was to be no character test, and the receipt of poor relief in the past was to be no disqualification. Speaking on the Budget, Mr. Asquith said: "The less you go into questions of character, short of actual convictions of crime, the better. All the suggested tests look well on paper; thrift, prudence, character, good repute, look well, but when you put them into concrete shape, they are difficult to apply, and the application is apt to produce cases of unwarrantable hardship." Prave 'orts! But turning to the printed Bill, Clause III., we read that a person shall be disqualified, not only "if before he becomes entitled to a pension, he has habitually refused to work," but "if he has been brought into a position to apply for a pension through his own wilful act or misbehaviour." In other words, a character test is applied which does not even look well on paper. In practice, of course, like all character tests without exception, it will work out as a preferential tariff on humbugs and hypocrites.

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Now consider the disqualification of paupers. Mr. Asquith's words were that only actual paupers would be excluded. But who are actual paupers? Is a person who has received relief during this year to be regarded as an actual pauper next year? Obviously not, if actuality means anything at all. Yet that is precisely what the Bill as printed implies. We undertake to say that not a single person could read Mr. Asquith's speech to harmonise with the Bill. Mr. Asquith proposed, "to exclude in the first year from the scheme actual paupers only." The Bill itself disqualifies for the present and for the future "all who have received non-medical relief since January 1st, 1908." In other words, every eligible person for a pension next year will be disqualified by the receipt of a penny in relief this year; even though the penny may have been given on January 2nd of this year, and be never repeated. A pauper this year is by this fatuous definition an actual pauper next year also.

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Such whittlings down of the not over-generous promises made by Mr. Asquith must be the cause of considerable dissatisfaction in the better sort of Liberals. We cannot believe that a whole body of men can take pleasure in chicanery such as this. It is contrary to the spirit of the present Parliament; and we decline to believe that Mr. Asquith is any more representative of his party or of the country in the matter of Old Age Pensions than is Sir Edward Grey in the matter of Denshawai and Russia. Nor can we think that Mr. Asquith is ensuring for himself a long period of office by making promises only to break them. In this respect the Labour Party has a special duty. The Old Age Pensions Bill is one of their Bills. They have promised it. We trust and believe that they will see that Mr. Asquith keeps their promise for them.

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Official information is at last at hand of a Railway Combine between the three "Great" railways, the Northern, Central, and Eastern. The joint loan and share capital amounts to over 176 millions, the total mileage is 2,809, and the net receipts last year were over five million pounds. Lord Allerton, the chairman of the G.N.R. and the chairman-designate of the Joint Board, is certain that the Combine "will make things better for everybody." But if a Combine of Three will do so, how much more a Combine of Ten? Speaking at the meeting of shareholders in December last, Lord Allerton foreshadowed the present change. "The time has arrived," he said, "when in the national welfare there will have to be a rearrangement of the railway service . . . the interests of the nation are bound up inseparably with the railway convenience of this country." True, but what provision will be made in this Combine for the national welfare? Surely, if a few private individuals can organise a Combine, a Cabinet in earnest could organise a National Service of Railways. Will Mr. Churchill look to his laurels? Railway Nationalisation is long overdue.

All the reports—save Mr. Haldane's—of the progress of the Territorial Forces Act make it appear that the Act has defects insurmountable by the old type of volunteer. We ourselves during the debate urged that Mr. Haldane was inconsistent in trying to make a democratic army by means of class distinctions. But worse defects than the exclusion of plebeians from commissions have been discovered in the Act. Under cover of official language and unofficial explanation, the true character of the new Territorialist has been concealed, but only for a while. Now that the facts are known, in vain is the net spread in the sight of any birds, however young. Mr. Robt. Edmundson, in "Justice" of June 6, gives a convenient summary of the old and new positions: "The old Volunteer enrolled; the new Territorialist must enlist. The old Volunteer was under civil control; the new Territorialist will serve under the despotic rule of the Army Council. The old Volunteer if he absented himself from drill paid a small fine; the new Territorialist may be arrested and marched as any common criminal through the streets, tried by court-martial, and sentenced to imprisonment. The old Volunteer could not be ordered to do anything; the new Territorialist can be ordered to do anything, from emptying latrines to shooting down his fellow-workers . . . There were no military prisons for the old Volunteer; the new Territorialist may be sent there on the shortest notice."

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The debate on Thursday regarding l'affaire Dinuzulu may be regarded as satisfactory in one respect: the Government had no intention of condoning the stoppage of Dinuzulu's salary. But in another respect we are still without explanation. How comes it that martial law, ordinarily so exceptional, has been allowed to prevail in Natal for no less than six months? If Zululand were in a ferment of active mutiny, the suspension of the civil law could not be more complete or, apparently, indefinite. And under cover of it the most irregular (to use no harsher word) proceedings may and do take place. The Natal Government proposes shortly to shrive its soul by an Act of Indemnity. We hope, however, that, before its ratification, the British Government will institute an independent enquiry.

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The Labour Party has now by affiliation definitely attached to itself the whole of the Miners' Federation, numbering nearly half a million members. Henceforth a working arrangement in the House of Commons as well as in the constituencies will prevail between the two sections of Labour representatives. It has been long foreseen that the Parliamentary Labour Party would probably, like Aaron's rod, swallow the rods of the other political magicians; but ten years ago, even five years ago, nobody guessed it would be so soon. Now that the party is about complete, the time has surely come when the policy of the federated sections should be considered in general and in detail. Everywhere there are signs of the neglect into which, pending this final absorption of the Liberal-Labour members, party discipline and party policy have been allowed to fall. Dundee and Pudsey are not causes, they are effects. And to these we may add the lamentable incident in the Russian debate resulting in the closing of Mr. Grayson by Mr. Henderson.

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Such incidents are worse than irritating, they are mortifying. And we sincerely hope they will cease to disfigure the records of the Labour Party. But they will only cease when the party has a policy, known and endorsed by all its members. We are convinced that even the most adroit arrangements with Liberals or Tories, so long as they are no part of the declared policy of the Labour Party, are unprofitable, if not disastrous. The Labour Party must be distinguished by its policy and methods as by its programme. We have no more to learn of the older parties in tactics than we have in principles. Our principles are new in political history; let our tactics be as new. There is urgent need of a special conference on the Policy of the Labour Party.

The Land of the Nativity.

A FEW days ago we heard the Labour Prime Minister of South Australia advise the Socialists of this country never to say or do anything that would cause real annoyance or unpleasantness to the powerful classes; the Australian Labour Party, we were told, had succeeded by reason of its studied humility in tone and deed. We are now affiliated to the Labour Party where it is considered rude to pound an old gentleman, at a private reception, however provocative of anger his remarks may be or . . . at all events we, who have hitherto written about affairs in Natal with some measure of moderation, now intend to have our say in the bluntest possible language, despite Australian counsel.

"By Christmas Day, the 25th of December, we had discovered seventy leagues of coast; on Thursday, December 28th, we anchored near the coast, and took several fish. At sunset we again set sail, and pursued our route." Thus simply does the unknown author of the "Roteiro da Viagem de Vasco da Gama," announce the tragic discovery of the country named, in commemoration of the day it was discovered*, Terra do Natal, the Land of Nativity, now known as Natal; the country that happens to be the most recent theatre of the uncontrollable blood-thirstiness, cupidity, and hypocrisy of the Anglo-Saxon, once he is released from contact with European civilisation.

The English occupation of Natal took place in 1824, and it was not till 1891 that the colony was given what is euphemistically called a responsible Government. The Legislative Assembly consists of 37 elected members; and the Cabinet of six members chosen from these 37. To peruse in the newspapers the doings of the Prime Minister of Natal, or the Minister of Native Affairs, impresses one with a certain sense of loftiness. The glamour is removed when you meet these gentlemen on their "native" heath, as was our fortune some years ago. The elected members of Assembly are, for the most part, the merest pot-house politicians, who could scarcely carry out the duties of some obscure Board of Guardians; the six Cabinet Ministers have not brains sufficient, were they all under one scone, to be elected Mayor of some tiny out-of-the-way provincial city in this country. The vulgar cunning of these bagmen has been exposed in many a Government paper; in the pages of this review we have given extracts from the correspondence between the Home Government and the late and present Governors of Natal, which presented in set words the treachery and trickery, the petty contemptible subterfuges by which Dinuzulu was induced to enter the clutches of his torturers—the Natal Ministry. There was not a scrap of evidence in the whole of the correspondence upon which one could imprison even a Natalian Minister; the vaguest insinuations about Dinuzulu's uncle, about some cartridges having been picked up (which were afterwards acknowledged to have been dropped), some gossip about his drinking to excess, and so on.

The most recent exposure of the petty shopkeeping minds of the Natal Government was undertaken by Mr. Mackarness in the discussion in the House of Commons on June 3rd. The Under Secretary for the Colonies explained that "at the time of the annexation of Zululand a definite and honourable undertaking was entered

into between the Government of Natal and Dinuzulu that he should hold a certain position and receive a certain salary during good behaviour, and that under no circumstances should he be deprived of his salary without the approval of the Colonial Secretary." Dinuzulu's salary was stopped on November 13th; the suspension had not the approval of the Colonial Secretary. The Imperial Government was not even informed of the fact; indeed, it only came to light through a Press telegram.

In depriving Dinuzulu of his salary the Natal Ministry has prevented the Chieftain from taking the necessary steps for his defence. It must be remembered that Dinuzulu is still confined in prison; that no definite charge, after all these months, has been preferred against him; so far as we can gather, it is said that someone was murdered in Natal at some time or other about which murder Dinuzulu could or should have known.

What is the object of this prosecution? It is to deprive the Zulus of one of their chieftains who still holds power amongst them. Mr. Dudley Kidd has elaborately explained the value to the Zulus of their allegiance to their chieftains. This does not suit the white inhabitants of Natal; they are intent on breaking down the Zulu system of government and land tenure, and thus forcing the Zulus into the industrial system. In short, to repeat for Natal the history of the landless peasantry of our own country.

Cheap labour—that is the aim of the whole manœuvre. It is on that score that we appeal to the British working man to take heed of what is passing in Natal, or he will find himself in competition with another race compelled, from sheer necessity and through no wish of their own, to labour under foul conditions for less than a living wage. We insist upon this aspect of the question because in addressing audiences on the past administration of Natal we have sometimes been asked "What has it to do with Socialism?"

We of the Socialist faith stand forth as Imperialists; we believe the only convinced Imperialists in the country. Leaving aside the international aspect of Socialism for the moment, we demand that in all questions of vital importance no Colony, and especially no Colony with a mind like Natal, shall have the power to decide an action as if it were an independent unit. In these days of rapid transit, of enormous migrating movements, of easily spread news, the Empire must be treated as one and indivisible—if there is to be any meaning at all in a British federation. Action in Natal recoils upon us here, upon Australia, upon Canada; chicanery in Natal reverberates through Hindustan. Physicians nowadays do not treat local disorders without considering the constitution of the patient as a whole. In Imperial matters we can do no less. The man on the spot is only *a* man on the spot, and there is no evidence to show that he is necessarily well acquainted with even the local conditions; he is usually absolutely ignorant of anything beyond them. Assuredly no Home Government would act without obtaining the fullest evidence from those who presumably have some local knowledge. In these days of cables and many journeyings, it is absurd to speak as if we were in the days of Clive, when necessarily the local authorities were stultified unless they were given or took complete power.

Natal has lost every recognition to be considered a civilised government; it is time the tragedy, endangering the whole of South Africa, were ended. Its 100,000 white inhabitants have proved themselves incapable of dealing with the million native inhabitants. The powers Natal has hitherto enjoyed and abused should be withdrawn, and the Zulus placed under a responsible British administration, as are the Basutos. This is a definite policy which the Labour Party should press upon the Government; it is a true and sane Imperialism; not the shoddy variety beloved by commercial Tories or Liberals.

* Perhaps we should explain to the white inhabitants of Natal that the 25th of December is kept in Christian countries as the birthday of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity.

Policy of the Labour Party.

THE political contest at Dundee did not end with the counting of the votes and the return of Mr. Winston Churchill to his anxious party at Westminster. What the papers were pleased to call the "result," was in fact really an announcement that the issue at last was joined and the battle had begun. There are two Members of Parliament who sit for Dundee; at the General Election of 1906 one Liberal was returned and one Labour Party man. The Liberal seat became vacant when Mr. Robertson went to the Lords; and Mr. Churchill was nominated to take his place. The Labour Party of the division, already in possession of one seat, promptly put up Mr. Stuart to fight for the other one also. In other words, instead of compromising for one member apiece, it claimed the sole right to possess both. Let there be no mistake as to the exact meaning of this action. To claim only one seat at Dundee meant a system of half-concealed alliance with the Liberals; to fight for the second seat meant open and undisguised war. The Labour-Socialist movement is at last beginning to realise that it must quickly make up its mind whether it intends to bargain with the Liberals for what they are pleased to give, or afraid to withhold; or whether the whole issue between them must be fought out with the bare swords of political war at the polling booth.

The fight at Dundee was an act of guerilla warfare, for it did not receive the support of the Labour Party. Mr. Keir Hardie and a very few other members of the party were quite sure which was the right side to take, and expressed themselves quite clearly from Mr. Stuart's platform; but the bulk of the Labour members were eloquently silent and energetically inactive. Now, it is clear that this uncertainty between the official party and the candidates who profess to represent it at the polls is having disastrous effects on the whole movement. As a matter of theory, the endorsement of Mr. Stuart's candidature was technically the concern of the Scottish Workers' Committee, and not of the Labour Party at Westminster; but in plain fact the decision really lay with the latter. If the whole fighting strength of the party had been in action at Dundee Mr. Stuart would probably have won. The support was withheld, and he lost. There has been no concealment of the reason why the Labour candidate was thus allowed to go to his certain doom; he was told that it was the present policy of the Labour Party to allow the Liberals to retain one seat in every double constituency. In other words, there is a tacit alliance between the two parties on this point. The local Socialist and Labour Committee in Dundee refused to acknowledge any such compact, and declared war against the Liberals—to the bitter end; the Labour Party stood silently for compromise. And now the whole Socialist and Labour movement has to decide between the two policies: the policy of bargaining or the policy of fighting.

It is a question which must be settled with a clear understanding of the facts, and the most earnest attempt to draw the right conclusions from these facts. There must be no hysterical clamour, even when it takes the virtuous form of waving the red flag. The question is a simple one; are we going to gain most by compromise or by war? The answer is of no ordinary difficulty, and there is no room for calling each other fools or traitors, as we began to do in the case of the Dundee affair. An examination of the facts shows that out of the thirty-two seats held by the Socialist-Labour Party, in twenty-four of them we were either unopposed by Liberal candidates altogether or one seat in a double constituency was left to the Labour man. There are eleven double divisions where the seats are shared between the two parties; and in only two of these eleven did the Liberals run two candidates. To put it the other

way, out of the thirty-two seats, only eight were taken from the Liberals at the point of the sword; the rest were surrendered by the Liberals without a struggle.

Now, on these facts there is based a theory which maintains that we hold our present position as the result of a mutual understanding with the Liberals. It is suggested that we can only continue to exist if we agree to give and take in a reasonable manner. For example, if we claim both seats in a double constituency, as in Dundee, then the Liberals will withdraw from their kindly bargain, and we shall be fought in every place, and, presumably, wiped out of existence. Now, if that theory be true, it is a good reason why we should, for the present, continue to pursue the methods of compromise. We have entered the field of politics; and the first essential of success is to gain seats in Parliament. But this reasoning is not conclusive. The Liberals certainly stood aloof in the large majority of the fights we won. But there is another possible reason for their action besides kindness. They may have been afraid to fight. This explanation appears the more probable when we remember that there were at the last General Election thirty other divisions where they openly fought Labour or Socialist candidates. Now, principles are very elastic things; but when they lead a political party to fight Labour in one place and to be kind to it in another, then "principle" seems rather a stately term for such a state of mind. It is better to call it—expediency. In short, on closer examination, this theory that the Labour Party owes its existence to Liberal forbearance does not coincide with the facts. Both sides took exactly what they had enough votes to gain, and both should be respected for so doing. The man who believes he is right and gives way to another whom he believes to be wrong is neither more nor less than a coward; and we should respect the Liberals for fighting us.

But surely we have everything to gain by declaring, once for all, that we cannot have any compromise with the Liberals. For one reason, when are we ever going to make it clear to the man-in-the-street that Socialism alone will cure his ills when we, in effect, continually ask him to remain satisfied with Liberalism; for that is what the two-seat compromise really means. If Liberalism is good enough, why did we ever leave it? Every wise man knows that, sooner or later, the only possible bond between the Liberals and the Socialists will be the fierce grip of mortal combat; and the faintest knowledge of human nature should tell us that we shall get no army around us until we prove the inevitableness of the war. The ordinary man will never understand the science of Socialism for the same reason that he will never understand conic sections. But he will take the same intense interest in Socialism that he takes in a football match: because his imagination is stirred by the sport of war. Will he ever take us seriously if we ask him to vote for a Labour man in one constituency and tell him that Mr. Churchill was good enough in Dundee? We must give the people an inspiration as well as a programme. Let us declare openly that we defy the Liberals to do their worst. Then, alone, we shall do our best. When the Persians marched against the Greeks they threatened that their arrows would fly so thick that the sun would be darkened; and the Greeks sent back scornful thanks: "Good; then we shall fight in the shade." That was the defiant spirit which saved Greece; and it is solid political sense to say that it will save the Socialist-Labour Party to-day while timid compromise will wreck it. But there must be discipline in our ranks; the muddles of Dundee, Montrose, and Pudsey are ruinous. Whichever side is right, the minority must abide by an authoritative decision.

G. R. S. TAYLOR.

DELICIOUS COFFEE

RED WHITE & BLUE

For Breakfast & after Dinner.

A Socialist Budget.

"The degree of civilisation which a State has reached may almost be measured by the proportion of the national income which is spent collectively instead of individually."—Fabian Tract No. 127.

It has often been said that all class legislation is bad because you cannot benefit one class without injuring another, and in many respects this is doubtless true. At all events, it is vitally necessary that due recognition should be accorded to the undoubted fact that you cannot improve the economic status of the wage-earner without depriving the rich of a portion of those advantages which they at present enjoy. We do not preach a Class War. By all means let us have peace and a transformation of wealth-distribution as gradually and considerately wrought as possible. But at the same time we must not allow ourselves to be led by our desire to avoid all class disturbance and class rivalry into preaching peace where there can be no peace. We are out to abolish poverty, and in making war upon small incomes—for that is what it comes to—we are necessarily making war upon large ones. That is the fundamental fact which lies at the root of the Socialist proposals with regard to taxation, and no reformer who fails to recognise it must flatter himself that he enjoys the confidence of "all the forces of Progress." Moreover, even if it were possible to achieve our end of increasing the resources of the poor without decreasing those of the rich we should still continue to prosecute our campaign against the latter because we regard giant accumulations of wealth as a positive danger to the State; a danger exactly analogous to that of allowing a single individual to claim unlimited political power by virtue of his Divine Right. We would, perhaps, sooner live as subjects of the Tsar of all the Russias than as subjects of Wheat and Oil and Railway kings, for of the two the tyranny of the former is less intimate and degrading to the ordinary citizen.

So much for the war upon great wealth which is the necessary basis of our policy. We will now sketch that policy in greater detail, and give the main outlines of such a budget as we should expect to be introduced by a Socialist Government on its first accession to power. This task has already been essayed by several Socialist writers, notably by Mr. Chiozza Money and by Mr. Philip Snowden, and in most respects we cannot do better than follow their suggestions.

The four main Socialist canons of taxation as laid down by Mr. Snowden are:—

1. Both local and national taxation should aim primarily at securing for the communal benefit all "unearned" or "social" increment of wealth.
2. Taxation should aim, deliberately, at preventing the retention of large incomes and great fortunes in private hands, recognising that the few cannot be rich without making the many poor.
3. Taxation should be in proportion to ability to pay, and to protection and benefit conferred by the State.
4. No taxation should be imposed which encroaches upon the individual's means to satisfy his physical needs.

To consider the application of the last canon first. The great majority of the wage-earning classes have not, as it is, sufficient means to satisfy their physical needs. Hence as a class they should not be taxed at all. This means that practically all indirect taxation must be abolished. Our existing indirect taxation consists in the main of the duties upon tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, tobacco, and intoxicants. Of these the first four must be absolutely repealed. They are so monstrously unjust in their incidence that even apart from our canon they cannot be justified on any grounds whatsoever. They fall more heavily on the poor than on the rich, not only in proportion to their respective incomes, but in actual amount per head, for, as is well known, the poor consume more of these articles than the rich. They fall more heavily on women than on men, and, like all taxes on food, far more heavily on the married man with a family than on his comparatively well-off bachelor mate. The repeal of these duties as they stand at present would involve a loss to the Exchequer of about £10,000,000 per annum.

The liquor and tobacco taxes must be treated rather

differently. For ourselves, we should be inclined to reduce the duty on beer considerably, but many Socialists might regard it as a legitimate means of reducing consumption, and it would therefore in all probability be left alone pending the reorganisation of the whole trade under social management. Again, the tax on tobacco may be regarded by many as a tax on a luxury, but here, we think, the case for reduction, if not for abolition, is overwhelmingly strong. Out of every 3d. which the poor man pays for tobacco 2½d. goes to the Government. In fact, he pays 500 per cent. on the value of his tobacco, whereas the rich man who smokes the best cigars only pays from 20 per cent. upwards. This anomaly would certainly require some adjustment whatever our views as to the general desirability of treating tobacco as a luxury. To these proposed remissions must be added the £5,000,000 which represents the annual profit on the working of the Post Office and which a Socialist Government would use in remedying the present under-payment of the lower-grade servants of that Department and in cheapening the postal service for the benefit of the public.

In all then we should have a deficit of something like £20,000,000 to face, without allowing for any new expenditure. This deficit would be met by the expansion of direct taxation. Proposals for the graduation of the Income-tax have been worked out in considerable detail by Mr. Money. But in the first instance we should prefer the simpler methods suggested by the Fabian Society. In the words of the tract quoted at the head of this article, we should propose an Income-tax of 2s. 6d. in the pound. The existing exemptions and abatements would be continued, and in addition a new abatement of one-third would be allowed on earned incomes not exceeding £5,000. Thus all who earned their incomes up to £5,000 a year would pay 10d.; those who earned more than £5,000 or who enjoyed unearned incomes of less than that sum would pay 1s. 8d.; and the possessors of unearned incomes of over £5,000 a year would pay 2s. 6d. Later on we should propose a more far-reaching scale of graduation, with perhaps some new abatements to relieve the middle-class, and certainly a still heavier tax on excessively large incomes. In the meantime we should obtain something like £18,000,000 as extra revenue from this source.

Then we should propose a fresh revision of the Death Duties. Mr. Asquith's scale was a step in the right direction, but it is all too lenient on estates over £10,000. To us the moment when wealth is passing from one individual to another by inheritance is the best of all opportunities for obtaining a share for the State without inflicting hardship, and we should make the most of it. For large estates of £1,000,000 and upwards 50 per cent. would not be an excessive duty, and by a graduated scale with that figure as a maximum we should expect to obtain another £17,000,000 per annum. Finally, we should open up a new and comparatively inexhaustible source of revenue by taxing land values. It would be part of our avowed policy to tax all future unearned increment, *i.e.*, socially created values, at the rate of 20s. in the pound with the final object of transferring all economic rent from private to public ownership. From this source we might count upon at least £20,000,000 of new revenue at the start.

Thus, without going into further details, our balance-sheet would work out as follows:—

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------------|
| Additional Revenue from Income-tax | ... | £18,000,000 |
| " " " Death Duties | ... | 17,000,000 |
| " " " Land Values | ... | 20,000,000 |
| Total | ... | 55,000,000 |
| Taxation remitted | ... | 20,000,000 |
| Surplus | ... | £35,000,000 |

How we should dispose of this surplus is a question outside the scope of this article, but at least we should be able to provide for the aged poor in a manner more worthy of our national resources than is the timid and niggardly scheme which the House of Commons is now being asked to accept.

Good Breeding or Eugenics.

VII.

"We set good breeding as the corner-stone of our edifice."
—ERNEST PONTIFEX, Essays.

"THE mathematician argues, from his finite truths, through habit, as if they were of an absolutely general applicability—as the world imagines them to be" . . .

"In short I never yet encountered the mere mathematician who could be trusted out of equal roots." Before venturing on to-day's ramble, and seeing that it is June time, perhaps in lieu of it, one would act wisely by re-reading Poe's Purloined Letter, where there is much, beyond the extract I have given, anent the ridiculous conceits in which mathematicians robe themselves. These were more or less bearable, I suppose, when they confined themselves to such irrelevancies as Wrightman's multiplication table; though journeying through the world I find many besides myself who, from childhood onwards, have refused to believe that 2 and 2 may not sometimes make 3 or 5 or nothing. In chemistry, in biology, in life none can predict what 2 and 2 shall make. However, it is not a discourse around about the multiplication table that I would hazard to-day, but a warning against accepting a mathematician's ipse dixit where human beings are concerned.

* * *

In the last few numbers I have given some of the recent statements that confirm the acquired knowledge of untold generations of men, that "a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Now there are some who pretend that unless we determine to so many decimal points the quantity of goodness a good tree bringeth forth we have nothing tangible; and it is pretended that this determination has been actually made. Let us see. We have agreed that certain physical characters are transmitted from parents to children. How much? asks the Measurer of Life, the Biometrician. Tables are sent out to a sufficient number of middle-class families, and measurements are requested of father, mother and children—their height, their span of arms, and the length of the left forearm. From these data, curves and the rest of it are plotted out, and we are informed that the physical resemblance between parents and offspring is about 0.5—that is about one-half. (Were it complete the figure would be unity, were there no resemblance at all it would be zero.) I do not want to enter into the discrepancies between the Measurers of Life and the Mendelians, because scientific controversy is so painful and so pointless, and the respective champions are so ill-tempered.

* * *

Next the Measurers of Life ask—How much mental resemblance is there between parents and children? It was wisely seen that to discover this we must compare the children with the parents when they were children. This is difficult, but has been done in a kind of way to which I will refer another week. There is, however, another method, by ascertaining the degree of resemblance between brothers or between sisters. Accordingly schedules were prepared, and 3,000 to 4,000 returned by the heads of schools to whom they had been sent; the records took some five years to complete, and they were sent to schoolmasters because it was argued the information would be more impartial than if it were obtained from the parents.

* * *

From a recollection of my school-days and my knowledge of schoolmasters and mistresses, I take leave to doubt their impartiality even in the filling up of a

schedule, but a more serious objection is that they have not the necessary knowledge of the children to answer the questions that were put to them. The Psychical traits about which inquiry was made were Vivacity, Assertiveness, Introspection, Popularity, Conscientiousness, Ability, Temper, Handwriting. One might trust a teacher to give some answer as to popularity and handwriting; but who knows anything about a child's introspection? Indeed one educational authority to whom I showed the list doubted whether the average headmaster would know the meaning of the term, and would certainly be unable to appreciate introspection in the pupils. Temper was classified into quick, good-natured and sullen; Ability is graded from very dull through intelligent to inaccurate erratic. The character-scheme shows an earnest instance of pedagogism; Noisy, quiet; self-conscious, unself-conscious; self-assertive, shy. As if the girl who is shy, quiet, and so on in the school may not present just the opposite traits among her familiars. To make this list of any value the whole life-history of the children must be studied. It might be replied that only the fraternal resemblances were sought, and so what holds good for one brother would probably hold good for the other. But that is, of course, the very point to be judged.

* * *

Such a series of complex character studies could not have been framed by one having any real acquaintance with the psychology of child-life or with the human mind at all. What is interesting, however, is the result of all the curves and symbols that resulted—psychical characters were found to be inherited in the same ratio as the physical ones, 0.5. We are told that "we inherit our parents' tempers, our parents' conscientiousness, shyness and ability, even as we inherit their stature, fore-arm and span." "We are forced to the general conclusion that the physical and psychical characters in man are inherited within broad lines in the same manner and with the same intensity." "Geniality and probity and ability, though they may be fostered by home environment and good schools, are, nevertheless, bred and not created. The education is of small value unless it be applied to an intelligent race of men."

* * *

The final conclusion of all Professor Pearson's mathematics is, that we must increase the fertility of the upper middle-classes, because they are our only leaders of thought, commerce, etc. Rather too bad when one reflects that Gauss himself, the mathematician upon whose genius most of the statistical methods in use are based, was the son of a bricklayer. Amusingly enough, however, Professor Pearson chides the intellectual classes because they have "become enervated by love of pleasure," etc. Surely if geniality is bred, so is a love of pleasure, so is a love for small families. Hence it is useless looking to the upper middle-classes; we cannot breed large intelligent families from persons who are born with desires for small pleasure-loving families. A desire for fertility is born; it cannot be created.

* * *

We seem driven to an impasse, yet the situation is not really so hopeless. In the first place it is only an academician's view that the upper middle-class represents the brains of the nation. Names like those of Bunyan, De Foe, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Blake, Priestley, Dalton, Faraday, Wallace, Bates, occur to me as I write, with practically all the inventors of this country, to refute the Professor's bald statement. In the Professor's own words we might exclaim—figures on the table please! In the second place, environment, by which we mean all the factors surrounding the potential or actual organism from before conception, through birth, childhood, and adolescence, is not quite the impotent, negligible quantity that heredity scare-mongers would have us believe. Before displaying the power of environment I shall still have to deal with some other kinds of statistics about the inheritance of mental qualities and some mathematical fallacies about consumption and insanity.

M. D. EDER.

The Last Ten Years of English Literature.

By Osbert Burdett.

I.

A HISTORY of literature does not, like a history of economics for instance, pass from period to period but from personality to personality, and it is therefore natural to start a review of the last ten years of literature in England with the death of Oscar Wilde. This occurred in 1900, and since then English literature has never recovered; a crowd of foolish and vulgar writers has deluged English printing-presses with its effusions, and Oscar Wilde's name, instead of becoming, in his own words, "a low bye-word among low people," has suffered an even greater insult: it has become a commercial term, a talisman by which the doors of publication have been opened to those who otherwise would, no doubt, have maintained to this day a much more useful conspiracy of silence.

With these this paper has nothing to do, except, in passing, to notice how they have, perhaps, indirectly influenced the course of literature by making decadence, a technical term referring to style (as we have to remember), a worn-out fashion, banal, and now only the mannerism of a clique of no importance. Decadence in England is now the property of dilettanti: that is all.

Englishmen to-day have still the rare privilege, in spite of the death-roll of the last twenty years, of living at a time when three great names, names that will out-live posterity, are still with us: I refer, of course, to Swinburne, George Meredith, and Thomas Hardy. Swinburne, untiring still in the splendour of his great age and lasting genius, is giving us work to enjoy and technique to marvel at. "The Channel Passage" is the name of his latest volume of poems (since included in the complete poetical works that have been issued); while an early novel, published now for the first time, with the approval and by the advice of Mr. Watts-Dunton, has appeared in the last two years, and in the verses which intersperse the letters that compose it we can see the promise of a genius at the time of writing not mature. It is rumoured, too, that another tragedy is to follow on the subject of the Borgias. Unlike Mr. Swinburne, Mr. George Meredith has ceased writing—but can we wonder or complain as we remember the depth of thought, the bulk of matter which are characteristic of his work. As poet, philosopher, and novelist alike he is incomparable. It can, I think, be justly said that neither Swinburne nor Meredith has created a tradition. An imitation of Swinburne would be so obvious that the poet who succeeded in catching his style could never lay claim to originality: his influence is therefore only strongly seen in the works of minor poets. George Meredith, primarily a thinker, as Swinburne, primarily a master of form, can hardly have influenced contemporary literature to any great extent: as a philosopher he is too aloof, as a stylist too individual, to enable any copy to gain more merit than Marsyas won with Apollo's lyre. Thomas Hardy, the creator of the Wessex Novels, is chiefly distinguished from his fellow-genius, George Meredith, by a difference in his psychology, and by a different view of the world. Meredith, the great optimist, has never allowed the harshness of fact, the irony, as we say, of fate, to impress itself upon his work. It is true that few of Meredith's novels have what was once the conventional, the happy, ending; but the explanation of this is in the inherent weakness of the characters themselves and in Meredith's so logical exposition of them, not, as we find in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," for instance, the cruelty and injustice of the world in which they move. With an irony as deep as the art that expresses it, the last paragraph in the tragic history of

Tess begins with the word "Justice"; but the tragic death of Alvan and the dissolution of his life with Clothilde's evoke from Meredith only this dispassionate utterance: "Providence and her parents were not forgiven. But as we are in her debt for some instruction, she may now be suffered to go."

In these two parallel statements all the difference between Hardy and Meredith is seen: Hardy, a rebel against the God who allows such agony on earth, a rebel who must challenge the deity to answer; Meredith, the dispassionate observer of men and women, who sees them from a distance as a novelist, and, as a philosopher, regards them as material out of which what is for him the true philosophy, psychology, may be precisely made.

With the exception of that by these, the greatest names in contemporary English literature, not a very large amount of pure creative work of the first order has been done. But, on the other hand, there has been a faithful band of workers who have deserved a greater reward than they have gained by the careful compiling of discreet anthologies and by a just and wise criticism. Of these Mr. Arthur Symons is the chief. So loving a student and exact an appreciator of the arts, seven besides poetry as he has found them, is a valuable element in any literature; to him, among several books of satisfying and delightful criticism, we owe perhaps the best collection of English verse of a certain period that we possess; I refer, of course, to his "Pageant of Elizabethan Poetry." Mr. Symons has fostered with the care born of enthusiasm the old traditions of our literature, and while he has denied consideration to few, he has done poetical justice—the only real justice after all—to many. Perhaps his sympathy for France and his knowledge of French literature have given to him that nice discrimination which is only too rare a quality among English critics; the logic of his method and the impartiality of his judgment are almost French in their intensity. Was it this which made him, alone among English critics, give the true verdict on Mr. Stephen Phillips' work? Not the least of his merits, and perhaps the most telling proof of them, is his essay on Wilde—the only dignified criticism that we have seen which that unfortunate genius has received at the hands of his countrymen.

Wilde, ever an antinomian, as he tells us in "De Profundis," as a playwright has had no direct successor, but, in the sphere of paradox, has passed on this particular trick of style into the hands of another critic, Mr. Chesterton. Wilde enslaved language by making paradox the only medium of speech; Mr. Chesterton has tortured language to find new paradoxes. But it is not this, after all only a relatively unimportant question of style, that needs to be mentioned. The chief merit of Mr. Chesterton lies in this fact: as the champion of cherished beliefs, of the old order, of orthodoxy in his own phrase, he has turned the guns of the sceptics, the antinomians, the unorthodox, the "Hercules," on themselves with a delightful and destructive fury; the epigram, hitherto regarded as the special and unique possession of the enemies of the faith, has turned in their hands; they are met on their own ground, with their own weapons. Thus, while he admits that there is nothing new under the sun, he sees also that for all practical purposes a new sun rises every morning, and that the world is recreated every day. The paradox is an old, and now an almost hackneyed, figure of speech, but, in the hands of a Christian apologist, it has all the charm and force of novelty. Of the creative work of these critics—Mr. Symons and Mr. Chesterton—there is not space to speak; but it is their critical work, I think, as distinguished from what is creative but not critical, which at present possesses the more enduring quality, and the greater influence on English literature.

Turning now from criticism to poetry, we find another trinity of artists, each and all of whom are indebted to one or other of the critics I have just considered. First of all there is Mr. Robert Bridges, who has contributed to English literature a book on prosody, with the most searching examination of what were considered the laws of blank verse, the rules of scansion, or, as he would

say, the rules which direct where the stress shall fall, and how the time-periods—not the feet—must combine to form the structure of the line. His theories, like all other theories, are not wholly original, but they are none the less worthy of examination on that account. Briefly they are as follows. In the first place, English verse depends upon accent, and not upon long and short syllables, as was supposed. A blank verse, then, is a line that has five accents, while the number of syllables in the line is a matter altogether immaterial. Thus the words "scansion" and "feet" are misnomers: the correct expressions being "measurement of stress" and "time-periods." If you read poetry according to the sense you will find the rhythm of the line, in effect, is what he says; and, inasmuch as accents and not syllables are the important factors in each verse, a diversity of rhythm may result without in any sense sacrificing the number of stresses in each line which has been chosen for the poem, and which justly constitutes its metre.

But it is not only as theorist that Mr. Bridges has earned the title of "the wisest of poets." His lyrics, dainty, perfect things, the achievement of a careful craftsmanship, have a suave beauty all their own. He is grave with the gravity of silence, and joyous with all the voices of which silence itself is composed. In his "Shorter Poems," perhaps his most popular work, we see his theory put into a practice so perfect that only the divine carelessness of a bird's song appears on the surface of his poetry, beneath which how wise a craftsmanship has been at work! He has written plays also, dealing with the myths and heroes of the antique world, the verse of which is one of the most beautiful creations of modern literature, and with them, as he devises his choruses, or alters the rhythm to inform the different phases of the play with an expression suitable to them, his theories of prosody again are exquisitely intertwined.

There is another poet, too, who has been writing among us, with so evasive, so intangible a song that had it not been for Mr. Arthur Symons, his small public might never have extended to the general world. Ernest Dowson died in 1900. This is the brief estimate of his work, as his friend Mr. Symons has defined it, in the first paragraph of an introduction to his poems: "a little book of verses, the manuscript of another, a one-act play in verse, a few short stories, some translations from the French, done for money; that is all that was left by a man who was undoubtedly a man of genius, not a great poet, but a poet, one of the very few writers of our generation to whom that name can be applied in its most intimate sense." This is not the place to say more of him, and perhaps this tiny mention of him here is after all the most suitable tribute to a poet whose work was as beautiful as his opportunities were fleeting.

(To be concluded.)

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Feminism and Female Suffrage.

By E. Belfort Bax.

We have to thank Miss Murby for her pleasant wit and for a generally smart article. It is true it did not touch the point of my contention, but this, I suppose, is a detail. One thing I may congratulate Miss Murby upon. There are three time-honoured gibes, three ancient chestnuts, but evidently supposed to be very killing by the Feminist Sisterhood since they invariably find a place, like mixed pickles at a cold collation, in any controversy they may have with a man antagonist. (1.) It is the correct thing to suggest, that for any man to oppose the theories of Feminism, there must be some personal reason in his relations with the other sex for his doing so. (N.B. There is a touch of true womanhood here. Few, even clever women, seem capable of realising the possibility of interest apart from personal motives, or of zeal for abstract justice.) (2.) Then when the fact is pointed out that the lives and liberties of men may be endangered by women when the law gives them the whole force of the State at their beck and call, we have the innuendo suggesting great pusillanimity on the part of men for being afraid of women—the very obvious non-sequitur being, of course, ignored. (3.) Lastly, we have some reference, supposed to be very biting, to defects alleged to be discoverable in the "masculine intellect"—if the lady is ill-mannered to the "masculine intellect" of her co-disputant, if she be well-mannered, like Miss Murby, to the "masculine intellect" in general. Now, as I have said, I must congratulate Miss Murby on having resisted the temptation to trot out the first two of these stale devices. If she has treated us rather freely to the last, I suppose we must not be too hard on the feminine intellect in general, or on Miss Murby in particular. As regards this point, I may say, I should be quite prepared to enter the lists with Miss Murby, i.e., I should be quite prepared to maintain the thesis that the intellectual and moral "difference" of women from men renders women unsuitable as depositories of political power, in other words, as an element in the directive power of the community. In doing this, I would leave out of account an argument which to many is the crucial one, namely, that as to the difference in physical strength. Exigencies of space, however, rendered it advisable for me (at least so I thought) as the opener of this discussion to bar this side of the subject for the time being, and confine the argument to another, narrower it may be, but perfectly simple and obvious issue.

Now, my main contention as regards this issue, as I have said, Miss Murby succeeds in effectually evading. Let me state it once more in a few words:—The great argument of Feminists in favour of the extension of the Franchise to women is that non-enfranchised womanhood is groaning under the oppression of unjust man-made laws. But, as I showed conclusively in my article, and could emphasise if necessary by any number of concrete instances, the above statement by which Suffragettes and Feminists generally seek to win adherents for their propaganda, is a flagrant and a brazen falsehood. I have shown that not only is it untrue that "man-made" legislation is, in any single respect, unfair to women, but that within the past century it has consisted in the heaping-up, at the behest of Feminist advocates, of privilege upon privilege, civil and criminal, at the expense of men and to the detriment of men. This being so, I contend that not only did the chief Suffragist argument and the one most telling for propaganda purposes fall completely to the ground, but that the real facts as they stood, furnished a powerful argument against the object of the Suffragettes' propaganda. To the contention that women could not be held responsible for the present state of the law, and that it is unfair to throw it in their teeth since they have not and never have had the Suffrage, I replied by pointing out that these laws are due to the very same agitation at an earlier

stage as that of the Suffragists of to-day, that no Suffragist recognises their injustice nor proposes to repeal them, but on the contrary, all of them are looking forward to the day when they can by means of Female Suffrage urge forward legislation still further in the same direction. I have insisted that a specially privileged class has no claim to the common political rights of those not so privileged. This is recognised even by the British Constitution as it exists at present. Peers have not got the Franchise. Now to these arguments I have looked in vain for any reply in Miss Murby's article. Her references to Rip Van Winkle and the Horatian rustic may be very bright and witty, but what they have to do with the case, at least in the sense of furthering Miss Murby's argument, I am at a loss to conjecture. The reference to our old friend of the Katskins seems to connect itself with some remarks of mine as to a pamphlet published some twelve years ago, entitled "The Legal Subjection of Men." But Rip Van Winkle on awaking from his long sleep found things very different from what they were on the night when he laid himself down: whereas I, after the lapse of twelve years, find things so much like what they were at the time the aforesaid pamphlet was written, that in the main this pamphlet is still a trustworthy guide as to the state of the law, in so far as concerns the relations between men and women.

How Miss Murby connects masculine influence with the evils of the industrial development of the past hundred and fifty years, or why she should think that had women during this period possessed the suffrage, these evils would have been mitigated or prevented, I fail altogether to understand. We Socialists know that this development is purely economic in its character, and its evils are exclusively traceable to the monopoly of the land and the instruments of production in the hands of a possessing and privileged class that uses them as a means of obtaining surplus value by the exploitation of labour. It remains for Miss Murby to prove her case that the transcendent righteousness of the female human could or would with the possession of political power have altered the course of economic evolution during the period in question.

Again, I, "as a Socialist," do not exactly believe in "the break-neck race after and out of wealth" being "modified and controlled" at all, but rather in the complete abolition of this race by the reorganisation of industry on a communistic basis. When production is carried on for the use and enjoyment of all, and not for the profit and aggrandisement of some, then the present race for wealth must necessarily disappear. Here again Miss Murby's allegations as to the importance of the part to be played by the enfranchised female sex amount to mere assertion alone. The contrary assertion would be equally valid or invalid.

As a grievance which she evidently thinks the advent of female suffrage would remedy, Miss Murby quotes the inferior wages of the workwoman as against those of the workman. Here again, I submit, this is an economic disability under which women suffer which could hardly be remedied so long as the present system of wages exists, by any direct political action. Let us suppose women were to secure a legal minimum of wage equal to that of the male worker in the same occupation. Now, to a law of this kind I see, in principle, no objection whatever, but in practice I fear it would, in many departments of industry, have the effect of shutting women out of employment, it being a well-known fact that men's work is, *ceteris paribus*, preferred by employers to women's because, as a rule, it is more effective than the latter. It seems to me, therefore, very problematical how far any direct action women could in this sense exercise on legislation would result in any benefit to the working woman of to-day. I need scarcely say I am speaking with reference to the conditions of the labour market as they exist at present.

Miss Murby treats with great contempt the overweening privileges accorded by the law, and by the partiality of the Courts in the administration of the law, to women as against men. But here I ask, why do not Miss Murby's fellow-agitators in the feminist cause in-

corporate into their agitation a protest against this legal and administrative injustice towards men in favour of women, more especially seeing that, as I have pointed out, their movement in the past is itself largely responsible for the state of things in question? It was precisely the same class of women and their allies of the other sex who are now clamouring for the suffrage who were foremost in urging on the present iniquitous legislation. The late Dr. Pankhurst, unless I mistake, played a not insignificant part in bringing about the various enactments relating to married women's property which have freed the woman and bound the man. It is the militant Suffragists who, I understand, subscribe to movements for abolishing capital punishment for women while retaining it for men.

"We women—or must I say we feminists?—have, of course, seen the hollowness of its [chivalry's] pretensions long ago; we have learned that this same chivalry is a mere stage-weapon; demanding limelight or a rose-shaded glamour for its most effective play, and breaking short in the hand when real fighting's to the fore." So Miss Murby! It is significant, however, that the present Suffragette agitation exists, so far as its distinctive methods are concerned, solely thanks to this much-despised chivalry. Does Miss Murby think for a moment that her sister in Suffragism, Miss Molony, would have dared to ring her bell when and where she did had she not felt that she was safe under her panoply of womanhood, upon which the chivalry of fatuously-generous man would not venture to lay a hand? No! I repeat the tactics of the W.S.P.U. simply mean trading on the chivalry of men. It is this abuse of the gift of weakness with which nature has endowed them, on the part of women, by which they have succeeded in forging manacles to prevent men from exercising their right of self-defence, that I referred to in my previous article.

No! Miss Murby, I do not know what I might not "rise to," but I am afraid I could not sink to the fatuous chivalry which sees in the aggressive weakness of rowdy womanhood a sacred thing.

Two Sonnets on Suffrage.

By James H. Cousins.

I. To the Suffragettes.

Who sets her shoulder to the Cross of Christ,
Lo! she shall wear sharp scorn upon her brow;
And she whose hand is put to Freedom's plough,
May not with sleek Expediency make tryst:
Wherefore to thee be honour!—unenticed
By shallow tongues that bid thee meekly bow
And beg—for what their pleasure may allow—
With soft obsequious voice and honour priced.

O fateful heralds, charged with Time's decree,
Whose feet with doom have compassed Error's wall;
Whose lips have blown the Trump of Destiny
Till ancient thrones have shaken toward their fall;
Shout! for the Lord hath given unto thee
The new great age that brings new hope to all!

II. Concerning Freedom.

"Free as the waves"—they sang—"the waves that
swell
And break in large free laughter round her coasts,
Is England!"—sang the dedicated hosts
That, for her sake, went forth and bravely fell.
But now a word, like some heart-breaking knell,
Stirs with mute agony their solemn ghosts,
For England—England that of freedom boasts—
For Freedom's champions finds—a prison cell!

Oh! cease thy mocking, England, of the name
Of Her whose face shall never bless thy sight
Till man and woman, sharing equal right,
And linked in equal honour, equal shame,
Move, as of old, twin orbs in God's clear light,
And purge the world with one unwavering flame.

The Constitutionalist.

By Robert a' Field.

Used up; worn out; blasé; life-weary; weary of life; sick of life. In short, bored to death.

Weary Willy lay down on his tedious side. Out of all patience. Beneath the yellowing gorse bushes he rolled; and uncorked a flask. He wondered if anybody were thinking about him. The owner of the flask, for instance. Or the police. When Willy was well, he never wondered. Willy was not well. Willy was quite ill. In fact, he was quite about to die. And he thought so.

He watched the earth roll round in spite of him. But the beauty of sky and dazzling cloud and the blue of the sea below the cliffs he did not watch. Yet he felt it. Also, he hated it, this sick human. He spat about him and took a little nourishment out of the gin-flask. And now, great thoughts began to come around him. He went over a list of all the things which used to make him a fine fellow. Horses, women, wine, a title; and leisure. A popping good catalogue. True, he had never had any of them. Except the leisure. But that was the price of having his estates run by his cousin, the Dook o' Westminster. Willy was thus enabled to become a royal Traveller. As the householder whose gin he had commandeered knew by this time.

Suddenly, Willy's eye, swivelling, alighted upon an aged lady. She came hobbling along the path which ran below Willy's death-bed in the gorse bush. She was going to her work in the meadows.

"Oo me rewmatics, Oo-oo me old back," she kept wailing.

When her gaze fell into Willy's, she cried out: "It's a bad day for me, Mister. The worst since I cricked me knee falling agen the stack."

Willy listened. Then he began to sympathise. With himself. "Eh, I'm near gone," he responded. "Me heart's gone. Me legs is gone. Me gin's all gone."

The old lady prepared to depart. "Ow long afore yer pension?" she inquired. "Garn," said Willy. "Only fifteen years for mine," she clucked out.

Willy watched her go. Then he drew up his bottle.

Now, a certain god was come to meditate upon the cliffs that day. The god was interested in Humanity. He had a share in the concern. And things were not going well. The god knew why: Capitalism! Capital in congestion. Capital for the few. But how to distribute Capital? The god ran his eye over England. He beheld the many labouring hard collecting Capital. No hope from them. They had no leisure. Then he beheld Willy in the bush. Here was his man. The god decided to open negotiations.

Willy beheld the god. Willy touched his cap. "Yer Worshup, it was this way—" he began. A little precipitately. But Willy knew that if you do not get your story in quickly, you do not get it in at all.

"Be silent, my man," enjoined the god.

"Cer'nly, sir, only as I was standin harmless outside the shop that genelman in blue over there mistook me fer the feller wiv red air wot did it and ran away down Angel Road an I've a wife an famly pending on me sir and I'd like to request yer Worshup—"

"Presently," promised the god.

"Yessir, but I'll swear I'm innocent."

The god was gazing a queer, cold, calm gaze upon Willy. Willy cleared his throat. "Beg par'n, sir. Ope the Court'll overlook it, sir."

"I desire a little serious conversation with you," said the god.

Then it dawned on Willy. He had mistaken the Court Missioner for the Beak. What a go! A tear and a trickle now bedimmed his eye.

"Aint it ard on me sir, an me reglar converted? I was only saved agen last Sunday after a little backslide owin to encounterin a few old companions. Oh, I wish their stony earts could be dealt wiv by a genelman like you, sir. Hoo-oo!"

Said the god steadily: "Do not waste your time and

mine. I am going to put a few questions to you. If you choose to answer them, it may be to your advantage."

"Nah, then! None o' them games," broke out Willy. "I aint done nothink. I aint goin ter say nothink. I knows yer, Dick Donovan. Anythink I says 'll be used agen me, an then yer tries ter git me ter say it. I know ow much ter expeck from your sort. Nothink. You go hon. You go hon. I'm mum, I am."

"Who do you suppose me to be?" inquired the bewildered god.

"Ho! Yus!" explained Willy.

The god sighed. Then he said: "My poor fellow, I see you are in a state of pitiable distress. Do not think I wish to hurt you. I wish to benefit you."

Willy nearly bit his tongue. Here he had had a philanthropic old Party all to himself for ten minutes, and he hadn't got on to the Can. Willy "got on" without further delay.

"It's wot I've suffered, sir, as makes me suspekshous," he moaned. "Wot wiv andin over me estates an bein robbed by the Law I'm not the open-arted genelman I used ter be."

"Do you mean that you have owned estates?" said the god.

Willy drew himself high. "Sir, you behold a man wot's rode is kerridge."

The god gazed out to sea. Willy suddenly sat down. He felt a horrible pang shoot across his inside. He sweated all over. He made weird remarks.

"About these estates," said the god. But Willy had given in. "Nah look ere," he broke out wildly. "You make me tired. Can't yer see I'm dyin of unger? I'm too wore out ter play the goat any more. Besides, yer too easy. Blimee, I'd like a good cut o mutton an a few baked. Ur-oo-oo!"

"How did you lose your estates?" pursued the god.

"Lose em! I never ad none, yer old fool. Do yer think those fellers wot's got em ever let's em go? Think they'd share em wiv the likes o me? Na-o. Yer ave ter go an work reglar an never touch nothink, an bow an scrape an take all the cuss they like ter fling at yer, an then they'll give yer enuff ter git bread an onions wiv."

"Then why do not the likes of you prevent them?"

"Yus! Wy? I dunno. So ther. Dont talk disgustin rubbish."

"If you do not fight you cannot get your share of things."

"Yore childish," said Weary Willy. More pangs shot through him.

"Behold, England," mused the god. "How her cities are strewn with the wrecks of Capital. Wealth and Power dwell served by Battalions mute and obedient to a finger-beck. Such is not the scheme of Humanity. And who will challenge these conditions? Will Wealth, will Power make their servants equal with themselves? Nay. Is, Was and Shall Be may sooner be made equal with Never. England is unsafe for the Battalions. Their lives are devoured in slavery. Wealth and its minions, Majesty and Church steal every waking hour from them, so that there is none free to arise."

Willy arose. He was awfully angry. His countenance blazed with hate. His very rags fluttered with fury.

"Ow dare you!" he demanded. "You old humbuggin Soshilist, you! Wot, yerd down wiv the British Constitootion an is Majesty, would yer? Wy, let me inform yer, me fine feller, we'd burn yer fer a gyfox if we ad yer on the fif o November. Gurr. Hengland aint safe, aint she? Wot about the Bank? Aint that safe? Yer an yer schemes. Yer'll get ten stretch yer will if yer try ter come any of yer schemes over hus Britishers. Read the pleece budget an see wot we does wiv frords. Claps 'em in, we does, that's wot. Garn, yer stiff. Yer a nice one ter run down Wealth. Yerd be brought ome on a stretcher from Klondike yer would. Slaves yer thinks we is. I suppose yer never eard of rool brittanyer. No! Wy?"

Cos yer some bloomin forrener. I knows yer, yer lazy old murderin anarkist. Git ome. I demeans myself a-talkin wiv yer."

Willy went up the gorse. The god went up to Olympus. Willy glanced back accidentally. Natheless, scornfully. It was wasted. No one stood where the stranger had stood.

"Alrite, I sees yer," shouted Willy. "Yer wont stick no knives inter me. I aint afraid of yer. Ere! Pleece! Murder! Elp!"

Presently as nothing happened, Willy sat down. He moaned. The queer pains were shooting through him all ways now. And an odd chuckle sounded in his throat. He swallowed the rest of the gin. It burned like flames.

But soon the pain ceased. And the chuckle was heard no more.

Next day, the coast-guard found him lying on his face. "Drunken beast," said the coast-guard. He kicked Willy a bit. But it was no use.

The Defender of the Constitootion was dead.

Books and Persons.

(AN OCCASIONAL CAUSERIE.)

THE reference by Dr. Saleeby the other week in these columns to Professor Auguste Forel's work on the sexual question moved me to obtain the French translation of the book. Its full title is: "La Question Sexuelle exposée aux adultes cultivés." It is published by Steinheil, and the price is ten francs, which, considering that the volume is majestic and well printed, cannot be called dear. After Dr. Saleeby's recommendation, any laudatory remarks from me would have the air of an impertinence. I may, however, say that the work is one of the best pieces of vulgarisation that I remember to have met with. It is very complete, very honest, utterly capable, and singularly daring in the expression of views which are held by the majority of men and women of sense, but which men and women of sense are too cowardly to enunciate. The latter part of the book is more than vulgarisation, as Dr. Saleeby pointed out; but it is mainly as a vulgarisation that the book takes its stand.

* * *

I note that the French translation is in its eleventh thousand! Dr. Saleeby referred to the extreme improbability of an English translation, the fact being that England would not tolerate it. If it were not a popular work: if it were an affair for specialists published by special publishers at a lofty price, then England would tolerate it. But because it is full of information of sterling practical value to, and to be comprehended by, every normal human being, and because it makes agreeable reading for "cultivated adults," therefore no English publisher would dare to put his name on its title-page. This is a pity. I am a patriot in that I do hate the supposition that the great Anglo-Saxon race is a race of maiden aunts. I am aware that in stating that the book makes agreeable reading, I am likely to damn it for ever in the esteem of all self-respecting Englishmen. If I had said that it was dull, heavy, difficult, self-respecting Englishmen might have given it a chance. But perish the thought in Albion that sex and even agreeableness (to say nothing of joy) should ever be connected! Among all the heated defenders of Mr. Garnett's "Breaking Point" in a recent controversy there was not one—yea, there was not even the æsthetic A. B. Walkley—to assert that we were justified in deriving pleasure from the exposition of a sexual theme. They all defended Mr. Garnett's play exclusively on the plea that it was painful and moral. It must surely

be peculiarly true, according to our racial ideas, that children are "conceived in iniquity." And here is no doubt the reason why the English father always blushes to look upon his child.

* * *

But really it is ridiculous that Professor Forel's work cannot be placed before the English public. No popular book is more needed in England than a book of this kind, authoritative, courageous—and pleasing. My belief is that public opinion might be intimidated by a really high-class publisher, assisted and defended by a group of influential serious persons. For instance, if George Meredith or the Bishop of Hereford would write an introduction for it, and the august Macmillans would publish it, the result might not be everlasting penal servitude for the hardy pioneers. At any rate, the matter is worthy enough and important enough to be considered.

* * *

I must briefly refer to Messrs. Chatto and Windus's defence of themselves, in the matter of the Florence Press, in last week's issue. The point is of some importance, as it illustrates the attitude of publishers towards the democratisation of the literary market. Messrs. Chatto and Windus say that my "friendly paragraph mis-states their position," and that it is "likely to cause misapprehension," and that "the last thing they desire is to afford room for speculation" in the Florence Press books. If my paragraph mis-states their position, their own prospectus mis-states their position. In one breath they say that they will issue the Florence Press books as they issue other books, and in the next they say that the edition of the first book will be limited to five hundred copies! Why? The greater artificial scarcity of Kelmscott books is beside the point. The relative cheapness of the Florence Press books is beside the point. Why announce a limit? And if the last thing they desire is to encourage the speculative amateur who buys artificially rare books "for the rise," why in the name of common sense do they explicitly state that the books will not be reprinted in the Florence Press type? A plain person would suppose that such a statement was meant precisely as a bait for the speculative amateur. I am glad to learn that it is not so meant. But I regard Messrs. Chatto and Windus's methods of discouraging the speculative amateur and fostering a genuine public as most remarkably inept. I very much sympathise, however, with the intentions of the Florence Press, and I laud the promised cheapness.

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BOOK OF THE WEEK.

John Davidson. His Mark.*

IN the Epilogue to this powerful play, the second of a trilogy, "God and Mammon," Mr. John Davidson states his creed. He has stated it before, but never so emphatically, never so weightily. "I am not," he says, "a philosopher . . . I am a poet. This that I say is not a new philosophy or a new religion: it is more than these; it is the beginning of a new poetry. . . . With me there comes a solution of continuity; the past is cut off; a new era begins in which men shall no longer be the victims, but the masters of evolution."

So absolute a mood and such self-confidence do not, however, as Mr. Davidson supposes, repel. What does repel is the fact that they find no adequate expression in his work. Admitted that Mr. Davidson is a poet, even—for our day—a great poet; yet it is far from true that this play, perhaps the most sustained and powerful piece of writing Mr. Davidson has yet done, constitutes a unique achievement in poetry, or is in any sense a "solution of continuity."

Neither in form nor in idea, neither in intensity of language nor in passion of genuine thought is there anything here to warrant all the pother Mr. Davidson makes about his work in the epilogue. "Mammon and His Message" is a fine play, but it is not a great play. It contains magnificent passages, but it contains also a great deal of drivel. Its characters are intense and dramatic, but they are not nearly so heroic as Mr. Davidson supposes them; and as for the protagonist, Mammon himself, he is no better than the vision of the monster whom Socrates pricked to a ridiculous death in the dialogue with Gorgias.

Moreover, Mammon is borrowed or, at best, stolen by force, from Nietzsche. We hesitate to say that Mr. Davidson is the only Nietzschean who takes Nietzsche seriously and without salt. Mr. Oscar Levy takes his master seriously, but in the "Revival of Aristocracy" there are many grains of precious Attic salt. But Dr. Levy is a Jew, and Mr. Davidson is a Scotsman. Hence—but why hence?—Mr. Davidson is a serious disciple; and to be serious about Nietzsche is an intellectual calamity.

True, Mr. Davidson has made a faith of his own, made it, as the Epilogue tells us, out of an extraordinary blend of the very latest science and the most extravagant suggestions of the German philosopher-poet. If he had not named his sources we might have supposed he had been browsing on the Stanzas of the Book of Dzyan, the commentaries on which form one of the literary phenomena of the world. A most incredible creed it all is, to be sure. For the most part, Mr. Davidson is a naive realist, until his wings begin to move in the region of imagination, when instantly all his petty scientific terms drop away and he sings splendid lyrics to beauty.

We wish Mr. Davidson would take to heart his own confession, and believe it as we believe it. "I am not a philosopher." True, most true; then why in the name of poetry write as if he were? Philosophy, he believes, is second best to poetry; and, to prove it, writes his play, and adds an Epilogue (Mr. Shaw, by the way, holds that poetry is second best to philosophy, and properly writes his essay and adds thereto a play). But we fear in Mr. Davidson the Epilogue and its possible intrusion into the play, or at least, into future plays. We wish to be quite safe in Mr. Davidson's poetry from Mr. Davidson's theories. They distress us. They make us suspicious of meaning and doctrine in the lovely lines of his drama. In short, they worry us.

Now this is not according to the promise of the Epilogue (which, perversely, we read first—as Mr. Davidson might have foreseen). Mr. Davidson pre-

* "Mammon and His Message." A Play. By John Davidson. (Grant Richards. 5s. net.)

mised that he was not a philosopher; yet all the Epilogue is attempted philosophy at any rate. Listen again to the writer who is "not a philosopher": "I would have all men come out of Christendom into the Universe; into a new poetry." The very voice of the philosopher in the wilderness! The mere suggestion of a mission in a poet is enough to make the blood run cold; and in the evangelist of a new poetry it is terrifying as the last trump.

Of course, it is useless to argue with Mr. Davidson. Even if he had not this accursed mission his abnormal and crude egoism would vitiate all his theories. There is a splendid egoism, and an egoism that is the reverse of splendid. Nothing equals, for instance, the splendid audacity of the egoism expressed in the Hindu "Bhagavad Gita" (the creation of which alone, by the way, entitles India to self-government). After listening to the calm assurances of Krishna to Arjuna that "I am that": the ego is the cosmos; we can tolerate a high degree of egoism without flinching. But Mr. Davidson's egoism is childish by comparison: "I am not of the left, or of the right, or of the centre; but above these, and of the Universe. . . . I have authority; I write not in the name of any creed or party, revolution or reaction, but in my own name only."

That is true, but how absurdly said, how unnecessarily said. Who deniges of it? Nobody disputes to-day Mr. Davidson's absolute right to his own egoity. If he chooses to find it so pleasant a possession (for conscious egoity is not a being, but a having), we can only sympathise. It is an elementary form of individualism, and by no means a profitable form. The whole aim of a whole philosophy in one age of the world was to get rid precisely of that crude form of egoism; and even Nietzsche, if we remember rightly, turned his back on it at last.

In spite of criticism, however, this Epilogue remains one of the most stimulating essays written in modern times. We are grateful to Mr. Davidson for having thoroughly aroused our critical antagonism. Not many writers of the day deserve to move a man to wrath. And our wrath with Mr. Davidson is therefore tempered with a great and a rare pleasure. R.M.

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REVIEWS.

Sixty Years of Protection in Canada, 1846-1907.
By Edward Porritt. (Macmillan and Co., Limited.
5s. net.)

The history of the rise of the Protectionist Movement in Canada and the establishment and growth of the system as traced by Mr. Porritt makes very interesting reading, but the main interest of the book to a Socialist reader lies in the striking manner in which is shown the absolute indifference of both the great political parties in Canada to the well-being of the mass of the people. The outstanding feature is the great betrayal by the Liberal Government in 1897. The first Protectionist—or National Policy—tariff after the federation of the Canadian Provinces was enacted by a Conservative Government in 1879. The Conservatives remained in office for 17 years, during which period the Liberals never ceased to attack them for their Protectionist policy and to dilate on its injuriousness to the consumer. Sir Richard Cartwright, who was the Cobden of the Dominion, and to whom Liberals in and out of Parliament looked for relentlessly logical and slashing criticism of the Conservative policy, said, in 1893:—

"I may say at once that I think no man who has taken the trouble to examine the working of the Protective system will fail to endorse the statement I make that liberty and Protection are a contradiction in terms. You can have no true liberty under a system the function of which is to create a privileged class, and to concentrate an undue proportion of the wealth of the community in the hands of a few individuals. I contend that Protection, besides being the cause of the worst political corruption, is the deadly foe of all true freedom; and therefore the deadly foe of every Liberal who desires to see his country a free country."

These are the words of a man who three years later was Minister of Trade and Commerce in a Protectionist Liberal Administration. Again, in September, 1894, Sir Wilfrid Laurier delivered himself as follows:—

"We stand for freedom. I denounce the policy of Protection as bondage—yea bondage; and I refer to bondage in the same manner in which American slavery was bondage. Not in the same degree, perhaps, but in the same manner. In the same manner the people of Canada are toiling for a master who takes away not every cent. of profit, but a very large percentage, a very large portion of your earnings for which you sweat and toil."

It seems almost incredible that within two years this Liberal statesman could swallow convictions so strongly expressed and become Prime Minister of a Protectionist Government. Yet so it was. Mr. Fielding, Minister of Finance in the same Ministry, and other prominent Liberals spoke no less strongly on the subject. This opposition to Protection was the chief plank in the Liberal platform at the General Election of 1896, which resulted in the downfall of the Conservative Government and the accession of the Liberals to power. Nevertheless, when they came into office the Liberals immediately adopted the Conservative Protectionist policy, the reason they gave for this sudden volte face being, of course, the dislocation of the protected industries and the throwing out of employment of the workpeople engaged therein that would ensue. Since that date, however, they have never made any attempt to reduce the tariff; but, on the contrary, have considerably increased it and extended its scope, the only modification introduced by them being a preferential tariff in favour of Great Britain, framed so as to endanger no protected interest in Canada, which has not benefited the consumer to any material extent. As to the effect of the tariff on the wage-earning class, we quote Mr. Porritt:—

"The pretence that the tariff protects labour is as transparent as the claim that it is to the advantage of the grain-grower or the stock-raiser who must find a market in Liverpool, London or Glasgow . . . for the wage-earner not only must pay enhanced prices for most of the articles he needs, but he must pay his quota to the immense sum the Government is spending each year in inducing men to come into Canada to compete with him for work."

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tributions by the capitalists in return for legislative favours provide the Government in power with large campaign funds, which are used for the wholesale corruption of the electorate.

"Tariff and bounty beneficiaries, railway promoters, and subsidy hunting corporations, men with railways to sell to the Government, Government contractors, and wealthy men who have been, or who are, seeking to be appointed to the Senate, all contribute to replenish the war chest when a general election is pending. Civil Servants in many constituencies become zealous election agents in support of the men who have secured their appointment."

The Government also exercises much control over the Press which supports it. These things contribute to render it almost impossible for a candidate independent of both the established political parties to be returned to Parliament. The experience of Canada should be a warning to those who rest satisfied that the interests of the consumer are safe in the hands of a Liberal Government. Mr. Porritt is to be congratulated on his success in making a most readable book out of not very inspiring material.

A History of the Jews in England. By Albert M. Hyamson. (Published for the Jewish Historical Society of England by Chatto and Windus. 4s. 6d. net.)

Mr. Hyamson belongs to the older tribe of historians who are content to picture history as a succession of battles; but he lacks that power of expression which makes such sketches readable if not valuable. The Jews who figure in this volume, from their first authentic settlement in the reign of William the Conqueror, are sad figures who alternately amass wealth by usury and lose it by spoliation. We can neither rejoice at their gains nor feel dejected at their deprivations. The Norman kings protected the Jews because they provided an easy source of taxation. "It is thus seen that the Jews of Angevin England by their assistance enabled the Church and the Barons to erect buildings suitable for their purposes, and that by means of Jewish money the latter were put in a position to discharge their feudal obligations to the king, as well as to take part in contests for the recovery of the Holy Land. The King, on the other hand, by means of funds derived from Jewish sources, was naturally assisted in the government of the kingdom, and his missions abroad, both warlike and peaceful, were rendered easier." John seems to have been as favourably disposed towards the great Jewish moneylenders of his day as our present King is towards the Rothschilds and the other great Jewish moneylending firms of the present time. John, however, became an expensive dentist; the famous Jew of Bristol paid over 8,000 marks of silver for the extraction of seven teeth. (This beats the American dentists of London's West End.) Pillaged, prosecuted, massacred, the expulsion of the Jews took effect in 1290, when some 16,000 left England. Mr. Hyamson suggests that not all the Jews left the country; a few were converted and others professed Christianity. But there was no open Jewish settlement until Cromwell, not without enormous opposition, connived at their return.

Ever since, England has been the scene of an ever-growing material prosperity for the Jews and the decay of whatever was spiritually distinctive of Judaism. The Jews in this country have imbibed all that there is of mean, commonplace, conventional among Englishmen; they have not retained any intellectual independence, and with the exception of Disraeli and Zangwill, there is not one name that rises above mediocrity. We should have enjoyed an intelligent story of the manner in which the Jews actually made their money, and of their mode of living, both before and after the expulsion. This must be left to some more graphic pen than Mr. Hyamson's. Paine was not a "militant Atheist," he was a Deist; Barbados is the correct spelling of the coral island, not Barbadoes.

The Nationalisation of Railways. By A. Emil Davies. (A. and C. Black. 1s. net.)

The question of Railway Nationalisation but recently entered the field of practical politics. And a need was thereby created for a cheap and comprehensive handbook to the subject, of the sort that can be sold on

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By Rev. C. L. DRAWBRIDGE, M.A.

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railway bookstalls. Mr. Davies has filled that need in a truly admirable fashion. Every aspect of the question from the waste of competitive advertising to preferential import rates, and from directors' fees to cloak-room charges, is discussed with the most perfect lucidity and certainty of touch. While giving all necessary statistics Mr. Davies avoids the besetting sins of many enthusiasts, the sins of repetition and excessive detail. One of the most interesting chapters deals with "The Shareholders' Indictment," and with the prolonged, and for the most part unavailing, struggle of the Railway Investment Company to obtain up-to-date statistics as a prelude to the prevention of waste. The many extra millions that might be made by the exercise of ordinary business economy even without unification could, it is pointed out, easily be secured for the stockholder before the State has time to step in; but in Mr. Davies's view this—fortunately for the British taxpayer—is very unlikely, as there is no sign in the circles of Railway Directors of a man of sufficient intelligence to accomplish the most simple reforms. Altogether we have no hesitation in saying that no one who is interested in the subject can afford to do without this book. It is of the sort that cannot be written until a controversy is nearing its end. The case which it presents is not only convincing but final and unanswerable. In addition to its other merits it should be said that the whole of the book is at once readable, restrained and omniscient, a combination of qualities which is rarely found in controversial literature of this sort—if we except the best Fabian Tracts.

Eve's Apple. By Alphonse Courlander. (Fisher Unwin.)

A man of means and leisure, devoting both to a form of social service much in vogue at the moment, and having for companion a woman who is in love with him, meets and is subjugated by a Parisian adventuress of the kind that our novelists find so irresistible. He marries her, is ruined by her extravagance, and speculates with money held in trust for the other woman, the virtuous one. There follow disgrace and imprisonment, and final redemption through the virtuous woman aforesaid. Mr. Alphonse Courlander writes, perhaps, rather better than the average of his class, and has a good notion of telling a story. Why, then, should he deal in types and situations so wildly remote from the world of actuality?

MAGAZINES OF THE MONTH.

THE anonymous editor of the "Socialist Review" (described as an official publication of the I.L.P.) contributes in his "Outlook" some important pronouncements on the two questions at present agitating the Labour and Socialist movement: the question of the relation of local groups with the Labour Party Executive, and the larger question of the future of the Labour Party. Regarding the former, we will simply quote the following: "We need not hide the seriousness of the situation which will be created if candidate after candidate plays off his own bat, or has only local or sectional jacking." Of the latter, the Editor's most important sentence is the following: "This (the strengthening of the Extreme Right by the intervention of Socialist candidates) will always be the case until Socialism gathers enough strength to conquer all Parties"; and as an additional emphasis on the need for a Socialist party the Editor concludes: "Not until we get a Government which understands in its soul that the claim of the poor is against those who toil not but who possess much, will Old Age Pensions be robbed of the taint of pauperism or the savour of national charity."

The Editorial Outlook is followed immediately by an article by Mr. Wells, in which precisely the contrary opinions are stated. We have no need to defend the S.D.P. against Mr. Wells's charges; but regarding the Socialist movement as a whole and the question whether the time is ripe for the creation of a Socialist party we do not hesitate to affirm that Mr. Wells is at least fifteen years behind the times. As a first-rate Socialist propagandist, Mr. Wells naturally believes in the method of education; but why, now that the I.L.P. is definitely and avowedly Socialist in character, should he say, as he does, that a Socialist party is neither possible nor desirable at the present time? Moreover, that phrase "present time" is misleading, for Mr. Wells really means that a Socialist party will never be possible. "The sane Socialist," he writes, "who is also a sane politician, will do anything he can at the present time to prevent any

such party appearing, will do everything to anticipate and allay harsh and embittering feuds between Labour representatives and Liberals and reasonable Socialists—between, that is, those types of men who must ultimately be brought together if we are to see any deliberately Socialist legislation in the next twenty or thirty years." This can have only one meaning, namely, that Mr. Wells neither expects nor desires to see a Socialist party co-extensive with the existing parties. Its function, for him, is that of pacemaker only, and exclusively for the Liberal party. Which is certainly not the view of the Socialist political future we gather from the Editorial Notes.

In the same number Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace begins a series of articles on "The Remedy for Unemployment," which deserve to be read with care. The June number of the "Socialist Review" is a credit to the I.L.P.

In the "International," Mr. J. A. Hobson has an illuminating article on "The Coming of Protection." He ventures on a prophecy. "Nothing but a large and most unlikely revival of industrial prosperity is able to prevent the débacle of British Free Trade at the next General Election." Dr. Edward Bernstein defends the Labour Movement from the charge of lowering the standard of culture. He concludes: "He who understands the modern Labour movement is sure of one thing, it may bring about the greatest political and economic revolutions, it will never depress the level of human culture, but will supply the motive power for a continuous rise." The rest of the articles maintain the International character of this useful "Review."

The most important article in the "Contemporary" is Mr. Sidney Webb's reprinted lecture on "The Necessary Basis of Society." We summarised the article for our readers last week, and need only add that the article is in our opinion destined to have an immense influence on current political theories. Sir Thomas Whittaker and Sir Oliver Lodge contribute each an article on the Licensing Bill. Sir Thomas Whittaker maintains that "for sound and solvent companies the readjustment of their finances, which the Licensing Bill will necessitate, is quite feasible during the time limit which is proposed." Sir William Ramsay has an important article on "The Carnegie Trust and Scottish Universities." Started with such tootling of trumpets as seldom was, the Trust in recent years has degenerated into an engine of obstruction for higher education. Again, it was supposed that the Trust would aid poor students to enter the University. Sir William Ramsay's conclusion is definite: "Except in a small degree, the really poor student is excluded by the Trust." It is a curious reflection that Mr. Carnegie himself would have been unable to share in his own Trust! Other articles of interest are "Ibsen as a Religious Teacher": an examination of "Peer Gynt"; "Free Trade and the Late Ministry," the story of the Sugar convention, by Thomas Lough, M.P.; and "Vivisection and Disease," by Mr. Stephen Coleridge.

Mr. L. J. Maxse continues in the "National Review" to keep his eye on the German Emperor. But we wish he would be explicit in his terrible warnings. Regarding the Invasion Scare, for example, we absolutely fail to gather from Mr. Maxse whether he anticipates a "bolt from the blue" (in which case we are assured that ten days at least of "bolting" would be necessary), or a formal declaration according to the agreement of the Hague Congress. In either case, with the two-Power standard maintained we can sleep o' nights; and Mr. Asquith has given hostages for that. What more does Mr. Maxse want—except advertisement? After his notes, however, everything in the June "National" is a little dull. Mr. Norman Chamberlain distinguishes himself by a muddle-headed acceptance of contradictory hypotheses. "Ignotus" writes on "Neglected Aspects of the Entente Cordiale"—and may they be long neglected; and



A Woman Talked.

She talked about the beauty and cleanliness of her clothes and home—of the saving of labour, time and money—and of a genial, comforting household brightness.

She was a regular user of
Hudson's Soap.

Sir Charles Watson defends Gordon against the charges of Lord Cromer.

Two important articles appear in the "Albany Review" for June. Mr. Humphreys, the Secretary of the Proportional Representation Society, discusses the various proposals for Electoral Reform by application to recent three-cornered elections. We agree with his conclusion that second ballots have proved worse than useless to remedy the evils of representation; and we have no hesitation in declaring ourselves in favour of a "Proportional Representation" scheme. If Mr. Asquith's promise of Electoral Reform is ever fulfilled, it should include the abolition of the present grossly unfair system of defrauding minorities of representation. The other article of interest is Mr. Edward Jenks's exceedingly able criticism of Mr. Mallock's attack on Socialism. Other articles are "Old Age Pensions," by W. Sutherland; "The Irony of Samuel Butler," by Desmond MacCarthy, and an appreciation of the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman by Harold Spender.

We have already referred to Sir Cyprian Bridge's comments in the June "United Service Magazine" on the probability of a surprise invasion. But from our point of view the most interesting article in the number is Dr. Maguire's indictment of the Education methods of the War Office. We have often called attention to one serious and perhaps fatal defect in Mr. Haldane's scheme, namely, the reservation of commissions to public-school trained men. It was and is a piece of gross "class" legislation, and in a National Scheme is as bad in policy as it is obsolete in theory. From an almost unsurpassed knowledge of the inner life of the army, Dr. Maguire arrives at a similar conclusion. "I denounce," he says, "the War Office for its criminal and snobbish pandering to a base anachronism." Will Dr. Maguire write a new "J'accuse"? THE NEW AGE will gladly publish it.

DRAMA.

Opera Bouffe and Gossip.

THE present season of "Songs that Dance. Dances that Sing," at the Shaftesbury, is worth going to see if you haven't stored up too much dramatic energy in long abstinence. It really makes all the difference in theatre-going whether one goes regularly or only at long intervals. The regular theatre-goer very soon lowers his dramatic standards in a shocking way. An habitu  of London theatres begins to idealise Beerbohm Tree who had formerly despised Tree.

In anything but the crudest types of dramatic representation we are still only in the beginning of development. "Offenbach Opera Bouffe" we do rather well, these simple pleasures of the muddled mind being on the same mental and emotional level as those produced by beer-drinking on a long country walk. Excellent and divine emotions, beatific and revealing stupidity. "Who drives fat oxen," etc., etc., and who would understand the problems of rural England must be a little stupid with beer; who would understand the problems of dramatic England must be a little amused by Offenbach Opera Bouffe. I see from the Press that this Shaftesbury production has typical French characteristics. For my own part I merely noted that it had typical theatrical characteristics. This form of entertainment represents the glamour of the theatre in excelsis. "Well, anyway, what is the theatre for?" Precisely.

No one but an incurably idle or stupid person would go regularly to the London Theatres—and dramatic critics. Just as no one but an incurably idle and stupid person would habitually stupefy himself with quarts of beer. But, as a matter of fact, hundreds of thousands of persons habitually do both these things, and call it supporting the British Drama, or supporting British Industries. Dramatic criticism ought always to be divided between a review from the point of view of the habitu  and a critique from the point of view of the theatrical ascetic. But the habitu s would not like this; they may like to have their plays soft, but they prefer 'em criticised hard.

If you wish to find out what are good plays consult the dramatic critics. If you wish to find out what are suitable for habitu s consult the advertisement columns of the daily paper. The two views are always in conflict, because the critic tries to take the severe view, and the patrons of the drama take what makes them "feel good."

Offenbach Opera Bouffe is one type of theatrical stuff we do efficiently, and any not too complex matter treated in the same syrupy medium produces a popular result. At the present time out of 26 theatrical advertisements in my daily paper, only two are of plays (at the Haymarket and Kingsway) which can be seriously blessed from the severe critical standpoint. Three of the remainder are plays by Mr. Somerset Maugham, one of them "Lady Frederick," now about to migrate for the fourth time to a fresh theatre. And in connection with this I should really like to know if the rumour of the Censor's hand in Mr. Maugham's work is true or not. The rumour is that Mr. Maugham having begun by writing plays of high standard was advised by the Censor to write popular plays, and so now writes plays of popular standard. Thus do the benefits of the Censorship multiply.

One of the 26 is opera and one Shakespeare, but the two biggest successes are "When Knights were Bold" and "The Scarlet Pimpernel," which on its appearance was almost unanimously damned.

So long as the majority of a town's population are regularly reduced to the condition of energyless wet rags at the end of every day, just so long will it be impossible for drama of the inspiring (and energy con-

Why, When?

A little Friendly Advice to sufferers from Indigestion, and all who fail to Enjoy Life.

Why, when you sit down to a meal, do you do so dreading its after-effects?

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ZION'S WORKS contain explanations of the Bible, which free mankind from the charge of Sin. Read Vol. V., p. 87, and the "Discourses," Vol. XII. IN THE PRINCIPAL FREE LIBRARIES.

"UNITARIANISM AN AFFIRMATIVE FAITH," "UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY Explained" (Armstrong), "Eternal Punishment" (Stopford Brooke); "Atonement" (Page Hopps) given post free.—Miss BARMEY Mount Pleasant, Sidmouth.

suming) kind to be commercially successful. It is only due to the entire unreason of the dramatic mind that we have any theatres producing good plays, and only seven producing musical plays of popular amusement type. Plays of amusement are a necessity at present; to make them plays of instruction would be as much torture as lessons for underfed school children. That is all understood. But "to understand all is"—not to pardon all, but to go for what you object to with a ballot-box, a hatchet, or any other convenient weapon. If we are to have plays of the energy-consuming kind produced nowadays we shall have in every possible way, by subsidy and encouragement, to strengthen the dramatic unreason that insists on writing "Getting Married" in the face of Box-Office Returns and the advice of the Censor. The drama is only beginning now. Our rudiments are all very well, and some of the less young of the rudiments are on their own plane quite efficient. But the whole field of the sciences and the exploration of religious emotions are practically untouched. Positively I do not know any modern play in which the panorama of evolution is displayed, and none in which God is brought into the theatre. In the end, no doubt, the theatre will be the Church, and when we have dramas of the works of God, with farcical interludes, we shall at last be able to laugh in church.

L. HADEN GUEST.

CORRESPONDENCE.

For the opinions expressed by correspondents, the Editor does not hold himself responsible.

Correspondence intended for publication should be addressed to the Editor and written on one side of the paper only.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—Correspondents are requested to be brief. Many letters weekly are omitted on account of their length.

BLAKE AND WORDSWORTH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

Noting a mistake in Jacob Tonson's cheerful causerie, I write "to put him wise," as the Americans say. The super-excellent edition of Blake that he so rightly praises was (alas!) not prepared by me, but by Mr. John Sampson, with whom I cannot even claim relation. I have done no more than write about Blake, which is no distinction at all: there are few people now who have not written about him.

This note gives me the chance of heartily agreeing with Jacob Tonson (blessed name to booklovers!) in his commendable zeal for Wordsworth. I am sure Jacob would like to know that though I have not edited Blake, I have edited the "Lyrical Ballads." I do not apologise for mentioning this, because it seems that only two persons beside myself have ever seen this admirable volume, which reposes unread in Methuen's "Little Library." Jacob will find that I plead in my Introduction for all Wordsworth and not selected Wordsworth. I regret on re-reading to find that much of this Introduction is stupid. It was written a long while ago: some day I hope to write a better. But Jacob will like the text.

GEORGE SAMPSON.

P.S.—Jacob Tonson's funny line from the old Daddy (as FitzGerald used to call him) is indeed funny. My favourite line is funnier still, but is technically disqualified, because it is half one line, and half the next. Behold it:—

"My drift I fear
Is scarcely obvious."—(Prelude, v. 293 and 4.)
G. S.

* * *

FEMINISM AND FEMALE SUFFRAGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

The thanks of all thoughtful men are due to you for printing Mr. Bax's brilliant and crushing exposure of the "wrongs" of modern women. May I be permitted to supplement his remarks with a few observations of my own? I am, I venture to think, representative of a large and hitherto inarticulate class. I recognise that the chief problem of the day is the poverty of the many and the wealth of the few, that a lightening of the burdens of the former is bound to come, and Socialism alone will accomplish it. The wrongs of the poor touch me. But the wrongs of women qua women leave me cold. I deny that they—I speak of them as a sex—are our moral and intellectual equals. Women are fundamentally children, they never grow up. Not only so, but no one who at a theatre or other place of amusement has sat behind a well-dressed woman (who would be furious if the title of lady was denied her) in a huge hat which she declines to remove to enable those behind her to see the

stage, will deny she is often not only a child but an irresponsible and a fractious child into the bargain.

If women get the vote it means petticoat rule in perpetuity. They will swamp us at the polling booths. They will rule the land. Subjection to a woman in our youthful days we have all known, temporary subjection to a woman in the days of our vanity we have all known, but perpetual subjection to Women! . . . I for one will emigrate ere that day comes to, say, Germany. Being a man I can endure the tyranny of men better than the tyranny of women. But I decline to admit the contingency. At present we hold the vote as our birthright. Let us not be so mad as to throw it away. Universal manhood suffrage is far enough on the path of progress; to go further will be a retrograde step.

CHARLES D. LESLIE.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT IN DENMARK.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

Is not Mr. Fyfe doing less than justice to the Danes in your issue of May 30? The very point in which he accuses the Danish organisation of failing is one which they have tackled in a thoroughly Socialistic and efficient manner. The municipal labour bureaux there are not the water-tight compartments such as have been established in this country, but are linked up with each other by that marvellous system of cheap telephones which has well nigh made the Danish small farmer as great a user of the wire as business houses are here. The unemployed are thus put in touch with every place in the kingdom where work calls for hands, and the State-owned railways place at their command exceptional facilities for reaching the waiting job. His sensational picture of the horrors of unemployment seems therefore to be somewhat out of place as applied to the kingdom of Denmark.

G. L. C. WATSON.

* * *

THE INTERNATIONAL AND INDIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

I should be glad if you would give publicity to the following resolution passed at the last meeting of the British National Committee of the International Socialist Congress:

"That this meeting of the British National Committee of the International Socialist Congress, whilst deeply regretting the action of fanatical Bengalis who have resorted to explosives in their eagerness to protest against repression, and have thus sacrificed wholly innocent lives, desires to place on record its opinion that such despotic acts and economic injustice as at present disgrace British rule in India are calculated to bring about these outrages in revenge for the public floggings of political agitators and the imprisonment without trial of constitutional leaders."

WM. SANDERS, Hon. Sec.

* * *

"HEROES AND HEROINES OF RUSSIA."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

Allow me to thank you for the important review you were good enough to give of my book, "Heroes and Heroines of Russia," and at the same time to confess my inability to understand the purport of the concluding statement that I am not a Socialist, nor do I belong to any Continental school of thought. Am I to understand that the first statement implies my personal untrustworthiness, and the second my utter thoughtlessness? And how does the reviewer know that I am not a Socialist? In Russia a man's nobility of mind and angelic kindness of heart, and all other virtues, are duly testified to by the police when they give him his legal passport, and in the schedule "Religion" summarise his beliefs, principles, ideals, aspirations, moral conduct, etc., etc., by entering the simple, short, but very elastic word of "Christian." In England I have not yet heard of any passports at all, and doubt whether those who proclaim their Socialism from house-tops could produce certificates that they, and they alone, are the only genuine original Socialistic articles.

It is true that I am not a member of any formally constituted Socialistic organisation, simply because I cannot bind myself to any definite programmes and regulations. But in my humble way I am nevertheless always happy to help in the Socialistic cause, in so far as I believe it to be furthering the interests of the people in a practical manner, and as a matter of fact I do frequently help even more advanced reformers than the Socialists, though, again, I do not identify myself with them.

I do not know whether your reviewer, writing in a Socialist paper of such standing as THE NEW AGE, consciously intended to damage my book by stating that the author is not a Socialist. But, as practically all my "Heroes and Heroines" are professed Socialists, I can only

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leave it to the readers to judge whether the un-Socialism attributed to me has in any way prevented me from doing full justice to the Socialist subjects of my sketches.

JAAKOFF PRELOOKER.

[It is news to learn that it is damaging to any author to state that he is not a Socialist. Our view of Mr. Prelooker's political outlook was derived from the following passage:—"Modern Russian Revolutionaries still continue to put the cart before the horse by making Socialism the first demand in their programme before ever political freedom has been secured to guarantee the very inviolability of the citizen and liberty of speech and union. They have evidently learnt nothing from the disastrous experience of their predecessors," etc. Our statement imputes neither untrustworthiness nor thoughtlessness, and from the nature of the review should be considered rather a tribute to Mr. Prelooker's impartiality.—THE REVIEWER.]

* * *
 "HANDS OFF THE ARTIST."
 TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

As a man of genius may I be permitted to call attention to a matter which causes me considerable annoyance?

Whenever one of my plays is staged which probes a little more deeply than usual into life, certain sections of the public at once raise the cry that there are subjects which an artist ought never to touch on. This troubles me little, however, as it is of course the artist's duty to see life in its entirety, not to confine himself to carefully marked-out sections of life. There can never be any real, swinging advance in literature and art until artists are accorded full liberty, as Goethe puts it, "to thrust their snouts in every filth they pass."

It is from quite a different direction, however, that my real annoyance comes. I refer to those very clever people who draw inferences of their own—usually quite wrong inferences—from everything that I write. These logic-bound people obstinately insist, for example, that every one of my plays must have "a cause." They are apparently unable to comprehend how anything can be done without some strong, substantial, practical reason. "If a man writes a 'serious' play (say these wisecracks) he must mean something by it, he must intend to teach something"—and forthwith they drift off into all sorts of absurd guesses as to what my plays mean. The result is that I, a mere dramatist and a man of genius, find myself saddled with a political and social philosophy which, God knows, I never once thought of.

There are, in fact, two classes of people who are my natural enemies. First, there are the Stodgies, who decline to listen to anything that "outrages convention." Then there are the Intellectuals, who despise the Stodgies, welcome the artist with open arms—and crush him to death! In other words, they insist that he is one of themselves; claim that he is "in the movement"; read all their own silly "lessons" into his work; put their own gloss on everything he says or does; and know his mind and his intention better than he does himself.

The Stodgies are absurd, but the Intellectuals are the devil!

Take the case of my friend Ibsen. Was ever a man so beset, patronised and exploited by fools as this man has been? So-called Ibsenites—headed (seriously or facetiously) by Mr. Bernard Shaw—have insisted over and over again that Ibsen wrote his plays with the intention of placing before a misguided world certain ideals, political and social. These people see a man of intense energy pouring out a vast volume of work, and, instinctively looking for a motive—for, being English, they cannot imagine anything being done for "nothing"—they jump to the ridiculous conclusion that it all has reference to themselves. Obsessed with this curious idea, they immediately begin to see in Ibsen a missionary intent on teaching them the error of their ways. They never seem to comprehend that there is clearly another alternative, viz., that Ibsen, the artist, cared never a rap about "lessons" moral or otherwise, but just wrote straight on, portraying as faithfully as he was able (subject to his limitations) those traits of life which happened to come within his ken. In short, the Intellectuals as well as the Stodgies, seem to quite lose sight of the fact that the artist does not choose his subject, it is forced on him. The painter paints, the author writes, and the dramatist dramatises, for the same reason that he breathes—because he must. He no more chooses his material and his sphere of work than he chooses his body or his sex. In the beginning, he experiments with the object of discovering his "bent"; afterwards, he develops himself in the direction in which he has discovered by experiment that his powers lie. As for the dramatic artist, it is his duty to make investigations into life and to place before his audience the result of those investigations. The audience may then draw inferences or not as it sees fit; but it is absurd to saddle the author with responsibility for inferences drawn at random by free-lances.

My friend, Mr. Edmund Gosse (in his "Ibsen"), remarks

very pertinently: "It has been the misfortune of Ibsen that he has particularly attracted the attention of those who prefer to see anything in a poem except its poetry, and who treat of tulips and roses as if they were cabbages for the pot of didactic morality. Yet it is surprising that, after all that the author said, and with the lovely poem shaking the bauble of its fool's cap at them, there can still be commentators who see nothing in 'Peer Gynt' but the 'awful interest of the universal problems with which it deals.' This obsession of the critic to discover 'problems' in the works of Ibsen has been one of the main causes of that impatience and even downright injustice with which his writings have been received by a large section of those readers who should naturally have enjoyed them. He is a poet of fantastic wit and often reckless imagination, and he has been travestied in a long black coat and white choker, as though he were an embodiment of the Non-conformist conscience." And Professor Raleigh (in his "Shakespeare") puts the case very neatly when he says: "The poet seeks for no convertites or worshippers, but records his ideas and impressions of life and society in order that the reader may compare them with his own."

It is as necessary, therefore, that men like Ibsen and myself should be defended from the Intellectuals—who wish to turn us into parsons and the stage into a pulpit—as from the Stodgies—who seek to restrain us from dealing with the whole of life.

OLIVER ATKINSON,
 Man of Genius.

* * *
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TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

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