NOTES OF THE WEEK

Socialists are avid of facts; they are always making investigations, printing them and devouring them. The Library of the London School of Economics is making a specialty of lousing those facts. It is forming a collection of all publications, even leaflets, for or against Socialism; and in all languages. The Director informs us that the collection contains 2,500 publications, but he wants more. If anyone can satisfy this Oliver Twist let her or him send spare books, periodicals, pamphlets, etc., to the Librarian, Clare Market, W.C. If required he will send a special list of books that are wanted and full information as to admission to the Library. It is really one of the easiest Libraries to get into and one of the hardest to get out of that we know.

The Unionist Party is obviously justified in refusing their official support to its Free Fooders. By Tariff Reform the party means to swim or sink, and it is a little ridiculous on the part of Lord R. Cecil and his friends to wear that air of injured innocence as of the Irish trade mark which is now in use by over 400 Irish firms. It is a useful device to call attention to the merits of Irish wares, and is a guarantee to the consumer that the goods he buys with the trade mark are genuine Irish origin. We support efforts in every direction to make Ireland independent of England, and we have no hesitation in declaring that we find Lord R. Cecil a rather pompous, arrogant, and self-sufflating manner of speech, and with the most incredible manly code of good form that obtains in this country, and we have no hesitation in declaring that we find Lord R. Cecil a rather pompous, arrogant, and self-sufficient young old man with a very unpleasant and hesitating manner of speech, and with the most incredible ignorance of the impulses that govern human beings. He enjoys hearing himself speak on subjects upon which he knows absolutely nothing; e.g., on the feeding of men from their allegiance, at subverting discipline, and at stirring up a spirit of mutinous violence. There has never been a constructive theory in this world which was not good enough for its advocates to practise and live by, though they might be but a small minority. Socialists do not live in any way up to their so-called constructive theory. . . .

It is true that the compulsory acquirement of suitable land is provided for, should owners be loth to sell. But it is generally coming to be realised, from experience of the operations of the Small Holdings Act, that such a provision need entail very little friction where tact is shown. From Empire-building we turn to Empire-destroying, of which there is a painful example in the fifth of our articles upon the Socialist movement which we publish to-day. There we find that this movement, actively carried on through all sorts of agencies, but always in a spirit of destruction, is pushed into the Navy and Army, where it aims at turning men from their allegiance, at subverting discipline, and at stirring up a spirit of mutinous violence. There has never been a constructive theory in this world which was not good enough for its advocates to practise and live by, though they might be but a small minority. Socialists do not live in any way up to their so-called constructive theory. . . .

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We do not suppose the Labour Party will offer them a haven of refuge, but we think they might form the nucleus of the anti-Socialist Party whose birth is always being prophesied but ever seems to result in a miscarriage. To let Lord R. Cecil., Mr. Bowles and Co. down easily all the newspaper writers are extolling their marvellous abilities. We are not bound by the gentlemanly code of good form that obtains in this country, and we have no hesitation in declaring that we find Lord R. Cecil a rather pompous, arrogant, and self-sufficient young old man with a very unpleasant and hesitating manner of speech, and with the most incredible ignorance of the impulses that govern human beings. He enjoys hearing himself speak on subjects upon which he knows absolutely nothing; e.g., on the feeding of children and the education of working-class women.

There were two leading articles in the "Times" of the other day, one dealing with Empire-building, and the other with the Attorestation Report. Quite instructive are the following extracts:

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less than might appear from a glance at the whole appearance ultimately involved.

Notice the underlying suggestion in the second extract that if aeroestation were to cause any serious inconvenient consequence to sport, the Empire-builders would have a real objection to it on the same grounds as the Empire-builders of to-day, who have made more provision for putting pressure upon the Empire-builders to relinquish their grip upon suitable land. Empire-builders, of course, always live up to their constructive theories.

Some Empire-builders are more explicit than the "Times." The attitude of the average Imperialist has not been more naively expressed than in the following note from the Cosmopolitan Financier of January 23:

A country with such a glorious history has but to look back and take heart. Her over-sea trade is represented to-day by more figures per head of the population than that of any other country. She is the mother of the world's leading bankers, merchants, and carriers. To-day she has nearly three millions worth of gold was turned out of the banks and invested in Australian and Californian mines. They are the most enterprising investment.

Mr. Shaw writes in the "Clarion" that it was impossible for us to have a straightforward discussion on a motion for the cancellation of the Levy Lawsons and the Rothschilds would equally justify themselves. Anybody can find a moral reason for any sort of baseness. We have finished with the Portsmouth Conference; we must now help in the preparation of the soil for that unity of Socialists which must be the outcome of the present crisis.

Honest enquirers who want to know what Socialism is cannot do better than read Conrad Noel or A. J. Carlyle in the January number of the "Church Socialist Quarterly." Mr. Shaw quotes from the Cosmopolitan Financier, and Mr. Blatchford may be saddened because the whole organisation is manipulated by professional practice. Perhaps this is what the "Times" means by the death of the Labour Party, as an independent political force. However, the Labour Party have the approval of the "Daily News" and of their own consciences. What more can we want? We are told that it was free to anyone to organise an opposition, to manipulate the resolutions, etc.; just as it is to the Executive. This is not, of course, quite the case; the party in power has the whole machinery working for it and is acquainted with details that outsiders cannot obtain knowledge of. But, pace Mr. Chesterton, we think too well of democracy to take any share in the process of demoralisation, even were we assured of scoring a point now. It is really rather horrible when you reflect that the paid representatives of democracy are using the same tricks to keep themselves in power as the baser sort of members of Parliament. We admit they believe themselves to be acting from the best of motives; that without their guidance there would be a political reaction. But no doubt the Blumenfelds and the Levy Lawson and the Rothschilds would equally justify themselves. Anybody can find a moral reason for any sort of baseness. We have finished with the Portsmouth Conference; we must now help in the preparation of the soil for that unity of Socialists which must be the outcome of the present crisis.

Mr. Keir Hardie, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and Mr. Bruce Glasier, are quite lugubrious because the Labour Party's Executive was not adequately criticised. Mr. Pethick-Lawrence says: "Nothing can be more misleading than to regard the division on the resolution on policy party at all indicated what was in the minds of many of the delegates." These gentlemen, of course, knew very well what was in the minds of the delegates and they take very good care that discussion should be hurried. Mr. George Bernard Shaw writes in the "Clarion" that it was impossible for us to have a straightforward discussion on a motion drawn in accurate, friendly, and honourable terms. Mr. Shaw suggests that it is sheer stupidity on the part of the organisers of these Conferences that:

- Nobody could move anything; nobody could amend anything; nobody could, even by universal consent, take any step out of the most absurd dilemmas.
- Nothing was in order except the resolutions and amendments of which notice had been given, and which were printed on the agenda.

Mr. Shaw, of course, knows well enough that this is not due to Mr. MacDonald's stupidity, but to his astuteness. With cut-and-dried resolutions it is easy to regulate the voting of the delegates; were amendments allowed to be moved during the Conference the Executive or any one over the voting of their friends. Mr. Shaw discovered that he had either to speak on "a mass of slovenly resolutions, silly resolutions, even spurious resolutions, or be silent." Knowing all this from former Labour Conferences, knowing how cleverly the whole organisation is manipulated by Mr. MacDonald and his Executive, no one will be surprised that Mr. Grayson had determined to take no part in the Conference. Mr. Shaw admits that he had only just returned to escape muzzling because he is a Superior Person, but he is an intellectual and an expert with regard to professional practice. Mr. Grayson, unfortunately, possesses none of these qualities, and so had to muzzle himself or be muzzled. He chose the former.

Mr. Blatchford may be saddened because this last so-called Labour Conference displayed more energy, interest, and cunning in opposing the influence of Socialism than in preparing to attack the enemies of their class.

"Justice" may regret Mr. MacDonald's victory, since it "means the death of the Labour Party, as an independent political force." However, the Labour Party have the approval of the "Daily News" and of their own consciences. What more can we want? We are told that it was free to anyone to organise an opposition, to manipulate the resolutions, etc.; just as it is to the Executive. This is not, of course, quite the case; the party in power has the whole machinery working for it and is acquainted with details that outsiders cannot obtain knowledge of. But, pace Mr. Chesterton, we think too well of democracy to take any share in the process of demoralisation, even were we assured of scoring a point now. It is really rather horrible when you reflect that the paid representatives of democracy are using the same tricks to keep themselves in power as the baser sort of members of Parliament. We admit they believe themselves to be acting from the best of motives: that without their guidance there would be a political reaction. But no doubt the Blumenfelds and the Levy Lawson and the Rothschilds would equally justify themselves. Anybody can find a moral reason for any sort of baseness. We have finished with the Portsmouth Conference; we must now help in the preparation of the soil for that unity of Socialists which must be the outcome of the present crisis.

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FEBRUARY 11, 1909

The New Age

sorrow, also involved in this disgrace, because, not only are Russian police spies—Azeffs and would-be Azeffs—encouraged to dwell in our midst, but the Tsar and his co-executors are the close allies and friends of the King and the Liberal Government. We do not think these disclosures are likely to have any effect in staying the Russian revolutionary parties; they are merely hibernating after their superhuman efforts of the last few years. We can safely predict the renewed activity of the movement in a very short time.

The Care Committees of the London County Council were, we opined, committees for the care of school children. We were mistaken. They are committees for the care of money-bags, and are now rapidly being packed by women of the Idle Rich Class; by women who have been especially trained by the C.O.S. to compensate for their lack of the feelings common to human beings by general ignorance and prejudice. On one Care Committee in one of London's poorest districts there were served Lady A. B. X., the relative of a peer whose services have been handsomely rewarded by the State. A few days ago she discovered a child being fed whose father had just got some employment. This, said her ladyship, was no longer a necessitous child. Vast distress at the child's feeding had been one of her work throughout the winter, he had only been six days employed, that he was in arrears with his rent, owed money to the shopkeepers, and that it would take a little while to set his affairs in order. Finally, her ladyship, sent for the child, and said: "The committee formed to vote as to whether dinners were required or not in this case. Teachers serve on these committees, and they knew her ladyship had been directly planked down by the County Council. Were it not so tragic for the child, she would, sometimes in a community, teed stolidly as to whether a child should be fed or not. It reads like the anti-Socialist's travesty of Socialism, not as an actual instance of Capitalism. We are aware that Socialists do not, unfortunately, belong to the leisured classes, and these committee meetings are held in the afternoon, but we urge all who can find the time to serve on these Care Committees.

The whole business is a painful commentary on the danger to Socialism in acceptably compromising. The Socialists demanded school meals for all children as an essential part of their education. The meals were to be suitably selected for children by the best experts available; they were to be served with some pretensions to decorum. In poor districts, where the more starving of the children grudgingly supplied with oftentimes quite unsuitable food procured from dirty cookshops (at an unwarrantable cost), served in wretched mission halls on dirty tables, sometimes without either knives or forks. We could not, of course, have done otherwise. We were bound to accept what we could get, because some of the overfed ladies of the wealthy class could no longer endure the appeals of our starving school children.

It is only characteristic of our times that the Lord Chief Justice "could not imagine anything worse for public morality than the publication of the terrible details which were now being sent down from Edinburgh every day. The publicity given to proceedings in the Divorce Court was a public evil." There is no condemnation for the conditions of our marriage and divorce laws, which make such proceedings necessary, no condemnation of the proceedings themselves; the evil is that the public as a whole, the mass of the public is individually fully acquainted with. These judges have once been barristers, and are perfectly acquainted with the whole system; they presumably mix among their fellow-men, and are therefore acquainted with the ordinary gossip of men and women. They must know something of the facts about the conditions of sexual life in this country. Apparently for a mere desire to fix the extente cordiale by showing that our neighbours are right in calling us hypocrites, the judges affirm that people in England may do what they like so long as nobody knows about it; so long as people conform outwardly to the customary morality, there is no harm in their defying the whole decalogue.

In an interview by J. M. Kennedy with John Burns that appeared in the "Daily Dispatch," the President of the Local Government Board, says: "I am an out-and-out Socialist, and it is for that very reason that I dislike the Labour Party." He looks upon the Labour members as men of straw; mere jellyfish. "They are vacillating between Liberalism and Socialism, and they will in time inevitably gravitate to the Liberal Party." Mr. Burns should have some sympathy with their position; his personal experience should help him to understand how sea-sick one gets when one is vacillating. If the Labour men are men of straw we are afraid that Mr. Burns can only be regarded as a lath painted to look like iron. Certainiy he has managed to conceal his convictions so adroitly that he is now the model Minister of the Tory Press. There is not a single piece of legislation that stands to Mr. Burns's credit since he has joined the Government. On the contrary, he has thwarted legitimate experiments in the direction of agricultural colonies; he has refused to go to unemployed women (especially in London); and he is now apparently preparing to resist any extension of the Old Age Pensions Act. We look forward with some apprehension to his action on the Afforestation and Poor Law Reports.

A few weeks ago we somewhat joyously heralded a discussion on "The Endowment of Motherhood" that the Women's Labour League was about to hold at Portsmouth. The discussion took place; the reports in the Press were too meagre to give us much enlightenment; whilst the correspondence in the "Kaiser," by Maxim Gorki
The Policy of Fabius again.

Two years ago the disciples of Fabius the Delayer almost made up their minds. After long years of patient waiting that would have done credit to an uncomplaining job, they suddenly began to pass brave resolutions calling for a Socialist Party which would represent them in Parliament. One thing they said they were determined on: they would no longer be misrepresented by the Labour Party. At least, that was the only meaning which could be attached to the resolution which was passed in January, 1907: "As soon as possible after the next Executive election, the new Executive shall appoint a special committee to inquire into and report upon the best means of promoting local Socialist societies of the Fabian type, with the object of increasing the Socialist representation in Parliament as a party co-operating as far as possible with the Labour Party, whilst remaining independent of that and all other parties."

The Committee sat; and reported in favour of asking the Society whether it would subscribe money to a fund to finance Fabian candidates. As to the exact position of these candidates, whether they were to be Liberals, Tories, Labour men, or Socialists the report was delightfully vague. However, Fabians are accustomed to vagueness in political matters, and the members promised a substantial amount of money. Then came a pause during which the members warned the Fabians who mean business (they are mostly in the provinces, and do not realise what is taking place at the Essex Hall meetings) that this gradual evasion of the political problem will be attempted. There are reasons for suspending judgment on the resolution of January, 1907, not being meant to be taken seriously. It was necessary to find some method of crushing a new spirit which was rising in the Fabian Society at that time; and the sensational political announcement no doubt served its purpose of smashing Mr. Wells and his supporters.

But that is not the end of this slippery evolution in Fabian political policy. In the "Fabian News" of this month we find it stated that a resolution was proposed which asked the Society to withdraw from the Labour Party, in order to carry out its previous determination to run independent candidates. To this an amendment was moved by Mr. Bernard Shaw, on behalf of the provincial Fabians who mean business (they are mostly in the provinces, and do not realise what is taking place at the Essex Hall meetings) that this gradual evasion of the political problem will be attempted. There are reasons for suspending judgment on the resolution of January, 1907, not being meant to be taken seriously. It was necessary to find some method of crushing a new spirit which was rising in the Fabian Society at that time; and the sensational political announcement no doubt served its purpose of smashing Mr. Wells and his supporters.

In other words, Mr. Bernard Shaw, within two years, has moved and carried by overwhelming majorities two resolutions diametrically different in their practical effects. When the Labour Party had just entered Parliament and really seemed likely to get on the right lines, and develop in the Socialist direction, Mr. Shaw persuaded the Essex Hall meeting (not the Fabian Society) that the time had come to act outside that promising party. Two years later, when the Labour Party has broken every promise of its earlier career, and has behaved with such weakness that it cannot any longer give hope of becoming a militant Socialist Party, then Mr. Shaw persuades another similar meeting that it should treat this timid party with every gentle consideration, and reaffirm its affiliation.

In short, in spite of the events which have, during the last two years, turned the Labour Party from a thing of promise to a broken reed, the Fabian Society declines to see the seriousness of the position; it has announced once more, to all whom it may concern, that its political policy was, is, and ever shall be, the policy of the Law of Topsy Turvy: a policy for intellectual acrobats, who are equally at home on their heads or their heels.

We have been careful to point out that these political plans were determined by a meeting of the Essex Hall group, which takes the liberty of calling itself the business meeting of the Fabian Society. We refuse to believe that the provincial Fabians, to whom political work is a serious matter, and too important a thing for mental buffoonery, will allow themselves to be made the joke of the Socialist movement. They know that the time has come to make a serious decision as to the political policy of their Society shall be. They will be ambitious to prove the so-far idle Fabian boast that they are the intellectual leaders of the Socialist movement.

They now have their opportunity of raising the Fabian Society once more into the front rank. Two years ago it seemed that the Labour Party would soon develop into a Socialist body. That hope has been unexpectedly dashed to the ground; and we are face to face with the fact that we have no organisation ready for an immediate Parliamentary advance which will have any hope of rapid success. The S.D.P. has long bravely stuck to its guns and run Socialist candidates. There is a large discontented section of the I.L.P. which wishes to do the same. But the Fabian Society has so far denied its faith by getting its men into Parliament under any colours which promised success; while the I.L.P. has fallen back on the Labour Party, because it did not see any hope of purely Socialist political unity.

Now is the time for the Fabian Society to reverse its former weak policy and lead the way to a wide Socialist political unity. We do not suggest that the Fabian Society can do much by itself. It is only a small force at present; but it has possibilities, if it will only behave like a rational body in political affairs, instead of allowing itself to be stamped as the irresponsible clown of the movement. If it would declare for a vigorous political campaign by avant-garde Socialist candidates it would rally to its support all the S.D.P. and the serious men in the I.L.P. And, in return, it would give its aid to the candidates put forward by the other two organisations.

There would be found the nucleus of a Socialist Party: the S.D.P., the serious branches of the I.L.P., and the Fabian Society all co-operating for the common purpose of running Parliamentary and municipal candidates, while they all retained their individuality as societies. It is the last chance of the Fabians to play a substantial part in the Socialist capture of the English Parliament. We warn them that every effort will be made by those who oppose political action to keep the control of the Society's affair in the hands of the Essex Hall meeting; which is entirely under the tongue of one or two men, who can make it stand on its head or its heels at pleasure. So the first step must be to have Essex Hall supplanted by a delegate meeting of members who will vote with some consideration of the case. Then the Fabian Society will begin once more to count in English Socialism.

The Great Bye-Election Joke.

Nevan can there have been a Cabinet with so ripe a sense of humour? Mr. Churchill's breezy jocularity, Mr. Lloyd George's poignant wit, Mr. Harcourt's perversity, St. Augustine's delightful birrelling, the drolleries of Sir Wm. Robson—the General Election after next, ha! ha!—the genial badinage of Lord Crewe—these humorous qualities of all these gifted individuals are so well known that one expects the press reports of Ministerial speeches to contain the parenthesis "loud laughter" nearly as often as "great confusion," which the lady was violently ejected."

These individual qualities are known, but the collective humour of our Cabinet has perhaps hardly received due attention. Now, the richest joke which it has yet played on any section of its supporters is the great East Coast of Scotland bye-election joke . . . and, with faultless instinct, the very cream of the joke has been reserved to the last.

There is nowhere so stalwartly, sturdily, officially Radical as the East Coast of Scotland: it is the one spot
in the kingdom where you can make an audience per-
spire by scathing references to an Irresponsible, Non-
Elected Chamber: it is the one place on earth where
the sentences printed all in capital letters in "Reynold's
Newspaper" are taken seriously. And of all brands of
Parliamentary Radicalism there is none so unwavering-
democratic, so fiercely assailable of mere hereditary
privilege as that of the Forfarshire Radicals. Three
Radicals did they send in 1906 to represent them in
Parliament, to help the new Government end or men-
ace the House of Lords, and one "Labour" man because
he was a better Radical even than the official Liberal whom he beat.

Well, the joke which the Government has played off
on Forfarshire has been to make three bye-elections in
the past nine months by the elevation of these three
stalwart Radical M.P.'s to three new peerages. (It is
not known whether the Labour man has been over-
looked or has refused.)

Dundee lost its valued Mr. E. Robertson; Mon-
trousse Burghs lost Citizen Morley, friend of Ireland
and of the South African Republics, who went to
the House of Lords rather than allow his adminis-
tration of India to be criticised by the elected repre-
sentatives of the common people. And now Mr. Sinclair
has been lost to his friends because the House of Lords
complains that it has no Scottish Secretary to satisfy
its thirst for information. This is the very cream of
the joke, for when Lord Linlithgow was Secretary for
Scotland in Mr. Balfour's Ministry, the Scottish
Liberals of the Taft Ministry were aristocratically sheltered from their criticisms by his
absence in the irresponsible, non-elected, gifted Chamber.

How will the county electors of Forfarshire take this?

Dundee and Montrose Burghs certainly made wry
faces, but they swallowed the joke. Is the county
going to swallow?

The county is less sophisticated and Anglicized than
the central centres: its workers are mainly agricul-
tural or pastoral or are fishermen. Of course, there is
a good deal of textile work, but in these small com-
(a)munities—such as "Thurso"—there is yet plenty of
independent political spirit. For "Thurso" is in the
constituency which once supplied it with a "Labour"
man as it was an easy and delightful walk from Forfar,
certainly less than two hours. Air like wine, and the
fragrant scent of the braes grateful to the jaded towns-

A man who has come home.

Perhaps Forfarshire has never followed the sordid
comedy in which Moey Isacse, the M.P., bespeaks for himself, and as "The<br>for<br>capitali<br>l<br>e<br>For<br>the<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l<br>l

In the very same Session that Knatchbull-Hugesson
was made a peer by Gladstone he voted against his
create, whereby Lord Houghton—another renegade—
satirically rallied him thus: "You really ought to
know better than vote against the party that has ennobled you
. . . . in the very first Session of your peerage.

It would be rather jolly to go canvassing in Forfar-
shire, if one had as many automobiles as the Charles:

Sometimes our Lord Meadowsweets do not even wait
for their successors to execute that manoeuvre.

Perhaps Forfarshire does not even know that the
Burton peerage was created by Mr. Gladstone.

It is not certain that all these new peers will wait
quite a number of years—as Lord Burton did—before
entering the Tory fold.

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was made a peer by Gladstone he voted against his
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It would be rather jolly to go canvassing in Forfar-
shire, if one had as many automobiles as the Charles:
Parliament. Four powers are yours of immemorial prescription, the power of appointing and dismissing Ministers, the command of the nation's armies and fleets, and the right to create peers. The judicious use of these would suffice to make you as great as Elizabeth.

Your first move should be to dismiss your present advisers. There is no step which would so much endear you to your loving subjects. The country is thoroughly sick of them, and has expressed its disgust whenever it has had a chance of doing so. But the mere dismissal of the official Liberals, though it would be highly popular, would have no permanent results, if they were to be succeeded by the official Conservatives, which would soon become equally odious to the people. Your object should be to destroy that farce of party government which has reduced the rights of both sovereign and people to a shadow. Your Majesty should choose for your Ministers able men of whatever political complexion who are willing to assist you in carrying out your programme.

That programme should be simple and decisive enough to evoke the support of the masses. It should include (1) the resumption by the Crown, as representing the whole nation of the land of England, which it once held from it on various feudal tenures, but was subsequently filched by the oligarchy; (2) the use of the vast resources which such a policy would place at the disposal of the great national industries, which would absorb the unemployed; (3) the shifting of taxation from the necessities and petty luxuries of the poor (beer, tea, tobacco), to the unearned incomes of the rich; (4) the establishment of a minimum wage for labour.

Of course, the oligarchy would fight against such a programme as fiercely as their predecessors fought against the Stuarts. But they would find their old constitutional checks as useless under present conditions as the pikes and muskets of Naseby would be in modern war. The command of the Army and Navy belongs to your Majesty, and, though a few plutocratic officers might throw up their commission, I am convinced that you could rely on the loyalty of your troops and your sailors to fight in so popular a cause.

Moreover, if Parliament proved refractory, your Majesty has always the right to appeal to your people. The result of such an appeal could not be for a moment in doubt. Already there is a strong disposition on the part of the industrial population to return men pledged to overcome their opposition by King James's expedient of the S.D.P.

The Directive Ability Fetish.

By Edwin Pugh

The pet god of Mr. Mallock's idolatry is a nebulous something that he calls Directive Ability, and defines variably as "the application of exceptional mental powers, not to the manual labour of the men by whom these powers are possessed, but to the process of directing and co-ordinating the divided labours of others"; and also—in contradistinction to Labour, which he says is "the mind or the brain of one man simultaneously affecting the hands of any number of other men, and through their hands the simultaneous tasks of all of them, no matter how various these tasks may be."

He cites several instances of what he means by Directive Ability, from which I select two. First he says, speaking of books: "Let us take two editions of ten thousand copies each, similarly printed and priced at six shillings a copy; the one being of a book so dull that but twenty copies can be sold of it, and the other of a book so interesting that the public buys the whole ten thousand. Now, apart from its negligible value as so many tons of waste paper, each pile of books represents economic wealth only in proportion to the quantity of it for which the vendors can find purchasers. Hence we have in the present case two piles of printed paper which, regarded as patterned with printer's ink, are similar, but one of which is wealth to the extent of three thousand pounds, while the other is wealth to the extent of no more than six pounds. And to what is the difference between these two values due? It obviously cannot be due to the manual labour of the compositors, for this, both in kind and quality, is in each case the same. It is due to the special directions under which the labour of the compositors is performed. But these directions do not emanate from the men by whose hands the work is arranged in a given order. They come from the author, who conveys them to the compositors through his manuscript; which manuscript, considered under its economic aspect, is neither more nor less than a series of minute orders, which modify from second to second every movement of the compositor's hands, and determine the subsequent results of every impress of the type on paper; one mind thus, by directing the labour of others, imparting the quality of much wealth or of little or of none, to every one of the ten thousand copies of which the edition is composed."

His second instance is equally illuminative. "If (says he) a singer sings to an audience, his effort is technically 'labour,' because it ends with the simple task; but if he sings so as to produce a gramophone record, his effort is an act of 'ability,' for he influences the products of other men, by whom the records are multiplied."

Could anything be sillier? According to Mr. Mallock, the author of an Exhibition Guide, which often sells by the hundred thousand, and can be a most valuable property, is greater—or at least of far more importance to his fellow men—than any literary genius. His instance of the singer and the gramophone is quite as worthy of his penetrative mind. There are first-rate music-hall vocalists singing the songs of popular red-nosed comedians into gramophones, the records of which sell in vastly larger numbers and are infinitely more profitable than the records of Melba and Caruso. These raucous-voiced buffoons, then, are possessed of considerably more Directive Ability (though, in my
Dr. A. R. Wallace on Unemployment.

With every inclination to accord to Dr. Wallace the respect which is due to so distinguished a statesman it is impossible to congratulate him upon this essay of his in social politics. Indeed, it is difficult to take it seriously at all, and one would gladly avoid making the attempt. But in his letter published in The New Age on January 11 Dr. Wallace specially requested that his proposals should be criticised in these columns, and his request is the sole explanation for the appearance of this article.

Dr. Wallace does not profess to be the originator of the schemes which he advocates. He wrote a pamphlet merely to call attention to a hitherto neglected work upon poverty and unemployment written by Herbert V. Mills and published about twenty years ago. It does not seem very surprising that the book has been neglected, since, to judge from Dr. Wallace’s account of it, it must have been several decades out of date when it was first published.

The scheme has, however, the merit of simplicity, a quality which more modern treatises upon the subject certainly cannot boast. It is easily described. Each Local Authority is to purchase 2,000 acres or more of land and to provide upon it suitable houses to accommodate 4,000 or 5,000 of the unemployed, together with sufficient tools, machines, and buildings to provide the whole community with the necessaries of life. All such necessaries are to be produced within the boundaries of the colony so that it may be entirely self-supporting. It would grow its own wheat and its own flax, weave its own linen, and drain pipes. It would even produce its own sugar and leather, which, on being tanned, might be used to make handles of domestic cutlery and for old-fashioned but useful lanterns. Nothing would be wasted, not even “the refuse fat,” which “would be made into soap for the use of the community.” The bones and horns might be made into soap for the use of the community. These and all who contribute, directly or indirectly, to its financial success. Many of them might be incapable of setting one of their own instruments going. Yet they batten on the talent of the inventor, the singer, the exhibitor, the shopman, and all the mechanics employed in its manufacture. Where does their Directive Ability come in?

Really, it is difficult for me to take such puerile nonsense seriously; but I will do my best.

I will assume that Mr. Mallock means by Directive Ability the sort of faculty that a man of the type of Sir Simeon, who possesses it, has never turned his hand to many jobs in my time, and I have worked for all sorts of employers, from professional men to petty tradesmen. And my experience has convinced me that this vaunted Directive Ability, about which Mr. Mallock vapours, is about the commonest kind of faculty in the market. Many of our captains of industry millionaires, some of them—owe their position and their influence to sheer luck. More are indebted to the blind self-devotion of underlings, that only a man without trade or home could be mean-minded enough to imagine any kind of relationship of, in a firm for which I worked there were four partners. The poorest of the partners drew ten times the salary of the managing clerk; but when the managing-clerk died, that firm tottered headlong to its fall, and in a couple of years was bankrupt: not because that particular managing-clerk had any exceptional Directive Ability—a thousand other clerks might easily have been found to take his place—but because the partners, not realising that they had no ability of any kind, had tried to run the business themselves. In many thriving workshops and factories the same condition of affairs prevails. The masters do not know one tool from another. They employ managers and foremen and travellers, who come and go, and are taken on and discharged at haphazard; yet the profits steadily increase, thanks entirely to the excellent craftsmanship of the common workmen. Again, there have been numberless private enterprises under the control of one man who, in the parlance, has “built up a fine trade,” in which, on being turned into limited companies, have multiplied their profits over and over again, and have developed in all manner of new directions, despite that the original Directive Ability has been completely withdrawn from the business by the transfer of the concern or the entrepreneur whose business was to do with the fortunes of a firm, and certainly it is not the directors of such gigantic concerns as railway companies: it is the patient, conscientious human ass who mutely bears the heat and burden of the day until, being worn out, they are cast aside to make room for others like them.

Directive Ability, forsooth! What measure of Directive Ability is it that directs the destinies of our great British Empire? There are, roughly, two spring-boards from which you may leap into place and power in England. One of the two is the Office or Hereditary Privilege, as you please; the other is, undeniably, the Gift of the Gab. Our Cabinet Ministers, and other high dignitaries, are not appointed because they have any knowledge of their duties, but because they can talk. This is patent from the fact that one man may pass from the Board of Trade to the Board of Education, from the Board of Education to the War Office, and from the War Office to Canada or India as Viceroy, irrespective of his natural qualifications; it is, one might say, a plan, simply because the Government knows quite well that the rank and file of the Civil Service may safely be trusted to do all the necessary thinking and planning and working for him.

But Mr. Mallock has apparently lived so long in a state of patrician polarity that he does not know these commonplace facts. It is a pity; for he has a queer kind of perverseness that is as fascinating and as irritating as a sky-sign.

not work" unless the critic is prepared to give exact
details as to where it has been tried and failed under
the scheme which Mr. Mills and he have laid down.
Certainly I am not prepared to do that. I do not
suppose it ever has been tried, and I feel sure that it
never will be. It is unthinkable that such closely "pro-
tected" colonies should ever be set up in the midst of a
large outside power whose machinery was more
efficient than our own. Would you have the ex-
change of foreign goods for the surplus of the colony
and the other at Frederiksoord in Holland. The first
scheme would be destroyed, and the colony would "go
under"; for by hypothesis the colonies consist of the
dregs of the industrial population, and could not be
expected to hold their own with the outside world even
if the moral and physical regeneration were such as
to satisfy Dr. Wallace's most sanguine estimate.
This brings us to another great difficulty. Dr.
Wallace hopefully asserts that "the unemployable"
are in reality by no means numerous. The assertion
is true if it is applied to tradesmen, but it is valueless if
unemployment comes from a general failure of the
economy of the whole scheme. Nothing is to be
imported which can be produced inside the colony,
and if the exchange of foreign goods for the surplus
of the colony is to be exchanged in such terms as the
colonies are to be absorbed by his scheme are unskilled indus-
trial town-dwellers whilst on the other hand the colonies
are to be united with the outside world even if
the moral and physical regeneration were such as
to satisfy Dr. Wallace's most sanguine estimate.

The fiscal problem is thus raised in its most elemen-
tary and acute form. Suppose, after the colony has
become "self-governing," it finds that it can obtain
cheaper bread by using all its land for growing wheat.
Or suppose it found (as it almost in-
vitably would find) that it could obtain a very much
cheaper supply of electric power by exchanging its sur-
plus electricity for foreign-grown wheat. If so, where is the "self-govern-
ment" gone? On the other hand, if the exchange
were allowed, free competition with outside industries
would quickly ensue, the economic basis of the whole
scheme would be destroyed, and the colony would "go
under"; for by hypothesis the colonies consist of the
dregs of the industrial population, and could not be
expected to hold their own with the outside world even
if the moral and physical regeneration were such as
to satisfy Dr. Wallace's most sanguine estimate.

How many of the original colonists would stay for a
year? and what is to become of the deserters who we
are told "could not again, be admitted"?

Two examples of successful co-operative communities
are cited by Dr. Wallace. One at Lalashine in Ireland,
and the other at Frederiksoord in Holland. The first
was composed of agricultural labourers, and the second
(we are told by Mr. J. A. Hobson) costs the Dutch
nation £2 per head per annum. Neither, therefore, is
of much value.

Dr. Wallace further assures us that his scheme would
make Old Age Pensions and workhouses unnecessary.

VI.—An Indian Nationalist.
An Indian Nationalist came into the office the other
morning. He appeared supernaturally agile-minded,
and had concealed fires of passion behind his eyes.
Here at any rate was Young India. I questioned him.
Tell me, I said, what view do you take of the Indian
movement?
The most serious—for England; the most hopeful—
for India.

Is the movement very general?
Among at least a hundred millions of the population.

Is that possible?
Possible? It is actual. You English do not realise
what has happened in the last fifty years. You
think India is still the India of the '57 Revolution: or
what you call the Mutiny. It is nothing of the sort.
In what respects does it differ?
In language, in religion, in spirit, in ideals, in every-
thing. Largely owing to the English influence there is
now a common language among educated Indians; and
therefore a universal means of communication. Largely
owing to you again, there is a common religion, another
band of union. We call our religion now Bande
Mataram.

But surely the Hindus and Mahomedans and Parsis
are not united?
Their differences are less and fewer than their points of
agreement. Then take the Native States. You
imagine they will prove a source of weakness when the
time comes? I tell you that Hyderabad is even now
almost unsafe for an Englishman. Remember the
Zakka Khel! Why did they refuse to fire on the Zakka Khel ! Why did they?
Why were they not punished? Oh, you English are
stupid.

But your people have no arms !
You have heard of gun-running in the Persian Gulf.
Arms will not be wanted in the next revolution. More
terrible weapons will be employed. Guns are a mistake.
I don't follow. What do you suggest?
I shall call it a revolution.

But my dear fellow-subject, your suggestion is
diabolic.
Not more so than the English treatment of India.
Your devils are suave and correct, but they have iron
hands, my friend, and General Grey outlined only pro-
fesses, it would still have no claim to the title of "The
Remedy for Unemployment."

It is, indeed, difficult to understand how this pamph-
let ever came to be written by such a man as Dr.
Wallace. To say that its manner and method are
utterly "unscientific" is to put the case mildly. Some
light is thrown in the midst of it, however, by a sentence
at the end, where the author informs us that his qualifi-
cations consist of "a considerable acquaintance with
the literature of this subject." He has studied books
where the problem has not yet been even sufficiently
stated—instead of studying the unemployed. Perhaps
that is why he wants them to make the bones and horns into "old-fashioned but useful lanthorns."

CLIFFORD SHARP.

Unedited Opinions.
Let me tell you Lord Morley has hastened by twenty years the Indian revolution.

How?

Morley, you know, was the young Indians' beau ideal of the English philosopher-statesman. Hundreds of our countrymen would work off by heart; better than he knows them himself. If three years ago they could have chosen an Indian Secretary they would have chosen Morley. But what has he done? Convincing the Indians that there is no meaning in fine words, and that the best Englishman is a tyrant in practice. Off all his reforms, not one but has passed through the sieve of the official gang in India. Not one of them bears the stamp of the John Morley we know. Either he has been outwitted and repulsed at every turn by the officials (in which case he ought long ago to have resigned), or he has played the traitor. "Anyhow, he is the worst because we expected him to be the best Secretary India has ever had.

Why do you not appeal to the English people?

My dear sir, it is useless. India must work out her own salvation. Besides, your English people are too busy making money to listen to Indians about India. Your Nevins came. Your Keir Hardie came; but what have they done? We expected Keir Hardie after his visit to India would stir up all England: but his speech in the House was nearly as moderate as Morley's: and nobody in the country listens to Keir Hardie any longer.

Can't you use the English Press?

The English Press closes its door to us. The "Manchester Guardian" prints an occasional article: the "Daily News" often refutes. Of course the rest are hopeless.

But you have your own English Press.

Yes, but who reads "India"? We are starting in January a new paper, "Swadachi," a fortnightly magazine. We propose to print 5,000 copies and to circulate it among all the libraries and prominent men. But do you think anybody will read it? A lot of niggers writing, you people will say. I remember Lord Salisbury's idiotic phrase! Not his alone, but the phrase on the lips of millions of your countrymen. And we a people that were civilised when your race was savage; we a people that produced Buddha before your nation was born! And do you think we have changed so much all that long time since. The English are still barbarians in India.

But can you suggest no further means of awakening England to its danger?

Frankly, it is not our affair. We are not governors of India. Why should we instruct our governors? We mean to be free and free we will be, whether your people understand or not.

But you would prefer they should understand?

I'm even sure of that. India needs to win freedom, not to have it given her.

Then why take any trouble to publish your papers in England?

Our leaders are divided. Some wish England to understand; others, like myself, are indifferent. We please everybody: each does what he thinks best.

What are your demands?

I fear you cannot give the guarantees we demand. Our people would not believe you. They would believe it was done to gain time; and meanwhile your Kitchener would be organising and organising, and your Cabinet scheming and plotting, and your Anglo-Indians setting one State against another, and all with a view to withdrawing the Proclamation as soon as you felt safe again. No, we cannot believe you.

Then in your mind the case is hopeless?

For England, yes.

I write what was said.

A day or two later another Indian came to call on me. Do you know X, I asked him, naming the first gentleman?

Oh, very well. He made my flesh creep with his story, I went on. What was it? he asked.

I repeated in outline what I have written above. My young Indian looked grave.

"I'm afraid most of it is true," he said.

But are you not concerned that the English public should know before it may be too late?

As a Socialist I am concerned that English Socialists shall know: the rest are hopeless. I believe that English Socialists alone have a mind to know. I would do anything in the world to let the Socialists know. But even they —— A. R. ORAGE.
Maternity.

I AM a Suffragist, and have been to many meetings. At most of these meetings we have discussed Maternity and the Child Question. The Suffragists, with the Power of the Vote, are going to protect the mother and help the child. The opponents of women’s suffrage take a similar line, but they think that the appearance of the mother at the polling station is synchronous with the neglected child at home. We wax very hot over the question of the mother and the child at our meetings, and we pat ourselves on the back and tell ourselves we are doing something very heroic in getting so hot in so noble a cause.

Why? I have been thinking over the matter for some time now, and have arrived at no satisfactory solution to my question as to why it is so noble to be a mother. It is natural. Certainly. A good many things are natural that nobody would think of calling heroic. It is altruistic. Is it? Mothers love their children very dearly and very tenderly; they are ready to make the greatest sacrifices for them, it is true, but mainly, I maintain, because they are their children. I have yet to meet the mother (I don’t think she exists) who, struggling round a capsized boat, with a crowd of drowning children, would deliberately select the very hot over the question of the mother and the child, who, struggling round a capsized boat, with a crowd of drowning children, would deliberately select the very hot over the question of the mother and the child, who, struggling round a capsized boat, with a crowd of drowning children, would deliberately select the very hot over the question of the mother and the child, who, struggling round a capsized boat, with a crowd of drowning children, would deliberately select the very hot over the question of the mother and the child.

But to return to the heroics of maternity and the platitudes about its purity and perfection we hear on every side. A woman feeds her own child. How beautiful! Why? It is a very pleasant sensation to suckle a child, if one can; so pleasant that the mother’s sensuous enjoyment is frequently reflected in a voluptuous smile—the beauteous smile of maternity, or the vacuous smile of one whose brain is empty and whose body is at ease. The mother likes to have her children about her; her own children, mark you, not those of other people, who is her children, who is her children, who is her children, who is her children. The children come into the room; her occupation, however important, is thrust on one side; her mental interests, if any, are obliterated; her friends are utterly ignored, or cannot be heard above the screaming of little voices, the clapping of tiny hands. But no matter: she is so unselfish; such a good mother.

The daughter of the good mother is well reared and well equipped, mentally and physically; naturally she survives the diseases of childhood, and grows into a healthy young woman. It is then her turn. An equally healthy and well-reared husband being selected for her (or perhaps she selects him for herself), she gets married; she bears a child in due course, and, from that moment, the sacrifice of her own life begins. Her child in its turn grows up, mates, and produces another child, and so on, and so on. This question of breeding is unending, and rather dull. No matter, so long as the good mother crowns it from her pedestal.

But it is the way to produce the ideal child you say, and that is surely very important. It is. Well, the ideal child has not arrived yet, but his advent is un-doubtedly at hand, for the new generation is up and—breeding? Breeding for the world to come, oblivious of the world that is, forgetful that the world to come, born amidst the world that is, must shoulder its heavy burden of sacrificial folly. Helen George.

••

The Shepherd’s Tower.

I saw it when the dawn was first declared—
His tower, whose body generations reared,
Its soul the Shepherd’s own.

Not blue the ambit of the twilight sky,
But clear and warm as ancient ivory,
Enshrined that flower-like stone.

As ivory unstained, and then there flowed
Through the wide eastern heaven rays that glowed
Into the upper white.

With delicate fire and gentle fawn,
The campanile’s summit answered dawn
And heralded the light.

Upsoaring from the silence, where still kept
Blue shadows while the lily city slept,
Child of the morning sky,

You floated into flame, yourself a flame
Above all wonder and beyond all fame—
A glorious mystery.

One with the firmament and not with earth,
Melting into the very morning’s mirth,
To heaven’s high self avowed,

Wrought of the roseate dayspring, pierced with shade
Of pearly eves, night fluted, rainbow rayed,

Windowed with purple cloud.

Thy colours echo morn and night and noon,
Moonrise on earth and sun-rise on the moon,

White Venus and red Mars;
The deep green shadows of a mountain grove,
The toam that glimmers and the waves that rove

Under the setting stars.

Pillar of fire! Symbol of the Re-birth,
Lifted for ever on this radiant earth

By Tuscan Giotto’s might.

Laud we the dust he piled in Arno’s plain
To beckon Italy, ere yet again
His own dusky eves to night.

Eden Phillpotts.
Abraham Lincoln.

By Francis Grierson.

"I have imagined people in future generations asking the question: "What! have you seen Abraham Lincoln, and heard him speak? Have you looked on Grant and Sherman?" —WALT WHITMAN.

I.

The first time I saw Lincoln was at Alton, the romantic old town on the Mississippi, in the State of Illinois, in the very heart of Lincoln's country. It was on the 13th of October, 1858.

I was very young when my parents left England to settle in Illinois, following the example of a kinsman who had gone out to the same country; and here, on the banks of the Mississippi, we had the good fortune to witness the last great debate on slavery between Lincoln, the rail-splitter, and Douglas, the Little Giant. It was a memorable day. Thousands of people poured in from every section of the east and west. The town was like a place in possession of a ravaging army.

My father had for some years been a prominent "Lincoln man," and on this day he revelled in the final triumph of his political "idol." No words could express what the Republicans felt at Lincoln's moral victory, while the pro-slavery men looked the daggers they heeled.

"His body was a huge skeleton in clothes; his face defied artistic skill to clothe; his dull eyes would fairly sparkle with indignation. What did they want his face for?"

Iared not use. For it was here in this same Alton that Lovejoy, the fearless Abolitionist, was assassinated with cold blood by a cowardly mob of pro-slavery "fire-eaters" some years before. I must confess that this experience face to face with Lincoln was not calculated to fill me with any special reverence for the "great" man whom I found the metropolis of Western genius, as some of them were considered to be, nor for many others in different parts of the world, the famous politicians of France, for instance, whom I met in Paris on my first sojourn there in 1869, not one of whom could possibly imagine. He was not an artist, like Disraeli, nor a prose-poet, like Burke, nor a man of romance, was the least romantic mortal that anyone could very well have been mistaken for what they were not.

Washington might have passed for a country squire, Disraeli for a lawyer or sculptor, Gladstone for a judge or bishop, Whitman for a country schoolmaster, Poe for an artist or musician. Alone, of all the great men of his own country, Abraham Lincoln bore the imprint of Nature on every feature, the sign of the Western soil, the virgin wilderness, the unsullied atmosphere, the untrammeled dominion of individual freedom.

In St. Louis, where we went to live, we witnessed the voting for Lincoln in the autumn of 1860; also the very heart of Lincoln's country. It was on the very heart of Lincoln's country. It was on the 4th of November, 1860, that I was at Washington, great as some of them were considered to be, nor for many others in different parts of the world, the famous politicians of France, for instance, whom I met in Paris on my first sojourn there in 1869, not one of whom could possibly imagine. He was not an artist, like Disraeli, nor a prose-poet, like Burke, nor a man of romance, was the least romantic mortal that anyone could very well have been mistaken for what they were not.

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There was about his dark, rugged face and his gaunt figure something that harmonised with the dark, silent waters of the Mississippi in its least romantic aspects; for Lincoln, whose existence was one long romance, was the least romantic mortal that anyone could possibly imagine. He was not an artist, like Disraeli, nor a prose-poet, like Burke, nor a man of imaginative eloquence, like his great rival Douglas; and for a very good reason—he had no imagination. He knew, and there was no room for doubt, that he was one of the most splendid figures that ever personified the American nation, humour and logic held Lincoln to mother earth, the furtherance of a universal principle. He could very well have been mistaken for what they were not. Washington might have passed for a country squire, Disraeli for a lawyer or sculptor, Gladstone for a judge or bishop, Whitman for a country schoolmaster, Poe for an artist or musician. Alone, of all the great men of his own country, Abraham Lincoln bore the imprint of Nature on every feature, the sign of the Western soil, the virgin wilderness, the unsullied atmosphere, the untrammeled dominion of individual freedom.

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* * *

Abraham Lincoln belonged to that rare class whom Edmond Scherer calls "les grands mélancoliques." Of these I find two sorts: those who laugh because they can, and those who languish because they lack the faculty of laughter. Humour is a product of observation and experience, and a combination of the practical and the philosophical. It requires no great discernment to distinguish the individual and a merely distinguished personality. In-
no humour was ever so intimately related to formal situations, moods of melancholy, moments of woe, incomparable with the humorous power. Beside him the academicians of Virginia and Massachusetts appeared provincial rhetoricians, book-worms, or fanatics. His long, large body, awkward hands and feet, his ill-fitting clothes, the incessant hum of his well-worn voice, the senatorial aristocrats at Washington look like tailors' dummies from London or intellectual automations from Boston. He spoiled reams of their classical rhetoric by a page of witty reasoning, political fanaticism, the suave logic hidden in his outbursts of pleasantry, and sterilised the poison of patriotic bigotry by a combination of patience, tact, and prophetic intuition such as was never known before in the history of politics.

Poe was too original, Whitman too simple. The first offended by his genius, the second by his candour, the third by his profoundness. One of the secrets of Lincoln's power lay in his habits, heavy countenance, quick wit, dreamy moods, and achieves its end by the natural and the simple. A university is a forcing-tube where the brains of the students, heavy countenance, quick wit, dreamy moods, and clear vision. Although he was always observing and always learning, no one could add an iota to the will, the character, or the substance of the man. At the age of thirty-six he was alluded to as "Old Abe," and in New Orleans got his first experience of the horrors of negro-bondage. Lincoln was assassinated by Wilkes Booth, an actor of talent, crazed with fanatical and sectional hatred. The nation was plunged in mourning, party-strife was forgotten, and for three weeks business ceased throughout the country. Not till May 1 did the funeral cortege reach Chicago on its way to Springfield, Illinois. I passed along through the great Court House in the old-fashioned gild frames. Poe was too original, Whitman too simple. The first offended by his genius, the second by his candour, the third by his profoundness.
I continue from last week my notes on the great stolid comfortable class which forms the backbone of the novel-reading public. The best novelists do not find their material in this class. Thomas Hardy never. Eden Phillpotts, never. H. G. Wells, almost never; now and then he glances at it ironically, in an episodic manner. Hale White (Mark Rutherford), never. Rudyard Kipling, rarely; when he touches it, the reason is usually because it happens to embrace the military caste, and the result is usually such mawkish stories as "William the Conqueror" and "The Brushwood Boy." J. M. Barrie, never. W. W. Jacobs, never. Murray Gilchrist, never. Joseph Conrad, never. Israel Zangwill, never. Leonard Merrick, very slightly. Frank Harris, never. George Moore, in a "Drama in Muslim," wrote a masterpiece about it twenty years ago; "Vain Fortune" is also good; but for a long time it has ceased to interest the artist in him, and his very finest work ignores it. George Meredith was writing greatly about it thirty years ago. Henry James, with the chill detachment of an outlander, fingers the artistic and cosmopolitan fringe of it. In a rank lower than these, we have William de Morgan and John Galsworthy. The former does not seem to be interested in John Galsworthy, for the quality in him which more than any other vitiates his right to be considered a major artist, is precisely his fierce animosity to this class. Major artists are never so cruelly hostile to anything whatever as John Galsworthy is to this class. He does in fiction what John Sargent does in paint; and their inimical observation of their subjects will gravely prejudice both of them in the eyes of posterity. I think I have mentioned all the novelists who have impressed themselves at once on the public, and genuinely on the handful of persons whose taste is severe and sure. There may be, there are, other novelists alive whose work will end by satisfying the tests of the handful. Whether any of these other novelists will rise to the superiority of the stolid comfortable which could give pleasure to a reader of taste. The best novelists who now sympathetically occupy themselves with the stolid comfortable are writers of the calibre of Anthony Hope, E. F. Benson, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Miss May Sinclair: peers of Henry Arthur Jones, and Stendhal a marquis. I could not, with any sort of confidence, offer an explanation. I am, however, convinced that only a supreme artist could now handle successfully the material presented by the class in question. The material itself lacks interest, lacks essential vitality, lacks both moral and spectacular beauty. It powerfully repels the searcher after beauty. It is surprising how even favourites unmixcd pleasure. It is surprising how even favourites...
are maltreated in conversation. Some of the most successful favourites seem to be hated, and to be read under protest. The general form of approval is a doubtful "Yes-es!" with a whole tail of unspoken "buts" lying behind it. Occasionally you catch the ecstatic note, "Oh! Yes; a sweet book!" Or, with masculine curtness; "Fine book, that!" (For example, "The Hill," by Horace Amesley Vachell.) It is in the light of such infrequent exclamations that you may judge the tepid reluctance of other praise. The reason of all this is two-fold; partly in the book, and partly in the reader. The backbone dislikes the raising of any question which it deems to have been decided; peculiarly which at once puts it in opposition to all fine work, and to nearly all passable second-rate work. It also dislikes being confronted with anything that it considers "unpleasant"; that is to say, interesting. It has a genuine horror of truth neat. It quite honestly asks "to be taken out of itself," unaware that to be taken out of itself is the very last thing it really desires. What it wants is to be confirmed in itself. Its religion is the status quo. The difficulties of the enterprise of not offending it either in subject or treatment are, perhaps, already sufficiently apparent. But incomparably the greatest obstacle to pleasing it lies in the positive fact that it prefers not to be pleased. It undoubtedly objects to the very sensations which an artist aims to give. If I have heard once, I have heard fifty times resentful remarks similar to: "I'm not going to read any more bosh by him! Why, I simply couldn't put the thing down!" It is profoundly hostile to art, and the empire of art. It will not willingly yield. Its attitude to the magic spell is its attitude to the dentist's gas-bag. This is the most singular trait that I have discovered in the backbone throughout all my agreeably sardonic observation of it. My curious joy in it will never diminish.

Why, then, does the backbone put itself to the trouble of reading current fiction? The answer is that it does so, not with any artistic, spiritual, moral, or informative purpose, but simply in order to pass time. Lately, one hears, it has been neglecting fiction in favour of books of memoir, often scandalous, and historical compilations, for the most part scandalous sexually. That it should tire of the fiction offered to it is not surprising, seeing that it so seldom gets the fiction of its dreams. The supply of good, workmanlike fiction is much larger to day than ever it was in the past. The same is to be said of the supply of genuinely distinguished fiction. But the supply of fiction which really appeals to the backbone of the fiction-reading public is far inferior to the backbone's demand, but it continues to hire the offensive stuff, because it cannot obtain sufficient of the inoffensive,—and time hangs so heavy! The caprice for grape-nut grumbles, but it continues to hire the offensive stuff, because it cannot obtain sufficient of the inoffensive,—and time hangs so heavy! The caprice for grape-nut history and memoirs cannot endure, for it is partially a pose. Besides, the material will run short. After all, Napoleon only had a hundred and three mistresses, and we are already at Mademoiselle Georges. The backbone, always loyal to its old beliefs, will return to fiction with a new gusto, and the cycle of events will recommence.

But it is well for novelists to remember that, in the present phase of society and mechanical conditions of the literary market, their professional existence depends on the fact that the dullest class in England takes to novels merely as a refuge from its own dullness. And while it is certain that no novelist of real value really desires, it is equally certain that without its support (willing or unwilling,—usually the latter), no novelist could live by his pen. Remove the superior and the circulating libraries would expire. And exactly when the circulating libraries breathed their last sigh the publishers of fiction would expire. And exactly when the circulating libraries breathed their last sigh the publishers of fiction would expire.

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BOOK OF THE WEEK.

Recent Verse.

I HAVE before me the two volumes of "Poètes d’Aujourd’hui" and two little placquettes of verse by members of the Poets’ Club—almost an antithesis, but not quite. "Poètes d’Aujourd’hui" is the flower of thirty or more years’ conscious and ardent artistic effort, the work of pioneers, scions of the old school, and a group of artists who fought for their art against ridicule, who chose even ludicrous names to isolate themselves in their art, and who listened week by week to the noble phrases and philosophies of the Maître, Stéphane Mallarmé. But the Poets’ Club is apparently a dining-club and after-dinner discussion association. Evening dress is, I believe, the correct uniform; and correct persons—professors, I am told—lecture pontaneously to the band of happy and replete rhymesters—and one or two poets, occasionally. How did Lady Margaret Stockdale stray into "this galley"? The most notable poems—almost the only poetry in these two books—are hers. This one stanza, from an ode to Aphrodite, outweighs almost the whole of the print of the other members:

Where the slow dancers on gold-sandalled feet
May feel the sea-wind sweep across the floor;
Where every cloud of the storm, the sullen rain
Shall cast its shadow, and the sullen rain
Enter at will, and the soft doll’s howl call
Be mingled with the sea-gulls’ mournful cries—
Where, when the flickering altar fires are vain,
The flaming storm may light her festival.

The only other poems worthy of note are Mr. Selwyn Image’s verses, though not very original; Mr. Henry Simpson’s beautiful "Alba"; Mrs. E. M. Cran’s "Lonely Song"; and the quaint conceit of "Autumn," by Mr. T. E. Hulme. For mere verse, Mr. F. W. Tancred’s "The Story of Amaryllis," by Viola Taylor (Sidgwick, 3s. 6d. net); "Psyche," etc., by John Garth (Allenson, 4s. 6d. net); "The Golden Bridal," by A. S. Johnstone (Cornish); "Poems," by W. E. B. Henderson (Nutt, 1S. net each); "The Cry on the Mountain," by J. A. MacKereth; "Sir Christopher," etc., by A. E. Jessup (Nutt, 1s. net each); "Love as Pedlar," by Lady Alice Eyre; "Day Dreams of Greece," by C. W. Stork (Elkin Matthews, 1s. net each); "Songs of London," by H. E. A. Forst (Gowans, 6d. net); "Clifton Chapel," etc., by Henry Newbolt (Murray, 1S. 6d. net); "Selected Poems," by Laurence Hope (Heinemann, 6d. and 2s. 6d. net); "Songs of the Garden of Kama," by Laurence Hope (Heinemann, 1s. 6d. net).

The flaming storm may light her festival.

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L. Mitchell's "The Living Chalice." She treads the ways of the heart and of the spirit, and life that overflows, down with her crystalized into essence, jewels and symbols. She is one of a band of poets, of whom A. E. is the chief; and she seems to have nothing to say which the master has not already said perhaps, however. His is a more personal note of harmony. This note may be unjust; but A. E.'s vision of life can surely have only one interpretation and one interpreter. Perhaps if Pan was married with OM, poetry might be better served. But Miss Mitchell's verse at least a contribu-
tion, who is cautious, which cannot be said of "The Study of Amarilysis," by Miss Viola Taylor. One is, at least inspired by real feeling, the other, if not of a machine-

drawn quality, merely rings the changes on phrases taken out of books—Ronsard, Swift, anybody. Miss Taylor must fling aside the easy way of putting verse together, and take poetry seriously as a high art, to be wrought at with all the passion in her. Had she been anything of an artist-craftsman, with any sort of consciousness of artistic vitality, most of her book would not have been written; the rest—ugly, flat—have been poetry. And in the same way, "Psyche, etc," by John Garth, and "The Golden Bridal," by A. S. Johnstone, would have almost nothing left; "Poems," by W. B. Henderson, "The Cry on the Mountain," by J. A. Mackereth, perhaps a few pages; "Sir Christopher," by A. E. Jessup—a much finer and different poem (your "Sir Christopher" are so superannuated; and Coleridge is much better reading) is "Love and a Pedlar," by Lady Alice Eyre. Well, Lady Alice Eyre writes poetry to pass the time away. "Day Dreams of Greece" are ancient Greek stories told pleasantly in blank verse, and that is all. In "Songs of London," Mr. Furst has quite a personal note; he is caustic and humorous, gay, grave and senti-
mental, and can be read with pleasure. But most of his verses would read better if they had been written as little sketches in prose. In Paris this is an art by itself. We look on poetry as the highest art; and it is a mea-

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the critic throws his own picture on the canvas. I repeat—
and I object strongly to the fate that has led it
fused by, instead of master of, feeling, and he cannot
intellect, apart from and not through the feelings.
fore, limited, as affection must needs be, to a narrow circle.
His knowledge is in the primitive condition of being con-
tinguations of the relations of man and woman show clearly the
ridicule. He calls me an amiable sort of person, says that
mame or some other pen, are ones that, being based on
advice is a form of autobiography will one day be gener-
when I am informed where Marx went wrong. I should
be glad to know, nevertheless, which portion of Marx's
economic views has been thus recognized as indefensible.
Or can it be possible that the intelligence which has thus
surrendered at discretion the opinions of a great genius
is not really intelligent? That point I might even try to
investigate when I am informed where Marx was wrong.

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French women of the middle class have better heads
for business than French men. It was an American woman
who, foreseeing the Krueger-branch Trust panic and
accelerated bullion and made an enormous fortune. There is no
physiological reason why we should not gain money for our-
sew out of the same mine when we are a hundred up beyond.

For this purpose it is only fair that men should pay a tax
and organise a system of State insurance for mothers. The
family would then become tolerable if the members of it
were free of the burden of economic dependence; and since

FLORENCE FARR.

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To the Editor of "The New Age"—
That criticism is really a process of self-revelation, just as
advice is a form of autobiography will one day be gener-

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