

THE NEW AGE

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, AND ART

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We shall be very glad to send to any address a copy of the Prospectus of the proposed NEW AGE COMPANY, Limited. Applications should be made AT ONCE to Mr. Frank Palmer, 140, Fleet St., E.C.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

MR. JOHN BURNS forwent his summer holiday this year in order that he might deal with the unemployed. He is dealing with them. When the Prime Minister stated in the House of Commons on October 22 that the unemployed grant should not be withheld from persons who had received Poor Law Relief during the year, or who had been assisted under the Unemployed Workmen's Act during the past two years, he did not mean this at all. There can be no doubt but that he meant something quite different. It is true that the majority of the members, counting by noses, were with Mr. Asquith, and had put this interpretation upon the words used. But a powerful minority, consisting of Mr. John Burns, had come to a quite other conclusion. Mr. John Burns's circular stated that the new regulations "do not remove the existing disqualifications, but they give to the Distress Committee a discretion whereby they may waive the disqualifications in proper cases." Nothing will make us believe that John Burns had committed an error. Who has ever heard him hint at such a possibility, and who so quick as he to detect error? Has he not somewhere told us that he stands as a British bull-dog couchant, ever ready to fly with out-soaring pinion wheresoever he is wanted to conquer corruption, to flagellate faults, to block beer money?

* * *

We cannot spare Mr. John Burns; England hath need of him. His health is precious to us; he must not be allowed to overwork himself. We all suffer from his work. Mr. Asquith must prevail upon him to take a prolonged holiday. Mr. Burns, we are told, went to Germany once upon a time and followed the soldiers on foot. Why not go there again? In Germany there now languishes another solitary soul, another incomprehensible man, another powerful minority. We should rejoice indeed could we learn that Mr. John Burns was taking a cure in Germany, that he had invited the

Kaiser to join him on a tour in Count Zeppelin's airship. In such companionship their habitual reticence would disappear in the free air; they could unburden themselves to one another on all the questions which the habit of diplomatic reserve has hitherto prevented them from imparting to an interested world.

* * *

Mr. Asquith did not "in the least complain" that attention had been called to the non-fulfilment of his promise, nor did he complain "of the very moderate and reasonable manner" in which Mr. Henderson had called attention to the matter. This is really magnanimous, but gives one the impression that if some less urbane speaker than Mr. Henderson had moved the adjournment the regulations as first issued by the Local Government Board would still be in force. The Labour Party's success on this occasion emphasises the value of an independent group acting on behalf of the workers; the Labour and Nationalist members were supported only by Mr. Lea and Mr. Rowlands when leave was asked to move the adjournment. The whole episode demonstrates what real powers a President of the L.G.B. does actually possess. Without any new legislation, by merely issuing humaner regulations and by compelling recalcitrant local bodies to obey them, much could be done to change the condition of thousands from misery to comparative comfort. The poor in the lump is bad is the inscription now to be read over the portals of the Whitehall offices.

* * *

Miss Murrell Marris, in her debate with Miss Bondfield, was aghast at the thought that "if a woman worker, forced as she might be to work in a factory under Socialism, disagreed with an official, she would find it impossible to leave her place and go to another situation, because there would be no other employer but the State. She would have to remain and put up with all the insults and disagreeable conditions attached to officialdom." That is a forecast of women under Socialism. Here is a picture of men not under the slavery of the State. Mr. Roberts asked the hon. member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he was aware that David Nicholls, who had applied to the Kent County Council for a small holding, was about to be evicted from his cottage by the landlord, part of whose land was suggested as suitable for small holdings, and that Nicholls was now being subject to a local boycott, having been refused an adjacent vacant cottage on the ground of his resistance to the aforesaid eviction; whether he was aware that other persons in the locality were being restrained from making application for land under the

Small Holdings and Allotments Act for fear of similar intimidation; and whether his Department contemplated any action to protect persons in such circumstances, and, if so, what?

Sir E. Strachey: The facts are as stated, and the President of the Board much regrets that he has no power to interfere.

* * *

Eviction, starvation, perchance death, because you would rent a plot of land under the Small Holdings Act. No one can interfere. We shall take it lying down, and some will think about joining respectable Land Clubs. Oh, for an English Michael Davitt. Cannot we induce a few Irishmen to settle on English soil for some years?

* * *

The appeal for "Personal Service among London Poor" has naturally been received with unanimous approval by the London Press. It is so kind of these ladies, and these good lords, and Mr. Arthur Henderson, to show such interest in the respectable poor. The signatories "are aware of conflicting theories and schemes for improving the state of affairs; but the questions are complicated and require long study and research before a conclusion can be arrived at." It may be true that long study and research are required before Lords Salisbury and Norfolk, and Mrs. Asquith and the others can arrive at a conclusion. Nay, we doubt whether any period of study, howsoever prolonged, will bring them to any understanding of the unemployed question. It is indeed a flagrant insult to the nation, and too much in keeping with English hypocrisy to have such an appeal signed by a landlord of the Duke of Norfolk type. First, get you off the backs of the people if you have desire to be of personal service. We have nothing to urge against charity when it is personal, our whole being rises in revolt against any endeavour to systematise the giving of help, of advice, of material relief. On general grounds we should persuade our readers to have nothing to do with this appeal, while an examination of the letter shows that it is to be little but another C.O.S. dodge to prevent charity. "Order and system" are to be ensured; "expert supervision" is to be secured when material relief is required. We want no order and no system and no expert supervision in deeds of charity; we shall give to whom we like because it pleases us, to the fatherless and widows, the drunkard, the down-on-his-luck, and the spendthrift. Our degrading industrial system must not be bolstered up by organised appeals from fine ladies and useless landlords.

* * *

Second thoughts are second best. When the Lord Chancellor proposed that sentence of death should not be passed in cases of infanticide, the Bishop of Southwark "thought the first instinct of any humane person would be favourable to the proposal." After listening to the lawyers' arguments, however, he concluded that he would not take part in the division. The proposal was rejected, the Bishops present acting like the Bishop of Southwark. Our historical knowledge of the Bishops is somewhat hazy, but we suppose merely on the doctrine of chance that at some time or other there must have been somewhere a Bishop whom one could have fairly described as a humane person. What was his name? During the debate Lord Coleridge admitted that he had great objection to the passing of a death sentence that was not to be carried into effect. So far good. But neither he nor any of the lawyers seemed to raise any objection to the passing of a sentence that was to be carried into effect. Though we can all easily conceive ourselves committing a murder, no man can understand the state of mind of a human being who can, in cold blood, and without the slightest personal ill-will, order the murder of another human being. But to become a judge you must first cease to be a man.

* * *

Highly significant is the qualified approval given to railway nationalisation by Sir George Gibb, Chairman of the Metropolitan District Railway Co., in a paper he read before the Royal Economic Society. He said "he could not wholly disapprove of a scheme which would secure for the country the advantages of a system of

well-regulated monopoly, even in the guise of State ownership. Competition, in his judgment, created more evils than it cured." The more acute minded directors are just commencing to recognise that it will soon be time to sell out their property to the nation, for its value is just about on the decline. Owing to the recklessness of former competition, the enormous sums grabbed by the landed proprietors, and bad finance, the companies have a vastly swollen capital. But the real danger for them is a probable change in our means of locomotion; electricity, motor-transport, and air-ships will abolish the present clumsy system of transport along fixed lines. At the first commercial success, which may come at any moment, the railway shareholders will be clamouring to be bought out. As Sir George Gibb remarked, "the value of their property would be fully provided for in the event of State purchase." We know that the shareholders would receive much more than the value of their property. In England corruption is a fine art, it has nothing of the grossness of the United States or Russia. We hardly know that we are being fleeced, but whenever the Public buys anything one may be quite sure that it pays through the nose. Landlords, lawyers, shareholders, are all in the conspiracy; the arbitrators and the sellers are alike drawn from the property-holding classes, and they will always see that the private interests come out on top. It was so with the London Water Companies; it is so with the Dock Companies, where a huge sum is to be paid for some worn-out mud-yards. Socialists should urge the spending of vast public moneys on the building of new roads suitable for motor traffic, on experiments in electric traction, on experiments in air-machines. We should choose our own time for Railway Nationalisation. Fancy buying out the District Railway, with its architectural triumphs in railway stations, and its cumbersome, over-crowded cars. Let the shareholders keep their property whilst prices are falling, and let the nation compete in other ways.

* * *

DECAY OF HUMOUR UNDER SOCIALISM.—

This we are convinced is a true and just indictment, although it is a point our opponents have not yet raised. Fallen to the Saturday ebb, our spirits were raised by the placards of the morning papers: Amusing Debate on the Licensing Bill. We turned hurriedly to the report, we bought all the morning papers, we read all the different versions of the same debate. Of ourselves we found nothing amusing; the jokes had to be demonstrated to us by a Liberal confrère. Sir Samuel Evans supposed himself at eleven o'clock on a Sunday morning asking for a plate of ham and eggs and a cup of coffee. Mr. J. Hope (first humorist): "The right hon. gentleman forgets that he ought to be in church at that hour." Mr. G. D. Faber (second humorist): "Bacon and eggs were not the proper preliminary to divine worship." The third humorist was Mr. Cox, which gives us hope, for we do not remember that in his Fabian days he was ever known as a wit. Remove the errors of Socialism, and the best springs of humour will bubble forth again.

* * *

With a minority in Parliament, it is not to be expected that Mr. Fisher, the Labour Premier, will be very heroic in his legislation. If the Australian Labour Government could but carry out Mr. Deakin's New Protection to its logical sequel we should have a form of Tariff Reform which all Socialists would heartily support. Under the New Protection, the duties from increased tariffs would be paid as a bonus to those manufacturers where a certain standard for the workers was maintained. A minimum rate of wage, the best possible of factory conditions and the minimum number of hours for the employees, would be the conditions to be settled between the Government, the employer, and the workers. The experiment will, we are convinced, not long tarry in Australia; we can but hope that it will fall to a Labour Government, with Mr. Fisher as Premier, to pilot such a measure through the Parliament and be responsible for its execution. With any other than a Labour party in power we should not

find the workers reaping much benefit from such an Act.

* * *

There is no civilised country in the world, Turkey perhaps excepted, that has a democratic form of government. The difference between constitutional monarchies and absolute monarchies is that in the former foreign affairs are mismanaged by an aristocratic clique and in the latter by an imperial clique. We English are making ourselves peculiarly absurd just now in our commentaries on the historic Kaiser interview. Here for a few brief moments the Kaiser spoke out of the fulness of his heart; he spoke unreservedly, not as Kaiser, not as diplomatist, but as one human being to another. Are we going to denounce him because he spoke frankly, without the cunning and deceit of the diplomatist or of our English Front Benchers? Are we to denounce him because he spoke as the friend of England? or because he said a large proportion of Germans were hostile to Britain? It is doubtless true that the majority of Germans are not enemies to England, but the Kaiser was, we take it, speaking of the majority that counts in the making of wars—the bureaucracy, the officers, the army and navy, the plutocracy. What is the use of this senseless attempt to conceal the truth from ourselves? Under the German Government system war is made without consulting the people, just as the people of Britain had no say when the war with the Boer Republics was manipulated. We do hope the Social Democratic Party will be under no mistake; just as an open enemy is better than a false friend, an absolute autocracy is better than any constitutional monarchy around which clings a festering mass of snobs, toadies, and miserable poltroons. We think the Socialists of this country have too long taken it for granted that the form of government is of little importance. With the economic changes we urge we should not abate a tittle of our demands for a constitutional alteration, with the abolition of the monarchy as a chief item.

* * *

The late Lord Justice Mathew was as strong a "pro-Boer" as he was a Home Ruler. We recall an incident in the Commercial Court in which he revealed his strong feelings on this matter. Lord Robert Cecil, in opening a case arising out of the seizure of a consignment of gold, stated that the seizure took place on the day the war broke out, the exact date of which he had forgotten for the moment. Lord Justice Mathew leaned forward, saying with great solemnity and sternness, "You need not trouble to remind me of *that* date, Lord Robert, I shall never forget it as long as I live." Lord Robert Cecil's father was Premier when it broke out. The late Judge was an admirable commercial lawyer. As a criminal Judge, on the whole, he was humane. But the ferocity of his sentences, in cases of sacrilegious robbery, rather marred his reputation for humanity. Lord Justice Mathew always regarded landlords or owners of house property as, ipso facto, persons devoid of any civil rights.

* * *

We call attention to a remarkable editorial note which appears in the current number of the "Socialist Review," a monthly magazine edited by Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P. Writing of the present crisis on the Labour Party, the editor observes:—

The wary Socialist who studies the influences at work to-day—influences very largely created by the success of the Socialist and Trade Union combination in the Labour Party—sees that the rise of a Socialist-Radical group might seriously upset political calculations. The secession of the Right Socialist wing, caused by incessant attacks and by a feeling that, on the one hand it is not wanted, and that on the other, the regular Socialist movement is to refuse to discipline itself into fighting efficiency, carries with it much greater dangers to the uninterrupted development of Socialist policy and organisation than would follow upon the Left Wing—small, ineffective, and not equipped with any well thought out plan—deserting us. The success of Socialism in a country governed by popular vote will always depend upon how far it can make itself the nucleus of a big political force—Socialistic, but not necessarily Socialist like our Labour Party.

There is only one deduction to be drawn from this statement of Mr. Macdonald: namely, that Mr. Macdonald is contemplating the creation of an open Labour-Radical ["Socialist-Radical" is a misnomer] alliance as a set-off against the possible defection of the frankly Socialist Party from the Labour alliance. In that event it is easy to prophesy on which side Mr. Macdonald will find himself.

* * *

The suggestion we made in our columns last week for the formation of a Socialist Representation Committee which should consist of representatives of declared Socialist bodies of an independent character has met with a most favourable response in many quarters. It is evident from our correspondence that, as we have often declared, the rank and file of the movement are desirous of vigorous action while the leaders hesitate and hesitate. "Justice," in discussing the subject in its current issue, propounds as an alternative suggestion a Social Democratic Labour Party. Our objection to such a proposal is that it is misleading in name as well as impossible in practice. Socialists have had enough of Labour politics; and while the S.R.C. would undoubtedly welcome into its organisation every avowedly Socialist Trade Union body and branch, the primary purpose of the Committee would be the return of Socialists as Socialists. Further, the proposal made by "Justice" would involve the extinction of existing Socialist organisations, a fate against which they will rightly fight to the uttermost.

* * *

The "Labour Leader" complains that in printing a selection of letters and resolutions from private individuals and from Socialist and Labour branches we omitted the names. Our reply is that when you are printing only about 1 per cent. chosen at random of the correspondence received the addition of names would make the selection invidious. We have compiled, however, a complete list of the branches and bodies that sent congratulatory messages, and this list will be published at the opportune moment.

* * *

Mr. Victor Grayson, M.P., desires to thank the many persons and organisations who have sent him congratulations and resolutions on his recent action in the House of Commons. He regrets that it is quite impossible to answer or acknowledge individually the thousands of letters, etc., that he has received. Pressure of work has absolutely prevented him from dealing with the many requests from branches for lecturing dates. He hopes to deal with some in the course of a few weeks.

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in ENGLISH.

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The Limits of Compromise.

By Victor Grayson, M.P.

VICTOR HUGO, in "Les Miserables," insisted that it was God and not the English who won the battle of Waterloo. Had the heavens not wept at Blucher's delay, and thus rendered the ground so damp that Napoleon was unable to bring out his heavy artillery, the verdict might have been otherwise. Thus, according to Victor Hugo, did Wellington and his men profit by the vagaries of nature.

Had not Mr. Chamberlain and his party perpetrated the egregious and criminal blunder of the Boer war, it would indeed have needed an excessively optimistic prophet to prognosticate the supersession of the Liberals by the Tories. It was obvious even to Mr. Chamberlain, that the stereotyped policy of the Unionist Government spelt electoral disaster.

But that astute gentleman was not found lacking in political resource. He hastened to the rescue of his desponding party with the brand new cry of Tariff Reform. Certainly, from the Unionist point of view, this move must be counted to him for righteousness. It was a signal service to the Unionist Party. They had run through their musty stock of democratic cries. They were further in need of some nostrum that would divert public attention from the effects of the Boer war.

But in the attempt to save his party Mr. Chamberlain opened up a precious opportunity to his enemies. The scanty prestige that the Liberal Party had obtained by its feeble and divided opposition to the Boer war policy was hardly sufficient equipment to enable it successively to encounter the General Election.

Mr. Chamberlain's propaganda cry afforded to the Liberal Party the much-needed hint. The Liberal shop-window presented a depressing and unbusinesslike spectacle. Its Newcastle show-goods were wretchedly dusty, moth-eaten, and frail. But down from the shelf it brought the dear familiar Free Trade fetish. Having dusted it carefully, it formally erected it for worship. With the result that at the General Election the Liberal Government was returned on a purely negative policy—with some disconcerting accompaniments.

A new and unexpected element had entered into politics. Leader writers raged furiously and proclaimed the end of civilisation. The new Government was seriously perturbed. Here was a new pawn in the political game, whose value and power they had not yet discovered.

Six months elapse. Some things happen. The Labour Party, consisting of thirty members out of six hundred and seventy, discover themselves to be a force in politics. The initial flush of success ostensibly leads them to strange conclusions. The rugged independence that had been their original symbol paled before the new vistas of political expediency that opened before their eyes. Here were chances they had never dreamt of. Grim capitalists bent in tenderest sympathy to their most poignant appeals. This illusionment came as a sudden catastrophe. Old fallacies had passed away, and all things became new. The ruling class only needed moral suasion—and all would be well.

Hence, the old unfriendly attitude of sturdy independence grew vague before the possibilities of expedient compromise and party arrangement. Labour leaders were amazed that Cabinet Ministers were willing to converse with them on equal terms. The manna of heavenly sympathy was theirs. Simple Labour members fell down in unsophisticated worship before the complex Code. It was less a matter of philosophy

or ethics than a matter of elementary etiquette or manners. The first twelve months of their existence was remarkable in its effects.

Here was a supreme opportunity for the Labour Party. A sturdy, robust attitude of independence on their part was (and is) undoubtedly the most embarrassing situation that the Liberal Government could have. The first session's work, altogether admirable in its way, gave the new party some sense of its power. But immoderate praise led to smugness. The political game began to fascinate, and cunning patronage cleverly administered blunted the edge of their opposition. Till—now alas for human hopes—what a spectacle the party of organised independence presents! Such platform partnership as Mr. Birrell and Mr. Arthur Henderson must be a diverting sight indeed to the astute Liberal capitalist. We have little more hope for the Labour Party than we have for the other two. The latest expression of more moderate opinion bids fair to extinguish the last gleam. Their opportunity seems to have gone by forever. Their irritating self-complacency has aroused the disgust of the country while their imagined political adroitness is a matter of amusement to the old political hands.

THE FIRST LONDON

CLARION MUSICAL FESTIVAL

will take place at

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ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6TH, 1909.

Competitions (open to all Musical Socialists) will be held in Solo Singing (Soprano, Mezzo, Contralto, Tenor, Baritone and Bass), Piano, Violin (Senior and Junior), and 'Cello. Competitors entrance fee SIXPENCE. Also Socialist Choir and Sunday School Choir Competitions. Prizes awarded in each class. For further particulars and forms of entry, apply to GEORGIA PEARCE, "THE CLARION," 44, WORSHIP STREET, E.C., not later than December 13th.

WHICH IS THE REMEDY—

The Reign of Christ or Socialism?

IMPORTANT DEBATE,

HORNS ASSEMBLY ROOMS, KENNINGTON,

Monday, November 23rd, 1908,

BETWEEN

Mr. F. G. JANNAWAY

(Christadelphian), and

Rev. N. E. EGERTON SWANN,

(Church Socialist League).

CHAIRMAN: ALBERT KENDALL, Esq.

MISSION: 3d., 6d., 1s. Doors open 7.30. Commence 8 p.m.

Surplus over expenses to Hospital Saturday Fund.

Unrest in the I.L.P.

We understand that definite steps are now being taken by certain branches of the Independent Labour Party to call for a special conference at the earliest possible moment, to discuss its future political policy. We feel confident that the wisdom and justice of this request will appeal to every member of the movement who is looking at the matter with an open mind. This desire for a conference is nothing more nor less than an earnest wish to have settled, one way or the other, which political policy is best for the rapid advance of Socialist and Labour ideals in Parliament. At present everything is in a state of confusion and unrest which is paralysing all efforts. A definite division has come in the ranks. A large number of the I.L.P. branches have declared that they are entirely dissatisfied with the policy now being pursued. This dissatisfaction by no means necessarily involves any vote of censure on their present representatives in the Commons; it means that a certain proportion—the evidence goes to show that it is a very considerable proportion—of the members consider that the time has now come to discuss whether the present tactics of the Labour Party in the House are really likely to advance the cause of Socialism, which the I.L.P. is out to win. If the leaders in the House are convinced at a conference that the rank and file are ready to support a more vigorous policy, then we are surely right in assuming that those leaders will willingly obey the instructions given them by the delegates.

One thing is quite clear. A frank, open discussion at a conference is absolutely necessary. If anyone objects to that opportunity being given, it can only be from a desire to hold back the truth. No one can think that it is really advisable to put off this settlement until the usual annual I.L.P. Conference at Easter. The Easter meeting is always overcrowded with urgent business; and the present subject of dispute is wide and important enough to absorb the whole time of any meeting. It is, further, vitally important to make a definite decision about the future policy before the I.L.P. delegates go to the Labour Party Conference at Portsmouth in January. So that any attempt to put off the special conference on the grounds that it will involve the branches in unnecessary expense, must be regarded with suspicion as an attempt to shelve the whole matter.

We must most emphatically protest against Mr. Keir Hardie's appeal to "close up the ranks" before this question is settled. It is altogether unreasonable to expect us to stand in line with any movement until we are convinced that the ranks are marching the way we desire to go. This blind appeal for unity, regardless of whether the policy is worthy of our support, cannot be too strongly condemned. We would ask Mr. Hardie this question: Has he really been satisfied with the conduct of the Labour Party in Parliament and out of it during the last six months? Does he think they have done all that could have been done for Labour and Socialism? Does he not feel that they could have attacked the Government with twice the energy they have shown and have got twice the concessions in return? Will he say that the great debate on Unemployment ended in anything but a ridiculous pantomime when the Labour Party refused to vote as a united body against Mr. Alden's vote of confidence in the Cabinet? And if he is not satisfied on all these points then we ask whether he has any right to beseech us to "close up the ranks" until we have thoroughly threshed out this question of whether the Labour Party is conducting its business in the best way.

We, on our part, venture to think that the comrades of the I.L.P. will not allow themselves to be guided by sentimental appeals. They will close their ranks when they are certain that those ranks enclose the men who are fighting for Socialism in the way which will take them most quickly to the goal. They will not be treated like naughty children who must obey their elders. In two cases out of three the younger generation is always right and the elders always wrong. The I.L.P. is entitled to a clear business-like answer to the question why the Labour Party did not fight at Dundee and at Newcastle. We must remind Mr. Hardie that he declared in the "Labour Leader" that had he been in England he would have advised a fight at Newcastle; we must remind him that he went down to speak for Stuart at Dundee, while almost all his fellow-members were standing aloof. Now, when some of us can stand a weak policy of compromise no longer, and are saying openly that the Labour Party must mend its ways if it wants our loyal support, then Mr. Hardie almost forbids discussion and orders us to close up the ranks. We shall have the courage of our convictions, if Mr. Hardie has not the courage to stand by his.

Again, the I.L.P. must insist on a clear answer to the question why the Labour Party refused, as a united body, to vote against the motion when Mr. Alden was put up to say that the Government had done all that could reasonably be expected of it for the cure of Unemployment and the relief of starving men and women. The I.L.P. has the right to know if any of its representatives in the House have any doubt as to the proper answer to the Government's miserable concessions. We say, without hesitation, that if the Labour Party has not made up its mind on this elementary question, then the sooner the rank and file of the I.L.P. desert these leaders the better. They will be deserting the "closed ranks" in order to go to the assistance of Socialism.

But for the moment the so-called rebellious branches are not called upon to prove their case against the orthodox branches. All they are asking for is a special conference at which the whole matter can be frankly discussed. They are asking for the mere right of free speech: they entirely refuse to be ordered to close up the ranks without the opportunity of debate. If the Labour Party can prove that it is doing the best for Socialism then the I.L.P. will stay in that party. If it cannot prove that, we trust all the piteous appeals for one more chance will be disregarded—that the I.L.P. will set out to shape a new policy—no, rather to keep to its old policy of rigid independence, from which the weakness of the Labour Party has been dragging it down. For the moment, it is impossible to say which policy it will choose. That can be decided at the conference.

One thing alone is certain. If the conference is not held, if no opportunity is allowed for debate, then there are many branches of the I.L.P. which will break away from a body which is so worn and old that it is afraid to face the music. We appeal to the branches that are preaching submission to support this demand for a conference; for we warn them that it is their last chance of persuading the I.L.P. to stand together. If the rebels are denied a hearing, then they will go their own way unheard. And on the men that remain behind will rest the responsibility of smashing the I.L.P.

A COURSE OF THREE FREE PUBLIC LECTURES
on the

Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche

will be delivered by

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On WEDNESDAYS at 5 p.m., beginning the 25th
NOVEMBER.

1st Lecture (25th November): "Nietzsche—The Immoralist."

2nd Lecture (2nd December): "Nietzsche's Superman."

3rd Lecture (9th December): "Nietzsche—The Moralist."

The News of the Week.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell has decided that the materialists must go out of the Socialist Movement. At all events, he says, *he* will not go.

A holy man once handed a tract to a tramp, and said, "This is the bread that will not perish!"

And the tramp said, "Savin' yer reverence, it ud go down better with a bowl of hot broth." Hence the term materialist.

"Everybody," writes Mr. Macdonald, in the "Socialist Review," now admits the wisdom of the Labour Party Executive in not fighting Newcastle." This is probably true of "everybody" except the majority of Socialists and Trade Unionists in the country—and Mr. Keir Hardie.

Mr. Herbert Gladstone, in replying to a question in the House, once more declares that he has no legal power to release the imprisoned suffragists or to lighten their lot in prison. It is almost a relief to hear this; it is always comforting to know that Mr. Gladstone has no power. May the happy day soon come when he has no legal or political powers of any kind whatsoever.

It is, indeed, disheartening. No sooner have we congratulated ourselves because a Labour Cabinet has been formed in Australia, than the "Times" takes the gilt off the gingerbread by announcing: "The new Labour Ministry is a pleasant surprise, since very few expected that the caucus would choose eight Moderates, excluding the Extremists entirely." Fancy toiling all the way to the golden gates, and then only to please the "Times."

Mr. W. Reddeford, the organising secretary of the Independent Labour Party, has tendered his resignation to the Organising Committee, which resolved that it be accepted with regret, and that he be thanked for his past services to the Party. It is a pleasing duty to add to this announcement that Mr. Reddeford has been appointed as a representative of THE NEW AGE.

The "Railway Review" informs its readers that the first settlement under Mr. Lloyd-George's Conciliation Boards scheme has just been signed, exactly one year after the Boards were first proclaimed. It also points out that this settlement only applies to the goods guards and shunters on one railway. At this rate, the overworked and underpaid railwaymen will crawl into Utopia somewhere about the year A.D. 2500. They will all be old enough for a Liberal old age pension by that time, if that is any comfort.

That most excellent of papers, "The Yorkshire Factory Times," in a statesmanlike leader on the reverses suffered by the Labour and the Socialist candidates at the Municipal Elections, concludes with the comforting reflection that we shall win in the end, for "Labour omnia vincit." Quite so! Only the first thing Labour has to conquer is itself. The Tories and Liberals win their seats by the votes of wage-earners, who poll for the enemy's candidates. If the workers stood by their own men the other fellows would get their victors in the same nutshell. And what fun it would be to crack that nut.

By the way, that aforesaid excellent paper also says that THE NEW AGE was "inspired" when it discovered that the Labour Party was disorganised because only half the Party voted against the Government in the Unemployed debate. But it wasn't real inspiration; it was only a stroke of quite earthly genius that flashed through the brain of our office boy, who once won a prize for elementary arithmetic. He proved, in a masterly way, that half the Party on one side and half on the other was a case of ordinary subtraction.

There is a spice of the real thing in the New Zealand elections, which are now proceeding; they do not worry about the Constitution, and such unimportant affairs; they fight on the price of beer. At least, the labourers of Lyttelton held a meeting and sent an ultimatum to the publicans:—Reduce the price of your invigorating beverage or we shall vote for the Prohibition candidate. If only our Englishmen would vote on that neck-or-nothing principle. Imagine Mr. Asquith's mental collapse if he received a note from the Trade Union Congress:—"Give us an Unemployed Bill or we'll all vote for the Tories at the next Election."

The Members of the House of Commons have such a quaint idea of what is agreeable news: for when Mr. Asquith got up last week to declare that he was quite prepared to spend a lot of money on the Navy, then both sides of the House gave hearty cheers. A strong Navy may be necessary, perhaps; but when I am informed that I must spend money on disagreeable necessities, I don't cheer. I pay and look glum. The ratepayers of a city don't cheer loudly when they are told that the Council intends to raise the rates in order to provide more policemen. Navies and

policemen, and soldiers and parsons, are all terrible nuisances which should be paid for in a bad temper—not with cheers, anyhow.

The goose that indulges in golden-eggs would be very welcome in the German Finance Minister's yard at the present moment. He announced the other day that the yearly Imperial income must be increased by £25,000,000. He proposes making the manufacture of spirits in part a State monopoly, increasing excise duties on tobacco and beer, death duties, and a tax on electricity and gas. They seem to take these matters more quietly in Germany. Why, when we wanted a few millions last year for old age pensions one would have thought the Bank of England had mislaid its last sovereign. There is plenty of money if the Chancellor goes to the right pockets.

Mr. Plowden ordered a little boy to be birched last week to cure his persistent disregard for certain small rights of private property. It seems that this young genius filled up his spare time by winning L.C.C. scholarships and innumerable medals for regular attendances. So, just "to save a future Prime Minister," said our most genial of magistrates, he ordered the rod. I wish Mr. Plowden wouldn't worry so much about the future; he might save some of our present Prime Ministers from persistent disregard of big public rights if he gave his mind to it.

The Chicago Board of Education appointed a committee to report on the feeding of school children in that city. The report states that 5,000 children are habitually hungry and 10,000 more are always underfed: "We find that a large number of children have only bread saturated in water for breakfast, day after day; that the noon meal is bread or bananas, and an occasional luxury of soup made from pork bones; that children often frequent South Water Street begging for dead fowls in crates, or decayed fruit; that others have been found searching for food in alley garbage-boxes." That is the price the Americans willingly pay for the honour of keeping a half-dozen show-millionaires. Chacun à son goût.

The difference between good and bad government comes out very clearly in a letter, published by the "Times" last week, from Mr. Salmon, one of the scientific experts on the staff of the Agricultural College at Wye. He shows that the Board of Agriculture is wilfully allowing the black scab disease to get a firm hold of the English potato crops. It could be stamped out by firm administration under the Board's direction. But the Board is behaving with the same ignorant slovenliness which it displayed in the case of the gooseberry-mildew a year or two ago. It was warned of the danger; practically did nothing; and spent thousands in doing that; and the disease is almost beyond control. Now it is, apparently, going to repeat that display of incompetence in the case of the black scab.

Details of the "Great Socialist Rout" at the recent Municipal Elections are now to hand, and scarcely seem to justify the extravagant jubilation in which the reactionary Press has been indulging. The net results are as follows:—The I.L.P. lost three seats, the S.D.P. lost five seats, and other Socialists gained one seat. Altogether, therefore, the Socialist losses throughout England, Scotland, and Wales amounted to seven. This result was achieved by the combination of Liberals and Conservatives against Socialists in 147 cases. The actual Socialist vote was increased by about 25 per cent. A rout indeed! We are indebted for these figures to the very valuable statistical abstract prepared by Mr. Bruce Glasier, and published in the "Labour Leader."

Dr. Saleeby, whose name is familiar to most of our readers in connection with the study of Eugenics, is shortly giving a course of four lectures on Parenthood and Race Culture at South Place Institute. Particulars will be found in our advertisement columns.

No paper was better named than "The Englishman." Under the sole control of "Charles Weld-Blundell, of Ince-Blundell," it has independence, insularity, obstinacy, honesty, and all the typical virtues and vices of Englishmen.

* * *

VICTOR GRAYSON'S MEETINGS:—Nov. 18th, Holborn Town Hall (Clarion Scouts); 19th, Colne Valley; 20th, Colne Valley; 21st, Colne Valley (Meltham); 22nd, Bury (Evening); 22nd, Bolton (Afternoon); 23rd, Wallington; 24th, Halifax (Victoria Hall).

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Remarks.

By Hilaire Belloc.

It is delightful to roam about THE NEW AGE and to browse in it. It provokes thought, and that thought tends to find expression because one knows THE NEW AGE will print ordinary opinions.

No other newspaper in this country will do so. There has fallen upon our Press a mixture of convention and terror which makes it impossible to print quite simple truths. Perhaps there has never been a greater gulf between conversation and letters than there is to-day in England. It is like two different worlds: the conversational world what we all know it to be, but the printed world abject, nothing less, and foolery.

Those of us who have worked for some years in London journalism can, if we choose, leave an amusing account to our descendants of that particular aspect of the break-up of our society. The pale, watery-eyed atheist, honestly slaving away for his thirty shillings a week, and going to another atheist at a larger salary and saying, "Oh, I say! We can't print this!" We could describe how and why the letter is not printed. Then we could set side by side the things written in the Press and the man who wrote them. We could describe the Paris correspondents who can't talk French, and the military experts who are Volunteers, and the gentleman who knows German and nothing else. It is an amazing world! Not the big world, but the little backwater of our decaying life just here.

Let me try and put some order into my thinking, and consider what THE NEW AGE* particularly suggests to me this week. I think everybody will agree with page 22, the gist of which is that the House of Commons is out of touch with the English people: and I think the instance given of Sunday closing is as good an example as you could get. The present arrangements of hours for public drinking on Sunday are grotesque. Everybody dislikes them, everybody is oppressed by them, everybody who has anything to do with places of public entertainment feels about them as one feels about a shower of rain when one is without one's umbrella, or about the sound of hammering next door when one wants to sleep. They are a filthy nuisance. And why, in God's name, nuisances of this sort should continue no one can tell. The only source of paying any particular respect in any form to that day of the week is the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church says that if you are a Catholic, it is a day on which you must go to Mass and abstain from servile labour. She does not command you to enjoy yourself, but she advises you to. Cards, wine, songs, games (especially dramatic entertainment), all these things are associated in the Catholic mind with the idea of Sunday, and a very jolly day they make of it. Why on Earth, or rather in Hell, people amusing themselves by making up a new religion should have chosen to make one particular day offensive is, and remains, to the Catholic mind a mystery. It is like the mystery of evil.

But the evil is worse than mere Sabbatarianism. It is imposition. The country is not Sabbatarian. If the English people still cared about plaguing themselves in the old way, the minority who were annoyed would have to grin and bear it. But they don't care about it. Take a referendum of the adult males of London, the bulls of the herd, and you would have a universal howling of an angry kind in favour of more elbow room

of a Sunday—and yet by the trick of Parliamentaryism (which is easy enough to describe, but on which I won't digress here) there is a sort of smug self-satisfaction among those who are supposed to stand for the herd, at making *less* elbow-room. It is immense!

Supposing a constraining law to apply to the rich as well as to the poor in this country: it is a strained hypothesis, but for the sake of hypothesis, suppose such a law. One of our less successful writers, let us say, an indifferent handler of English, a wealthy man, goes into the Athenæum after leaving a friend's house where he has been dining, and takes up the "Spectator." He asks for whisky and soda, the clock strikes eleven, the waiter comes in in his shirt-sleeves and bawls "Time," and this man and the Bishops and the rest are bundled out into the street. The thing is quite inconceivable. So is conscription. So is a graduated Income-Tax.

As a symptom, government after this fashion is very grave; but it is also actively dangerous in itself, because a nation, like a man, lives by its common sense, and if all organs of expression are closed to it, it stumbles and gropes. An opponent who can see, hear, and speak would beat it out of time, and at any moment this nation may be at hand-grips with such an opponent. It is certain that in the beginning of a campaign an unnational form of government will call upon the strength of the nation in the wrong way, and will use it in the wrong way—the fighting will be like the fighting of a blind man.

* * *

The idea behind Hamilton Fyfe's article is very sound. It is a feature of English Socialism that it goes with fads, but I don't see why he should be puzzled by that. Most intense feeling goes with a fad of some sort, and where a nation has been deprived of its ancient and fixed religion, these fads will be multiple and personal. Very often the same person will have different fads at different times in such a society. I have known people who began as teetotalers very fond of shooting, and are now drunkards who jaw about cruelty to animals, and even subscribe to the salaries of people who batten upon that particular fad. And I have known people who began as drunkards end up as teetotalers. And I have known people who went in for woman-suffrage at middle-age turn Buddhist at fifty. All these things are surely native to a society whose religion has been taken away from it. When a society still has its religion, there are grooves and channels for such emotions to run in. They are common to all citizens, and the fact that they are communal makes them sane.

The article has a few slips in it. Why should Mr. Fyfe say that the idea of the Egyptians governing Egypt is "preposterous"? To set up such an arrangement is the great alternative of our diplomacy in the Near East. It may be a good move or a bad one, but it is now being considered quite seriously by all responsible statesmen. We get very little out of Egypt. Of the total sum we squeeze out of the Egyptian peasants and hand over to French Jews to spend in Paris and the Riviera, we do not keep anything like a 5 per cent. commission. And even that our younger sons have to work like niggers for. Strategically the position has grave weaknesses, as everybody knows; and would have to be abandoned in the first stages of a war. On the other hand, though the commission is small, there it is, and some of it dribbles into England: and the Occupation is an asset to use when one is bargaining. He would be a very wise man who could decide exactly what a patriotic Englishman should do in the matter, but certainly a serious diplomatic policy is not a "fad."

Hamilton Fyfe makes a very good point indeed when he says that a Socialist State would be necessarily Protectionist. It would have to decide what it would import, and would have to exclude everything else rigidly. I think most Socialists would agree with

* I.e., on THE NEW AGE of November 5.

him. Anyhow, whether they do or don't, it is a plain piece of mathematics which there is no gainsaying; and a man who calls himself a Socialist and a Free Trader at the same time is just like a man calling himself a Catholic and an Anglican at the same time; or like a man calling himself a captain or a colonel when he isn't even a soldier. He's using words out of their plain meaning, and trying to play a verbal trick. Or, more likely still, he is merely repeating the words without bothering his head to think.

By the way, why does Hamilton Fyfe talk of the "slow-moving British mind," its "respect for property," and its "attachment to orderly methods"? The English are, and always have been, an imaginative and an adventurous people. They have had in the last three centuries less strict arrangements about property than any other people I can call to mind. The French, for instance, are savage in defence of property; the Irish to obtain property will risk their lives. The Englishman, on the other hand, is quite happy owning nothing, and if he owns a great deal, very often uses it almost as though it were a public trust. I know a stretch of river in my county over which several men claim hopelessly conflicting rights. The law on the point is a pure bit of anarchy—but these men never quarrel. It is true that the English rich vote large compensation to themselves whenever the State takes anything they have. I forget how many years' purchase Hicks Beach got; it was something enormous. But that is not particularly English: it is merely human, or rather a something common to all animated beings. If you turn a horse loose at a heap of oats he will begin eating them up, and small blame to him; it is his master who is to blame. And if the rich, under such temptation, help themselves to great wads out of the taxes, it is the fault of the electorate. When it comes to destroying economic values in the case of the poor, the rich don't dream of compensation. Why should they? The poor will go on electing them just the same.

I hope Hamilton Fyfe won't mind my protesting against that word "English" being applied to things which are not peculiar to the country: it doesn't lessen my admiration for his article.

AUTUMN TWILIGHT.

The air is chill, the yellow leaves are falling,
The sky is grey with tears that will not fall,
Among the trees a few sad songsters calling
Hear only sighs in answer to their call.

And yet comes Eve, with silent, shadowy spaces,
And yet comes Eve, with sombre, purple West,
And smoothes the scars of battle from our faces,
And kisses us, and softly whispers, "Rest!"

Sing me a song of Twilight, O sad singer,
Of live, winged shadows deep'ning into Night,
Of Twilight touching us with cool, still finger,
And drawing Day's dull curtain from our sight,

To show us magic sleights—the firm earth shifting,
To send Time groping backward in the past,
To launch the soul forth into Great-Sea drifting,
And gives it peace at last.

Nay, hush your song, die out, O last bird's sobbing!
Gather, O shadows, deeper and more deep!
Rise not, O Moon of Night! cease heart from
throbbing!
Flutter, O tired eyelids, into Sleep!

Come close, O Night, your wraps around me flinging,
And let there be a little rest from strife,
For Silence is more beautiful than Singing,
And Death than Life.

W. R. TITTERTON.

American Literature.

By Upton Sinclair.

MRS. ATHERTON cannot understand why American literature is bourgeois when we have such mighty subjects; and then she goes on to name the subjects—and she names all the most bourgeois things we have: "Such men as Roosevelt, Pierpont Morgan, Yerkes, Cleveland, or even Croker!" "Our imminent financial supremacy, our devouring commercial inroads, our gigantic trusts violating many laws, our colossal strikes!" This again is an idea that Mrs. Atherton got abroad—in fact, she confesses as much. It is the typical European idea about America—and how absurd it is! Mr. Chapman points out the same blunder in the case of the foreign critics of Whitman. Whitman is admired in England because they think that he is representative of America. "Here was a comet, a man of the people, a new man, who spoke no known language, who was very uncouth and insulting, who proclaimed himself a 'barbaric yawp' and who corresponded in the English imagination with the unpleasant and rampant wildness of everything in America—with Mormonism and car factories, steamboat explosions, strikes, Repudiation, and whisky!" And all the time what is the truth about America? "An industrious and narrow-minded population, commonplace and monotonous, so uniform that one man can hardly be distinguished from another, law-abiding, timid, and traditional; a community where the individual is suppressed by law, custom, and instinct, and in which by consequence there are few or no great men, even counting those men thrust by the necessary operation of the laws of trade into commercial prominence, and who claim scientific rather than personal notice!"

Of course, however, we are not all bourgeois, else we were lost. Many critics have risen up to reply to Mrs. Atherton, and they have named many writers—Whitman among them—and hosts of the newer authors who have dared to think for themselves. The main point, however, all these defenders have missed, just as Mrs. Atherton missed the main point in her attack. All her argument would have at once become clear had she understood that what she was attacking was the literature of Capitalism; and all the arguments of her critics would have become clear had they only perceived that they were defending the literature of Socialism. Whitman himself for instance, would, if he were alive to-day, be stumping the country for the Socialist ticket; nearly all his followers are doing it, and the same thing is true of the followers of Emerson and Whittier, of Lincoln, Wendell Phillips, and every other freedom-loving man we ever had.

Mrs. Atherton is just as naïve as the reader. She, also, casting round for the causes, has come on the trail of the magazine editor. It is the big magazines, and their standards, she says:

"It is safe to say that it is the ambition of every new writer to 'get into the magazines.' . . . And although it may be difficult to 'get into the magazines,' it is still more difficult to get out. So great has the power of the magazines been that they have convinced half the world they stand for the true aristocracy of letters, that he who ignores their canons must withdraw and forever dwell beyond the pale. The newspapers have taken their cue from them; it saves thinking; and there is, beyond all question, a certain public which will not recognise the existence of an author who has not been bred in one of the magazines or launched by one of the associate publishing houses. To be a pariah is not a pleasant thing in this world."

And so on! But pray, if a man be made of such stuff that he finds it "unpleasant to be a pariah," what business has he trying to write literature, what business has he prattling about "the larger life"? How can one manage to beat about the bush so long and not get at the central fact—that the "new writer" who has it as his ambition to "get into the magazines" is simply out of place in a discussion of literature? Is

there any magazine now published in the world for the sake of literature — which has any more relation to literature than it has to cigars and soap. Speaking, not figuratively nor jestingly, but the simple fact, what is a magazine to-day but a means of enabling the exploiters of cigars and soap to make known their wares to their customers? To do this, of course, the magazine has to have readers, and to get readers it publishes a mass of reading matter; but what possible relationship has this reading matter to literature? What possible room is there in such an arrangement for an author or an editor who knows or cares anything about "the larger life," or for the magazine owner who dreams of employing such men? I was talking the other day with a person who knows, and who remarked that there were only three monthly magazines in this country making any money at present. He named them; two of them are owned and run by men who know as much about literature as they do about pork; one of them, in fact, is now running a vast grocery business with the money he has made, and is probably more interested in the groceries than in the magazine. The third publication has recently ventured to expose a little of the rottenness of our bourgeois society; and its proprietor has just been refused admission to New York's "swell" millionaire club!

In the same way that we have magazine "literature" we also have "criticism"—that is, we have departments in our newspapers where books are reviewed as a means of securing publishers' advertisements. That those books are "reviewed" the most, that are advertised the most, is something that is taken for granted by everyone. The writer of this, a few years ago, had occasion to record the results of a unique experiment of his own in this line; he published a book himself, as an unknown author, and sent it to about two hundred newspapers, with the result that it was noticed in thirteen, generally to the extent of two or three lines, being praised by two or three and condemned without reserve by six or eight. He then had it brought out by a prominent publishing house under a new title, with much puffing and a couple of thousand dollars worth of advertising, and when sent to the same newspapers it received about one hundred and fifty reviews, being praised by 84 per cent. of them, and condemned without reserve by 2 per cent.

And also we have—God help us!—"literary magazines!" Of these magazines every one of the monthlies is owned and run by some publishing house, and, with one single honourable exception, is used as a disguised puff-shop of the house's books; without a single exception they are used to afford their publisher a free advertising medium. "The purpose of the Book-Booster," writes a genial satirist, "is, as the name indicates, to boost books—our own and others. With this distinction: that the books of Josh, Gosh and Company will be boosted without reference to the number of pounds sold while the publications of other houses will be boosted only when they have passed the dead line, which is 50,000 pounds. Books that fail to attain such a sale can be mentioned but briefly."

These things are deplorable, of course, and men with conscience, magazine editors among them, battle against them bravely, but only to fail, and either give up or else sink into obscurity. They fail and they must fail forever; it is intended by nature that they should fail, just as it is intended that our political reformers should fail, that our tenement-house reformers, our stage reformers, our anti-imperialists, our peace agitators, our labour conciliators should all go down beneath the juggernaut of the bourgeoisie. The point is that we have now a system of society which makes wage slaves of the vast mass of humanity, and shuts them out forever from all hope of sharing in civilisation, progress, and light; and the failure of all our efforts at reform, of all our dreams of joy and beauty is simply the justice of Nature, the vengeance of this down-trodden class.

ENGLISH REVIEW

MONTHLY HALF-CROWN net

TO BE PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 25

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Bloody Sunday.

L'envoi.....Twenty Years On.

[The following note was intended by Mr. Cunninghame Graham to appear with his article, "Bloody Sunday," to which it belongs, which was published in our last issue. Our readers will, we hope, give themselves the pleasure of re-reading the article in the light of Mr. Cunninghame Graham's powerful postscript.—Ed. N. A.]

WHEN I read again my article of twenty years ago which appeared in the "Commonweal" through the kindness of my great and revered friend William Morris, I confess that, like Warren Hastings, I am surprised at my moderation.

I did not say half enough in condemnation of the brutal conduct of the Tory Government then in power, or of the base treachery and cowardice of the Liberals, who refused all help.

Now, as then, I preferred, actually preferred, the thieves amongst whom the wayfaring man fell on his way to Samaria (I think) to the Liberal Pharisees who passed by without helping him.

You can at least fight with a highway robber, and if he beats you it is the fortune of war. Against a cowardly sneak and Pharisee, the state of your stomach deprive one of the power of doing anything but retch.

A Tory Government has been succeeded by a Liberal Government. That is to say, the hogs who were grousing and growling outside the national food troughs twenty years ago have ousted the hogs who had eaten and were lying warming their bellies in the sun.

Since that time the British Empire has several times been put up to the ignoble Dutch auction known as a general election, and we, the free and independent citizens, have been bought and sold again.

England is a big prize. Let it not be forgotten that though the actual "trading" amongst our politicians is not so large as it is in some countries over the counter, that the jug and bottle department is always open.

After twenty years' experience, I am more and more convinced that our politicians do not work (sic) for nothing.

What have we gained after twenty years on the path to Liberty? Denshawai, Zululand, the Boer War, the suppression of free speech and the liberty of the Press in India are the answers.

We are the same hypocrites. The Tories are just as ready to coerce, the Liberals as cowardly and as impotent to defend.

To their credit can be paid the killing at the Featherstone Pit. This makes them equal with their sweet enemies now out of power. Should the necessity arise, the Liberals would be just as active in suppressing free speech in London as the Tories were twenty years ago.

Nothing has changed. Only the bottle-holders of to-day would be the butchers of yesterday, and instead of Tory policemen jumping the guts out of a prisoner or knocking down a woman in the streets and calling her a "bloody whore," the ministering angel would be a Liberal.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

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November Grass and Restaurant Oddments.

By David Lowe.

PARTY politics offered no attractions to Quarles. He could understand politics being played like any other popular game, such as football or cricket, but for men who took the pastime seriously he had little leisure or patience. Yet he had many friends, both among the ins and the outs, and as far as he was concerned, there was no line of division in Clubland. Not given to argument, it was an entertainment in itself to watch him evade being drawn into discussion. There were occasions, however, when he was successfully trapped, and he was caught then by the warmth of those feelings which he usually so carefully concealed.

One evening he went with Rammerscales to the smoking-room of the Old Liberal Club in Buchanan Street—a room which, in the opinion of Quarles, was saturated irredeemably with intrigue and evil thought, and they joined a small circle seated in the south-west corner. The topic of conversation was industrial depression, with references to unemployment, scarcity of contracts, difficulty in collecting accounts, and prophecies as to the time when trade would take a turn for the better.

"Business won't improve till the spring," said a tall, dark-visaged merchant who was smoking a dirty briar; "there's really no money going round at all."

"Not sooner than February, anyhow," added a huge corpulent person with red cheeks, smooth forehead, laughing, mocking, grey eyes, clean-shaven face, and long grey hair; "not a day sooner, and there's piles of money in the country, but nothing to do with it."

"Some people might at least pay their accounts," interjected a lean, sallow young man, the owner of a fashionable tailoring business. "There are hundreds of gentlemen who are making dull trade the excuse for not paying their accounts; gentlemen who are quite able to pay. Instead of settling their debts, they are taking an extra day at Turnberry trying to strike a rubber ball with a stick, under the impression they are playing golf. If they paid for their suits, we might get more work for our workmen, whereas at the moment there are many good journeymen walking the streets."

"Sounds like George Square," said the merchant.

"The George Square talk did some good, too," added the tailor. "The agitation frightened many who don't pay their accounts into subscribing handsomely to the Lord Provost's fund for the relief of the unemployed."

"Their civic charity is an insurance against riot: their church charity an insurance against fire," said Quarles.

There was a prolonged silence, during which each person puffed smoke heavily, and looked past his neighbour. The corpulent gentleman with the red cheeks drew out his watch and gave a start as if he had overstayed an engagement, but it was evident that he was curious to see what turn the conversation was going to take. The silence was broken by Rammerscales, who ventured to remark in a tentative way that the citizens had responded generously to the appeal for the workless and homeless.

"There's far too much made of the unemployed; they are in the main a lot of lazy, dissolute good-for-nothings," said the dark-visaged merchant. "And, besides, the pictures of their condition are over-drawn."

"What you require to do just now," rejoined Quarles, "is to take a walk through Glasgow Green at five o'clock in the morning, and the sight of the poor wretches lying on the grass—November grass—will destroy your assertion. You should see them rise; you should see them stretch their weary, stiff limbs in

tragic postures of despair; you should hear the chattering of their teeth."

"Rather early for a constitutional," said Red Cheeks with a callous smile. "And, besides, what could one do though he saw those derelicts?"

"Their first need in such a condition is not a kind word, the right to work, clothes, food, or money," replied Quarles. "Any man who is forced by society to sleep on the damp grass qualifies, in my opinion, for a tumbler of grog in the first place. Their quaking jaws and clicking teeth cannot settle to eat until some cordial calms their outraged and famished bodies."

"They are wastrels, anyhow. Why not let them die out?" queried Dark Face.

"We live in an age which has discovered immense wealth in by-products," replied Quarles calmly. "Thirty years ago, miners used to throw away shale as rubbish and waste, while to-day it is the source of many indispensable chemicals, oils, and dyes. At one time looked upon as positively useless, it is, in wise hands, of the greatest usefulness. It is the basis of the indigo trade, turkey red trade, the basis of the whole of the aniline dyes, the basis of the motor-car and the rubber industry, and so I would like to give the by-products of society a chance: just in case one of the men who slept on the cold grass yesternight may to-day write a splendid sonnet after his grog. Some might even live to be shopkeepers, and being real wastrels would be able to give the three things which go to make a successful shopkeeper—wrong quality, wrong quantity, and wrong change."

There was another halt in the conversation, as if each man thought of many things. Rammerscales again came to the rescue. "After all," he said, "the people you saw on the Green weren't people you knew; can you give an instance of a man being genuinely workless and homeless and hungry: that is, of a man known to you personally?"

"I can give you one instance or many instances," replied Quarles. "And not later than to-day I was approached in the Central Station by a schoolmate; we had played many games together in boyish days, and he did not ask for money. The conversation disclosed that he had been unemployed for a long time: that now he would even take a labourer's job. I asked him for his address. He had none. Three days previously he had left his lodgings after a gradual process of pawning his belongings. He had not been in a bed since then, and for two nights he had walked the city streets."

"He must have been drinking," said Dark Face.

"If you had seen him, you would not have allowed such a remark to escape," replied Quarles. "His cheeks were freshly red, his eye mild, and his speech clear and calm. He had prospects of an appointment as a checking clerk with a shipping firm, and yet he had scruples about it, because it involved Sunday work. He had never approved of Sunday labour in any shape or form—but what could he do? He must live. Yet if he got the appointment, he wouldn't like his friends to know he was working on Sundays. I noticed he had contrived to keep himself clean."

"But, really, with so many charitable associations at work, there cannot be many people in actual want?" said Red Cheeks, almost in a tone of protest.

"This also would help you to come to a finding," answered Quarles. "Take a walk through the lanes of the centre of the city where the refuse of the shops and restaurants is set down in bins for the scavengers to remove, and you will see hundreds of human beings grubbing in the refuse and ravenously devouring indescribable oddments, fiercely contending for a share of the soiled and rotten rejectments."

"There's a lot in what you say," added the tailor quickly. "A thing came under my notice which bears out your statement. I was going along Victoria Road one afternoon when I was attracted by the movements of a tall, slender young man of good appearance. His suit, though old, was very well cut indeed. He wore preserves, and he carried a walking-stick. Now and then he would make a dart for some object on the pavement oblivious of the passers-by, who, like

myself, were interested in the performance. He was gathering crusts, discarded cores of apples, banana skins, bits of anything eatable. Some pieces he ate at once, other pieces he put into his pocket. He never lifted his eyes."

"But how can we be expected to give men work when there is nothing for them to do?" asked the merchant. "If we don't get contracts, we can't keep our people working. If we paid them wages for nothing, we would soon be bankrupt!"

"Unemployment is not the evil," said Quarles. "We are suffering from too much work, too many products under lock and key. Our national income reached its highest point this year, and yet there are people starving, people unable to find employment, people who arrive wageless at the end of each week. The distribution of labour is as badly arranged as the distribution of wealth."

"If people could only see that we get our living because labour is applied to the earth," remarked Rammerscales. "It is calamitous that the soil is in the possession of a few human beings who have the power—if they dare use it—to withhold from the rest of the nation access to the means of life. Imagine, seventeen people own the half, and seventeen hundred own nine-tenths of Scotland."

"But land is only one factor," exclaimed Quarles. "The other factor in production is in the keeping of the workers themselves. Labour has the power to raise its own value by gradually making itself scarcer, and, being the great voting majority, labour can easily fill Parliament with representatives pledged to legislate in the direction of fewer hours of work. Owing to invention and the use of splendid mechanical contrivances, the world is being made small and parochial, and as the nations of the earth are brought nearer and nearer to each other by speedy communication, the more susceptible will each nation become to the condition of those around it. Unemployment is by way of being universal instead of national. Man everywhere has to compete with his own Frankensteins—machines for saving labour—and is thereby committing a protracted suicide which can only be averted when he makes up his mind to expand his leisure as he expends his ingenuity."

"The upholders of our present system must be prepared to face a permanent war between the holders of material and the holders of labour?" asked the tailor.

"War which will end when material and labour are jointly possessed," assented Quarles, "and men may think of forsaking their Trade Unions and Federations on the day when landlords knock down their march dykes and fences."

There was silence for a minute, and then Rammerscales exclaimed, "Every man has the right to work! That cannot be denied, anyhow."

"The right to work," said Quarles somewhat scornfully. "Bah! necessity sees after that, and our only real right is our present ability to do as we know. While labour continues to be common, absorbing the greater portion of our waking hours, it will remain cheap, and the labourer will be held cheaply. It should be remembered without ceasing that work is a curse which should be minimised, and the way to increase remuneration is to increase leisure. Nor should it be forgotten that work not worth doing is worse than idleness."

"It seems we are in for a big change," remarked the corpulent person, rising with difficulty out of his chair.

"If there is to be a great change, and I have no doubt that a great change is imminent, it must first be in the attitude of man towards life," said Quarles, who added reflectively, "The form of the change will appear later."

"But ideas such as yours will get many a hard knock before anything happens to cause us alarm," said the dark one, with a wink across to the tailor.

"It is as true of an excelling idea as it is of an ever-green holly hedge," remarked Quarles, with a kindly smile. "The more it is punished and repressed, the more it grows."

Books and Persons.

(AN OCCASIONAL CAUSERIE.)

"WHAT will be avoided will be superficiality of the specially modern kind which is the inevitable consequence when nothing but brevity of statement is aimed at." This sentence is from the Editorial prospectus of "The English Review," of which the first number appears next week. The prospectus proceeds to say that the Review will treat its readers, not as spoiled children who must be amused by a variety of games, but with the "respectful consideration due to grown-up minds whose leisure can be interested by something else than the crispness and glitter of a popular statement." These are brave words, and they indicate that the Editor, to use his own admirable and piquant phrase, has set himself "a task of some magnanimity." Indeed he has! Sundry monthly reviews have lately died. It has happened to me, more than once, to be invited to contribute to a review for "grown-up minds" which has expired ere I could finish my contribution. I am, however, for certain reasons, not without faith in the immediate future of the "English Review." I think it may even accomplish what no review has ever done before—namely, the absolute exclusion from its pages of articles written not by an essayist who wanted to say something in particular, but by an essayist who wanted to fill up spare time by doing something—anything—of a harmless nature for a review. Too frequently in expensive reviews, one encounters articles under such titles as: "Dr. Johnson as an Astronomer," or "The Topography of St. Augustine's Confessions," or "The Novels of Octave Feuillet"; and one wonders who reads them, and how on earth they got into the review. The explanation is simple: no one reads them, unless he has been marooned with the review in his pocket; and they got into the review because the mind of the editor was too negative to keep them out.

* * *

The directing mind of "The English Review" is Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer's, and it is not negative. Mr. Hueffer is young and forceful. He is in the world of ideas, and can approach nearly all the writers worth approaching as a personal friend. He has had the extraordinary honour of collaborating twice with Mr. Joseph Conrad. This alone would certify him. But by himself also he has been prolific and various. He has had the enterprising sagacity to obtain H. G. Wells's new novel, "Tono-Bungay"—and it may be asserted that Wells's novels are not given away. "Tono-Bungay" is undoubtedly the author's best novel. It was finished, I think, some time ago. It is the history of a patent medicine and of a man, and neither foretells the future nor taxes belief.

* * *

The price of "The English Review" is half a crown net. I think that a shilling net would have proved more profitable. The class that will spend half a crown for an hour with the crack authors is immensely smaller, and contains a far higher proportion of "spoiled children," than the class that can spend only a shilling. Whatever the price, those who desire that an exceedingly courageous enterprise may succeed should remember that mere desire, however fervent, is futile. The thing to do is to put your half crown down like a man, at once.

* * *

No one who has read George Bourne's two elaborate accounts of the peasant—"The Bettesworth Book" and "Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer"—is likely to underrate the possibilities of the exact "document" as a form of noble literature. I wonder if Mr. Stephen Reynolds, author of "A Poor Man's House" (John Lane), has read either of these works. Although I am quite prepared to be told that Mr. Reynolds has never heard of George Bourne, still his book reminds me of George Bourne's books. I take it that Mr. Reynolds is young, since I am unfamiliar with his name. This may be his first book. I hope it is, for there is a pleasure in saluting with admiration and respect a new authentic talent. "A Poor Man's House" is very

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good. Mr. Reynolds lived in the cottage of a Devon fisherman and toiled "in the boats," and put down what he saw and felt, as he saw and felt it. The journal, he says, was originally kept "for the purposes of fiction," but he has not turned it into fiction. Doubtless we shall have an opportunity, later, of judging Mr. Reynolds as a novelist. If he possesses the constructive gift he should assuredly be a novelist of mark. Already he has strong individuality, a finished style, a notable power of accurate observation, and a quick sympathy which is most pleasingly free from sentimentality. His pages on mackerel-fishing, cleanliness, religion, children, night-thoughts, are memorable. In the whole book nothing charmed me more than the extraordinarily fine excursus (pp. 86-87) on the vulgar use of the word "like" at the end of a sentence,—“Tony's getting obsolete, like.”

As Mr. John Lane is one of the few publishers who take pride in the bodies of their books, and as the unusual salience of the chapter initials shows that original thought has been bestowed on the format of Mr. Reynolds's book, I may permit myself a few remarks on the format. The design of the page is bad. The size of type has been unwisely chosen; it is too small. Mr. Lane ought to remonstrate with those celebrated printers, Messrs. Turnbull and Spears, about their spacing between words, which is lax and far too generous. The essence of a good page is strict economy of spacing. Further, the lower margin is too narrow. And the "rules" above and below the running-title are inexcusable. Someone has evidently tried to produce a beautiful book and someone has failed. I honour the attempt.

A novelist of my acquaintance has been favoured with the following remarkable letter from the Secretary of the Sociedad de Artes Antiguas, which, though situate in Barcelona, has, strange to say, temporary offices in Cheapside: "We have received from Advocate Barrigazzi, of Lucca, Italy, some very confidential letters and pawn papers of his late client 'Ouida.' Our instructions are to sell these documents, but it is with the greatest reluctance that we would offer them to the general public, seeing that they are painful evidences of the veteran authoress' great distress, poverty, and humiliation under money difficulties. These strictly confidential letters were written under hard mental strain to her lawyer, and should have been destroyed, but in our position all we can do is to offer them to a few of the leading British authors who would, we are certain, exercise good taste in the disposal of them and not allow them to become matter for common gossip and perhaps even, jest. There are 16 letters, for which the Advocate asks from 10s. to £1 10s. each." Tut-tut! Spanish treasure!

JACOB TONSON.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

History in Glimpses.*

It is very difficult to describe accurately Mr. Belloc's new book. It is not exactly a book of historical studies, though many of the sketches contain no event not verifiable. Nor is it exactly a collection of historical short stories, though in some of them imaginary persons and incidents appear. It might perhaps best be described as a rapid impressionist history of Europe told in glimpses. But, whatever we choose to call it, I, for one, would call it without hesitation, one of the most illuminating and original volumes issued in recent years.

The manner in which Mr. Belloc makes history live and move before us is his first title to honour. His second is one very difficult to combine with it, his very careful historical accuracy. I have already indicated that these studies are not all quite of the same character. Thus some of them contain nothing but history, as "The Ark-Royall" and "The Battle of Lewes." Others are purely fictitious, only the background being

* "The Eye-Witness." By H. Belloc. (Nash. 6s.)

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historical, as in the case of "The Christian" and "The Pagans." And between these there are many gradations such as "Thermidor," where an imaginary conversation takes place between real people, and "The Apprentice," where an imaginary person is introduced merely as a witness of a real event. But in every case it is clear that Mr. Belloc must have been at extraordinary pains to verify not only the large facts but the small details—details of weather and trifling social custom.

Yet in Mr. Belloc's case, as Macaulay put it, the fuel has not put out the fire. Nothing more readable has been written on English history. In some cases the climax, though quite historical, comes as dramatically as anything in the most sensational novel. From the purely literary point of view I would take as the best of these sketches that called "The End of Henry IV." Mr. Belloc describes the death of the first Lancastrian King with a vivid tragedy which recalls that moving account of the passing of Mr. Burden which formed so startlingly a contrast to the tone of the rest of that admirable satire. The physical agony of a loathsome disease, the mental agony of remorse, the loneliness, the fear of hell are painted in frightful colours. And then he tells us of the carrying of the body by sea to Canterbury, the storm which awoke the superstitious fear of the sailors, who hate carrying a corpse, the splendid burial near the shrine of St. Thomas, the evening entertainment of one of the sailors at a local inn. Then he ends thus:—

They drank all together, these two companions and those that had gathered round, and when they were full of ale, and had become bold with it, and had sung some songs, and when evening had fallen, the sailor saw fit to tell them this tale: That in the gale of the night (they all remembered the gale?) he and certain companions, whose names he dared not give, had lightened the ship lest it should founder; they had not lightened it of lead, nor of iron, nor of any part of the cargo, but they had lightened it secretly of an evil thing—they had jettisoned the body of the King.

Quite equally good is "The Pagans," with its high sense of the dignity of the dying Roman world, and "Thermidor" with its fateful atmosphere and keenly individualised dialogue.

But, after all, these studies are not valuable only for their merit as literature. They are especially valuable because they are the judgments of a strong mind deeply read in the annals of the past on some of the most important events in the world's history. It is all the better that these judgments are generally counter to the view accepted by our Whig-Protestant tradition, for whether Mr. Belloc's views be right or wrong, the resistance which he offers to the conceptions which most of us imbibed in our youth forces us to think. Thus the struggle against John is described as "a League of officials, wealthy merchants, higher clergy and barons," and it is said that "the people of Staines, being for the most part poor people, had made a story of the quarrel between the King and the rich men, and (being poor people) had taken sides and made a sort of game of it." Later in "The End of Henry IV" we are told that the two sweepers outside the Abbey "were full of the tradition of the common people, and knew very well that usurpation and the denial of right and Parliaments and the rest were good for great lords, but evil for God's flock." Finally, speaking of the flight of James II, Mr. Belloc says:—

"It was in this way . . . that the last attempt to found a strong executive in England, to curb the rich, and to sustain all against the few was washed away."

Mr. Belloc closes his volume with an account of a public meeting held during the Elections of 1906, a piece of work in his very best vein of contemporary satire. We read of the Politician and his speech; how "he would, from time to time, lift from a small pile of sheets upon the table a quotation from the words of an opponent or a colleague, reading those of his brother and his more famous uncle with a fine ring of contempt as of something hateful; but those of his first cousin, his private secretary, and his mother's second husband, with the sound approval of a judgment fixed and

To every "NEW AGE" reader I would recommend the following books:

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secure"; how he would use the names of the great dead "to obtain repose"—"for when his voice weakened a little he had but to mention in a loud and particular manner one of three or four speakers who would, were they now alive, presumably stand in his division of public action, to obtain many minutes of clapping and shouting during which his voice might take rest"; how "he ended with a sentence, the intonation of which was that of the clergy when they are in pursuit of their professional affairs, and the words composing which were no less than a catalogue of the great virtues, I mean tolerance, mercy, justice, courage, the love of freedom and the service of one's country." Then we have the opponent in the audience who hissed the Politician because "in his view the Politician was the champion of all things evil, but his brother and his uncle the champions of all things good." There is also the other member of the audience, who, when questions were invited, asked "whether nations did not prosper under the conditions of justice, freedom, and tolerance?" "The reply," Mr. Belloc tells us, "was in the affirmative."

One Liberal paper has taken Mr. Belloc severely to task for ending his series of historical studies with this frivolity. It showed a woeful lack of "imagination" in Mr. Belloc that he did not realise the profound significance of the difference of opinion between the Politician on the one hand and his brother and uncle on the other, a significance at least as profound as that of the French Revolution or the conversion of the Roman world to Christianity.

For myself, I felt that "The Politician" was the fitting climax of the book. When I had read it I thought of all the visions that Mr. Belloc had so vividly called up. I saw that large room in the Pavillon de Flore where ten men sat re-making in so terrible a fashion France and Europe; I caught the rumble of the guns at Valmy; I heard the splash of the Great Seal of England when the last Stuart flung it into the Thames; I saw the black scaffold in front of Whitehall; I saw the dawn breaking over the Downs above Lewes and the gaunt figure of De Montfort riding along the lines of his army; I noted the cavalcade of barons as it passed through Staines on its way to Runnymede; I thought of the vivid flashes which had shown me the progress of the New Religion in the mighty Empire of Rome; and so back to the first vision, the Channel with the galleys of Cæsar riding in the dawn. And all for this! All that the Politician might triumph over his uncle and brother or they over him!

In artistic contrast to his account of the English public meeting Mr. Belloc has set down a description of the defence of a barricade during the Commune of 1871. And that description, despite its tragedy, comforted me, for I remembered that there was in Europe one people that had fought its masters. As for us, we have fought only to make Parliaments stronger than the King, and, because whatever men fight for they finally establish, Parliaments are stronger than the King, with results which, as Mr. Belloc says, are "good for great lords but evil for God's flock." But we have never fought to make the people stronger than Parliaments, and so the people are not stronger than Parliaments, and all our statutes and constitutional reforms cannot make them so.

And in his story of the Commune Mr. Belloc thus describes the final rout of the Revolutionists:—

There was not one behind the barricade but had three men, or four, or five upon him (for a full company had charged), and for perhaps a minute the younger men struggled as an animal struggles against those that hold it whilst others kill; the older men had at once gone down. . . . And in the midst of all this savagery the youngest of them was shouting as he died, some screamed, disjointed syllables of a chance revolutionary song. The red flag still stood above the blood of the defeat. . . .

God send that we may yet live to see that flag in England, and, maybe, to see the Politician and all his kin standing where a King once stood, outside the windows of the Banqueting Hall.

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By FRANK G. JANNAWAY.

This pamphlet has compelled Mr. Blatchford to re-write "Merrie England," in the new edition of which he has suppressed a whole chapter and many former facts.

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DRAMA.

The Builder of Bridges.

MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER may not believe in the stage as a pulpit, but he has certainly made St. James's a vestry. His Edward Thursfield is only not quite of the Little Bethel because it occasionally reminds one so much of Albert Chevalier and Harry Randall. And what a splendid Chadband he would make! Here's oil for you, here's unction! How smug he is, how beaming, how mildly he pats you with his padded, priggish smile! In an article not yet published I suggest that most of our actor-managers should cross over to the music-halls. Surely Mr. Alexander should be the first to go.

The weakness of the play is the strength of Mr. Alexander. He would have a fat part, and the play is unfortunately all about a woman; the shifting of the point of interest has wrecked the play.

I am angry with Mr. Sutro. Here was a big chance for him: A proud, high-principled woman madly in love with her brother, and ready to lay all her pride and her principles and all her friends and relations as a burnt-offering on the altar of her love. Here were some fine possibilities. But Mr. Sutro has shirked the problem.

Dorothy Faringay loves her brother to distraction, and goes to St. Moritz with deliberate intent to get engaged to the man who will shortly hold in his hands the secret of her brother's theft, to come home as his promised wife, to keep so until the brother is out of danger, and then to throw him over and go back to a prior engagement. This is quite a conceivable scheme. A woman who loves her brother madly usually does not marry at all, but if she does, she will not regard the proceeding of vital significance, nor a little shuffling of the counters as morally dreadful. Still, if her principles are very high, and her pride very stubborn, here will be the drama, in the struggle between them and her love, but with heavy odds on the love. If her principles are not high, you will get the spectacle of the sister struggling heroically against the universe for the fair fame of her brother and losing her own in a shower of epithets.

But suppose this to be a very exceptional woman, and let her fall in love with her victim. What then? Will she go on with her scheme (granted, of course, she still loves her brother)? Will she, a woman who will dare do such a thing in the name of love, have any scruples about her first little lover? I think it incredible. The little lover will vanish into the night. The problem will be: Shall she go on quietly making this other man love her and risk a subsequent finding out of the conspiracy? Or shall she blurt it all out to him and throw herself on his devotion? Dangerous that last; it means, perhaps, death to the brother. What will she do? There, Mr. Sutro, is your problem for you!

The present version is quite impossible. The whole dramatic stress is on the question whether she will or will not marry her first little lover. Eventually, of course, after an entirely fictitious conflict, she marries George Alexander (and who could resist him?).

The character of Dorothy Faringay is correspondingly unreal. We cannot comprehend and sympathise with this woman who, for the sake of her brother, throws everything to the winds—except her promise to marry a weak-minded young gentleman whom she does not love. And these villainies of hers could only become heroic dressed in the colours of a great devotion which we are left to take for granted. Again, except for the incidental mention of his name heavily underlined by the actress, one is left ignorant of the fact she likes him until she tells you so. And then you don't believe it.

The builder of bridges himself (but he might have been anything else so far as the play is concerned) is an atrocious hero. His sentiments are exceedingly proper, and occasionally he is adamant; but this grand, silent man who has trusted his love absolutely, and promised simply to go out of her life if she deserts him, on finding out the fate she intended for him, treats the woman he has loved to a piece of quite abominable blackguardry, and that without losing his temper. A strong man might break out of bounds and invoke the lightnings, and a stronger or a weaker man might take his hat and say good-bye, but the only excuse for this vulgar tirade was the need of the star actor for a star speech.

And now I am angry with myself for taking Mr. Sutro so seriously. After all, he only wanted to write a thrilling railway novel, and in the third act is a splendid thrill. First and second lovers ordered to arrive at discreetly various hours. First lover dismissed for ever because he won't find £3,000 to ransom brother from debt to grand, silent lover, who has put that sum into the embezzlement account. Second lover, at tea with auntie, the brother, and She. Rattle bang at the outer doors, rumours of altercation; and then violent incursion of first lover, in wild disarray, with an offer to "dearest Dorothy" to somehow stump up the money. The Rev. George Alexander rises with his eyebrows up among his curls, his mouth pursed, and his eyes rolling. Dolly turns white, auntie utters a paradox, the brother says "You fool!"

That, I think, is a very beautiful thrill. And I love thrills. The distinctive attribute of drama is sensationalism. Handle what tools you may—psychology, cut and thrust incident or ideas, your purpose is to thrill. The suffrages of the audiences must be taken by assault. Alfred Sutro's training as translator of Maeterlinck, the great sensationalist, has stood him here in good stead.

But if the thrill is the means, it is not the end of drama; it is only the bell and the oyez of the crier to compel a hearing. Mr. Sutro compels a hearing beautifully, but he has nothing to say. Or he deliberately avoids saying it.

He give us, however, in his second act, one little piece of genuine drama—thrill and all. Dolly to Thursfield, "After all—I'm not quite sure I shall marry you." Thursfield (after a pause; very calm): "Why did you say that?" Dolly: "To see how you'd take it." Thursfield: "And how did I take it?" Dolly: "You gave no sign." That could not be better.

Irene Vanbrugh found Dolly a great task. She didn't quite know whether she was in Ibsen or Drury Lane, and acted as if she were in both. Her gestures were jerky and monotonous, and her general atmosphere was coldness endeavouring to be intense. She impressed me like a figure in a cinematograph. But now and then, in the duologue quoted, for instance, and when the situation allowed her, she was good. Above all, in the tea-party scene just before the explo-

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sion, where her note of mad playful gaiety with its undertone of hysteria was absolutely right. And she always carried herself like a queen.

The Sir Henry Killick of William Farren is to me farce too extravagant to be amusing. Mr. Dawson Milward, the bad brother, was much too tall; a lanky sinner looks so preposterous. Except in one indignant scene, he acted without much strength or charm. Mr. Harcourt Williams opened weakly as the weak young lover, over-exaggerating the obvious moral of the part, but he, too, found himself in his "scene"—the dialogue with his sweetheart which leads to his eviction. Miss Florence Haydon, as the aunt, must learn that epigrams, however bad, are not made better by a preliminary cough. Mr. E. Vivian Reynolds was weak and violent as an office manager in the second act and tolerable as a "pathetic old clerk" in the fourth: that ridiculous, unbelievable fourth act, wherein the author reconciles his tricked hero with the detected trickstress by means of a trick photograph with some words of endearment on the back.

I want once more to enter a protest against the way we are debauching our actors with strong scenes. Few, even of the best, think it worth while to play as well as they can till the lime-light comes. And consequently the acting of the quiet scenes of our plays is uniformly dry and colourless. One can hardly blame the actors. The plays are made so, and the thunders of the gallery only go to a fine frenzy and foam at the mouth.

One word of advice to Mr. Sutro. I do not think he is interested in men and women, but I think he is interested in ideas. Let him find a theatre where is no actor-manager, and write a play of ideas.

W. R. TITTERTON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

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

MR. JOHN BURNS AND UNEMPLOYMENT. TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE"

We violently disagree with John Burns, whose natural inclinations should have prompted him, quite apart from his experience in conducting the unemployment movements in the eighties, to have taken a more kindly view of the sufferings of the workless poor in England. But, notwithstanding his callousness, there is no humbug about the way in which he throws over the obligations of his earlier, and, may we add, better days. Yet, contrast his conduct, about which there is something one can respect, though one profoundly differs from him, with that of the leader of the Labour Party in the House of Commons, who has associated himself with the attacks, rightly or wrongly, which have been made upon John Burns for saying the working classes on the Clyde drink too much. Cannot Mr. Henderson spend his Sundays in any other way than by tub-thumping at Pleasant Sunday Afternoons on the evils of moderate drinking, or by supporting the Licensing Bill, the object of which is to reduce the very evil which he pretends does not exist? Here is the leader of the Labour Party, who says that Capitalism is the enemy, and that Socialism is the only remedy for poverty, signing a circular, with dukes, peers, and ladies of title as co-signatories, the object of which is to mitigate the miseries of a system that the Labour Party, if they were true to their mandate, would not tamper with, but would at once take Parliamentary, or other means, to overthrow. Mr. Burns' suggestion that Clyde artisans drink too much is bad enough; but what are we to say of Mr. Henderson's belief that private charity in the shape of cold soup, free, and stale bread, and ethical platitudes (of Dr. Stanton Coit and the Duke of Norfolk?) is the only possible palliative at the moment? John Burns, for all his faults, has chosen the better course in making grants that have given 6,000 men work at Trade Union rates for the next 16 weeks. It is no answer for Mr. Henderson to retort that Mr. Robert Blatchford has been doing the same thing. It only makes Mr. Henderson's offence a graver one, because, commanding though the position of Mr. Robert Blatchford is, he is not in the responsible position that the leader of

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the Labour Party has occupied with such conspicuous discredit during this Session. Moreover, philanthropists do not produce Socialists; they invariably produce exploiters.

TWO POLITICIANS.

MR. BURNS AS WHIPPING-BOY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

Mr. John Burns has again been made the whipping-boy of the Cabinet. On Thursday evening the Labour Party moved the adjournment of the House on the question of the contradiction between the circular issued by the Local Government Board to Distress Committees and the promise made by the Premier. On the face of it there was a complete discrepancy, and Mr. Asquith did not hesitate to declare that neither in word nor in spirit did Mr. Burns' circular represent the intentions of the Cabinet. Unfortunately for Mr. Asquith's reputation for truth, a precise reference to Hansard demonstrates that in word, at any rate, the circular was a replica of the premier's speech. The "Daily News" had the audacious unscrupulousness to suppress in its pretended verbatim extract from Hansard the very words in question, thereby making it appear that Mr. Burns, and not Mr. Asquith, was in the wrong. Such methods may be political, but they are not honest. Worst of all, the Labour Party now thinks itself indebted to the astute Mr. Asquith.

R. M.

"MUST SOCIALISTS BE CRANKS?"

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

Mr. Hamilton Fyfe appears to consider he has settled something by calling the adherents of every Socialist principle he dislikes, "cranks." Socialists are adjured to give up their "cranks" (i.e., principles), and devote themselves, like good and sensible men, to the advocacy, not of a "crank," oh dear, no, but of an impudent and brazenly fraudulent nostrum by which one of the rival capitalist parties is seeking to put salt on the tails of the goodly company of fools of which it supposes the British electorate to consist, in order to get into office. No, Mr. Fyfe, "in vain is the net laid in sight of the bird"! We Socialists all know that much of the talk about Free Trade is bunkum, and that Free Trade is not the panacea Liberals represent it to be; but the recognition of this fact is no reason for coquetting with the deliberately concocted and ill-concealed politico-economic swindle called "Tariff Reform." Let us hope Socialists will remain "cranks" in Mr. Fyfe's sense; to wit, stick to their principles and have nothing to do with the "practical common sense" of gentlemen like Mr. Fyfe.

Might I suggest that Mr. Fyfe would perhaps do better to leave Socialism and Socialists alone, and devote his practical attentions to his dear protégée, Mrs. Gould, late of Monte Carlo. The gentle creature is still, I believe, languishing in one of the prisons of central France. But who knows that were Mr. Fyfe to begin once more to moisten his blotting-paper with his tears on her behalf, the eloquence of his copy might not procure the liberation of this poor ill-used murderess, whose head has, doubtless, not lost its cunning at the "flapdoodle" which so softened his heart to her in the dock a year ago?

SIMONIDES.

AUTOMATONS OR AUTOMATA?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

May a humble and appreciative reader venture to point out that the plural of automaton is automata?—See p. 507 of "N. A."

GERTIE DE S. WENTWORTH JAMES.

[When the NEW AGE appears in a Greek edition we shall certainly use the foreign plural. Chambers' Dictionaries have fortunately invented a plural, "automatons" for English use.—ED.]

"WANTED AN S.R.C."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

With reference to the proposal in last week's NEW AGE that an S.R.C. should be formed in place of, or in addition to, the present L.R.C., let me say that I heartily favour the proposal as an addition, but do not think that as a substitute it is either feasible or desirable. For one thing, the present L.R.C. and those in the Trades Unions and the I.L.P. and F.S. will never submit to extinction, however much they might incline towards reform. And also we

have yet to see if it is "dead," as your correspondent suggests. I incline to think that it has yet many years of useful life before it, although I do not any longer feel that it can do all that I at first hoped it might be able to do—hence the necessity of an addition in the shape of the S.R.C. Certainly the fact that only 16 members supported Keir Hardie against the Government on the occasion of the vote of censure calls for sterner condemnation even than their desertion to a man of Victor Grayson a few days before! But I feel sure that the Trades Unions themselves will censure the Labour M.P.s. who did not support Keir Hardie; and we have yet to see what they will do about Victor Grayson's treatment. We know already what the rank and file of Socialists feel about this.

But surely the work for us all for the present is the

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organisation of the workers into a "class-conscious" (for want of a better term) force to fight the capitalists for even the most elementary rights and justice. And in this work we can all, even Labourists, stand shoulder to shoulder (albeit not all in one organisation) to convert and awaken the workers and to fight their exploiters and oppressors

What we might do about the proposed S.R.C., therefore (since many like myself would like to still remain in the I.L.P. at the same time as we joined the new body), is to call upon all branches of the various Socialist organisations throughout the country to enter a national federation, whose bases should be that of the Socialist clubs at Bolton and Blackpool, etc., where the Socialists have all combined with the object of taking independent Parliamentary and other action wherever the Labour Party left the field clear, but not otherwise. This is the present policy of the S.D.P., which also allows its members to belong to the I.L.P. if they choose; and I don't see why we should go further than the S.D.P. does already. This federation might meet together in conference once a year and draw up and alter its programme as the members and the occasion required. And in this way the whole of the friction in the I.L.P. over the Labour policy would be removed without any split being caused in the I.L.P., and at the same time an outlet would be required for the activities of those of us to whom the Labour policy seems altogether too slow.

(Rev.) W. B. GRAHAM.

* * *

A NUMBERED EDITION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

I notice that Mr. J. Tonson writes regarding the numbering of copies of books: "But I fear the example of the 'Mercure de France' is not likely to be honestly imitated."

I have at present in the printers' hands a new work in the case of which publication I arranged that this should be done—each copy put on the market bearing its individual number. The work is entitled, "Who is to be Master of the World," an introduction to "The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche," by Anthony M. Ludovici, prefaced by Dr. Oscar Levy, author of "The Revival of the Aristocracy," etc. T. N. FOULIS.

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