GEORGE BERNARD SHAW. By Francis Grierson.

THE NEW AGE
A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART.


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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

It may be easy to drive a coach and four through an Act of Parliament, but it is not so easy to drive an Act through Parliament itself. There are half a thousand pockets at Westminster through which a Bill must pass, not to mention the even more tightly-lined minds of the members. Mr. Lloyd George is experiencing all the difficulties of the camel-driver intent on getting his camel through a needle's eye. Unfortunately, he is dropping too much of the merchandise for our liking. After all, it is his Bill, not merely any Bill, that he has undertaken to pass; and if it issues from the Commons plucked almost to the skin we shall not think much either of him or his hen. On the other hand, the principles of the Bill are in themselves worth something, and if it issues from the Commons in a sentence that deserves to be remembered..."
movement in England, with the single exception of the Social Democratic Party, repudiates the class struggle. It denies, that is, that there is any inevitable antagonism between the possessing and non-possessing classes. This concession has been mainly due to the facts that not only has Socialism been largely indebted to its middle-class adherents, but the upper and middle classes of the country have on the whole been more liberal here than elsewhere. But this liberalism is likely to vanish as the economic issues become clearer. Three times this week uncompromising attacks on the Labour and Socialist Parties have been made by representatives of the ruling class. At Stockton Lord Castleragh (of whom Shelley's words appear to be hereditarily true) declared that "most Socialists were either fools or lunatics." The Duke of Rutland, at Leicester, let his cat out of the bag by testily remarking that he would like to put a gag into the mouth of every Labour member and keep it there. But the most offensive attack was that of Lord Winterton. This noble bird had the impertinence to charge Mr. Thorne with being drunk in the House of Commons. Even if Mr. Thorne had been as drunk as a lord, he would still have found plenty of company in the House of Commons, and during many a sitting too. In fact, drunkenness is quite venial in Parliament among the orthodox parties. But the Labour Party is still new enough to have the charge of drunkenness made almost criminal. Presumably Lord Winterton in the House of Commons, and during many a sitting too, was relying upon the conventional conception of the working man as a beast given over to guzzling and without manners. As it happens, the Labour Party is temperate to a fault, and its manners in the House are Galahadian. The record of the suspension of Mr. Thorne was explaining on the following day at the instance of Mr. Asquith and Mr. Balfour, both of whom gave quite unnecessary testimonials to the Labour Party. Of Lord Winterton we can only say that his manners alone would exclude him from membership of the party to which Mr. Thorne belongs.

We shall venture to mar the orchestral concord on the subject of education which Mr. Runciman opened by a solo on the big drum. Education is now costing the country annually some two millions less than the Navy costs; and in our view the expenditure is almost as useless. During the last five years, on Mr. Runci- man's own admissions, educational changes have been confined to administration; in other words, they have not been educational at all. There are only two important subjects in education proper; one is the curriculum, the other is the status of the teachers. Neither was mentioned by Mr. Runciman or will be. Yet we may satirize our schools, feed and doctor and clothe the children, establish crèches and raise the school age without any radical improvement until, firstly, we have decided to abolish at least half the subjects of instruc-
tion on the time-table, and, secondly, made up our minds to pay teachers such a wage as will secure the country the services of other than the rejected of the clerical and factory world.

While elementary day-school education is still in so shocking a state, it is simple lunacy to talk of making elementary evening-school education compulsory. Yet a Committee appointed by the Board of Education has just recommended the extension of compulsory attendance of children between 14 and 17 at evening schools. The thing is monstrous. No evening continuation school that we have ever seen desired to be encouraged by the grant of a single half-crown. To make them compulsory is a new act of slavery for our youth. What is obviously needed for the poor is what the children of the rich obtain: free education until the age of 20, with trade or university to get into wage-slavery. That the enforced "idleness" of the children of the age of 20 would cost a great deal is true; but what is the value of machinery if it does not set people free, and who better deserve to be set free than children, whose responsibility for the chaos of civilisation is nil? There should be no evening schools for the poor, still less compulsory attendance at them.

But compulsion is all the rage now. Poor Lord Roberts is being employed in his old age in the task of pulling children out of the Liverpool slums to unfold the latchet of his shoes. His speech on Tues-
day in the House of Lords was a pathetic appeal to the country to provide a conscript army for the use of the very class whose patriotism may be measured by their objection to paying a farthing tax on their landed possessions. We have certainly no objection to prepa-
lations for the defence of the country against Ger-
many or any other Power idiotic enough to attack us. But it is not our national policy to break a voluntary army in a way which has broken down until it has been tried. We shall never believe that a voluntary army is impossible until the offer of trade union wages, civic conditions, and a civil service pension to all soldiers has failed to enlist a million of men.

Compulsory service, however, will not be rendered impossible by the opposition of the people: but by the opposition of the classes. Everybody knows that the one difficulty is to secure officers enough even for the Army we have. To multiply our Armies would be to leave it officerless or,—unthinkable—to throw the higher ranks open to men without distinction of class. This democracy is sensible enough; but we are subjected during war, in peace the mess would not stand it.

The change of Chancellors in Germany might prove an opportunity for the Cabinet to renew its attempt (if the attempt was ever made) to come to an understand-
ing with Germany. Prince Bülow never did understand England, though he seems to have under-
stood Germany well enough. His successor, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, is, we are told, no diplomatist, and we may add in the words of Artemus Ward, his other habits air good. The German Invasion scare is now marked Diminuendo, but nobody knows when the pedals will not be put on again. It is incumbent on Sir Edward Grey to learn what the new Chancellor feels disposed to do, for Germany's sake as well as for England's.

We imagine, however, that Sir Edward Grey's laurels are drooping pretty rapidly now. By his own confession, the Turkish revolution took him by sur-
prise; but for that we can forgive him, since it took the Young Turks themselves almost by surprise. But Sir Edward Grey's failure to divine the Persian sequel is unforgivable. In a properly critical country Sir Edward Grey would now find himself superannuated. The Shah has been deposed, the Nationalists are in possession of the capital. The Grand Khan has sold his sword to the winners; and, in fact, things have turned out precisely as Sir Edward Grey thought they would not turn out. His pet ally, Russia, has, through no fault of his, lost her chance of dipping her feet in the Persian Gulf and securing a pass to India. In short, Sir Edward Grey has failed not only England, but what must gall him worse, Russia as well.

The Suffragettes have invented a new and admirable method of propaganda. The 14 ladies who were im-
prisoned last week have steadily refused to obey the prison regulations, on the ground that they are entitled to political, not civil punishment. Mr. Gladstone, of course, has a reply for them which doubtless his admirers will regard as clever. The women cannot possibly be political offenders because they have not a vote: and they cannot obtain a vote because they cannot agitate politically. We hope they will continue to break the whole lot of the regulations, and induce the genuine civil prisoners to do it also. They might even emulate O'Donnell of the Issacs, who escaped his chains on a peeping Governor. It is about time someone in the Cabinet was brought to his senses; and the person who needs the treatment most urgently is Mr. Herbert Gladstone.
National Defence and the Democracy.

The death of General de Gallifet, whose cynical ferocity in the repression of the Commune is now a matter of history; the General whose murderous proclivities marked him easily first among the bloody Generals employed by the excreted Versailles Government in the slaughter of 35,000 of their fellow creatures; the disappearance from the stage of the principal military figure in that most remarkable of all civil wars is just one of those events which may and should be used to bring into prominence the inchoate nature of Socialist thought in this country, and makes it worth while to attempt to bring the British Socialist movement to realise its kinship with the Continental movement.

On no point, perhaps, is British Socialist opinion more ill-informed, undefined, uncertain, and incomplete than on the question of the military and anti-militarist ideas of the Continental Socialist movement.

Nor do British Socialists realise that the French Socialist movement is historically, logically, and as a matter of easily ascertained fact, the natural leader in the world's democratic Socialist movement.

The reasons for this condition of mind in England are plain and can be discussed, if need be, on some other occasion—but the result is a whole host of misconceptions, reflecting alike on our intelligence and our capacity for solidarity which it is imperative some determined attempt should be made to remove.

The death of General de Gallifet, an event which falls like a barren seed on the stony ground of British Socialist ignorance, prompts Cipriani to write in the course of an article in "L'Humanité": "We all know that the army is a hotbed of Galliffets, and if to-morrow—as in 1792—the people came out into the streets, Galliffets would spring up like mushrooms to steep themselves in its blood."

To the average British Socialist who has never grasped the significance of Belfast, forgotten Featherstone except as a party cry, and never seen a machine-gun in Trafalgar Square, Cipriani's words are the language of hyperbole.

To those who do not shrink from the logical conclusion that, whether it is politic to say so or not, Socialism is inevitable, and who realise the truth of the hackneyed saying that revolutions are not made with rose-water; to those who know anything of the mentality of the ruling classes and the psychology of the army officer in this and all other European countries—and least perhaps in France than elsewhere—Cipriani's words are a simple truism.

Let me now quote the same writer's conclusion and ask all Socialists, or mere believers in democracy, who read this to seriously reflect on these words:

"What is necessary to prevent the growth of this noxious fungus—it is—what Socialists have maintained for years—the abolition of standing armies and their replacement by the nations in arms."

Let me ask all Socialists and democrats of every type to weigh well whether there are substantial grounds for believing that the leaders of the Socialist and Labour movements in this country are justified in withholding from British democracy its place side by side with the national democratic movement in its demand for a national militia and the abolition of standing armies.

It is true that much depends upon what might be meant by a national militia, but scepticism as to the democratic and Socialist nature of such a military body can only be justified by gross ignorance of Continental democracies or want of faith in their ideals. To pretend that the demand for a national militia in France and Germany, for instance, arises from the detestation of these democracies of conscription, and then to put forward as a particular British virtue the national hatred of conscription, is an instance of bad faith—as it might appear—but arises from the sheer insular incapacity to grasp the full significance of the world democratic movement to which Mr. English Walling referred in his recent article in The New Age.

A little of that "aggressive and offensive" policy that bases everything on a democratic confidence in the masses of men would save the movement in this country from that incoherence of expression which in connexion with military policy is paralysing action and sterilising thought.

Paralysing action because nothing whatever can be done to obtain for the British Socialist and Labour movement the locus standi to which it is entitled in the settlement of the question of national defence as long as this movement has been in the midst of one of the most odious forms of democracy—of the whole before the democracy of a part he will see that the cause they have at heart might be better served by a sojourn in the midst of one of the most odious forms of democracy of Europe than in cultivating, by trips to the Colonies, a bastard Imperialism which cannot but be opposed eventually to the spirit of democracy.

When we have a leader capable of putting the democracy of the whole before the democracy of a part he will see the enormous impetus that can be given to the Continental anti-militarist movement by the concession in Great Britain of compulsory military training on the lines of Continental democratic thought. He will see that at the same time bring the British movement into its proper place in the international movement and line up the whole of the Labour and Socialist movement in this country.

Such a leader with the insight with which I have endeavoured him will see that the constitution of Haldane's Territorial Army may be either a step towards a most odious form of conscription—unilluminated by democratic ideas—or a system of organised national defence on lines consistent with the highest democratic ideals.

Without dealing now with the social and democratic side of the organisation of a national militia in this country, the political conditions which the democracy of Britain would insist upon as the sine qua non of its concession of the principle of compulsory military training would be:

Adult Suffrage (Male and Female). Payment of Members. Proportional Representation.

That if faced by an united working-class democracy the governing classes would agree to pay this price for the organisation of the nation in arms there can be no doubt. That is to say, if the demand were put forward with the sincerity and conviction which could not fail to result from such an intelligent appreciation of the vast importance of the issues involved my faith in the British, no less than the Continental democracies, entitles me to expect when the matter is properly put before them.

Richard Maurice.
Hungary! Advance or Avant?

The development, political and commercial, of Hungary is creating an Anglo-Hungarian literature. These three books are all valuable to the student of the constitutional history, political conditions, and economic evolution in Hungary.

Count Andrassy’s work is unfinished,* but it carries the record of Hungarian constitutional liberty from the period of the Arpáds, who were the first rulers of Hungary, down to the reign of Matthias. Count Andrássy has been as successful as those who know his scholarly attainments and ripe political wisdom had the right to expect. Yet there are certain signs of unreality in his argument on constitutional liberty. One feels that he is not perfectly happy in his moment of writing; and his conscious uneasiness that there is a somewhat hollow ring about Hungarian constitutional liberty is explained by a study of “Scotus Viator’s” able and disquieting analysis of the present status of the minor peoples in Hungary under Magyar rule. One is surprised to find Count Andrassy speaking of “the Hungarians.” It is a most misleading term. The Irish, for instance, represent a well-defined ethnological type, whereas the Hungarians are made up of the inhabitants of Hungary, connoting no ethnological type. “Hungarians” may be permissible in a popular hand-book, but it is unpardonable in a book on constitutional liberty.

“Hungary of To-day” is explanatory of the prevalent theories of taxation, labour legislation, social and intellectual ideals, commercial and industrial progress, in modern Hungary. The most distinguished Hungarian publicists have contributed the various chapters, with the exception of a chapter by the editor, Mr. Percy Alden, on “The State Child,” describing the advanced policy which obtains in Hungary on matters affecting the child. As a trustworthy guide to the material and intellectual progress of modern Hungary, this composite book is to be strongly recommended to all those who are interested in the economic and social resurrection of Central Europe.

The most vital book of the three is “Scotus Viator’s” “Racial Problems.” It is a weighty and elaborate exposition of Magyar domination in Hungary. “Scotus Viator” has been vigorously denounced in the most atrocious terms by those whose conduct he has examined without fear or favour. Pamphlets and books have been published to establish, not the falsity of his facts, but his enmity to the Magyar people. Englishmen who know the personality concealed under the pseudonym of “Scotus Viator” recognise the more bitter these personalities the greater the proof of the truth of the charges made by this malicious writer.

To summarise the situation to-day, the Magyars are themselves committing the same acts of oppression which they charged as tyranny against Austria in her days of Kossuth and the European revolutions. The language of the non-Magyar peoples is ruthlessly suppressed. The non-Magyar journalist is imprisoned or feigned to be the moment he criticises Magyar rule. The judges are intimidated by the Government to convict in political trials. Juries are packed. Children are persecuted if they sing patriotic racial songs. Non-Magyar teachers and priests are prosecuted and Magyar teachers and priests are put in their place. The Magyars have resorted to the usual methods of ruling races in impressing their alien language, alien education, and alien ideals upon those who are temporarily subject to them, or who are numerically in an inferiority. The


**Racial Problems.” By “Scotus Viator.” (Archibald Constable and Co., Ltd., London. 1908. 528 pp., maps and photos. 16s. net.)

***By Members of the Hungarian Government. Edited by Percy Alden, M.P. (Eveloogh Nash. London. 1909. 499 pp., illustrated. 7s. 6d. net.)

Csernovia trial is as astounding an instance of organised judicial miscarriage as the Dennisaw trial. The Magyars, with the usual courage of the Imperialist, war on women. The prisoners in the Csernovia trial were sixteen women and two men, the total sentences amounting to one hundred and forty years’ imprisonment for no offence whatever, unless being shot at by gendarmes brings one within the grip of Magyar criminal jurisprudence. The appendices contain long catalogues of political persecutions of Roumanians and Slovaks. The sentences are ferocious in their severity.

The replies of Count Andrassy to the interpellations of the Slovak leaders in the Lower House are couched in most illiberal language. Count Andrassy’s speeches in office and the principles enunciated on Hungarian constitutional liberty are as diverse as Lord Morley’s administration of India and his philosophic writings. There is a harshness and censoriousness about Count Andrassy’s defence of Governmental action which ill befits a professor of constitutional liberty; hence the uncertain weakness which betrays itself throughout his book.

“Scotus Viator” has done a great service to the nationalities in Hungary in collecting the vast quantity of material contained in “Racial Problems”; it is a tremendous indictment of the Magyarian Government. Though Hungary’s material progress has been rapid in the last few decades, her moral and spiritual outlook, certainly so far as the flaming hate of the non-Magnarian is concerned, has darkened since the days of ’48. Count Andrassy may be well advised to write a history of constitutional liberty in Hungary; it is right to record that which is slipping away ere it is gone.

In Hungary, as elsewhere, the forms of constitutional liberty are no guarantee of the existence of personal liberty or liberty to express and to write one’s honest opinions, without risking vindictive prosecution and persecution. As Eugene Marceau put it in one of his finest definitions of liberty in literature, “Liberty is the right to be in the wrong.” That definition of Liberty has not been understood by the Magyars, nor, perhaps, by any other ruling class. Until it is accepted and understood, Hungary will be torn by the dissensions of the races which are resident upon its soil. The Magyars must study should “Scotus Viator’s” book as an independent criticism of an outspoken but friendly observer, whose erudition and knowledge of his subject have given him a claim to be heard.

To the English politician all these books are invaluable. To the jurist Count Andrássy’s book will appeal most. The compiler of these essays edited by Mr. Alden has the wider commercial and financial field for its circulation. “Scotus Viator” should be read by everyone who studies European politics and the race difficulties of Central Europe.

“STANHOPE OF CHESTER.”

G. Bernard Shaw.

By Francis Grieben.

It is interesting to note that both in England and America humour is losing itself in wit and in cynicism. Material success added a bitter drop to Mark Twain’s humour, and the same kind of success has added a taste of hyssop to the medicinal cat-nip, snap-dragon, and hellebore of Mr. Bernard Shaw’s honey from the common hive. Perhaps he is imitating the tactics of Disraeli, who understood the crowd and used his wit as a fanning machine to clear the way to the goal of his choice, who stood just outside the political circus, hailed the idlers and clubmen by clever antics, filled his book as the bumblebee process instead of by pleasant potions of snap-dragon, and hellebore of Mr. Bernard Shaw.

Anyhow, none of them can plunge with the dexterity of their reckless and break-neck somersaults. He is a past-grand-master of G. B. S. There is a wonderful elasticity in his bouncing-board. He is a past-grand-master in the art
of diving, although he sometimes goes to the bottom, and seemingly for good; but he always bobs up like a bladder, and by a hocus-pocus of word massage and mental callisthenics he resuscitates himself and is at it again.

No matter what G. B. S. does he is always diverting, but, like a good many of his "comrades," he does not care much for the humble life. He believes in success. He does not believe in being a communal caterpillar; it is better to be a butterfly, because to what a butterfly may do, from sitting on a proterarian paling to flitting over fields and fashionable pleasure grounds, alighting on a daisy here, a buttercup there, a cabbage leaf here, a rose bush somewhere else, for no full-grown butterfly will consent to flutter long on a cabbage. Fine flowers and fine scents are wanted, and these can only be had in the gardens of success. If it is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven than it is for a camel to enter the eye of the needle, it is still harder for rich artists and writers to become serious Socialists. And some of Mr. Shaw's "comrades" are doing their level best to become richer. If you ask them for their patent of equality they will show you a pile of gold and say, "This is not like what G. B. S. is not plunging he swims entre deux eaux, as when he writes: "If the Judgment Day were fixed for the centenary of Poe's birth there are among the dead only two men (Poe and Whitman) born since the Declaration of Independence whose plea for mercy can most justly be said to show sympathy, but never in the place where most people expect it. The proper thing seems to consist in doing the opposite thing. If the partition that separates wit from madness is only a page of tissue paper the partition might disappear by the turning of a leaf. Some people prefer the sentimental to the cynical because, like somebody's cocoa, it goes furthest and lasts the longest. In some things it is better to side with the majority.

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For nothing does he like better when he says: "America did not teach Mark Twain and his temperament, there is -in a jew's-harp, does not appreciate a great deal of sentiment, and his most intimate friend was the arch-millionaire Rogers of the Standard Oil Plutocracy. The American humourist has not the same sense of the ludicrous that the American humourist has not the same sense of the ludicrous that the American humourist has not the same sense of the ludicrous that the American humourist has not the same sense of the ludicrous."

The great President was neither an artist nor a poet, and Mr. Shaw is bound to appear in artistic company, even though he should miss the company of the greatest humanist of the past hundred years. But in ignoring Lincoln G. B. S. negatives his attitude as a democratic leader. It is like talking about the history of Socialism while ignoring Fourier, the history of art while ignoring Michael Angelo, the history of music while ignoring Beethoven.

G. B. S. is often most amusing when he intends to be serious, as when he writes about Mark Twain and music. "Wagner," he says, "described 'Twain,' he says, 'described Whistler tied a blue ribbon in his hair and wore an impudent eyeglass."

"Mark Twain's humanity is often more like that of a butterfly than of a man. He mystifies people by his plays, walks the tight-rope of theatrical surprises, stands on his heels, toes, or head with the balance-pole of paradox quivering in the teeth of the public; for no one knows which end of the pole will go highest in the air—the Tolstoy-Ibsen or the Nietzsche-Wagner end.

But, in spite of all, some people will continue to ask, in what does G. B. S. take himself seriously? This question might be answered by asking some others: How does he compare with some of the masters he most admires? Has he the tartaric sincerity of Tolstoy? Has he the long-suffering patience of Ibsen, the passion of Wagner, the fine frenzy of Nietzsche?

"Mr. Shaw's weakness lies in the intellectuality of his wit. He can tear down but he cannot construct; he can scatter but he cannot concentrate, and the instruction he affords is rarely in proportion to the amusement.

The Sea Lady.

'Neath the foam of scudding seas,
'Neath the cloud-raft of the waves,
Her mansion is, in coral caves,
Hung with weedy tapestries.
There she sleeps; nor stir nor sound
Breaks the sea-bit dim serene:
There she dreams; nor shade nor sheen
Sickles o'er the still profound.
The Clarion Van.

When the Clarion Van came into his neighbourhood Holbein Bagman was drawn towards it irresistibly, and it was not long before he had ingratiated himself into a position upon the platform at an evening meeting in the public thoroughfare. The first impression that struck Holbein Bagman was the picture he saw in front of him. The van had been stationed beneath an arc lamp borne upon a lofty standard, and serving to illuminate the faces of a motley crowd with warm bright light, chequered by sharp-edged shadows. That ring of faces like a ring of fire—the intense expressionary fire of human countenances brought together and all directed to one centre—set Holbein Bagman's heart a-beating, stimulated and dilated his nature. He was in the very presence of the concentrated gaze, and could read momentary feelings and life histories all around him. Beyond the crowd presented itself the marvellous vista of the main thoroughfare of a manufacturing vicinity, narrowing at the far end towards railway arches, its squalid shops and dwellings in huddled perspective enchanted and glorified by the glow of a sky still commencing with the lights that altered in the upper air. Within the street itself Holbein Bagman watched groups of people meeting, dissolving, heavy wheeled traffic interminable in procession, tram cars and motor cars passing and re-passing with sudden blaze of light and clamours of bell or siren, the edges of the crowd upturning and dissolving as if to disperse that vapour of picture fluctuated under the deepening hues of twilight with alternations of brightness and darkness, noise and quiet, disturbance and momentary rest. All was motion and drama, murmur and mystery, until "Who wouldn't be the founder of Christianity had of old when he said, 'I, the living voice of the Creator, have been sent into the midst, for he had felt its presence. Already his heart had expanded by contact with common humanity, already his mind had grown more eager, and Holbein Bagman took these effects to be the divine possession. Let his spirit mount a little higher and Holbein Bagman would be among the prophets!

Perhaps, gentle reader, you have never interpreted the fact in its true significance that an audience drawn from the shins and mean streets will listen with attention and animation to a good teacher who takes them. Such a mood seemed to be settling down upon the crowd as the chairman went on with his preliminaries. He was not the best of chairmen, nor the most intelligent of Socialists, but one noted that the crowd had taken his measure. They were at the same time attentive and inattentive, as if hearing but not caring greatly for what they heard. It was possible, then, for a speaker to have an equal audience and an indifferent audience. The speaker established a sympathy between himself and the folk who listened to him; he succeeded in playing upon the mysterious harp which is human nature, and in drawing from it for a while tones which resembled sphere music. For the time being speaker and hearers had forgotten the commonplace, and participated together in a sense of enlargement of life.

No sooner had the Clarion Van concluded than Holbein Bagman began to see in the group particular reasons for the change. The nearest circle about the van was composed of children under the age of sixteen, boys and girls unkempt of hair and clothing, hollow in cheek and eye, not one of whom but was an argument of condemnation against the community of society. These children gave up and down, talked and wrangled together like sparrows, occasionally catching the eye of Holbein Bagman with an expression half-furtive, half-covering. It says something of Holbein Bagman's lack of self-possession that his imagination was haunted by Scriptural phrases. "It is the will of your Father which is in heaven that not one of these little ones shall perish." "Where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them." Holbein Bagman looked about for the Christ in the concentric circles of hardened and weather-beaten working folk and loafing folk who had gathered together round the van. If the Christ was anywhere he ought to be there, and what was the saying of a bishop who had stuck like a burr in Holbein Bagman's memory? Bishop Ridley (may the Clarion Van bless him for it) had said, "They are the salt of the earth.' "Ye gave me water to drink, I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me, I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came to me." Now, in Holbein Bagman's case these maxims meant what they say—"the rite of commentator was new to Holbein Bagman—they can have no other meaning than this, that, I, the Divine, am that hungry man, that naked man, that criminal. I, the Divine, am all men—therefore keep your eyes open that you do not miss me." Holbein Bagman began to gaze with a new intensity upon that audience of working people to whose social equals in another country the words had been spoken, "For behold the light of the world is at hand. The kingdom of Heaven is within you." A woman with a discoloured eye, which might have been given to her by one of the knot of men who stood at her elbow, was the first answer to his investigation. A drunken man, rapidly growing ill-tempered under the efforts of the bystanders to quiet him, was the second. A chorus of boo-boos from a section of the crowd greeting the remarks of the chairman was the third. Yet Holbein Bagman's face was unimpaired; the feeling of the momentary intensity upon that audience of working people to whose Socialism is Religion. I am entirely in agreement with the speaker. To me it seems that there is no such religion in the world to-day as Socialism, and I will give you some of my reasons. I know of no more wonderful example of faith than that which the Clarion Vaner has shown. He was faith in you, in mankind, as the founder of Christianity had of old when he said to the common people that 'ye are the salt of the earth.' For it the Vanner had not faith in you, he would not be speaking to you; and Jesus had not had faith in men and women he would not have tried to teach them. Then the Clarion Vanner has faith in the future. He believes that the days to come can be made better than the days that now are. He has faith in reason, he has faith in effect, he has faith in every good endeavour. Show me, then, in any of the churches of to-day more of the reality and essence of religion! Show me finer worship, finer reverence, finer conviction—nay, show me anything so fine! The common clay of humanity, who honours it as the Socialist honours it? The King-dom of Heaven that is in the midst of us, who describes it as the Socialist declares it? The enthusiasm that kindles the spirits of men when they come together, as with the renewal of the day of Pentecost—who inherits that? Show me anything like the shade words mean to you for the Socialist? . . . My friends, Socialism is religion, for Socialism is hope and faith and love and effort, and by these things, and by these things only, men truly live.

HOLBEIN BAGMAN.
An Open Letter to the Executors of William Morris.

Sirs.—There is a word to be said to you concerning the poems of William Morris; and as those who might say it with authority and effect are greatly occupied with the works of living men, I shall presume to say it from my obscurity.

"The Defence of Guenevere" has been, to at least one man now busy in the world, such a "golden book" as the forms of Rossetti were to Gaston de Latour in Pater's romance; and this not so much because the music and fantasy of Poe came there to a more matchless issue as that the saturated observation and passionate life, also present, seemed to have achieved almost a re-birth of poetry.

The poems of Morris's later life, like the later designs of Rossetti, have another largeness and sweetness and power; but in the early years when genius touches a myriad possibilities before yielding to the limitation of any choice, both men found a strangeness of wonder from those transients no splendour of their maturity can quite compensate us.

In the instance of Morris the regret is enhanced, because the scant successes of his "Guenevere" volume discouraged him from farther work in poetry for so many years that his maturity and choice were reached in silence.

Judge, then, the effect upon those who love that first volume of the announcement by Mr. Mackail (doubtlessly with your concurrence), in his fine biography of Morris (vol. I, pp. 166-173), that before the poet had become a literary success, he had in his written poems yet unpublished in which those first characteristics were strengthened and deepened with tremendous effect; that fragments exist of another Guenevere poem intended to lead up to those published; and, more than all, that the novel and poignant dramatic energy of "Sir Peter Harndon's End" had been extended and developed amazingly in a series of "Scenes from the Fall of Troy," of which more than half were completed and are still available.

Sirs, the songs and the passages of blank verse quoted by Mr. Mackail from these last prove it to be a matter of grave importance and national concern that they should not remain unpublished and subject to all the risks that wait upon an unique manuscript, without counting that there are living men who deserve and need to read such poems before they die.

I do not know if such a publication would be against their author's wish; certainly in the somewhat similar case of his early prose romances his own slighting opinion of them has not prevented their being collected in the volume "The Hollow Land," greatly to the world's enrichment; while the fact of Mr. Mackail having quoted nearly a hundred lines in his biography stirs the hope that such a course may seem feasible to you in this instance also.

In this day of elegant three-and-sixpennyworths is it less than a duty that those who have the power should lay open this additional counsel of beauty from the great days that are just over and remind us how generously poets worked then?

In the same connection it may be recalled that Mr. Mackail speaks (Vol. I, pp. 207-208) of at least three narrative poems still extant which were written for the "Earthly Paradise" series, but finally admitted, beside several fragments (one of which appeared in "The Athenaeum" and has been pirated in America); and farther (Vol. II, pp. 257-258) that when the collection of "Poems by the Way" was made, enough work of all periods remained unprinted to fill another such volume.

The publication of the latter would surely serve fortunately to emphasise the fact that Morris was among the greatest of lyric poets—a fact too often obscured in the shadow of his huge verse-romances; while the conclusion of the dedication of the "Earthly Paradise" would fitly perfect a volume of such liberal proportions as Morris loved his books to assume.

Yet I take leave to urge foremost the most vital importance of the publication of those early Troy poems, which would extend the beloved poet's fame by extending the number of the modes of poetry over which he has proved his mastery, and would add at the same time another genre to English poetry.

I am, sirs, respectfully your petitioner, G. B.

Two Fables.

By Edward Storer.

Bad Weather.

GOD ALMIGHTY sat upon his throne of gold and purple, conducting the infinite orchestra of planets, winds, and elements. His beat was rhythmic, though a trifle lethargic, for He had been conducting the same piece a matter of several million years, and knew it tolerably well.

From the pale reeds of Saturn and Mercury there flowed a queer music, sweet, shrill, and strange. It was like the skirling of gigantic grasshoppers dancing about the vaporous fields of space. The Moon clapped her lustrous cymbals like a butterfly closing her wings together, while Jupiter played his far trombone with concentration and energy. The Hail, the Wind, the red-faced tenor of a Sun, the elegant virtuoso the Lightnings, and the big drums of the Thunder all combined to swell the volume of sound made by this colossal and remorseless orchestra.

On the Earth the poor creatures for whom this extravagant and costly entertainment was provided were anything but pleased. Matters had been very unpleasant there for some time past: nothing had come to them but hail, snow, wind, Aurora Borealis, thunder, blizzards, earthquakes, and other ear-racking and terrifying music.

As a matter of fact, they had had enough of it down there, and said so, plainly that the news of their discomfort reached the ears of God just as He was turning over a page of the score.

"Madam," He said to Venus, "I fancy your E string must be down." But it was not so.

At last, however, the true explanation of this extraordinary cymbal was afforded.

"I think, Sire," ventured Mars, turning towards God with a courtly bow, "that we are playing the wrong parts. . . . Boreas there is struggling with the Winter Symphony, while really . . . ."

"Ah yes," said the Almighty with a gesture of infinite weariness, "that comes of always playing the same old tunes."

Eternal Folly.

"Kiss me," said the Moon to the Earth, as they climbed up the silken stairway of twilight into their house of the Dark. But for a filmy shawl of cloud thrown lightly over her, the Moon was naked. She leaned gently on the Earth.

The stars, who are the children of these two lovers, were playing their little golden games in the sky with an amused, half-shy regard for the amorousities of their parents.

"Mignon," said the Earth, bending over the beautiful pale face of his wife.

As he kissed her, a long, crimson shudder plunged through the West and dyed the air a hundred tints.

And all the thousand children of the Earth and the Moon, the little stars playing their golden games in the sky, smiled to themselves at this nightly folly of their aged and respectable parents.

"Was there ever such a couple?" they asked.
The Three Tramps.
By Major Arthur Layard.

The long, hot summer's day was nearing its close. Not a breath of wind ruffled the oily surface of the broad, sluggish river as the red ball of the sun set in the west behind the vast expanse of fens. Myriads of circling compass flocks played and pirouetted, rose and fell, in the flight, diaphanous haze which was gathering over field and water. The slow, dreamy flow of the stream scarcely stirred the slender, graceful reeds which nestled under the old disused towpath. Over the opposite bank twinkled one little star in the clear, faint green of water-meadows lay flat and wide, the line of the deep intersecting ditches marked by stunted hedgerows. Here and there a solitary wind-disfigured tree seemed to accentuate the loneliness of the scene. The aromatic odour of the sedges filled the air. The swallows flew high, and away to the south a trailing flight of wild duck was pointing to the spire of a church, which stood up alat in the fens like a needle on end in a green cloth.

There was a steady, rustling movement in the long, thick grasses near the dyke which separated the towpath from the fen or luxuriant beyond and a ragged, bald, unshaven man, with a squint, dragged himself to his feet with a muttered imprecation.

"Beat it! There are the devil!" he growled, stretching his thin, lanky arms and yawning. His pointed elbows had pierced the sleeves of the horrible old frock-coat, which hung about him in tatters, His feet were a pair of frayed cord crossed his dirty chest obliquely, and passing over one shoulder held up his patched, mire-stained trousers. String, also, had been ingeniously to prevent what was left of his boots from falling off his feet. Socks he had had been brought into use for feeding, and now and again a sudden splash would break the silence.

"Why don't you a'makin' for."

"Aye, gw'nor, and g'nuh'mor," he grunted, cautiously descending the meadow bank into the stream, followed by the others. The ripples coursed upward and lapped the pale face of the poor drowned fellow.

The bed of the river sloped rapidly downwards at this point, but after a couple of trials, the two men managed to pull it through the reeds and half-way up the bank, till the feet were well clear of the water. "Nothin' in 'is pockets, sure it!" exclaimed the man who won the spirtail.

The other removed the canvas shoes and flung them on the towpath. The black head of the third tramp rose an inch higher and noted where they fell. "Shift, belt, trousers, and socks, g'nuh'mor," itemed swivel-eye. "Share an' share alike. Settle abaat them 'tillies' later. I ain't got no shirt or belly-band. You 'ave. You 'kip the socks an' trousers. That's fair!"

"Yess, that's a bargain. But I'm a-goin' to 'ave them shoes, s'elp me!"

"Yer sawed bus't. 'Oo went into the stream an' fetched 'em out, I'd like to know?"

"Silly rot! 'Ow 'eere you g'nuh'mor, you 'ave. 'Ere a'makin' for, without me a'lding you?"

The third man was quietly crawling like a snake through the grass nearer and nearer to the shoes. "Wot's that bloomin' well got to do with it, yer blighter? I'm wet up ter my middle." "Yess, an' I've got to put on the dead 'un's scroppin' wet trousers. It's orl one!"

"I'm bloomin' well going to 'ave them 'tillies.'"

"You ain't!"

"Take that, yer red-caped thief," exclaimed swivel-eye, butting his bald head at the stomach of the other, who dodged to one side with remarkable alacrity and landed him a terrific blow in the ribs as he stumbled forward. Meanwhile the dead body was inch by inch slowly sliding down the slippery bank with gathering velocity, feet first, into the river. Swivel-eye caught his opponent by the ankle as he fell and pulled him to the ground. It appeared that the two ragged beings were locked in another's arms, rolling over and over, kicking, scratching and biting like a couple of wild cats.

The black-haired tramp crept yet closer, and reaching out an uncleanly paw, annexed the shoes and concealed them in his breast.

Blasphemies and howls of rage proceeded from the combatants, who, in the struggle, had moved some four or five yards away from the place where they had pulled up the dead man. The third tramp, scrambling up, ran to the edge of the towpath just in time to see the corpse disappear through the reeds. He waited. It rose to the surface a few yards from the bank and was caught once more in the reeds —this time well out of reach.

The twilight had given place to bright starshine. By looking attentively he could just make out its position. He had a stick in his hand, and he planted it firmly in the mud as a mark, immediately opposite the body. At the same instant the warriors separated, panting for breath; and, facing one another on their hands and knees, glared mutual murder from their bloodshot eyes.

"Go it, ye cripples!" cried the third man; "and let the best blighter win! Thankee kindly, gent'lemen, for them shoes."

He plucked them from his breast, and, brandishing them triumphantly, made off down the towpath at a quick shuffle.

The rivals leapt to their feet, but they were too exhausted to attempt to follow him, and he vanished into the night.

"That bloomin' well settles it," said red head.

Swivel-eye walked over to the byway where they had recovered the body. The dead 'un's taken is 'ook!" he exclaimed, with a fearful oath.

THE NEW AGE
July 22, 1909
An hour later a hatless, black-haired, tattered individual, wearing a pair of canvas boating shoes, walked into the police station of the county town and, giving his name as William Weary, of no fixed abode or occupation, claimed a sovereign for the discovery of the body of the drowned man.

Books and Persons.

A VOLUME which should pass through the hands of all those very numerous people who are concerned in the present renaissance of the English stage—from Mr. Bernard to his playing, Mr. Redford—"Gm and Adolphe Thalasso’s ; Le Théâtre Libre"—(published by the "Mercure de France," 3 f. 50 c.) In this book of three hundred pages is given the whole history of the highly important dramatic movement begun by that great man, André Antoine, on the 30th March, 1887, in a bandbox-hall, with a quadruple bill, of which three items were perfect failures, while the fourth (an adaptation of Zola’s "Jacques Damour") was a perfect success. If the Théâtre Libre had been German, as it was German, this work would have been in ten volumes instead of in one, and nobody would ever have read it except the composers and Prof. George Saintsbury, who reads everything. But the French can be contradictory without being irrational, and hence, Thalasso’s book is strangely comprehensive. He begins at the beginning with "general considerations upon the aesthetic of dramatic art," and then he supplies a sketch of the nineteenth century prose drama, which he divides, epigraphically, into two schools—the school that seeks "life through movement," and the school that seeks "movement through life." That is to say, the machine-made piece-makers on the one hand, and the other those who sought to bring truth into the theatre. The representatives of the first school are of course Scribe, Angier, Dumas fils, and Sardou. By the way, M. Thalasso points out that Sardou first saw the full possibilities of a crowd on the stage which is his credit.

At the head of the realistic school M. Thalasso puts Balzac—Balzac, all of whose plays were disasters, and perhaps deservedly so, in those days, though, that he is right. After Balzac, Alfred de Musset and Henri Beuche. The name of Musset surprised me. I should have said positively that Henri Beuche was the greatest French dramatist of his century and "La Parisienne" the greatest modern play. M. Thalasso puts M. modern playwrights and their work as we have seen in the last chapter. It is right that he has omitted them, however, and especially the efforts of those authors who sought to bring truth into the theatre. The representatives of the first school are of course Scribe, Angier, Dumas fils, and Sardou. By the way, M. Thalasso points out that Sardou first saw the full possibilities of a crowd on the stage which is his credit.

In appendices, we have details about all the authors (French and foreign) whose works were staged by Antoine (the foreign legion includes Tolstoi, Turgenev, Ibsen, Björling, Hauptman, Strindberg and even Boileus, but not Sir Arthur Wing Pinero), and all the artists. Among the native authors were Jean Jullien, François de Curel, Georges de Porto-Riche, and Emile Fiz. The Théâtre Libre had to be postponed until Antoine got his humble round the end of 1887 it is the first truly modern modern play. The interview is equally perfect—banter of the latest journalism, and not E. V. Lucas and C. L. Graves. The interview is equally perfect.
tired cynicism—for example, Mr. John Masefield! Mr. de Sélincourt is not yet within fifty years of disillusion. And apart from the detail that he really can “write,” his most precious and rare asset is his terrific instinctive joy in life, joy in his material. Hence I regard him with a stern but genuine curiosity. He has already written a chapter here and there of which he will never be ashamed. I do not assert that he is the novelist of the future, but I say that wary readers who find an innocent pleasure in remarking “I told you so,” will be well advised to perpend upon his fictions.

JACOB TONSON.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

*Woman’s Worst Enemy—Woman.* By Beatrice Tina. (New Age Press. 1s. 6d. net.)

I will not preface my remarks about this book by saying that it is a courageous statement of woman’s case. Beatrice Tina is obviously a creative artist, and, therefore, there is no question of courage or cowardice in her work. What she writes seriously is of necessity truth and reality to herself.

She has a wonderful clear-sightedness, childlike in its simplicity and directness. Children are not tampered with by convention and prejudices because they do not know anything about either. Most people when they learn of these bug-bears or, in other words, grow up, become narrowed by their experience. Beatrice Tina seems to have garnered the knowledge and still kept her childhood’s gift. The enormous gain attached to this is obvious; there is one disadvantage, that is an occasional discovery of a well-worn truism, but this is a rare occurrence. This writer has another treasure which is generally shared by the small band of children who have not quite shed the wisdom they gathered in some other world, namely, an arrogant merciless sense of humour. There is no formulaising or caging this censor; it positively ramps around and very perfect is he who escapes its sting entirely.

There have been doubts concerning the sex of “Beatrice Tina.” These will be silenced easily by “Woman’s Worst Enemy.” for the writer’s experiences as a woman are touched upon and the work is too serious to inspire suspicion of a trick. One feels by the way, when she writes of these experiences, that Miss Tina possesses an exceptionally genuine memory.

This “Woman’s Worst Enemy” is remarkably well knit together, and there is no waste of words or superfluous echo of idea.

It begins by stating the author’s own mental position towards the Woman question; goes on to talk of different types, of the kept wife, the professional woman, the artisan, the harlot and the unfit mother, winding up with “woman as State creditor.”

There are three great points driven home—the crime of allowing girls to marry and to attempt child-birth without knowledge of their significance, the evil of unfit maternity, and the importance of careful breeding.

In speaking of the last, the author says:—

A child’s life begins nine months before it is born. The mother, being the necessary intermediary, must have means to fit herself for maternity if she is to produce a child worth her trouble and worth the attention of the community.

In proportion to its intelligence, a community will demand quality rather than quantity. Nowdays, when God is on the side of the most ingenious gun—that is, on the side which owns the best organising and inventive brains, numbers count less than intelligence. And intelligence is an expensive product.

Good breeding is a communal matter, and the Ideal State would be one wherein every person born was really welcomed, and every person dead one really missed.

Of the unfit mother:—

Almighty curse! That Adam, the builder and rebuilder of civilisations, must fall and fall again, defeated by the quailing womb of the woman who bears him.

A decadent nation, in attempting to restore its energy by forcing women into becoming mothers, merely burns the candle at both ends.

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along with a secret purpose. He wanted to keep up his prestige and to square one of the Powers waiting to use this prestige, despite his "documentations" to the contrary. The truth is, Napoleon played his part to the end, working first for himself, then for his son (as M. Godefroy claims), and, if all failed, for his name. The book, however, contains exhaustive references, and these, together with its illustrations and admirable "get up," should secure it a place in the best libraries.

**Marriage as a Trade.** By Cecily Hamilton. (Chapman and Hall. 5s.)

It is the most welcome of shocks to find the "Daily Mail" allocate space and giant headlines to its review of this book. We wonder if miracles are happening in Suburbia. Are the women there really weaker than we believe of their position as word-paid wives and mothers, and even ready to be attacked and derided if that will bite through their fetters? Needless to say, Miss Hamilton, before pronouncing her judgment, has taken just pains to know both sides of the story. It is that which makes her summing up of serious importance. She has written a very courageous book. The conclusion we draw therefrom is that the present marriage-laws women have a far worthier life if they remain single. Page 312 contains, perhaps, the most everlasting true description ever written of women's secret attitude towards the Daisy Lord type of law-breakers.

**The Life of the Universe.** By Svante Arrhenius. (Harper's, 5s. net.)

The first volume is merely a primer dealing in a perfectly characteristic way with the creation myths of primitive races and some ancient peoples. This historical part is very sketchy, and Arrhenius possesses no gifts of making these poetic stories glow with life. The second volume treats of astronomical discoveries, the conception of energy and of infinity. The Swedish chemist, like other scientists, is out of his depths where philosophical problems are concerned. Scientists should confine themselves to their particular trades and help us to get good soap, wholesome jam, show us how to grow potatoes and breed cattle, leaving the philosopher to the tasks which he understands so much better. There is nothing more illuminating about Professor Arrhenius than about any of the other semi-popular and trivial works of this nature. The one worldly idea we find is the suggestion that by radio-activity germs may have been transplanted through infinite space; thus our earth may have received germs from other stars. We also like the idea that under certain conditions of the air a ray of light is so refracted that a person looking straight towards the horizon would see all round the world, and would "be in a position to see his own back." Despite the necessary failure of science to unravel the universe, Professor Arrhenius is quite sure that science will perform this task, and he is impressed with "the soundness and reliability of modern opinions" as compared with ancient ones. We like this reawakening of the Age of Faith, be it only in radio-activity.

**ART.**

A few pictures at the London Salon (Royal Albert Hall).

Here we have an equivalent to the French "Indépendants." The absence of a hanging committee seems almost sacrilegious in this England, but atmosphere is balanced for the concupiscent eye by the choice of Albert Hall for background. The circumstance of that vast building seemed rather alarming at first, but I felt well rewarded for my tramp when I discovered Mr. Gideon Fidler's works from other stars. They are of outdoor things. In the first a gloriously fine pheasant is contemplating the pitiful skull of another, who had travelled along the pleasant path earlier and more unfortunately.

The second gives a peep of river, and on one side, close to the watcher, a proud kingfisher perches, a world of supremacy expressed in the poise of head and
preened feathers. More in the background is a smaller one, ready to preen and to rule, its shorter feathers and smaller head foretelling just so much glory as the first claims. Mr. Fidler writes under this picture:

"Long may you reign."

But the third picture is the most entrancing of all. The painter has taken the idea, or at least used as title, two lines of Kipling:

"Only the dew-pond on the height,
     There, dew-drops, that never fail." 

The composition of the picture is quite wonderful. It represents a wide, shallow pond cut out of chalk-white ground, with spreading turf edges, and there are sheep drinking. Written down it may sound to some people unimaginative, but only it is unimagined by them. One can feel the impression of sun and air and space; it radiates as quite a distance from the picture. Another contribution which delighted my heart was by Mr. A. C. Colhurst. He gives an illustration of Deluxy's impression of a spining. Notes and sharps and flats are dotted about over all small melodious-looking trees. The thing was irresistible. An empty-soul But we are certainly indebted to this artist for an amusing illustration to an idea. I wonder if he gathered inspiration from John Lane's poster of the elliptical rain-bow and Chopin prelude? Probably not.

Horace C. Taylor sent in three terrifying pictures, much after the German decadents' school. I was sorry about the hanging committee then, for they inspired a while.

There are some studies of landscape by Konrad Korniowsky, and he has also two portraits. This artist exhibited at the Salon last year.

I found, too, a marvellous production of Walter Crane's. An astonishing young woman with bright yellow hair and calculation in her off eye is holding an apple very determinedly in her hand. Obviously she does not intend to part with it for less than a very high price. I am not very sure what mythical heroine she represents, but I think I saw the same head as a print, and it was more pleasing.

There are still other pictures well worth a tramp round the Hall, but I will content myself with digging out these few.

Recent Music.

In London we have as many string quartets as we require, and a little more. We are frequently visited with foreign touring quartets of first-class abilities, which is a strong reason for running parties of native origin. The best of all the foreigners who have recently appeared here is that wonderful group of players who performed at the French concerts. Their performances will, I am sure, never be forgotten by those who heard them. But there is at least one British combination worthy of being considered seriously; I refer to the English String Quartet. It is composed of Thomas Morris, Herbert Kinze, Frank Bridge, and Ivor James. These young artists were all students together at the Royal College of Music; each member of the quartet is thoroughly acquainted with his neighbour's temperament and musical habits, and the result is an excellent ensemble. The contrast between their playing and the playing of the quartet at the French
concerts is simply the contrast between things English and things French. At their second concert, given at the Barbican Hall, a composition by Francis Bridge was performed in England for the first time. This work (Quartet in E minor) represents imagination and academic ability at breaking point. With Mr. Bridge imagination is an unconsidered trifle; but some of us still look for it in music, and in these days of great technical achievements in composition we naturally turn to the sort in which we shall find some homage to beauty. In this Quartet (which, by the way, I like better than most things of the composer's I have yet heard) there is quite a considerable amount of vitality and exuberance, blustering like the little winds that blow your hat off in a crowded street. In it one finds hints of courage and independence, no very striking originality; grace and elegant rhythm of the Allegretto movement, however, raise it rather above the class of average native work we are now getting hardened to. I hope the English String Quartet will continue to produce Mr. Bridge's compositions. I was delighted to observe a very distinguished professor, who was seated near me, wincing at one of Mr. Bridge's unprepared discords. I didn't like the chord myself, but I enjoyed the performer's reaction intensely. He was more eloquent at that moment than all his lectures.

The musical season is now over. It has been shorter than usual, but has been crowded with many good things. Mr. Bridge will be best remembered for the first performance of "Pelléas and Melisande" at Covent Garden, the greatest opera since "Die Meistersinger." Debussy, who came over to rehearse the company, has proved in this work (finished almost a decade ago) what every operatic composer who ever thought of the subject at all tried to suggest, namely, the possibility of a reconciliation between dramatic poetry and music. With an orchestra very similar to that employed by Mozart he has achieved where his predecessor had failed. Indeed Debussy seems to have derived more from the methods of old Monteverde than from any subsequent reformer. His music is of course always superb, in this opera being more than usually restrained, so that the poetry of the libretto is not completely sacrificed. Masterlinck himself disapproves of it. But then real poets will always object to musical settings of their cherished works, and who can blame them? Debussy has, I say, proved the possibility of a legitimate synthesis of poetry and music; but his art, I fear, may not be consummated. It. To do so he will have to advance as far beyond his present achievements as he has already advanced beyond Wagner's. In other words, we are promised in this one a drive, and if we take the point from whence the Greek chorus started. Then we may begin again to appreciate poetry and the proper declamation of dramatic verse.

Covet Garden has also seen this season the first production of "Louise" by Gustave Charpentier, an opera of Bohemian life in Montmartre to swaggering and sentimental music of the Puccini type; "Tess," by Baron Frederic d'Erlanger, an Italian libretto on Hardy's novel, translated into English by Mr. Claude Aveling, a curious subject of genius and symphonetic qualities, and the Afternoon Theatre produced "The Wreckers" of Miss Ethel Smyth, an "all English" libretto of Cornish life a century ago to music written with a strong German accent. See Covent Garden Opera.

In other kinds of music the achievements of the season have been more generally interesting: Mr. Delius in a "Mass of Life," founded on a Nietzschean text; Mr. Holbrooke, in his "Bal de Beatrice, d'Este," a wonderful little piece of chamber music descriptive of a ball arranged for that lady by Leonardo da Vinci; the recitals of Max Reger; the French concerts; Mr. Hamilton Harty in his Violin Concerto; Sir Charles Stanford in his Great Slit entitled an "Ode to Discord," so well advertised that everybody was familiar with the joke beforehand; and lastly (of a purely random list) the concert of Mr. Joseph Holbrooke, who had just returned from a trip to Terra del Fuego with Lord Howard de Walden, under whose protection he took out an orchestra of four hundred thousand performers to play his lordship's opera to the natives. Mr. Holbrooke announced his concert with his usual "eccentric" letter circularised in print; this time it was headed "An Apology," in which he expressed his regret at being forced to give a concert of his own compositions. This composer is a man of genius when he is writing music, but his paragraphs should be banned by the Censor as unfit for publication. I heard only a portion of his concert, and couldn't afford to pay a shilling for the programme, but came away with the pleasantest memories, memories of a mighty slumber, of boxes sniffing, of the hall like rice at a wedding ceremony, and an audience of perfectly alarming proportions. I am afraid I have forgotten the tunes.

I hope Mr. Thomas Beecham will not be discouraged by the fact that there are now four "permanent" orchestras in London. It must be a most difficult business to keep a propagandist orchestra going under present conditions; we look, however, to Mr. Holbrooke to do so. His work has, in the last two or three years, been far and away the most important thing in London.

Herbert Hughes.

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AMBROSE BIERCE.

To the Editor of "The New Age."

The notes of Jacob Tonson on Ambrose Bierce interested me keenly, and I hope they may be the means of directing the attention of some English publisher to the possibility of issuing a cheap edition of Bierce's short stories in this country. That so rare a judge in these matters as Jacob Tonson thinks well of the stories should be a sufficient recommendation; that so well-informed an authority on literary matters generally knows so little of Bierce is significant, and might justify a London publisher in claiming as a "discovery" (so far as England is concerned) a mere "re-discovery." Anyway, the thing itself should be worth while.

Twelve years or so back, Bierce nearly obtained the distinction of book-publication in London. I was acting editor of a certain London weekly, one of whose contributors was an eccentric but gifted young Bohemian named Cowley-Brown. He had lived for awhile in the United States, and had read and met Bierce, whom he described as "wasting the greater part of his time breaking his shins over his own wit, excoriating Irish-American saloon-keeping politicians, and filth of that sort, in an inimitable cussatorial entitled 'Pursuit of a San Francisco paper.'" I asked Cowley-Brown to write about Bierce, and he did, his articles causing some little sensation in London.

In due course Mr. Bierce took out an orchestra in London. It must be a most difficult business to keep a propagandist orchestra going under present conditions; we look, however, to Mr. Holbrooke to do so. His work has, in the last two or three years, been far and away the most important thing in London.
America. But I am not sure of this, and in print I find that Cowley-Brown alluded to Bierce as a product of California, bracketing him with Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller, and Mark Twain as the pride of the Golden Gate in that day when she shall come to be proud of her noblest achievements.

I may add that Mrs. Twain some years ago tried to work up a London interest in Bierce, declaring that he has the best brutal imagination of any man in the English-speaking world. The trick was not only blessed but also worked up a London interest in Bierce, declaring that he has the best brutal imagination of any man in the English-speaking world.

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