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

NEW SERIES. Vol. VI. No. 16. THURSDAY, FEB. 17, 1910. [Registered at G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] THREEPENCE.

MORTMAIN.

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One Year	**15 0**	**17 4**
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All orders and remittances should be sent to the NEW AGE PRESS, *38, Cursitor Street, E.C.*

MSS., drawings and editorial communications should be addressed to the Editor, 38, Cursitor Street, E.C.

Advertisements are inserted in the NEW AGE at the following rates: **£6** *per page;* **£3** *per half page;* **£1 10s.** *per quarter page;* **6s.** *per inch. All communications regarding the same should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, 38, Cursitor Street, E.C.*

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THERE is a little too much optimism in the Report of the Executive of the Labour Party on the results of the General Election. While the election has not proved catastrophic, as it might have done, it cannot be regarded as "highly satisfactory." Mr. Keir Hardie at Newport took the more truthful line. "He could not pretend for a moment," he said, "to be satisfied with the result"; and he went on to point out the real moral of the set-back. "It was that the Labour Party had not yet evolved either the organisation or the *esprit de corps* which would enable them to cope successfully with their opponents. The main reason for their failure was that their educational work had not yet succeeded in converting a majority of the electors to their way of thinking." That is a sound conclusion, and we wish that not only the Labour Party, but every other militant minority would take it to heart. In questions ultimately political it is the initial danger of propagandist bodies to attempt to seize before their time the symbols of political power. The laborious process of educating the country is no sooner begun than it is abandoned for the hazard of politics. Instead of fairly and thoroughly convincing the country, such bodies turn to what promises to be the easier task of bullying or tricking legislators into assent. But this, though never so astute and successful, carries with it no guarantee that the country is convinced. Bills, it is true, are made Acts, but only Acts of Parliament; fruit plucked before its time is not fit to be eaten.

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To what mood of intolerance of criticism the leaders of the Labour Party have been reduced is evident in the Tillett incident at Newport. Mr. Tillett has been, as all its friends must be, an unsparing critic of the Labour Party, and occasionally he has been a more frank than friendly critic. But there was nothing in his letters to the *Times* to justify either Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's electoral opposition or Mr. Henderson's pedagogic rebukes at Newport. Mr. Henderson asked whether such charges as "a surrender of principle" or "a betrayal of trust and authority," which Mr. Tillett had brought against the Labour Party, were criticism or abuse; and unfortunately the Conference agreed with him in regarding them as abuse. If that is so, then we are all guilty of abuse and criticism is impossible. Surely the phrases are mild in comparison with the language employed even by one section of Liberals against another, not to mention the language occasionally employed by the Labour Party against the Liberals. It is a bad sign if the New Party that is to do so much to redeem the world begins its career by resenting even the mildest criticism. What will it do when later on its enemies begin their opposition in deadly earnest?

* * *

We ourselves have suffered ostracism by the Labour Party for certain candid articles, but if the few critics we have left behind us in the ranks are to be boycotted too, we can prophesy an early end to the Labour Party's career. And serve it right! The other parties have their public as well as private mentors, and endure them bravely with benefit to their morale. If the Labour Party were wise it would encourage rather than ban its friendly critics, who are never more necessary than when they are least wanted. Of the discussions at Newport in so far as they bear on the political situation we shall have more to say later. At present it may be observed that the Women's Labour League that held its meetings concurrently with the men's party talked a lot of patent nonsense as dangerous as ridiculous. What, for example, is to be said of a woman, a doctor too, who urged that public-houses should be closed not only on election days but for three weeks before an election? There is nothing democratic in this; but there is in it all the inhumanity which distinguishes the worst type of the social reformer.

* * *

Will these good people try to understand that such opinions really disqualify them from taking part or lot in any popular movement? They are cranks, and their least dangerous occupation is to be set to gnaw a file in savage lands as missionaries. We would gladly see such people given a practical task; they are not fit for politics, particularly for politics of a popular character. For future use that aspiration of Dr. Ethel Bentham's will probably be preserved by all the anti-Socialists of England. And great will its efficacy prove wherever Englishmen are met together over a pot of beer. Only a little less ill-considered was Miss Bondfield's resolution calling on the Government to extend the period during which women might not be employed after childbirth from four weeks to six months, and to enact legislation to provide assistance during the prohibited period on the lines of the Necessitous Mothers' Assistance Bill. The intention of the resolution was admirable, but the implications were disastrous. The work of married women, either in the factory or in maternity, is not, unfortunately, so greatly valued that a huge tax on it would leave it unaffected. Employers would certainly be still less inclined than they are to employ married women if they were liable to be called on to contribute to their support during six months; nor would the proposal, if carried into effect, do anything to encourage marriage or child bearing at all.

* * *

The problem is about as difficult as any in the social dictionary; but that is all the greater need for approaching it by easy stages. The chorus of amazement that greeted Miss Bondfield's resolution in the London papers was proof that her suggestion was at all events novel. In addition we regard it as foolish. Pending such economic changes as would ensure an income for life to every citizen, each according to his need, there are only two ways of dealing with the question of married women's labour. One is by the simple device of making married women's labour either unnecessary or

impossible. You can prohibit it, as indeed it is being practically prohibited in elementary schools; or, on the other hand, you can fix such a minimum wage for a man as would enable him to support his wife without working. These are the devices already being employed by public bodies on one side and by the trade unions on the other; public bodies would prohibit, trade unions would make unnecessary. But there is a second line, and it is this which we think Miss Bondfield should have taken. It is to endow maternity by means of public institutions of a large and liberal character. What is there, for example, to prevent a municipality from building, equipping, and maintaining Maternity Homes to which might be attached Convalescent Homes in the country or by the sea? Nothing but the wit and the money; and the latter, at any rate, is to be had even by Miss Bondfield's resolution in presumed abundance. Until some such provision for maternity is made, either by raising men's wages or by municipal endowment, we do not see that people are entitled to deplore the decline of the birthrate. On the contrary, the decline of the birthrate in such a civilisation as ours is the most hopeful sign we know. Childlessness is the ultimate criticism of capitalism.

* * *

Turning from the Women's League to the men's Labour Party, we have to regret that a bolder attitude was not adopted towards the Osborne case. It is plain as a pikestaff, of course, that the Osborne case was brought against the Union for the purpose of wrecking political Labour; and it is equally plain that the judgment, unless reversed by Act of Parliament, or superseded by Payment of Members, will prove fatal to the Labour Party as we know it. But of the two alternatives we should prefer that Payment of Members should be chosen. Even should the judgment be reversed as was the Taff Vale decision, there is no guarantee that it would not be perpetually challenged in one form or another. We have frankly to face the fact that even in the Trade Unions there is a vast amount of education to be done before the members can be trusted to stand politically where their leaders have hitched them. And it is just this education that will be neglected if a bare majority of the members are allowed to coerce the minority into actions for which that minority are not prepared. The charge so often brought against Socialists that they are riding to power on the backs of bitted and enslaved trade unionists will thereby assume reality, at least enough reality to give it point and venom. Payment of Members, on the contrary, would deliver not only Labour members but all the other members from partisan servitude. The Osborne judgment, in fact, presents the Labour Party with an opportunity of striking a blow not only for their own freedom but for the freedom of politics. We hope that at the last this counsel will prevail.

* * *

The political situation alternates periods of suspense with periods of crisis; and it is one of the former through which we are passing now. Nobody appears to know what is happening, still less what is likely to happen. All that we know is that affairs are in as knotty and perilous a state as they have ever been in English political history. It is an occasion, as we said last week, for statesmen and not for partisans; and we are glad to see that several of the wiser journals are assuming the former position. The "Westminster Gazette" is advocating a truce, and the "Times" on Wednesday wrote its leader on the situation with a definite detachment from partisanship. "Were we disposed," said the "Times," "to reflect on the Prime Minister's position in the mood of partisans . . . but we take no such view . . . the partisan argument is not likely to prevail with either side." Alas, that impartiality should be so short-lived. On Saturday the "Times" published the worst political leader that has yet seen the light in recent journalism. Throwing every scrap of decency, decorum, patriotism, and consistency to the winds, the "Times" on Saturday began to urge the Unionists to do their best to make the passage of the Budget impossible not merely through the Lords but through the Commons itself.

* * *

What had happened between Wednesday and Saturday to produce the change from statesmanship to the most reckless partisanship? On Wednesday the "Times" was protesting that the King's Government must be carried on at any cost to party. On Saturday it proposed to make the King's Government in the vital matter of Supply an absolute impossibility; for there is no mistaking the catastrophe following the failure to pass the Budget before March 31st. Why the change? On Thursday Mr. John Redmond delivered a speech at Dublin some hours before the first Cabinet Meeting had been held, in which he declared that the proposal to take the Budget before the Lords' Veto in the coming session would not and could not meet with the approval of Ireland. In phrases of unmistakeable lucidity, he announced that if such should prove the order of procedure he would vote against the Budget. As this would certainly mean the defeat of the Government unless the Unionists came to their support, the "Times," in accordance with its declarations of Wednesday, might have been expected to assure Mr. Asquith of Unionist assistance in carrying on the King's Government. But no, the worm turned.

* * *

We are not greatly concerned, however, with the tactics either of the "Times" or of the Irish Party under Mr. Redmond. Mr. Redmond may be as sincere as he is frank, but the position of the Irish Party will not be improved by an attitude of impossibilism. The Government majority consisting of the Liberal, Labour, and Irish groups happens to be so constituted that each is indispensable to the other. If the Liberals can do nothing without the Irish, the Irish can do nothing without the Liberals; and of all the groups the Liberal is by far the largest and certainly the most representative. If either of the Irish and Labour tails proceeds to wag the dog, it will not be so much the dog that will object as the country at large. After all, neither Mr. Redmond nor Mr. Henderson has been made Prime Minister by the election, but Mr. Asquith if anybody at all. The predominant partner may be, and in our opinion is, unwise in forcing its views on Ireland; but this unwisdom is scarcely countered by the unwisdom of Ireland in attempting to force its views on England. One thing is certain, the House of Lords will not be suffered to be abolished by Irish votes. Of that Mr. Redmond may be sure, Budget or no Budget.

* * *

We may be said to be writing like Tories, but our reply must be gathered from the following quotation from "Tristram Shandy": "The ancient Goths," said Sterne, "had a wise custom of debating everything of importance twice—once drunk and once sober,—drunk, that their councils might not want vigour; and sober, that they might not want discretion." Drunk, Socialists might be as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile. There is no length in the direction of abolishing the House of Lords that we would not go. The hereditary principle in abscondito is a base perversion of and substitute for intelligent selection. So long as it prevails there will be no equality, and consequently no real difference among men. If our people were wise they would immediately begin to uproot hereditary offices of every kind, nor would they cease till not a place was filled by the son of his father by right. But the point is that our people are not wise. Our electors are about as stupid as they well can be. They have not the smallest notion of what the hereditary system means nor the beginning of a notion of what might take its place. Except by advertisement of Limehouse speeches and the like, they scarcely know that a House of Lords exists at all. As for panting to abolish it, they might as well be expected to pant for the abolition of the Nebular Hypothesis.

* * *

Deplorable as this may be, the fact remains that no great fever of excitement will be engendered in the mass of the electors against the House of Lords, and

particularly in the absence of any substitute as an ideal. What, they would ask, is to take its place? If nothing, then is there suspicion again. If something, what? We have read every letter and article on the subject, but we see nothing to compare with Mr. Allen Upward's suggestion in our own pages. But his scheme would leave the Lords practically as they are, only constituting the Privy Council as the arbiter in cases of dispute. Elsewhere, however, nothing tangibly suggestive has appeared; and, as far as we can see, nothing will appear. Now, in face of the intellectual apathy combined with electoral indifference or doubt, it would be treason to Democracy, which is government by consent, to force on the country a leap in the dark for which the national nerves have not been braced. What is more, even if it is attempted, the attempt will fail, and recoil on the heads of those who made it. There is a moderate measure indicated by the election and no less by the general feeling; it is that the Veto on Finance should be abolished. Beyond that the country is not at this moment prepared to go. Only it would like to hear more about the next step.

* * *

The *Times* has been mentioned as reverting to partisanship, but the *Nation* and the *Daily News* have been partisan all the time. Neither of these papers during the whole crisis has so much as once thought of the national as distinct from its party's welfare. But the theory if not the practice of representative government demands that a Prime Minister and his Government should, when in office, consider not merely their own followers, but the whole country. It is only the Goths who have not recovered from their drunken electoral orgie who give the same advice when they should be sober as when they were actually drunk. The *Nation* and the *Daily News* are still valorous with their partisan potations, and both have entirely ruled themselves out of the councils of the Government, however they may still suit the Liberal Party itself. The objections of both these cocoa-pods to the advice of The New Age to Mr. Asquith is that it would be tantamount to "selling the pass." Well, we don't mind selling the pass when there is no other alternative but either giving it away or losing it altogether. Worse still, the people as a whole do not want the pass held. The *Nation* is not the nation.

* * *

If we may repeat our advice in a concise form, we would say that the first business of Mr. Asquith (who, by the way, we should never forget, sold the pass to the Lords last November on the advice of the *Nation* and *Daily News*) is to pass the Budget; with a preamble abolishing the Veto on Supply if possible, without if necessary. Next he should sketch a programme of Social reform including Unemployment Insurance, Poor Law Reform, and the extension of the Old Age Pensions Act. Thirdly, the Budget for the coming year should be framed to extort the already promised consent of Mr. Balfour and the sensible Unionists; that is, it should free the breakfast table and concentrate taxation on incomes. Fourthly, concessions should be made to a country still inflamed by fear of Germany to the extent at least of taxing super-incomes by another 10 or 15 per cent. for Naval expenditure. Nobody would grumble at that or dared if they would. Not one of the above measures would be thrown out by the Lords, not one would be unpopular in the country. Meantime, the best minds would be discussing the best plans not for reforming the Lords but for creating an Imperial Senate capable of acting as umpire from time to time. Something of this kind would really suit the country very well; and the effect of such a session, though not apparent in the big words which Radicals are fond of using, would be apparent in the only places that seriously matter: the cupboards of the poor and the pantries of the aged. If Mr. Asquith cannot do this, then let him resign. If he cannot do it without kow-towing to Ireland, then let him resign. If he cannot do it without concession to the Labour Party (which in some respects is as Radical as Radicals), then let him resign. No Socialist, at any rate, will blame him for doing so in any case.

Lord Loreburn.

A Practical Proposal.

Certain Liberal worms have been turning (in the columns of a contemporary) under the heavy heel of the Liberal Lord Chancellor. It is alleged, we have no doubt with reason, that Lord Loreburn boycotts his fellow Liberals in his appointments to the magisterial bench and the Christian ministry. As regards the latter grievance, it is probable that his Lordship is a student of the Gospel according to Judas Iscariot, so frequently referred to in our columns, and honestly holds that sympathy with the cause of progress and the relief of poverty (with which his Lordship is identified) unfits a priest to follow in the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth.

The magisterial bench is on a different footing, because it is not easy to see at the first glance why a political distinction should be drawn between the highest judicial office and the humblest. It is possible, of course, that the Lord Chancellor considers Liberals unworthy of the office of Lord Chancellor. It may be that when the then Liberal Premier sought to press the Great Seal into his reluctant hands, Sir Robert Reid declined it, on the ground that he was a Liberal; and only accepted it after being assured that he was not to be appointed on political grounds, but because the unanimous opinion of the legal profession, from Lord Halsbury downwards, had indicated him as a worthier holder of the office than the Conservative whom he displaced.

That may be so, but the complaint against Lord Loreburn is, not that he does not appoint on political grounds, but that he actually boycotts on political grounds, in other words, that he regards Liberals, *ipso facto*, as unfit to serve their King or their God. If that be his Lordship's conviction, we are sure it must be conscientiously held. It is quite inconceivable that the Keeper of the King's Conscience could let himself be swayed in the discharge of his high functions by the desire to be patted on the back by decadent Dukes, or called a nice man by Primrose Countesses, or praised for his stern indifference to popularity by the *Daily Mail*. Sir Robert Reid, we are persuaded, would not have accepted a peerage and £10,000 a year, with a pension of £5,000 a year for life in reversion, unless his conscience had assured him that he was free from the stain which disqualifies for the unpaid magistracy and the ill-paid vicarage.

The inference is clear that his Lordship, although officially a Liberal, is personally a Conservative, having, no doubt, received a dispensation from the Premier to join the Primrose League before assuming office. Under some modest alias, it may be, such as Smith or Jones, his Lordship has received a Primrose knighthood; or perhaps, following the example set by his illustrious predecessor, Bacon, he writes patriotic plays and Imperial poems under the popular nom-de-plume of G. R. Sims.

Meanwhile the obscure worms whose piteous wriggles have earned the compassion of even a Liberal editor, deprive themselves of all claim to sympathy by the selfish and partisan character of their complaints. Each is thinking of his own grievance, no one is thinking of his neighbour's. The Nonconformist excluded from the bench cares nothing for the curate excluded from the pulpit, by Lord Loreburn. And neither of them appears to know or care that the boycott is enforced with equal or greater severity in every department of the public service.

The proprietor of a Liberal paper published in a dockyard district once complained to us that when a Liberal Ministry took office he had to put on pressure through his member of Parliament to obtain the Admiralty advertisements. The moment a Conservative Government came into power, the advertisements were taken from him instantly *by the officials of the dockyard*, and given to his journalistic rival.

That is but one of the innumerable complaints which have reached us, and leave no doubt that the words—"No Liberal need apply (except for the office of Secre-

tary of State)"—are written in invisible ink above half the doors of Downing Street. Lord Loreburn is far from being the only member of the present Government —or rather Ministry, for it is afraid to govern—whose private politics would seem to be at variance with his public ones. It is unfair to single out Lord Loreburn and spare Lord Crewe, and that statesman whom the *Daily News* itself, in an unguarded moment, hailed as "that true Conservative," Lord Morley.

The Liberal worms put themselves out of court altogether when they degrade a public grievance to a party one. We do not in the least mind if Lord Loreburn's conduct costs a few Liberal candidates their seats, or even costs the Cabinet its life: we mind no more than if we were the one Minister secure of a good pension. What we mind is the damage done to the nation and the empire by this bureaucratic vendetta against the democracy. It is more than a scandal, it is a traitorous crime, to rob the country of the services of half its best citizens, out of political spite. And when the opinions penalised are those of the official Government, when, in a word, they are the official politics of King Edward VII., addressing Parliament in his own person, the spite becomes insanity.

What the paid patriots of Downing Street refuse to realise is that the unpaid patriot, be he Liberal, Unionist or Socialist, who serves the public as member of Parliament, or candidate, or Eighty Club lecturer, or journalist, or humble canvasser, is rendering services not less entitled to respect and recognition than those of the War Office clerks who managed the last war, and the Anglo-Indian officials who are brewing the next mutiny.

That is the case in a nutshell, and we will not weaken it by further words.

To return to Lord Loreburn, there is one department of his work in which it seems to us that he has clearly abdicated his clear duty to the country, apart from any duty he may or may not feel towards those who have raised him to his high station, not merely in spite of his being a Liberal, but just *because* he was (in their belief) a Liberal. We refer to his appointments to Crown livings.

No perfect system of appointment to the Christian ministry exists, the Nonconformist bodies differing as widely from each other in this matter as they differ from the Church of England. But the grand merit of the National Church is that she enjoys the benefit of divers systems, so that more than one stamp of man has a chance within her pale. The clergyman who is too clerical to please a lay patron, will be sure to please a bishop; if he is too loyal a Protestant for his bishop, he has a corresponding claim on the Simeon Trustees. The Lord Chancellor ought to be relied on to do justice to another class, the broad-minded man, who has neither family connections to secure him private patronage, nor a secret Catholic society to intrigue on his behalf with the episcopal bench.

The balance in the Church can only be preserved if all these different systems are administered independently. But of late years patronage has been passing steadily from lay to episcopal hands, with the result that the clergy are growing more clerical, and losing the character of citizens in that of a sacerdotal caste.

Now it is complained of Lord Loreburn, we fear not altogether falsely, that he is guided in his bestowal of the Crown livings, not by his personal judgment as an enlightened layman, but by the opinion of the bishop of the diocese. That is to upset the balance yet further, and invest the bishops with far greater power than they were ever intended to possess.

If Lord Loreburn desires to free himself from responsibility, and at the same time to benefit the Church, there is a far better course open to him. The weakest element in the Church has always been the exclusion of the congregation from all voice in the appointment of the minister. There are a handful of parishes scattered up and down England where the parson is elected by the ratepayers. We have never heard any complaint of the results, and we have heard, as we should expect, that the system works favourably for Protestantism, and unfavourably for clericalism. We invite Lord Loreburn to try the experiment of extending this system. Instead of taking the opinion of the bishop, why not take the opinion of the parish?—of course reserving the right to disregard it if it appears to be given under improper influences. We suggest that elections carried out under the Lord Chancellor's directions, with the restraining knowledge that he was free to accept or annul the final choice, would be conducted with decorum, and would infuse a new and valuable element into the life of the Church.

Our readers ask us from time to time to offer them constructive, and not merely destructive, criticism. We are hampered by the knowledge that in most cases a practical suggestion is only likely to be accepted if it can be insinuated into a Minister's mind under the guise of an idea of his own.

There are many suggestions which we should be glad to make were there an organised party in the country willing to take them up, and work for their adoption. If we are not mistaken the need for such a party is being widely felt, and we may soon have the privilege of seeing it emerge to light. Till then, or till we meet some statesman of the calibre that excludes vanity, we shall sometimes feel that we are doing better by keeping the details of our programme up our editorial sleeve.

THE NEW SEA SONG OF THE GREEDY LASCAR.

Now some men swim and some men drown,
And a ship she cleared from Glasgow town,
And over the bar steamed she,
With her siren hooting balefully,
Into the fog on the Irish Sea.
And on her deck was an Englishman,
A Briton drunk and free.
And down in her hold where the great fires be
And the engines thunder sullenly,
A sober man, sweating in slavery:
A Lascar man.
Down in the hold was a Lascar man
Sweating in slavery.

Now the mercy of God in the fog ran down
The ship that cleared from Glasgow town:
Down in the deep went she,
With her plates a-gaping woundily,
And her fires all drowned in the Irish Sea.
And over her side leaped the Englishman,
Naked as born to be.
"I thank my God I'm alive," said he;
"I thank my God for His mercy to me,
And never more I'll follow the sea,"
Said the Englishman.
Safe ashore was the Englishman,
And drunk as drunk could be.

And yet in the hold of the ship gone down
The sober Lascar chose to drown—
Drown though his choice was free.
But first he dropped on his bended knee
And hugged his poor little treasury.
And thus to his God prayed the Lascar man:
"Leave the wage of my toil to me,
And I'll thank Thee God most joyously—
I'll thank thee, God, from the deep of the sea
That I walk not the earth in poverty,"
Said the Lascar man.
And down in the depth went the Lascar man
With the wage of his toil in the sea.

Now that Lascar man I would rather be
And take my ease on the floor of the sea
And share with a mermaid my last rupee
Than walk this land of liberty
In misery.

Norreys Connell.

Foreign Affairs.

THE statement has been repeatedly made in these columns that there never was any foundation for the naval agitation, but that it was a calculated effort to provoke a war scare between England and Germany. The "Times" of February 8th contained a review of England's naval progress for 1909. In that article these words appear: "Thus for this year, in spite of the acceleration in construction abroad, the two-Power standard, as well as the two keels to one, will have been more than maintained." Liberal complaints about "the campaign of lies" emanating from Mr. Blatchford, Mr. Maxse, Mr. Strachey, and Mr. Garvin, who have been now convicted of the basest attempt to inflame national passions since 1899, are thoroughly justified by the testimony of this impartial writer in the "Times." What have these gentlemen to say in their defence? A correspondent of the "Spectator" has already charged its editor with blood-guiltiness. The degradation to which Unionism sank in the recent election has not left the "Spectator" unblemished. The pitch of Lord Northcliffe has defiled it. This decay of decency and gentlemanly conduct is a most deplorable feature of present day journalism.

* * *

THE NEW AGE has commented upon the curious similarity between the allegations of English Jingoes against Germany and the counter allegations of German Jingoes against England. An article in the German naval paper, "Marine Rundschau" on the retirement of Lord Fisher gives a striking example of this sterility of thought amongst the Jingoes. The "Observer" last year discovered that the Germans were secretly accelerating their rate of construction. In 1908-09 the United States, England, Germany, and Italy simultaneously speeded up their "periods of shipbuilding"; but the "Observer" twisted this well-known fact in shipbuilding and naval circles into a perfidious conspiracy to overwhelm England. The "Marine Rundschau" quite incidentally, as though mentioning an undisputed fact, brings the same charge against England: "Moreover, the efforts of England to obtain in secrecy a great advance over other nations has reacted to a certain extent on the value of her own fleet. It becomes obsolete sooner." This German Review has hit upon one explanation for these naval scares. It is to the commercial benefit of many of the persons who engineer these scares that English taxpayers should be mulcted for the building of huge ships, which are rendered quite useless by the progress of naval invention in five or seven years. The owner of a certain newspaper which took a considerable part in the naval agitation, bought up blocks of armament shares when the market was low, and sold out when the scare had run them up to an artificial value, netting over £5,000 profit in "differences." Such is the commercial foundation of non-party patriotism.

* * *

The Prussian Franchise Bill has been justly denounced by the German Socialist and Radical Press. A few figures from the official returns will explain the disadvantages under which the Social-Democrats labour by reason of the class system of voting. In the Prussian General Election of 1908 the Conservatives received 354,780 votes, which gave them 152 seats. The Catholic Centre received 499,340 votes, which gave them 104 seats. The Social Democrats received 598,520 votes, which gave them seven seats! Can one be surprised that the German masses are more dangerously inclined towards the classes than in England? The fierceness of the Socialist outburst when Herr von Bethmann Hollweg introduced the present Bill, which is expected to increase the Social Democratic representation by two or three seats, can be well understood. Prussia is awaiting a Reform Bill of 1832. Moreover, the implied threat in this sentence of the German Chancellor has exasperated an already intense feeling: "Prussia could not let herself be towed into the waters of Parliamentary Government while the power of the Monarchy remained unbroken."

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The Indian Press Bill has passed, notwithstanding a strong protest from many Indian members of the new Legislative Council. This black draught has been sweetened by the release of the deportees. Lord Morley has at last given way to the pressure of the Liberals in this matter. These releases would have heralded an era of peace in India had they been combined with a restoration of civil rights to the Indian peoples. Unhappily, the Indian Statute Book is being stained with more and more repressive legislation, while measures of economic reform are absolutely neglected. One piece of good news is the retirement of Sir Herbert Risley. The rumour that Lord Kitchener is to be Viceroy is incredible. It would be tantamount to placing India under martial law. There is no precedent for appointing a general on active service to such a post as this. The effect in India would be disastrous. The Viceroyalty of India is the highest civilian office under the Crown, and it would be a momentous step to establish a military precedent. Moreover, Lord Kitchener's quarrel with Lord Curzon has unfitted him for this post. This appointment, if confirmed, will be the maddest of Lord Morley's many follies.

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The situation in Spain is getting out of hand. The fall of Senor Moret was inevitable the moment the Monarchist Liberals began intriguing against him. Senor Moret alleviated the excesses of martial law and restored the lay schools. His heart was not in the fight with the Vatican, which protested against his proposal to revise the Concordat. With a disloyal following, a suspicious King, and a hostile prelatry, his position became untenable. The straits to which King Alfonso has been reduced will be appreciated when one understands the past career of Senor Moret's successor, Senor Canalejas. Senor Canalejas is a moderate Socialist and anti-Clerical. Unearned increment taxation and old age pensions are two planks in his programme. Senor Canalejas has pledged himself to "a free election." No such thing has been known in Spain, where Liberals and Conservatives always have combined "to make the elections," as the saying is. Senor Lerroux, the Republican, is the feared enemy of Church and State. His following has increased enormously in the past few months. His programme is a most attractive one to those enlightened Spaniards who are weary of the Church and Court domination. Separation of Church and State; the dissolution of the religious orders; the abolition of indirect taxation; large expenditure upon technical education; old age pensions, and a scheme for the more equitable distribution of wealth. Spain is approaching a desperate struggle, and she will need all her virile patriotism to preserve her during the fight against religious darkness.

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City magnates are pocketing large sums from the rubber boom. Penal legislation should be carried against directors and shareholders of companies who are amassing fortunes out of exploitation of tropical natives of an abominable kind. In Peru, in the Congo, in the Malay States, and in Mexico there is the same tale of awful cruelties in connection with the commercial development of rubber estates. Anybody who has any regard for his personal honour should sell out rubber shares. The English companies are worse than the Belgian companies. "STANHOPE OF CHESTER."

London's Opportunity.

By R. Wherry Anderson.

IN order to regain power on the London County Council, the Progressives have to win twenty seats, and the elections are only three weeks ahead. Can it be done? That "depends." Is it worth doing? That also "depends."

It is a little troublesome to be everlastingly confronted with the pessimist who makes no distinction between Progressive and Moderate, regards them as the same dogs with different collars, and awaits—with or without folded hands—the day of the Super-Man or the Super-Party. His complaint, tediously repeated for twenty years and untrue all the time, is found, on analysis, to amount to little more than the conviction that the Progressives are unequal to the task of building a new Jerusalem. Those who have seen the list of candidates for the coming elections are under no illusions on the subject. The new Jerusalemites will do little electioneering; they will turn their attention to other work. The fact remains that building of some sort has to be done, and, as far as our purposes are concerned, the Progressives are the only builders available.

The campaign has not begun propitiously enough to promise a Progressive victory. Several constituencies are still without candidates, whilst others have adopted men of a calibre vastly inferior to that of the municipal statesmen who gave the Council a world-wide fame and established the very principles that are now being adopted in cities as far away as America and Australia. Even the inspiration of a programme seems to be lacking at the present moment. The Progressives are hardly likely to win on the mere denunciation of Moderate administration, more especially as the office-holders of the last three years have been too timid to use the reversing gear systematically. The election will not be won on "nagging"; there must be a constructive programme.

London's population in 1901 was four and a half millions, and the five million figure has been passed since then. With full power to brighten the lives of those millions, will the electors lethargically refuse to use that power? Will they hand over their interests to a gang of which one half are mere dull reactionaries and the other half deliberate plunderers? It is the business of the Progressives to put before the electorate an ideal. We want—to use a phrase from one of John Burns's old election addresses—a "dignified, unified, beautified London."

The use of the term "unified" brings to mind the fact that little has been done in recent years to counteract the pretensions of the Corporation that still monopolises funds and endowments, charitable and otherwise, that morally belong to the whole of the Metropolis. How long is this City division of a little more than one square mile to enjoy privileges denied to the other 116 square miles of London and exemptions that cause increased rates to the Boroughs outside its area? Is there any reason why this Unification and the Reform of the City livery companies should not form a part of the Progressive programme for 1910?

It would be useful to know which monopolies the Progressives are prepared to seek Parliamentary sanction to acquire. Is it to be electrical power or tube railways, motor-'buses or taxi-cabs, pawnshops or public-houses? The exact order may be comparatively unimportant; what is important is to know what the Party proposes in this direction, and three weeks is but a short period for the information to be conveyed to the voters.

With regard to the claims of Labour, the Progressives will, of course, declare for the maintenance of trade union conditions in contract, and for the principle of direct employment, as guaranteeing good workmanship and the breaking-up of "rings." What is the Party prepared to promise in the way of useful work for the unemployed? Take next the question of revenue. How far does the Party intend to push the principle of relieving occupiers by a cumulative rating of ground-landlords or a municipal death-duty—or both? Some time or other new sources of income must be found. Pronouncements are also wanted on Housing and Town-planning. The substitution of healthy workmen's dwellings for slum tenements might well proceed at a more rapid pace.

Why not reconsider the policy of surrendering liquor licenses? After due considerations of the advantages and disadvantages of that policy, a practical reformer is bound to come to the conclusion that it has never prevented any really determined citizen from getting drink or getting drunk. It has increased the trade of neighbouring publicans and used up the ratepayers' money. The Council ought to retain all licenses and ask the House of Commons for power to manage the business on the lines of reformed model municipal restaurants or taverns. Should such powers be withheld, it should hand over the license to a limited liability company of recognised social reformers, exacting from them a guarantee to apply all profits over five per cent. to estimable public purposes, including counter attractions to alcohol.

Then there is the æsthetic programme—the need of a beautified London. Can nothing be done to prevent the view from the White Stone pond at Hampstead from being spoilt by the intrusion of bricks and mortar into the landscape that stretches "Hendon way"? Already the prospect is by no means as pleasing as in Constable's day. Another danger threatens at Wimbledon, where the beauties of Putney Vale and Kingston Vale can only be preserved by a scheme of municipal purchase, aided possibly by some generous subscriptions from the public-spirited residents of the locality. What, again, is to be done with Lambeth Bridge, the safety of which has been questioned this ten years? Is it also impossible to devise means by which the purchase and demolition of the hideous bridge at Charing Cross could be carried out cheaply in accordance with a scheme of recoupment on the development of adjoining land?

Londoners are not asking for circuses, but, spending their days in drab and dreary surroundings for the most part, they would welcome proposals for enlivening the gloom. There are girl factory workers who want recreation, errand-boys to be kept out of mischief in their spare time, men and women who would be happier if they had more alternatives to their "pubs" and their crowded homes. Here is the opportunity for the Council to promote the later opening of museums and picture galleries and the provision of boys' clubs and girls' clubs. Concerts are municipally provided in the parks in summer, but the winter concerts are left to other caterers. Yet the latter concerts are more needed than the former, for wintry weather prevents people from indulging in boating, cycling, railway trips, and general outdoor exercise. There is a Town Hall in every part of London, and these buildings should not remain empty merely to save the trumpery cost of cleaning and lighting. A charge of twopence a head for a row or two of seats in front would defray that expense. The Council's bandsmen to-day suffer all the hardships of a "season trade"; from October to May they have to subsist on the giving of music lessons and other more or less precarious jobs. A Sunday concert at Llandudno has been known to attract an audience of 3,500. Why cannot the London County Council, disregarding in winter as in summer the antiquated objections of some of their Nonconformist friends, offer the Democracy some first-class concerts throughout the halls of the Metropolitan Boroughs? It might add to the concerts a few Art Exhibitions and prove the falsity of the insinuation of the "Liberty Review" that it is not art but beer that the people want.

The Historical Method in Sociology.

By S. H. Swinny.

The social organism, like the individual, is subject to the laws of the inorganic world. It must adapt itself to its environment. Had the constitution of the solar system been different, or had the same climate prevailed over all the earth, social development would have followed another course. So, too, the laws of biology necessarily affect society, itself an organism made up of living organisms. Social institutions, for instance, which favour the selection of the unfittest, will injure the society in which they exist. It is, therefore, not surprising that some early investigators of social phenomena should have treated sociology as a mere extension of the simple sciences. But to this plan there are two great objections. First, to account for social changes by the working of physical or biological laws would require immense periods of time. Taking such a law as that of natural selection, even if it worked entirely in one direction, many generations would have to pass before a particular type could be eliminated; and in society the law seldom works in one direction, and social changes can rarely be traced to the elimination of a single type. Secondly, it is in the early stages of civilisation, or in communities with few strong traditions, that the environment has most effect. The Dutch Boer, transplanted from Holland to the South African veldt, brought with him the civilisation of his native land, and remained generation after generation in all essentials Dutch. An old civilisation changes very slowly in response to changes of environment, and yet in the last two thousand, even in the last two hundred, years, what vast changes have taken place in Western Europe!

Another plan that recommended itself to early inquirers was the investigation of savage or primitive peoples. It was noticed that the germs of many institutions could be found among savages, and it was rightly believed that the study of origins would throw light on the institutions thus traced to their source. But here again difficulties arose. Institutions have often been entirely deflected from their original purpose. Their effects in a complex society are often entirely different from those found in simpler states. Very few societies are really primitive in the sense of being unaffected by others. And it is now being recognised that some previous knowledge of social institutions and development is necessary for the due understanding of savage peoples. A more fruitful field was opened by the study of social institutions as determined by the prevailing industry, hunting, fishing, pastoral, etc., and by tracing the effects left by these industrial stages in later ages. But here, again, the method was most successful in dealing with the simpler forms of civilisation, in which each stage has lasted for very long periods. It becomes less satisfactory when it is used to account for the rapid transitions of the modern world. And why should we seek indirectly for that which we can search by a direct approach? We want to know the course that social development will take in the future. Is not the most obvious method to study its course in the past—in other words, to discover the laws of social progress by inductions from history?

A society, isolated from all others, would change, though it may be slowly, if there were an accumulation of wealth and knowledge. The forms and traditions of the past would tend to keep it stationary; the new forces, the greater knowledge of and power over the environment would tend to introduce new ways of looking at the world, new processes in industry, new modes of life and conduct. To discover the future course it would be necessary to trace the course already followed and to consider what new forces would change that course, or accelerate or retard the rate of movement. If there were no new forces to be taken into account, induction from history would give the key to the future. If there were new forces, it would still be necessary to study history, both to see what new forces were growing up and to trace the course which would be followed without them in order to appraise their effect. If society is moving in a particular curve, whether under a constant force in the direction of the curve, or under that constant force and others tending to deflect its course or accelerate its motion, it is still necessary, if we would foresee its future course, to trace its course in the past.

Such an isolated development is nowhere found in our Western World; but for over two thousand years the West, though modified by contacts with the Theocratic civilisation of the East, such as Egypt and Persia, has had a continuous life of its own. The foundation of abstract science in Greece, the conquest and government of Rome, the passage from Polytheism to Monotheism, from conquest to defence, the decay of the mediæval system with the advance of wealth and knowledge, the destructive movement, first of Protestantism, then of Freethought, and the constructive movement of modern science, resuming the work of the Greeks, the resulting application of science to industry and the modern industrial revolution, are phases of a growth proceeding at very different rates, but in which each phase is closely connected with and results from its predecessors. The external contacts can be easily valued and allowance made for them; and subject to them, each stage will be one link in a long chain. Each generation inherits the civilisation of those that have gone before, makes its own additions, large or small, and hands on the civilisation thus modified to its successors, to be modified by them in turn.

Two very common objections to this historic method are the complexity and the obscurity of history. But the first is not in itself an objection. It is only an explanation of the long delay in applying it. If it is the best method for reaching the desired goal, it must be pursued in spite of its difficulties. The simplicity of a method is no guarantee that it will produce good results. And as to the obscurity of history it is a mistake to suppose that history as an instrument of sociological research depends upon those questions of individual psychology which are so important to the biographer Great intellectual and social movements are not obscure—the facts are patent enough, though the relations between those facts may appear very different to the trained sociologist and the descriptive historian. There is nothing obscure or doubtful, for instance, in the general course of modern science; even such problems as the stagnation of biology after the time of Harvey is easily explicable. History in its main outlines is easily traceable, and it is with its main outlines that sociology is concerned. One caution, indeed, is necessary in dealing with Western Europe in modern times. There is a general line of advance common to all the nations that compose it, but modified in each particular case by the peculiar circumstances of each. The study of any one of these national histories by itself will not enable the student to disentangle the general from the particular. It is necessary to begin with the general evolution of Western civilisation, and then to consider how the peculiar circumstances of the country, such as, for instance, the insularity of England, have caused special developments. And there is this further advantage in considering the general movement before that of any one nation—it gives less effect to the much-feared obscurity of history. The worst national historian can do little to falsify a movement common to many nations. One other point may be noticed. The historical method does not set aside other methods. On the contrary, it brings out their full meaning. How can the effect of the environment be calculated unless we know the stage of social evolution reached, and the other social forces which are acting? How can we assign its due weight to the geographical position of England or of Ireland unless we know something of the general course of civilisation?

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones and Drama.*

THESE five pamphlets by Henry Arthur Jones have touched me to tenderness. That a man who has been writing plays for thirty years should be able to tell us that we have no drama, and that he knows the necessary conditions of its production, is to me as pathetic as the tragedy of a mis-spent life. Mr. Jones has been treated very generously by the play-going public of England and America, as he himself declares; I suppose that the royalties on "The Dancing Girl," "The Silver King," "The Middleman," "The Masqueraders," "The Case of Rebellious Susan," "The Liars," "The Manœuvres of Jane," and "Mrs. Dane's Defence" have placed him beyond the necessity of writing for his bread and butter. Why, then, should he be pleading for a modern drama? Is it that the elder brother wishes the prodigal son to share his prosperity, that Abraham's bowels are moved to pity by the thought of poor Ishmael starving in solitude; or that Mr. Jones is an artist who has denied himself expression, has, indeed, blasphemed against the Holy Ghost, and is now compelled to utter his own condemnation? The last is probably the real reason, for he says that "if a national theatre should be established and endowed either by the Government or by a private gift, I would very glady offer it a new play without any consideration of fees whatever." If my conjecture is correct, if Mr. Jones has created a work of art, a drama as distinguished from a play, may I suggest that his position and influence ought to secure an early production of it? In times like these, when the theatre is full of "legs and tomfoolery," as Mr. Jones aptly phrases it, no artist has any right to conceal his creation when publication is easy to him. A real drama is preferable even as argument to explanations of what drama should be, and I await this play by Mr. Jones that will prove all his past productions to have been exercises in craftsmanship. I have so much sympathy with Mr. Jones' intentions and aspirations that I do not rejoice at being obliged to differ from his proposals. The cry of the artist for works of art, for the beauty of truth and the truth of beauty, the mystical reality of immortality, touches me so nearly that I should like to agree even where I differ: the aspiration is of so much more importance to me than the argument. But Mr. Jones is really wrong in his arguments, shows such a misconception of the artistic nature and the method of its expression, the cases he mentions so completely refute his proposals that I shall be doing a real service to our common hope by emphasising his inconsistencies.

Let me say at once that Mr. Jones' attitude towards this subject is the antipodes of my own. His argument is a plea for recognition, protection, and patronage: he wants the drama to be recognised "as the highest and most difficult form of literature," he wants "a national or répertoire theatre where high and severe literary and artistic standards may be set," and, if I understand him rightly, he wants the drama to be approved by Oxford, and all that the word connotes; in short, he pleads that the privileges of respectability be extended to dramatic art. To this end, he begs the Puritan not to be puritanic, the puerile person not to be puerile, the pornographic person not to be pornographic. Of course, all these people will retort by asking the artist not to be artistic. A man must see that these protests against human nature are futile, that art has achieved and must achieve its glory in spite of the difficulties, that an artist is wasting his time in objecting to the conditions of his existence, that if he wants recognition, protection, and patronage, he must find the way to get them from unwilling people, and that he has no right to any of these if he does not produce a work of art. "A faithless and perverse generation seeketh after a sign," but if no sign be given it is idle as well as unfair to abuse the faithless and perverse generation. God made us all, and, as Byron said, "God help us all," for nothing short of a miracle can save us.

Why, it may be asked, should drama be recognised as the highest and most difficult form of literature? What is to be gained by subjecting a play to another standard of judgment? We have seen the architectural ideal paramount in music, the sonata form set up as the pattern from which no musician must vary, with the result that the dithyramb, which only music can express properly, has been decried as beyond the sphere of music. Debussy has been damned because he was not Inigo Jones, and I am of opinion that some of the musicians have become architects, for the South Kensington Museum, for instance, is undoubtedly a blend of the two arts. Precisely those things which are great in literature cannot be expressed in drama; the storm in "Lear," for instance, is poetry and not drama, and any attempt to reproduce it in actuality robs it of its value as literature. The peculiar function of literature is its capacity for transporting the static states of the emotions or the soul into words: the drama, on the other hand, must express the dynamic states in action. If it were otherwise, if the two arts had this inter-dependence instead of correlation, we could put "Wuthering Heights" and "The Story of an African Farm" on the stage, and "Henry of Navarre" and "The Masqueraders" in the Library. A static drama is a contradiction in terms, Maeterlinck notwithstanding, and any attempt to set it up as an ideal would justify anyone in reproducing the meeting between Carlyle and Tennyson, for example, when two men sat together for an hour and a half without speaking except to ask for the matches. This subject would be suitable for a picture, but neither literature nor drama could make anything of it.

Mr. Jones will think that I have lost my grip of his idea; he will protest that he had no intention of founding or supporting a static drama. But if drama is to be identified with literature instead of differentiated from it, he must be logical and take the consequences. If a play is to be suitable for reading, it must possess something more than is necessary for its performance. Shakespeare, of course, is on my side; he wrote poetry, and poetry can be declaimed as well as read. His plays are literature because they are poetry, not because they are drama: his construction is faulty, and again and again he drops out of a character and soliloquises in his own manner. This is permissible in literature, but not in drama; we regard Shakespeare as our greatest poet, not our greatest playwright. Look at Browning and Byron: they are both dramatic poets, both can be either read or declaimed, but neither was successful as a dramatist. A play may have a literary quality that makes it suitable for reading: the Greek dramas are a case in point: but it is seen at its best on the stage, and must be judged as drama.

I am not denying the difficulties of dramatic writing: I believe it to be the most difficult of all the arts; but I object to raising another standard of judgment. The plays that are now being produced are, speaking generally, neither drama nor literature: Mr. Jones himself has written many plays, but not one drama that he considered worthy of mention. I have not read his plays, so I have no opinion to express of their literary value, but I venture to think that they would not be as satisfactory in the study as we have found them on the stage. If we have no drama, as Mr. Jones says and I agree, it is because we have no dramatists; we have many playwrights who have mastered the technique of

* "On Reading Modern Plays" (Samuel French); "Foundations of a National Drama" (Chiswick Press); "Corner Stones of Modern Drama" (Chiswick Press); "Literature and the Modern Drama" (Chiswick Press); "The Censorship Muddle" (Samuel French, 6d. net).

their craft, and can turn out plays mechanically. They are not dramas because they are not the expression of a creative impulse working upon a personal emotion; they are the fruit of intellect not of imagination, they are based on facts and not on truth, they are the effects of observation, not of vision. There is no reason for the play form having been adopted; they might more properly have been written as novels or Fabian tracts. Let it be stated positively that a drama can only be written by a dramatist who has an idea or an emotion that demands the dramatic form for its fullest expression. A drama must be an organism self-contained and explanatory, expressing something that could not be better expressed by any other art. Having shouted for a dramatist, let us see what Mr. Jones proposes to do with him.

Mr. Jones proposes the establishment of "a national or répertoire theatre," the publication of plays, a school for actors, and the treatment of drama as a fine art. As Mr. Jones tells us that we have no drama, I decline to treat modern plays as fine art. I intend to judge all plays from the point of view of drama, and I refuse to call a playwright an artist. I object to schools for actors just as I object to the Academy of Music: I do not want a lot of cleverly trained mechanical mummers, all with the same tricks of expression, the same treatment of a subject, the same "severe literary and artistic standard." The system may work very well in France, but we are in England, and when we see Oxford and Cambridge turning out hundreds of men every year who are only fit for the stiff shirt, frock coat, and silk hat they instantly adopt, when we see our Academy turning out players and singers by the score, and not one artist worth mentioning, we may have our doubts as to the efficacy of a school for actors. By all means let them learn elocution, but if they do not know how to act no man alive can teach them. Shaw has told us of the almost insuperable difficulties in the way of professional performances of Ibsen's plays: he stated that the best performances were given by intelligent amateurs. Similar experiences befell him in the production of his own plays: he found the professional actor incapable of understanding that a Shavian character is possibly a man; the actor could only conceive it as that of a hero or a villain. If this is the result of a professional career, in which a man has to play many parts, what would be the result of a training in a school for actors? All of them would be taught by the same masters, all would be moulded on the same models, they would all know the same set of technical tricks, and most of them would be incapable of understanding a part that did not call for the use of those tricks. Thank God, we have no established Academy of Acting in England: things are bad enough as they are, but the elevation of our standards by academic training and influence, the vision of a cultured people, is enough to make every artist shiver with horror. The Philistine is ever preferable to the Professor; he does not pretend to understand art, and can sometimes be induced to accept a masterpiece instead of a commonplace. But the Professor and his laws, his classic models, and his good taste. Be merciful and spare us!

The national theatre is, of course, the most attractive of the proposals, but is it actually any better for the dramatist who is an actor? Mr. Jones objects to a Censor, and I quite agree with all his arguments; but is a national theatre likely to be even as tolerant as Mr. Redford has been to new men and methods? We all know the type of man who is naturally attracted to these official positions: Mr. Jones's own insistence on the difference between Mr. Pigott the man and Mr. Pigott the Censor shows us. Nor would Mr. Jones be more acceptable to me as Director than Mr. Pigott or Mr. Redford. I have already mentioned his offer of one of his own plays, but I have something worse than that against him. In his lecture at Harvard on "The Corner Stones of Modern Drama," he said: "I am told that a very large amount was designed by a wealthy American to found and endow a national American theatre on a most lavish scale; but he was persuaded by a religious friend to hold his hand and shut his pocket because of the evil that a national theatre might work in your midst. Consider how many hundreds of thousands of your fellow-citizens will in consequence waste their evenings in empty frivolity, when they might have been drawn to *Shakespeare or Goethe.*" If any man offers to play Goethe in England, I solemnly declare that I will shoot him. But what are Shakespeare and Goethe doing in a national American theatre? We see, then, how Mr. Jones regards the national theatre: it will be managed by men of culture, refinement, and good taste, it will commend itself to University men and all the illustrious obscure, as Shelley called them, and Ishmael will still starve in the desert.

It will be objected that I am not putting forward any proposals of my own: I have a reason, and a good one. Shaw has dealt thoroughly with this matter in the preface to, I think, his "Unpleasant" plays. He proposed a sysem similar to that which supports opera: an influential committee of wealthy people and patrons of art, with a whole host of subscribers behind them, who could endow a theatre and pay a manager, and produce plays of an artistic nature wthout being obliged to consider too nearly their prospects of a commercial success. If this proposal is not acted upon, if the successful dramatists like Mr. Jones and Mr. Shaw do not take the lead in this matter, I am afraid that we shall have to put up with "legs and tomfoolery," or avoid the theatre altogether, as so many of us do.

There are certain platitudes that are so true that nobody believes them: one of them is, I think, stated by Wordsworth—"An artist creates the taste by which he is enjoyed." Shakespeare despised the mob quite as much as Wordsworth did, he cared so little for his plays that he made no attempt to preserve them; but he created the taste by which he is enjoyed. The mob acclaimed the wrong plays as the best, but they made it possible for him to produce his best. Ibsen and Shaw in our own day have gained recognition in the teeth of terrible opposition. Would their position have been any better, would their task have been easier, if we had had a school of actors and a national theatre that played Shakespeare and Goethe? What is the use of talking about "the establishment of definite and continuous relations between the drama and literature" as being necessary to the production of original works of art, when Mr. Jones tells us that the scene in Vanity Fair, written by Bunyan in "The Pilgrim's Progress," is an "imperishable piece of dramatic literature written, not by a man of letters, but by a travelling tinker"? What is the use of Mr. Jones telling us that a national theatre is one of the necessary foundations of a national English drama, when he told the students of Yale University that "it would be a sad waste of time if England or America were to put forth any self-conscious efforts to found and sustain a school of poetic drama to-day, or, indeed, to hope that by any possible process of manipulation or endowment the rising generation of English and American playwrights can with laboured forethought accomplish what the Elizabethans did naturally and spontaneously"? Let it be admitted frankly that England is not an artistic country, that if an artist is unfortunate enough to be born here he will find that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is a direct reference to him. And if there be any people in England who love art, and are in a position to help an artist to publicity when they find him, let them do so. But this establishment of schools and national theatres is not for the artist: it is an attempt to escape from the mediocrity of one to the mediocrity of many. Let us by all means have better plays, if we can get them, and better acting, and better criticism, and better treatment of the new men, if we can get it; but do not let us suppose that a national theatre committee will have any more appreciation of a work of art than a private manager, or that a school for actors will do any more than a professional experience has done. If we could induce the artists to practise the various arts, we should have no praise to spare for the craftsmen and journeymen. But where are the artists?

ALFRED E. RANDALL.

Our Idealists.

By August Strindberg.

(Translated from Strindberg's "New Kingdom" for "The New Age," by Miss D. Wooldridge.)

No tax-gatherer, rate collector, or statistical office can give us a census of idealists. We have made inquiries in vain at the district police station, and at the local assembly of clergy, but they admit to no such beings amongst them. They are everywhere and nowhere. It is not as if idealists never paid taxes, went to church, visited the police station, and so on; they do all that right enough, but, as has been said, one does not come across them in directories and registers. They belong to the class of doubtful beings of whose existence one is only now and then reminded. You have only to unveil a humbug, and you will at once see an idealist creep out and defend the humbug; call a man who has forged a cheque a forger and an idealist will show himself, and say that you have lost your ideal. He will omit to comment on the fact that you have lost your money, for he and his kind are not concerned with money, say they. Disturb any social rubbish heap you will, and idealists will crawl out like earthworms, and bury themselves in the earth; but, if you want to see them face to face, invite them to a big dinner, and you shall see them swarm like flies—big, fat meat-flies; announce a pension, a place in the Government, a sinecure, and they will bound forward like grasshoppers, and they will receive the place or the pension without fail.

What is really meant by idealist has never yet been defined, and, as with all unwholesome questions, it has been thought proper to keep it vague.

I, for my humble part, do not know what to think. I have met idealists everywhere, but I have never been able to define them. Once I shared the opinion that they were a Jesuitical society, but abandoned it when I saw an idealist intoxicated. A Jesuit would certainly not have got drunk. That they are a secret society I believed a whole summer which I spent in company with a journalist on the "Evening News." We were agreed on all social and political questions, believed as little in Napoleon III. as in the divinity of Christ; considered that truth was as yet undiscovered, but that her paths lay open; in a word, we were entirely agreed on all important points. One day an acquaintance asked me how I could stand the man.

"Because we agree about most things."

"You? But he's an idealist!"

"Hm! What does that mean?"

"Haven't you read the 'Evening News'?"

"No, I never read the 'Evening News.'"

"Read it then," said he, with an odd expression in which both mockery and sympathy shared.

At the dinner table my eyes involuntarily fell on a grey-blue sheet which lay under the bread-basket. I drew it carefully forth; unfolded it with still more care, and amongst the gravy and mustard stains I discovered a heading which drew my attention. The article was signed with my friend's not very well-known name.

I had thought I knew the world and men pretty well, but after reading that I looked upon myself as a young pigeon. For the writer showed himself not only lacking in all the convictions which he had maintained in his conversations, but even to be in full possession of directly opposite opinions. He was now pathetic, moralizing, intolerant, narrow-minded, and religious.

I wiped my hands on my napkin, and stuffed the newspaper behind the icechest.

That afternoon I met the idealist once more, and discovered that on his watch chain he wore a bronze medal with the bust of Prince Napoleon, recently dead, upon it.

To my question as to why he carried it, he answered that he had it. And when I asked what it meant to be an idealist, he asked me, laughing, if I would come and have a drink with him.

Idealists are found in all classes of society. I have met wine-merchants and steamboat captains who were idealists, but what this really consisted in, I never could make out. With the captain of the steamboat it expressed itself in this wise: he read a chapter out of the Bible every night. One chapter it had to be. But as he was drunk every evening no one could understand how he did it. In the wine-merchant's case it seemed only to consist in being in a sickly state of health, which necessitated the use of soda-water in the morning.

Professional idealists have given more definite shape to its cloudy principles. Two in particular are leaders, and continually bring forward their extraordinary power of idealising. One is the poet; the other the patriot. The poet belongs to that small and happy class of beings who may be named the favoured race. They may behave as culpably and as preposterously as they choose. They are counted among the favoured; they may do anything they will.

He was favoured by the teachers at school for his fine velvet blouse; he was favoured at his confirmation, because he was able to lay a five-pound note in the clergyman's hat; he was favoured in his graduating exams. when he gave a dinner at Hasselbacken. He travelled abroad and gazed on oil-paintings, marble statues and churches, to say nothing of how he amused himself; and read poetry books. When he grew tired of that, he came home and graduated as a doctor of philosophy by means of the poetry books, which came about thus: He had to say what the examining professor thought of such and such poems. As he was his good friend and said "thou" to him, he knew pretty well what the examining professor's thoughts were. The others, who did not say "thou" to the professor, had to seek many years before they could discern his thoughts, which were not to be found in books. Our friend was, of course, declared to be a genius when he had surpassed his companions. Now, after having read so many poetry books, he had naturally no difficulty in making poetry himself. So he made one piece to begin with. That his success was complete goes without saying, but, unfortunately, one poem is not enough to make a man immortal. He determined to make more. And he made them on all occasions. Now his learned friends had taught him that it was accompanied with less risk to recite his poems than to print them, and that this method was both pleasanter and quicker. Occasions were not lacking in times of festivity, and our friend chose the royal road. There were no banquets for celebration of inauguration at which our beloved poet did not, when dessert came, recite his poems to a slightly elevated company of gentlemen and ladies, who received with unbounded delight the productions which afterwards appeared in all the newspapers together with the accounts of the banquet.

But time stumps by with heavy tread, and drives the children of men in their multitudes before him. Woe to those who stand still. The peaceful winds of summer drop asleep; the horizon clouds over; the air grows heavy. We hear a distant rumbling; the cretonne curtains in the verandah begin to flap; cigar smoke wavers restlessly to and fro. The windows are shut; the shutters closed. It is thunder! Now a long sigh may be heard, a distant whistling; a drop of rain, heavy as a hailshot, strikes the Belgian window pane; the canaries scream; the storm is upon us. With his first blast he breaks off the dahlias, snaps the pale stalks of the asparagus, shakes the brown wigs of the artichokes, and interlaces the arbour and the asters in a confused mass. Cabbage heads cling to the earth like frightened hares, thinking to let the storm pass over, but he does not do so without fluttering their leaves as if they were a book of coupons; he tears out one from each end, and strews them around like chaff.

Take care, cabbage-heads, when the storm comes again!

Our friend looked at himself one day in the glass, and found that the continually repeated banquets had given him an apoplectic appearance. In fact, he looked more like an alderman than a poet. This gave him food for thought. He began to sleep badly at night, and hear pistol shots in his dreams; he began, in his waking hours, to smell powder. As Poet Laureate, he had the minor occupation of keeping a look-out. He saw unknown sails emerging from the distance; flags which he could not find in the Government's flag-charts; bold voyagers and sharp keels which he had not seen before. What were these privateers? As they were not to be found in the rolls they were enemies. He reported their behaviour, and was at once nominated literary Censor. As "dirt" he designates all literature which is not written in verse or does not treat of royal personages, lilacs, and cathedrals; further: poverty (all poverty is self-caused); beggars (begging is forbidden by law); ragged children; the incurably afflicted (unless with apoplexy!); fallen women; bad dinners; unsuccessful poets (except unsuccessful poets laureate). Those who criticise poets laureate, who unveil successful humbugs, who investigate the causes of human misery, and who turn to dustheaps to seek possible pearls are all the veriest scribblers. Yet in all this, it is not easy to get an idea of his ideal. Perhaps there is no such idea! Perhaps it is nothing at all! Perhaps it is like nothing but a black overcoat kept on a peg, and only worn when one goes for a walk. Perhaps it is another's name with which we sign ourselves! Perhaps!

But there is another idealist, who might, if he were not so stupid, be more dangerous in his activities than he is. This is the patriot. He is three yards long, has a huge beard, carries a cudgel, and wears top boots. He is the product of time spent at students' meetings and polytechnics. He has made his way in the world with an old musket, which he is always cocking. He began to cock it in the polytechnic among the friends of the militia, and has since continued to cock it in a big newspaper. But his flintlock is broken, and he has in vain offered the pieces to the historical museum; the tinder is wet, and the powder is musty. When no one believed any more in his gun, to which he wrote bad poems every year, he drew forth a sabre which he had bought in a rag and bone shop. Every now and then he rattles his sabre, but it attracts no one.

A blockhead himself, and an unsuccessful author, he occupies his leisure moments in persecuting young writers. He even tried to make his way at Court, but his cudgel pounded too hard on the parquet and his heavy boots tore holes in the carpets. He was, however, employed as a commercial traveller for the Court in the provinces, where he gave lectures on the history of Swedish kings and disturbs the ideas of the polytechnics. He cooks up everything in some way to win his laurels, and coins false money out of his patriotism, which is of the cheapest. He maintains that the causes of emigration may be sought for in the weakening of the regal power and in the decay of religiosity; he considers that it may be stopped by tariff reform and conscription; he preaches the gospel that the millennium has come to Sweden; that her development has reached its height, and that Sweden is the freest and happiest land on earth. For the rest, he assists with patriotic speeches at the inauguration ceremonies of elementary schools; at the opening of cattle shows, canals, and locks (but not of railways); he is delighted to uncover monuments to patriots; he distributes the medals of the Patriotic Society to faithful servants; is a member of the Society for the Promotion of Patriotic Industry; and arranges for flag-waving in country districts. His martial ardour is a result of the students' meetings and the forementioned flintlock.

But his days are numbered because he is very old, and one expects hourly to hear of an accident with his wretched old gun, which he is eternally cleaning. Yet we hope that he may be able to live long and learn that there are other ideals than Karl XII. and cattle shows, although they may not find a place in his mind, or be welcomed with flag-waving in country districts.

The Lemon Flower.

By Allen Upward.

In the life of the exquisite poet Wong this passage occurs:—

One day the magnificent Emperor Kublai, while seated in his garden, discoursing with his favourite poets, put to them this question: "What is the greatest instance of friendship?"

One of those present replied:

"I have heard that the rich mandarin Ching Hsing despoiled himself of everything he possessed, and having put the price of his estates into a bag, sent it to his friend Wu, whose property had been confiscated. It seems to me that no friend has exceeded the generosity of Ching."

Another of the poets, however, responded:

"Wealth in itself is not a great thing since its loss can be replaced. It is related of the famous philosopher Men-Tzao that, having observed that the eyes of his friend Yi frequently sought his wife's face, he commanded the woman to go to him, and say,—'Thy friend Men-Tzao sends me to thee.' Surely there can be no greater evidence of friendship than this."

A third member of the circle spoke thus:

"The utmost that one friend can offer to another is his life. The historians of the Hans inform us that the celebrated commander Meng, having heard that his friend and comrade Le was condemned to death, went to the place of execution, and suffered himself to be beheaded in his stead. Meng, therefore, seems to me to have achieved the most exalted nobility in friendship."

When all the others had confessed that they were unable to produce any greater instance of devotion, the magnificent Kublai turned to Wong, who had remained silent, and asked him:

"But what does Wong say? Are you of the same opinion as your brethren? Surely you cannot tell us of any more striking proof of friendship than this of Meng."

Wong, after considering for a moment, answered:

"Each of the acts of friendship which have been related merits the praise of perfection, since each of these honourable personages did what his friend required. The death of the mandarin Ching would not have benefited Wo; neither would the wealth of Men-Tzao have been a solace to Yi; nor could the wife of Meng have extricated Le. Nevertheless it seems to me that I have heard of something even more remarkable than the generosity of these friends.

"This trait is recorded of the illustrious and sublime poet Wang Po on the following occasion. The Viceroy of the province of Hunan offered the prize of a robe of silver tissue for an ode on the Imperial birthday. Wang Po, after he had sent in his own poem, found that his friend Sun had also written one, which, however, he was unable to present to the board of judges, through not having enough money to pay for the copying of the ode on yellow silk in letters of vermilion, as is prescribed by etiquette in the case of such compositions. Wang Po, although he perceived that Sun's ode was superior to his own, ordered it to be copied at his own expense, and transmitted it to the board. A report of what had taken place having come to the ears of the Viceroy, he awarded the silver robe to Sun, but ordered a robe of gold brocade to be given to Wang Po, since the beauty of a generous action exceeds the beauty of a poem as far as the value of gold exceeds that of silver.

"This, therefore, O great Emperor, appears to me to be the most conspicuous instance of friendship. For even as the flower of the bitter lemon, when trodden on, exhales the most delicate perfume, so does the mortifying passion of literary envy, when trodden under by friendship, yield a fragrance surpassing that of the lemon flower."

The victorious Kublai responded:

"Since it appears to me that the poet Wong understands the nature of true friendship better than any of the others who have spoken, henceforth I desire that he may be reckoned as the foremost of my friends."

The New Preacher.

Dialogue between two Anglo-American Stock-brokers.

By Francis Grierson.

THEY had listened to the first sermon of the new minister, and the people, now slowly leaving the church, were more than usually silent, more profoundly impressed than on any former Sunday within the memory of the oldest member of the congregation. Something had happened. The people might have been coming away from a long and solemn funeral service; but, as a young stockbroker remarked to his friend as they walked down the street, it was a funeral service with an immediate resurrection. The old was gone, the new had taken its place. The broker as he walked tried to explain.

"That man," he said, alluding to the new preacher, "has what artists call the true magic. He tears down the false and then builds up the reality. Did you notice what an influence settled down over the congregation when he began his description of worldly actions and reactions? Did you feel the sensation of sinking down and then rising up and out into a clearer and better atmosphere?"

His companion answered that he was fully conscious of the sensation at the time, and asked:

"Does it not come under the heading of rhetorical eloquence? Is it not due to the artistry of the words and sentences?"

"All fine preaching is more or less rhetorical," was the answer; "but the sermon of the new minister had in it something both higher and deeper than rhetoric; it was full of an emotion as true as it was fine. No concoction of empty phrases and fine words will ever influence critical and sensitive people. To revive drooping plants the water must sink to the roots. Words and sentiments must touch the deepest recesses of emotion. Mere argument can never be made to influence in the same way and cold logic is useless when you want to reach the high and touch the deep."

The stockbroker's companion admitted all this to be true, but he demanded to know how it came about that the preaching of certain revivalists, and notably that of the early revivalists, appealed to an order of mind quite the opposite to that of the mind used to rhetorical culture and classical learning. The broker stopped, and, facing his companion, explained:

"The emotion of the ordinary revivalist and the emotion displayed by this new minister are not on the same level."

"You mean the one is dominated by a sort of blind feeling, the other by a conscious intelligence?"

"This new preacher is an artist in words."

"You mean," said the other, "that the ordinary revivalist daubs his colours on the congregational canvas while this new preacher blends his colours and uses his brush with skill and caution."

"He does all that and more. I noticed while he was preaching how every word fit the idea, how every sentence fit every sentiment. Things were unified. His whole sermon was as orderly as a musical composition and as harmonious as a beautiful picture."

"So you think he was conscious of being the master of his sermon, instead of the sermon the master of him?"

"Impressional preaching is a good thing if the congregation is not critical. An audience of educated and experienced people have the critical faculty too strongly developed to be influenced by a preacher's impulsiveness, no matter how eloquent he may be. As soon as I know that a preacher is as critical as I am I listen to what he has to say, ready to be moved by his words if there is anything in them superior to the kind of argument we hear every day. This new preacher is logical, but we who have lived on logic want something more. We want the thing which we do not possess."

"You mean the art."

"I mean the art if you care to call it by that word; the art that goes hand in hand with a sort of verbal inspiration, a sort of word-magic, the sort of thing no fellow can quite explain, no matter how we reason over it. You see, the thing is too simple to be explained."

"Too simple!" The broker's companion stopped suddenly and looked the other in the face.

"Yes, it is too simple! Have you forgotten your Emerson already? The simple is always the result of the complex."

They remained silent for some time, then the broker continued:

"In every art the finest things are the clearest things; they bear a vital exterior evidence, full of significant power. When any art fails to do this it is not *fine art*; it is crude art."

"You mean to imply that the majority of preachers fail to influence their congregations because of their want of such art?"

"The vast majority fail to impress their hearers, not from lack of sincerity, or honesty, or deep conviction, but from lack of this poetic art, which means beauty united to power, conviction united to what critics call the "creative faculty."

"I must admit," said the other, "that I rarely attend church simply to hear the preacher. If I know what he is going to preach about I usually know what he is going to say. I sit and listen to the old platitudes in the name of ethics, and am mighty glad when the sermon is over."

"This is true of the majority of church-goers to-day," returned the broker. "Most of us go to hear the music first; the sermon is thrown in to give the service some show of moral and religious sentiment. I confess I, too, went to church to-day to hear the music. Now I have forgotten all about the music and am still under the spell cast by the new minister, whose correct name I hardly know."

"And yet all the words he used in his twenty-minute sermon are to be found in Webster's Abridged," said the other smiling.

"Truth on Sunday requires Sunday clothes."

"You mean the common truths expressed by the ordinary preacher are too common to impress."

"The ordinary preacher comes before his congregation with the same sentiments, the same expressions which served him during the week. He has changed nothing. The people have put on their Sunday best, the beauty of the women has been enhanced by colour and elegance, the character of the men has been enlivened by a more fastidious attention to cut of garment, but in his words, his attitude, his moods the preacher remains exactly what he was on the previous Friday or Saturday. *He is not on the art level of his congregation.*"

"That is a great point," said the other, musingly.

"Every ineffectual effort sinks to the level of the commonplace," continued the broker; "but in these matters the simple and the common are as wide apart as two poles. Most people, in trying to be natural and simple, become ordinary to the verge of boredom."

"So you think the homely truths have ceased to influence church-goers."

"A highly educated congregation demands something different. What we of the big cosmopolitan

cities want to-day is not household preaching, but household inspiration."

"What do you mean by the word 'inspiration'?"

"Religious feeling united to intellectual imagination, added to a something which eludes definition."

"A sort of divine mood, in which the preacher and the artist are one."

"Our senates, law courts, universities, studios, and literary coteries contain more gifted men than the churches."

"The fact is," said the other, with emphasis, "the rapid progress made in the world of art and music in recent years has made the efforts put forth by our leading churches look small and insignificant in comparison."

"But they have clutched at music," said the broker, "clutched at it like a drowning man at a straw."

"Yes, it is a grave error."

After a significant silence, the other said:—

"The mood evoked by music is transcendental. We soar on airy wings while we listen, but we descend to earth as soon as the last strains have ceased. Music entrances, but the trance is brief. The religious spirit is very different. We feel it as a waking reality. It is something we take with us from the home to the office in the City. *Music is a passion, religion is a principle.*"

"Is not fine music a good thing for the Church?"

"Its true mission is to open a way. Viewed in this light, its effect is sometimes marvellous, but so is the effect produced by an application of electric power to the human nerves—a power which thrills, but does not feed. Real religion is much more than a mental stimulus."

"You mean to imply that the churches are depending on music to take the place of effective preaching?"

"They are trying to feed the people on electric shocks."

"And in the meantime the people are undergoing a spiritual famine. Some churches offer a regular Sunday banquet, where everything is present but the staff of life. As matters stand now, music is the champagne of the banquet, the sermon a fricassee composed of fish, flesh, and fowl."

"We have made great strides forward in every line of accomplishment except that of original, true, and emotional preaching," said the other, as if waking out of a reverie.

"I agree," said his companion; "but emotion in itself is not an art, but a gift. The business of the artist is to direct emotion, tone it into rhythm, and make it effective."

"We are too young to remember the old-time actors who used to tear a passion to tatters, or the great revivalists like Peter Cartwright who swung sinners over the jaws of Tophet until their feet touched perdition; but in giving up the old, we have taken to pulpit talk which is hardly up to the intellectual level of the ordinary scientific lecturer."

"Is that not why the majority of preachers pass in society as intellectualists without a special religious gift, and without a real spiritual mission, possessing no vital influence on the people they meet in daily life?"

"Ministers have too long flattered the people by all sorts of notions cloaked under the name of religion, in which the soul has no more place than a sermon would have in the arena of the Stock Exchange on a busy day."

"Can science and religion ever be made to mingle and harmonise?" asked the other, with feeling.

"Formerly we humbugged others while we remained undeceived, but now each man does his best to humbug himself. Science has as much to do with religious sentiment and psychic emotion as it has to do with the natural flowers that grow unaided in the woods and fields. The smart man in the pulpit is no better than the smart man on the Stock Exchange. He receives no more respect from the world generally. In taking away the grosser superstitions from religion our ministers have taken away reverence and all the finer feelings and sentiments that belong to the realm of the psychic. There is no such thing as scientific poetry, no such thing as scientific emotion, no such thing as scientific religion."

"That means that no science will ever touch even the hem of the garment of the soul," said the other.

"Quite so. *Intellectual preaching is a religious illusion*, like operatic music in the church on Sunday. There are people who think such things fill a long-felt want; what they really fill is a social vacuum on Sunday."

"Religious leaders have got hold of the wrong art," said the other, with a luminous smile.

"Worldly art," said the broker, curtly. "Science is a material state of the mind, religion a spiritual state of the soul."

"The new minister possesses the last; it seemed to me he filled the whole church with an aura of religious intensity. He impressed all, even the most fashionable and worldly."

"That is because all great art is a psychic effusion."

They ceased speaking for a time. Then the broker said:

"A word is but a spark of light; a fine sentence is a thought made radiant. A splendid sermon is to a congregation what the rays of the sun are to the things of the earth. Plants grow aided by rain and sunshine; souls develop under discipline and the right words spoken at the right time. The new minister began his sermon in a sort of gloom; the clouds gathered, and at the right moment the rain descended, with interludes of sunshine to let us see that the sun exists above the clouds, and that religious happiness is not an illusion."

"Because people were never so fed up on worldly illusions as they are to-day, and I fear we are stall-fed optimists ready for the slaughter. We have listened too long to empirics who come and feel our pulse, look at our tongue, and then tell us, with a nonchalant air that nothing ails us but a passing indigestion, advise us to go for a trip to the country or to take a long sea voyage."

"I am not sure but that an age of optimism is not an age given over to pleasure," said the other.

"Many people are optimists from intellectual conceit. Pride, ignorance, and vanity are at the bottom of most of our optimistic pretensions, and if you look at things closely you will soon see how most of our so-called religious people are in exactly the same fix as our political parties. Before an election all parties are bursting with optimism, pretending to be happy. As a matter of fact, all are in doubt, many in a state of fear. After the election ask your political optimist if he is happy! The bitter irony! Ask your fair-weather church-goers if they are happy on the day the doctor whispers the final word that all is over with them—no more illusion, no more flattery, no more lying, no more pleasure, no more hope. Awful hour! When the optimistic catch-words sound as hollow as the cold clods falling on a coffin!"

"I think a good deal of the trouble arises from the fact that many of our pulpits are occupied by *agnostics who are groping for truth just like their congregations.* Their sermons are spiced with Spiritism, Theosophy, and mysticism, and the sauce for this intellectual pudding is called Christianity. These agnostics oppose nothing but real religion, for which they have neither feeling nor understanding."

"Stockbrokers are called Bulls and Bears. I regard an agnostic in a pulpit as a wolf in sheep's clothing. No Kerry bull is so dangerous in the arena, no grizzly so formidable amidst a wilderness of souls."

"And why?" exclaimed the other. "Because the agnostic could not hold his position in such a church six months if he did not flatter the divers opinions and beliefs to be found among the leading members of his congregation. Such a minister must be *ondoyant* and correctly vague, innocently vacillating and plausibly progressive, believing in everything, secure in nothing. As soon as a preacher pleases all the members of a cosmopolitan congregation be certain

you are dealing with a man of the world who knows how to lecture, but cannot preach."

"I make no profession of religion; my friends call me an agnostic; I have even been called a materialist, and when I go to church it is for the music. But I have never deceived myself. I do not profess to be spiritually contented. The man who is to influence me must, first of all, be convinced and contented himself. It is not possible to deceive a well-read agnostic for long; there is nothing he respects and admires so much as eloquent speech from a convinced preacher, nothing he despises more than a man of learning who pretends to know more than the agnostic. *It is not ignorance we despise; it is false claims to knowledge.*"

"But was there ever a time when the clubman and the millionaire, the fashionable woman and the society leader, felt so near moral salvation without feeling certain of it?"

"It all results from the absurd notion that a man ought to profess a spiritual optimism on a level, so to speak, with his wealth and his business capacity."

"But it is a far cry from the bodily ease that affluence provides to an easy conscience. And, if I am to judge by my own feelings, after having made a fortune of several millions while yet a young man, I can say with some assurance that no amount of luck or progressive prosperity will ever compensate for the lack of spiritual repose. I go to books for some signs of enlightenment, to Shakespeare, Marcus Aurelius, Plato, to Emerson, and Maeterlinck, but a living orator who can wrestle with the conscience of a people is worth more than books. He comes in direct contact with us, we feel his grip, we admit his superior force, we are conquered, and we shake hands with the victor as a friend."

"There are two classes of men who ought to be able to tell us what ails us—medical men and religious ministers: the one for the body, the other for the soul. The medical man succeeds fairly well, the minister fails in the great majority of cases. And why? *Because few ministers in our day feel certain they possess a soul.* Negative themselves, they fail to bring conviction to others."

"Besides that, I see a grave danger to the churches in presenting, as some leaders are doing, the subject of immortality in a purely material light. In their efforts to prove immortality they have created in the minds of many worldly people an atmosphere of security that fringes the borders of every selfish vice. I once met a business man who had been a Congregational minister in a large town. Some of the leading members of his congregation were inclined to be doubting Thomases. He hit on the notion that a series of sermons based on psychical manifestations as proofs of the soul's survival would be just the thing for the doubters. He preached for four Sundays on this subject, and at the close of the series had the doubters so well convinced that several of the richest ceased to take an active interest in religion. They no longer feared anything, declaring that the other world being just like this one, it was needless to worry about the soul's future. The pastor left the ministry for a business career; he could no longer raise the necessary funds to keep the church going."

"Preachers who attempt to reduce the spiritual to the plane of the material must always fail. It is madness to convince a man who is already a lover of self that he is going to live on unchanged after death. Preachers who do this may be sincere, wise they are not. The new minister we have just heard is not one of these. What we want to-day is not the grosser proofs of immortality, but the finer, more spiritual proofs. We want to get hold of the true feeling, the aspiration of continued spiritual progress—I hardly know what to call it. I should be sorry to think that things go on after death as they do here; it would make me more selfish than I am now."

"And that brings up the subject of charity and utilitarianism."

"What in reality is the thing called utilitarianism?"

"In my opinion, it is a multitude of sins under a cloak of wholesale charity. It is so easy to give wholesale, so easy to order things by the gross, so bothersome to handle them in detail."

"Is not mechanical charity an insult to all the recipients?"

"It is charity without spiritual sympathy, it is goodness made automatic, virtue made hypocritically vicious, penny-in-the-slot religion, all the more dangerous because the machine works so smoothly."

"I object to it just because it is so cheap," said the other with a bitter tone.

"What the wealthy utilitarian lacks is sentiment."

"But is he not often a sentimentalist?"

"*Sentiment gives distinction*, sentimentality is as crude as it is blind. This is why your wealthy parvenu gives so much to public institutions. He thinks he is buying distinction. Note that he or she always takes care to give to something that is, or will be, popular."

"Don't you think that as soon as the wholesale utilitarian philanthropist realises that giving to public institutions is a sign of decadent taste, to say nothing about judgment, the custom will cease?"

"The custom will cease as soon as the custom is regarded as *bad form*. Society has placed a ban on the person who eats with a knife and drinks wine out of a cup. I see the day coming when the ostentatious giver will have no place in refined social circles."

"And this brings us to a main point: the State will be compelled to maintain universities, hospitals, libraries, and all institutions connected in any way with public utility. Individuals will cease to be utilitarians. The rich will turn their attention to work of a distinctly private nature. Struggling men and women of talent and genius will no longer be objects of charity; they will be sought out and made to realise that their efforts are not in vain; poets, artists, philosophers, scientists, musicians, preachers with a gift will no longer languish in obscurity. The gifted will take their proper place in the world's work; they will cease to be the tools of cunning avarice and high-handed greed, the playthings of ignorance and pretentious fashion."

"You are touching the darkest blot on the social map," said the other, with sadness.

"Nothing mortified me so much as to be told by an Englishman that Europe absorbs our finest talent. I was angry. He then began to call the names—Whistler, Sargent, Shannon, Abbey, Henry James, Henry Harland, and others of whom I had never heard. He named so many I cannot recall them. He wound up by saying Walt Whitman would have been far happier had he lived in England, where he would have had a public instead of a small coterie in his own country. Needless to say my anger gave place to shame and mortification. You know the old saw. I returned home a sadder man, to say nothing of having grown wiser. My eyes were opened to the facts. Since then no one has ever caught me bragging about our culture."

"I heard the same sort of thing in Paris," said the Englishman. "'You have the talent,' they told me, 'but you don't know it when you see it.' Your talent has to come here to receive the seal of appreciation. 'Your typical millionaires,' said a French writer, 'cannot distinguish the difference between a postage stamp and the seal of an art academy; they have to be told the difference by the critics of Paris or by professional experts.'"

"In Berlin a German professor said to me, 'America will never be a nation until you deliver your men and women of genius from ignominy.' Through his big gold-rimmed spectacles the old professor gave me a long, withering look—you know the military look they have in Berlin. It is useless to buck against that look; our ferret-eyed Wall Street financiers cannot compete with it."

"Anglo-American society is in the zoological period, our pets are the one-pronged politicians, the spotted gazelles of Wall Street, and the two-forked statesmen from the wilds, sufficiently tamed at Washington and Westminster to eat pea-nuts out of the hand without biting the donors."

Books and Persons.

(AN OCCASIONAL CAUSERIE.)

I foresee a craze in this country for Brieux. I notify with a naive but just satisfaction that I have foreseen it for some time. I first perceived its coming one day during an intellectual meal in a green-painted little restaurant in Soho. Whenever I go into Soho I pass through experiences which send me out again a wiser man. On this occasion I happened to speak lightly of Brieux to a friend of mine, a prominent and influential member of the Stage Society—one of those men in London who think to-day what London will think to-morrow, and what Paris thought yesterday. He was visibly shocked by my tone. His invincible politeness withstood the strain, but the strain was terrible. From this incident alone I was almost ready to prophesy a Brieux craze in London. And now a selection of Brieux's plays is to be published in English in one volume, with a preface by Bernard Shaw. Within a fortnight of the appearance of the book the Brieux craze will exist in full magnificence. Leading articles will contain learned offhand allusions to Brieux, Brieux and Shaw will be compared and differentiated, and Brieux will be the most serious dramatist in France. I doubt not that Mr. Shaw's preface will be a witty and illuminating affair, and that it will show me agreeable aspects of Brieux's talent which have hitherto escaped me; but if it persuades me that Brieux is an artistically serious dramatist worth twopence, then I will retire from public life and seek a post as third sub-editor on the "British Weekly."

* * *

Brieux is a man with moral ideas. I will admit even that he is dominated by moral ideas, which, if they are sometimes crude, are certainly righteous. He is a reformer, and a passionate reformer. But a man can be a passionate reformer, with a marked turn for eloquence, and yet not be a serious dramatist. Dr. Clifford is a reformer; Mr. Henniker Heaton is a passionate reformer; and both are capable of literature where they are excited. But they are not dramatists. We still await Mr. Henniker Heaton's tragic fourth act about the failure of the negotiations for a penny post with France. Brieux is too violent a reformer ever to be a serious dramatist. Violent reformers are unprincipled, and the reformer in Brieux forces the dramatist in him to prostitution. The dramatist in him is not strong enough, to resist the odious demands of the reformer: which fact alone shows how far he is from being a first-rate dramatist. As a dramatist Brieux is no stronger, no more sincere, no less unscrupulous, no less viciously sentimental, than the fashionable authors of the boulevard, such as Capus, Donnay, and the ineffable Bernstein, so adored in London. And it is as a dramatist that he must be judged. Of course, if you wish to judge him as a reformer, you must get some expert opinion about his subjects of reform. I fancy that you will end by discovering that as a reformer he must be considered just a little crude.

* * *

I have seen most of Brieux's plays, and I have seen them produced under his own direction, so that I can judge fairly well what he is after on the stage. And I am bound to say that, with the exception of "Les Trois Filles de Monsieur Dupont" (which pleased me pretty well so far as I comprehended its dramatic intention), I have not seen one which I could refrain from despising. Brieux's plays always begin so brilliantly, and they always end so feebly, in such a wish-wash of sentimentalism. Take his last play—no, his last play was "La Foi," produced by Mr. Tree, and I have not yet met even an ardent disciple of the craze who has had sufficient effrontery to argue that it is a good play. Take his last play but one, "Suzette"—or "Suzanne," or whatever its girl's name was—produced at the Paris Vaudeville last Autumn. The first act is very taking indeed. You can see the situation of the ostracised wife coming along beautifully. The preparation is charming, in the best boulevard manner. But when the situation arrives and has to be dealt with—what a mess, what falseness, what wrenching, what sickly smoothing, what ranting, and what terrific tediousness! It is so easy to begin. It is so easy to think of a fine idea. The next man you meet in a hotel bar will tell you a fine idea after two whiskeys—I mean a really fine idea. Only in art an idea doesn't exist till it is worked *out*. Brieux never (with the possible exception above mentioned) works an idea *out*. Because he can't. He doesn't know enough of his business. He can only do the easy parts of his business. Last autumn also, the Comédie Française revived "La Robe Rouge." The casting, owing to an effort to make it too good, was very bad; and the production was very bad, though Brieux himself superintended it. But, all allowances made for the inevitable turpitudes of this ridiculous national theatre, the play was senile; it was done for! Certainly it exposes the abuses of the French magistrature, but at what cost of fundamental truth! The melodramatic close might have been written in the Isle of Man.

* * *

Take the most notorious of all his plays, "Les Avariés." It contains an admirable sermon, a really effective sermon, animated by ideas which I suppose have been in the minds of exceptionally intelligent men for a hundred years or so, and which Brieux re-stated in terms of dramatic eloquence. But the sentimentality of the end is simply base. I say "base." The sentimentality of another famous play, "Maternité," is even more deplorable.

* * *

It is said that Brieux's plays make you think. Well, it depends who you are. No, I will admit that they have several times made me think. I will admit that, since I saw "Les Avariés," I have never thought quite the same about syphilis as I did before. But what I say is that this has nothing to do with Brieux's position as a dramatist. Brieux could have written a pamphlet on the subject of "Les Avariés" which would have impressed me just as much as his play (I happened to read the play before I witnessed it). Indeed, if he had confined himself to a pamphlet I should have respected him more than I do. Brieux has never sharpened my sense of beauty; he has never made me see beauty where I had failed to see it. And this is what he ought to have done, as a serious dramatist. He is deficient in a feeling for beauty; he is deficient in emotion. But that is not the worst of him. Mr. Shaw is deficient in these supreme qualities. But Mr. Shaw is an honest playwright. And Brieux (speaking of course in a sense strictly artistic) is not. That he is dishonest in the cause of moral progress does not mitigate his crime. Zealots may deny this as loudly as they please. Nothing can keep Brieux's plays alive; they are bound to go precisely where the plays of Dumas fils have gone, because they are false to life. I do not expect to kill the oncoming craze, but I will give it no quarter.

Jacob Tonson.

The February "Thrush."

In the spirit that offers any opportunity whatsoever for the present generation to find out what it wants in Poetry there is so much which is purely felicitous that I wonder anybody should be found insensible enough to the needs of poets to condemn such an undertaking or even to treat it with indifference. When we hear a poet singing beside any gate into the meadow of the Muses it is at least a graceful act on our part to commend whatever we may believe about the chance of the gate being charmed open. This, I am aware, may maliciously be misconstrued into appearing a plea for the publication of all the verses that anyone may choose to write. Well, indeed, there is no power at present to stop the publication of however bad verses if the versifier possess but a sovereign or so sterling. There is no academy in England to establish a formidable barrier against obvious pretenders; nor are we so satisfied with what we have seen of the infallibility of the French Academy that we would wish to set over us a body of that sort. We prefer to wander and pipe our tune where we will, and if some clear day we should discover ourselves to be far distant enough from Parnassus, we must seek what comfort there may be in the fact that we strayed freely. Notwithstanding our inordinate

worship of liberty, we are, however, aware at times that our strength is by no means equal to our desire. The stimulus of association we then no longer despise, and we are even willing to accept a little help and praise. The "Thrush," I take it, is intended to supply just that stimulus, help, and praise to singers in the wilderness: an oasis where they may meet and inquire the true ways.

The February volume contains poems of somewhat unequal merit; but I find almost none altogether false or altogether tiresome. The "Castle of Dreams," by Alfred Noyes, strikes the keynote of the whole collection. One might chant here "Ah, for those happy days when we were so miserable!" There is memory of youth and the early world in most of the poems, making a natural groundwork of harmony out of which proceed themes of ambition, realisation, and disappointment. One or two false notes of vanity or of sentimentality are heard here and there; yet they nowhere dominate, but are quickly silenced by saner and truer suggestions. Alfred Noyes works into his tale of happy childhood no discordance, no grown-up meditations, no tentative psychology. We are given a simple impression of early scenes: glens of fern (without any adjective), shadow of boughs and shine of the sea; and the hint of a half-told tale excites in us no more regret than would the ruins of the castle if we saw them. Norman Gale's "Bee," beginning "Columbus in velvet," is more florid; he invites a bee to quit the sea of clover and find America in his garden. "The Mist Maidens," by G. Buckler, contains an excellent poetical idea. I think the ballad note suffers by the elision of certain syllables. "The dead leaves rustle 'neath my feet" is almost too stiff a line in a song which has for refrain: "Hush ye winds—softly! Blow soft ye winds and low." Armstrong Barry has even less reason to clip the word in his lines:—

"O for a glimpse of the river rolling
'Neath the blue of the Rhineland sky."

In a poem called "Sea Fancies," by Francis B. Young, the first few verses sustain a fine picture of a summer sea; but "purr" is not a verb to apply to sea-foam. I suggest that Mr. Young was led away by the association of ideas: the word "lapt" occurs higher up.

I think Thomas Burke's lyric, "Now fades the green," which is throughout of a naturally gentle and social tone, is not strengthened by the interpolation of such a word as "stab," referring to the gleaming of neighbourly lights into the darkness outside. Laurence Housman's poem about the tiny daughter of James I., who died crying, "I go, I go, away I go!" is one of the best in the collection:—

"This wing-like cry, this answering word
To some remote and secret bird,
That, gazing with prophetic eyes
From the bright bowers of Paradise
Sees in the dreadful years ahead
Joy withered, mirth disowned and dead. . . ."

The title "A Born Princess" I dislike, and the first stanza I find tedious and artificial, but the rest of the poem is irresistible in rhythm and grace of language. Completely artificial and jarring is Miss Morgan's "Morning." The idea of dawn creeping "nervously" among the stars, combined with the next assertion, "And one by one with ruthless touch put out the lamps of God!" Let us never remember unstrung hours when we might have wept wet tears with "Yesterday, cold, cold within her shroud." "Isle of my Heart" blows away this nonsense. "My father will be growing frail with delving in the croft." Donald A. Mackenzie is the author.

"Pilate," by G. S. Turner, is a very ambitious effort. I would like to weigh all the adjectives to satisfy my opinion that they overbalance all the other words. The poem is most painful, and there is no relieving action in it; yet this fault might not repel modern taste so violently if the expression were more restrained—if, in fact, there was enough pure poetry to delight the ear. Pilate appears too self-sufficient, too talkative in his loneliness. Our sympathy is not held, and, without doubt, the adjectives are largely to blame. Mr. James just carries us through because he himself is so saturated with his subject.

C. A. Bennett contributes imitations of Swinburne, Tennyson, Macaulay, and Shakespeare; distinctly clever and witty. Catherine Evelyn's "Valentine" is a lovely little song, and I quote it in full:—

"Tap at her casement pane
Ye budding hawthorn,
That waking she may know
How, sighing from the earliest break of morn,
Her lover waits below.

Lie at her silent porch
Ye gentle flowers,
And if she make no sign,
Tell her he whisper'd through the weary hours,
'Sweet, be my Valentine!'"

The Reviews at the end of the volume concern, among others, Alphonse Daudet, Thomas Hardy, and Arthur Symons. The review of Hardy's poems is full of persuasive criticism in that it recalls to the reader's mind all the old-remembered charm of the Wessex novels, and even to me, who groaned over the melodramatic "Sunday Morning Tragedy," there comes a desire to possess a volume which contains the "Pine Planters" and the "Revisitation," both of which are here quoted.

A prose idyll, "The Dead Village," by Francis B. Young, must on no account be overlooked between the verses and the reviews.

BEATRICE HASTINGS.

Drama.

"The O'Flynn." (His Majesty's Theatre.)

SIR HERBERT TREE (in noticing the last play at His Majesty's I am told I committed the solecism of referring to him as "Mr. Tree") is still adding to his collection of curious parts. As the High Priest in "False Gods" and as Beethoven he was quite impressive, and it is not unreasonable to suspect that in producing these plays he was inspired less by the desire to provide interesting drama at a loss to the box-office than by the ambition to accomplish a *tour de force.* This suspicion is confirmed by his production of "The O'Flynn"—an altogether worthless play by Mr. Justin McCarthy, designed solely to give Sir Herbert a big part. This time, however, he has missed fire. "The O'Flynn" is a romantic hotch-potch that would be laughed out of court in any European capital but London, though it would doubtless succeed admirably in New York. Also it gives Sir Herbert just the part that he cannot play. He is required to be a swaggering Irishman, a soldier of fortune, high-spirited, reckless and spontaneously jolly, dancing through the world and carrying off his impossible adventures by sheer impudence and bluff. There are several actors in London—Mr. Lewis Waller, for instance—who could do it tolerably well. Sir Herbert is not one of them. He is patiently reckless and laboriously sprightly. And to be laboriously sprightly is worse than never to be sprightly at all.

The fact is that Sir Herbert is only really at home in playing weak men. He has built up his present reputation very largely on his interpretations of the weak men of Shakespeare. I know that to many playgoers the mention of Tree in connection with Shakespeare is like a red rag to a bull, and I do not want to touch upon the question of scenery or decoration, but solely upon the quality of his acting. Take, for instance his Richard II., the weakest character of all. Irresolution, self-pity, the instinct for pose, languorous submission lit from time to time with inconsequent flashes of courage—in all these he excels. His curiously appealing voice makes the more powerful appeal because of its monotony. It forecasts tragedy and diffuses sadness. But the bustling O'Flynn must be played in a very different vein, and the trouble is that Sir Herbert is never quite able to shake off the Richard II. manner. In his personality, as it drifts across into the auditorium, there is something grave, something that is for ever crying out for pity. Every actor has a subtle influence of his own upon his audience, quite apart from the rôle he may be playing at the moment, and I think Sir Herbert's particular influence is the least sympathetic that I have ever known. It only attracts or impresses when it is translated, so to speak, into a part where loneliness and the appeal for pity are appropriate. If he must have a romantic, pseudo-historical play, it would surely be better to choose frank melodrama and to borrow "The Breed of the Treshams" from Mr. Martin Harvey.

There is one personage in "The O'Flynn" who cannot be passed by without comment—His Majesty James Stuart the Second. I confess I like seeing "royalty" upon the stage. It is always interesting to compare impressions, and James II.'s reign was so crowded with dramatic incident—with the innumerable plots, the Monmouth rising, the trial of the Seven Bishops, the constant conflict between Popery and

Protestantism, and James's ignominious flight at the Orange invasion—that one hopes against hope to find one of these happenings sincerely treated. It is idle to hope for so much from the author of "The O'Flynn." A puppet with a pale, drawn face and a wig of brown curls is brought upon the stage. From the respect paid to him by his Court the audience gathers that he is the person described upon the playbill as James Stuart, "King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith." He is an object of devotion to the honourable, of contempt to the contemptible; served by gallant gentlemen and soldiers of fortune, detested by fanatical Roundheads and such crop-eared varlets, plotted against by traitors who serve no master but their own ambition. That is all. That is history seen in the light of the romantic play "derived from many sources."

Why have we no historical dramas written to-day but those which appear to have been written for schoolboys? Think for a moment of this reign of James II. alone—of its incomparable interludes of tragedy, comedy and farce; of the paradox of the royal Protestant cavalier in the west country, at the head of his unwieldy army of yokels, themselves inspired by the outpourings of Roundhead preachers; of the pitiful meeting of Monmouth and the king; of James' threat that unless the people of London grew less unruly he would remove the Court to Oxford, and the Lord Mayor's reply, "Provided your Majesty will leave us the Thames"; of the evening in the palace, when the Court awaited the verdict of the great trial; and of the connivance of William at James' flight because it was not politic to take him prisoner. But, no—these are not romantic incidents. The mob of theatre-goers must be cajoled into swallowing their history, like children with a chocolate pill. The trail of the accursed Jacobite tradition is still heavy upon their minds. Their senses have been deadened by lack of the very necessity for thought in the theatre, and their critical imagination atrophied by disuse.

So be it. Let the dead bury their own dead. Only the art of the living can make history alive.

Ashley Dukes.

ART.

Art stranded in the Stock Exchange, looking up distractedly at its modern patron, is not an inspiring picture. An analysis of the new House of Commons shows that it contains one art and picture dealer, from which we may conclude that the interests of all other art and picture dealers will be fully protected. It would be curious to speculate as to what sort of bill this gentleman would introduce if given a free hand. Such a bill would doubtless be framed, for one thing, to give the dealer entire direction and control over the surplus cash and picture-buying hobby of the well-meaning money-grubber who, having grown rich as a brewer or pork butcher, determines to purchase a slice of immortality by becoming an art patron, and who, when he dies, a few years later, bequeathes his collection of dreary rubbish to a long-suffering nation either to replenish the doubtful resources of its public galleries or to form the nucleus of a fresh chamber of horrors in an architectural atrocity specially designed and built for the purpose. Being a tyrant, this type of art patron makes no allowance for his own ignorance. He leaves his entire collection of city-brand pictures to the community in such a way that the authorities—good, easy men—have no choice but to accept it, and no will, apparently, to order the secret destruction of the offending portion of it.

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To hand one offensive party over to another would not, of course, improve the indefensible position of art in this country. On the contrary, the vices and corruptions of the dealer-cum-city merchant system of picture collecting would continue to increase; notable bequests of the Tate type would also increase their far-reaching evil results; while indiscriminate money endowments would go on overcrowding the civic landscape with ugly buildings. But one consideration would justify such a proceeding. It would make a clearance once for all of bodies like the R.A., since the administration of such a bequest as now permits this iniquitous institution to exist and exercise such an evil influence on the art world, would pass into the dealer's hand. It is hardly necessary to point out that it is the Chantry money which has for years kept the R.A. alive and out of the workhouse. This money has enabled its members to buy each other's pictures, and thus to keep each other going on thousands per annum intended for the purchase of works of art. If proof of the maladministration of the Chantry Bequest is needed it may be had at the Tate Gallery. This gallery, it will be recollected, is the outcome of the benefactions of a certain tradesman-art-patron named Tate. It was literally built of sugar. It has now become treacle through having fallen into the hands of the R.A. and being mainly used by it to store the purchases under the Chantry Bequest. The bulk of these purchases are contained in three or four or more rooms. As pictures they are generally below criticism. Even to the casual observer three things are noticeable —the large proportion of them marked "R.A." or "A.R.A.," the huge prices paid for those so marked, and their bad quality.

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Turning to these pictures one regards with amazement the stuff which the combined judgment of the Academicians has placed upon these walls. No critic with any artistic judgment or taste could take them seriously. Indeed, he would turn in contempt from the work of Millais done after he had become an R.A., and had ceased to express his artistic individuality, and had come to regard art as a commodity; from the machine-made pictures of Waterhouse, the fancy-dress ball crowds of Dicksee, from Sargent's sensational "Carnation Lily," from the disgracefully drawn and painted "The Doctor," so obviously designed to tickle the lachrymose sensibilities of the public; and from the made-to-sell work of painters maintaining the traditions of the Academy. It makes one ill to walk through this exhibition of debauchery in painting; to see room after room hung with pictorial lies, with the soulless and lifeless work of academical plodders, with that of uninspired painters who try to talk before they see or feel, who devote flat lives to poaching upon our best poets and story-tellers, mutilating their fine motives by clumsy treatment, and striving to render in paint the marvels that belong to the magic words of genius. One regards with equal amazement the top-market prices paid for these melodramatic academic efforts, the thousands paid to "masters" who are masters of incompetence, and in no other sense.

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As a set-off to these wild extravagances there is, it is true, the unexampled generosity of Herkomer, who has given to the R.A. his vast group, 21ft. long, of the Academy Council of 1907. It is now hung in Room 13 at Millbank. The number and place are ominous. I shall watch the effect of this appalling gift, with its theatrical representation of a group of "manufacturers" discussing the sale of their ware, on the works of art. And I shall not be surprised to hear that the Turners, the Stevens, the Furse, the Wards, the Blakes, and the Whistler have gone out and drowned themselves as a protest against being placed in such insufferable company.

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There is no need to dwell here further on the maladministration of trust funds. Perhaps, after all, the Royal Academy is not wholly to blame. It is, generally speaking, a feeble body. It is entirely devoid of a proper knowledge of art and of the limits of its own strength and powers. Indiscretion and impudence have built up for it a reputation and a credit of the most profitable kind. In spite of warnings, in the face of criticism and indisputable facts, it still retains its hold on the public faith. And the public will continue to leave it in the possession of trust monies wherewith

to back its fancy in the matter of its own members' brushwork till it has completed its work and banished art from this country for ever. The aforesaid art-patron is also to blame for the sins of the Royal Academy, and it would not much matter if he were handed over to the mercy of the dealer. But I, for my part, am not for retaining the city art-patron, save under one condition. Unless he can first prove that he has the art instinct of Ruskin, who invested in Turners, or of Stewart, who bought all Fortuney's work, or Wallace, with his peculiar museumy mind, he should be eliminated. Or, if he must endow, let him endow wash-houses and book-dispensaries, and unattractive drinking fountains.

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Several exhibitions have opened this week, but the only ones that call for serious attention are at the Baillie and Goupil Galleries. The Baillie Gallery has four interesting "one-man" shows. Robert Fowler exhibits some individual work. His textures are rapidly built up, and perhaps he is a little too fond of loading-up his canvasses. But his pictures should be seen for their admirable effects of light and atmosphere. Mr. Bernard Harrison is a new man who deserves encouragement. His three Italian studies (14, 15, 16) are in particular very interesting and excellent work. His colour, however, is ugly. He must improve it. I was greatly impressed by William Shackleton's work at the Goupil Gallery. Though this painter has not yet got into his stride and is experimenting in all sorts of odd methods, and feels all sorts of strong influences from Turner to Cayley Robinson, he is on the way to the big achievements. He builds up his textures very slowly; his feeling for colour is uncertain as yet. He has fine intentions, and is searching intensely for something. Sometimes he gets his effect, and this in a very poetical way, as in "Shrimpers" and "Phryne at Eleusis." These two canvases alone justify the exhibition and call forth genuine admiration. They also render the well-written preface and notes to the catalogue quite unnecessary. Painters should avoid explaining their work; otherwise they risk explaining themselves away.

HUNTLY CARTER.

Insurance Notes.

This is the day of big concerns in insurance and other walks of business life. However we may like it or dislike it the process of amalgamation will go on, and the public will, in insurance matters, be served in an ever-increasing degree by big offices of the omnibus character, transacting practically every description of insurance. This applies to industrial as well as to ordinary life, and also to fire and accident business. Such is the opinion of a contemporary, and we are not disposed to think otherwise.

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The total premiums for business done in British offices under the Workmen's Compensation Act during 1908 amounted to £2,283,406, and on the year's work, after providing for outstanding claims and unexpired risks there was a loss of £9,981. It looks as if an advance in rates were needed to make this class of insurance worth the trouble.

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Referring to the decision regarding the conversion of Friendly Societies given by Justice Joyce, the "Victoria Record" says: "This important decision should have the greatest interest for our readers. It establishes, and, we think, rightly and finally, a view of conversion procedure which, in all the years of discussion, does not appear to have occurred to anyone. It lays down that a society, by special resolution, may do not more than change its constitution from that of a friendly society to an insurance company, and that it must then follow the usual procedure prescribed by the Companies Act, and get the consent of the Court to any required enlargement of the objects of business as set out in the Memorandum of Association. The commonsense of the judgment is irresistible, and the decision should settle one phase of a thorny subject, and prevent much misunderstanding and litigation in the future."

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It is an open secret that the suggested Government scheme of State insurance against sickness will make provision for a benefit of 5s. per week, the cost to be divided between the member, his employer, and the State. Membership is to be compulsory for those who are below the Income-tax level, says the "Weekly Times," and the workmen's contribution is to be compulsorily deducted from his wages, on the lines of the German plan. The proposal has sharply divided the members of friendly societies

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At the annual general meeting of the Royal Co-operative Collecting Society to be held on the 23rd inst., proposals for amending the rules will be submitted in order to take advantage of the extended powers of assurances under the new Act. The proposed conversion to a company would appear to be abandoned as a result of the injunction obtained by two members.

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The Liverpool Victoria Friendly Society, out of a capital of £3,400,000, has invested £653,000 in land and interests in land. The Royal Liver Society, out of a capital of £3,000,000, has invested £643,000 in land and interests in land. The Hearts of Oak Friendly Society, out of a capital of £3,600,000, has invested almost £3,000,000, or nearly seven-eighths of its capital, in land and interests in land.

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Judged by the discussion which took place at the important conference of the leading lights of the Royal Liver Society at Liverpool, an effort is going to be made to bring the society into line with the hustling offices of the country. The Chief Registrar is to be communicated with, says "Reynolds," as to the interpretation of several nebulous parts of the new Act, while the necessary amendments of the rules are to be made to enable the society to transact all kinds of business empowered by the said Act. The fact that the amount which the society is empowered to utilise for management is too small has been generally admitted, and has militated against the progress of the business. An effort is to be made to remedy this drawback. It is expected that the actuarial valuation now taking place will reveal the large surplus of £250,000, and the method of allocating this large sum was discussed, and is to be further considered. It was resolved that steps should be taken to earmark a certain portion of this surplus towards the formation of a superannuation fund for the benefit of the workers of the society. It was considered that the said fund should be formed on a contributory basis. After the somewhat strained relations which have existed between the Committee of Management of the Royal Liver Society and a large number of the leading agents over the conversion movement, it is pleasant to learn that the above conference was of a harmonious character.

CORRESPONDENCE.

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

HUNTLY CARTER AND THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

I hope you will allow me to take up the cudgels on behalf of the old masters, and particularly the old masters of the National Gallery. They apparently spur Mr. Huntly Carter to abhorrence and disgust. He champions the moderns against them, and sees in one generation of painters better work than all the past centuries have produced. This is temerity, indeed! May I assure him that there is very little chance of his giving contemporary painters their due as long as he is blind to the greatness of the old painters?

I challenge him to mention a single picture in which "only the face of Madonna is original, the rest having been added from time to time": the draperies in the sixteenth century, the high lights in the seventeenth, the landscape in the eighteenth, and so on. I admit that some of the Botticelli attributions are wrong, but none of the pictures given to this artist have been painted by half a dozen different hands, as he suggests. I have no doubt that these pictures will be properly labelled at an early date, in common with many others which have been altered since the advent of Sir Charles Holroyd. As a matter of fact, there are very few pictures, indeed, about which there is room for controversy. In comparison with the Louvre, with its numerous errors of description, the National Gallery is a model of correctness. The former has just added a most obviously bogus Turner, thus making confusion worse confounded in the British section.

The Titian he mentions is evidently the superb "Bacchus and Ariadne." He finds this picture—perhaps the finest in the world—"uninteresting." If he cannot see glorious colour and technical qualities in this picture, he can see them in nothing. Again, there is no Titian portrait in the gallery which is "almost hidden under many layers of varnish." Of the very early masters, which he describes as "examples of the restorer's ingenuity"—all but three, he says—well, they do not exist. They are generally in the most

superb condition, considering that five centuries have passed over them.

"Among the Italian masterpieces of the Salting bequest are pictures which house-painters in Tuscan villages are turning out by the hundred." Such a statement hardly needs contradiction. Anyone conversant with the technical side of art knows that it is absolutely impossible to fake an old picture. Such fables are the property of the halfpenny newspaper. A man can no more imitate the appearance of age in a picture than he can fly to the moon. The only thing possible is a silly, superficial resemblance, which, to the trained eye, is as new as the pictures in last year's Academy.

There are no "dreadful, uninteresting Dutch canvases." The attributions in this section are perfect, and almost every picture is of surpassing interest to the student. Indeed, one regrets the absence of many of the lesser known but exceedingly meritorious Dutch artists. Mr. Carter may see in the "moderns" far better work. But will he mention a few painters of the last fifty years who can even be compared, in all those qualities which go to make a good picture, with men painting in the style of Terburg, Metsu, Vermeer, Teniers, Hobbema, Wouvermans, Van der Capelle, Van der Heyden, Rembrandt, Hals, Van der Velde, and a dozen others? He deliberately challenges the centuries with his generation of modern painters. Let him prove his contention. It will be an extremely interesting discussion.

When he calls Velasquez's "Venus" a half-burnt, atrociously restored French painting, one can only smile and beseech him to look at it again! Now, if he had challenged Velasquez's "Portrait of an Admiral," and attributed it to del Mazo, he would have supporters. But even this is open to discussion. It is quite possible that it came out of the great master's studio. He even challenges the artistic qualities of Holbein's "Duchess of Milan"—another courageous action! I admire the courage, but not the opinion.

I do not agree with him when he affirms that no painter turned out more than half a dozen masterpieces, and that it would not matter one jot if all the rest of his work were at the bottom of the Atlantic. I know of no prolific painter who only painted six great pictures. To me, the veriest trifle of a master is precious. These minor productions often express the genius and individuality of the artist equally as well as the more pretentious works. A great painter can no more do bad work than a bad painter can do good work. For instance, can he show me a bad work by Rembrandt, large or small, oil, etching, or sepia note?

He accuses collectors of using the National Gallery for the purpose of selling their pictures. He cannot mention one instance. I believe the "Duchess of Milan" has been on loan to the gallery for at least twenty years. I wish Mr. Carter, for his own sake, could see the National Gallery collection of foreign treasures in its true light. It would help him in his appreciation of modern British work.

HUGH BLAKER.

* * *

"THE FALLACY BEHIND THE MILITANT THEORY."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

The Spartans on a certain occasion had the privilege of listening to a speech of rare beauty, delivered to them by the envoy of a neighbouring State; and when he had finished and the applause had died away his hearers sat silent and embarrassed, until at last they were obliged to confess that they found themselves in this absurd predicament: they were, they said, quite unable to reply, because in their profound enjoyment of the speaker's impassioned peroration they had entirely forgotten all the weighty and elaborate arguments of the earlier part of his address. When I came to the end of D. Triformis's article (in which she had deigned to discuss a recent letter from me published in "Votes for Women") I felt in a somewhat similar difficulty. For it seemed to me that surely I must have been so entranced by the fervid eloquence of her description of the wrongs of men (the wrongs which had led up to and, as she admitted, had justified those historic outbreaks of violence to which my letter had referred) that I had overlooked altogether that other passage—the passage containing her demonstration of the comparative insignificance of the present wrongs of women, a demonstration which I had understood her in the beginning of her article to promise, and which was indeed clearly necessary to complete her case against the militant suffragists. I therefore took the natural and obvious course—I gave myself the pleasure of reading her article a second time! I was, however, disappointed in my search, and could only conclude that she herself, carried away (as I had been) by her own eloquence, had quite forgotten to complete her argument. For the essential passage was in fact absent; and instead of the demonstration I had expected I found only an almost parenthetical remark to the effect that Triformis "would not pretend" to find in the present conditions of women any parallel with the conditions preceding those great examples of revolt on the part of men. But D. Triformis must remember that in this matter she is in the position of an accuser, while the militant suffragists are the accused; and the burden of proof lies not upon them or their advocates, but upon her. The defendants must be held innocent until they are shown to be guilty; and it would be a new, and hardly, I think, a desirable principle, either in our criminal procedure or in journalistic controversy, if the person charged with an offence were to be deemed guilty unless (or until) the accuser "pretends to find" evidence of his innocence. If D. Triformis will complete her case against the militants by an attempt to demonstrate the essential point which she has omitted, I shall then be pleased (if you can give me space) to reply to her. At present I am in the happy position of being able to agree with almost the whole of her article, for had I not been profoundly convinced that the oppression which led men to revolt was grievous and intolerable, I should never have cited those cases as examples of violence which could not be condemned. Indeed I think that if I differ from D. Triformis on this question of the militancy of women it is not because I hate violence less than she does, but because (if I may say so) I perhaps love the principles of liberty and equality more.

D. Triformis has some pleasant gibes based upon the view that I am an "upstart" militant woman, seeking to force my way, by force of violence, into the political fold. I have no claim to that distinction. As a man I am in the peaceful and inglorious possession of political liberty won for me by no merit of my own, but by the heroic efforts of men in bygone generations. And it is, I think, because D. Triformis belongs to a sex which has for countless generations borne the yoke of political subjection that this hereditary bondage sits lightly upon her shoulders. "Custom," as Hamlet would put it, "hath made it to her a property of easiness." And although in principle no doubt she holds a belief in the equality of the sexes, I hardly think that that belief has yet taken such a hold of her as to lead her to apply it in the practical consideration of these great questions. And because I cannot help thinking that this is the true explanation of her attitude towards her militant sisters, I must venture to put to her an illustration which I am quite aware may seem to her a somewhat absurd one. Let us suppose that some potent magician, by the mere waving of his wand, could effect so complete a transformation in our political and industrial conditions that men thenceforth should be in all respects in the present position of women, and women in that of men. I do not want to labour the illustration too much, but, briefly, let us conceive this country governed by two Chambers, one a hereditary House of Ladies, the other a House of Commons consisting of women elected by women. Conceive not only the legislative but also the chief administrative function of government in the hands of women, to the complete exclusion of the other sex. Conceive the ancient right of men to be tried by their "peers" to be subject to this extraordinary modification, that all men accused of criminal or political offences, or engaged in civil litigation with one another, or with persons of the opposite sex, should in future be tried exclusively by women magistrates, or by women judges with women juries. Conceive that industrially the conditions were so changed that in Government employment, for equal work, men received lower wages than women; that men working for Government contractors, and so employed indirectly by the Government, were subjected to starvation wages and all the other horrible conditions now attaching to the sweated labour of women. Conceive men excluded from some of the highest and most ennobling professions, while every mean and degrading occupation was open to them. Conceive that by factory and other legislation professedly intended for their protection, and by political inability to obtain redress of their industrial grievances, men were so handicapped industrially that they were driven by hundreds of thousands to adopt marriage as a profession, or by tens of thousands to make vice a trade. Conceive mothers possessing by law all the privileges of parentage, and fathers sharing with them only its duties and its burdens. And finally conceive that when men sought peaceably to lay their grievances before a woman Premier, they were denied a hearing, and treated with contumely and violence. Would D. Triformis, under such circumstances, think that the wrongs of men were so insignificant in comparison with the wrongs of the people in Cromwell's time, that whereas he deemed it necessary to take off a king's head, these men should refrain even from breaking a few windows or slapping a policewoman's face? And if they went further—if they adopted methods of real violence—if they went, eventually, as far in the paths of their forefathers as the obstinacy of Governments might make necessary, would she condemn them? And if not, why does she condemn her heroic sisters, the so-called "militant" women, who in these few years have so greatly advanced the cause of their sex by the extraordinary patience and fortitude with which they have endured so much violence while committing so little?

G. PENN GASKELL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

Until we reach perfection in human affairs discontent and rebellion against repression will remain a duty. D. Triformis's argument is like that of a man I know who was moving into a new house with his family. His wife objected to an arrangement which placed the nursery over the kitchen yard, into which no sun ever shone. He said, "You are like the princess who felt the pea under the feather beds. If you had to live in a slum you would not fuss about south aspects." Or like that of another husband of means whose wife rebelled against his appointing guardians with control of her children's education during her lifetime: "You ought only to be thankful you are all comfortably provided for." And when she appealed against a veto in the will against the daughters being educated away from home: "If I were a clerk on £200 a year you would not dream of college for your children!"

The sufferings of women may not be comparable with the sufferings of the people under John, but neither is the degree of their rebellion. I think if we militants wished to be unkind we might perhaps apply the word "shameless" to those who persist in comparing the kind and amount of violence used by women to-day with that of, say, the French Revolutionists. There is no parallel. Militants admit that only that degree of violence is justified which is absolutely necessary to effect a reform which no one can describe as a "petty" one, since on it depend all others. Surely the facts of sweating and prostitution alone are sufficient to justify militant revolt. It was a sweated exhibition which made me a "fierce" suffragist. I do not want my sons and daughters to grow up in a world in which these things are possible; and my "reason," such as it is, is convinced that the political equality which is essential to improvement is not to be gained by argument and persuasion alone, however long and patiently they may be employed. Some further pressure is necessary, and militant women have supplied it by finding a way to give the Government the choice between persecuting and doing justice without injuring anybody but themselves.

E. JACOBS.

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THE WHYS OF THE W.S.P.U.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

I confess myself somewhat surprised that D. Triformis, with all the common sense we are led to believe is at her disposal, has yet failed to perceive the sole, the obvious, and the absolutely conclusive answer to her attack on the militant agitation. Very carefully and solemnly she has proceeded to take each little point, hold it up to the clear light of academic consideration, and exclaim: "See, it is hollow, it is silly, it is false!" I am reminded of a passage in "You Never Can Tell":—

Mrs. Clandon (emphatically): But I can *prove* to her that Socialism is a fallacy."

M'Comas (touchingly): "It is by proving that, Mrs. Clandon, that I have lost all my young disciples."

Yes, she has proved the fallacy of militant action; she might similarly have proved the worthlessness of the halfpenny Press or musical comedies. I myself could do so in about half a column. Only it is not worth the trouble; someone would knock me on the head in a minute. He would say, "My dear chap, the halfpenny Press does not exist for you, but for the public. However rotten it may be, the 'Daily Mail' has a circulation eight times larger than any other daily paper." And "musical comedies may be fundamentally weak and wicked, but they draw larger audiences than any other form of play." Of course, it is answerable. Therefore I say to D. Triformis: "Your protestations are childish. Argument is of no value, except with superior people such as yourself, who are in a minority, and who are already converted. Sentiment, its alternative, has seldom failed with the masses in the long run. The suffragettes have ceased to hammer at hopeless heads; they have gone for the hearts. The militant policy may be bad, but it is going to win the vote for women." I am not surprised that Miss Robins' articles disgusted the pedagogue mind of D. Triformis. But she should not have read them; they were not intended for her; they were intended for ordinary people. If D. Triformis wishes to consult the law in a form suitable to her tastes, I would recommend her "Stephen's Commentaries on the Laws of England," in four bulky volumes. Ordinary people do not indulge in such literature.

And yet "D. Triformis" is really a militant all the time. For we find her confessing that "Woman's real grievance is a moral grievance," and that "woman is morally held in contempt." With the addition of the equally distressing grievance that she is morally worshipped, we see the whole camp of the enemy spread out before us. For there lies the complete psychological explanation of the male "anti." A product of that nefarious social system that prohibits a proper understanding between the sexes by forcing them apart at the first signs of mental development, he is led to regard woman either as an angel or an animal, according to whether he is of an idealistic or materialistic temperament. What women have to do, then, is to prove themselves human beings. To do this, if I may use a paradox, superhuman efforts are required, for illusions (or prejudices) are not easily displaced. A great and sudden shock must be administered. Mere argument is utterly thrown away; not so militancy. It is novel, it is shocking. The male "anti" at first shakes his head. The idealist mutters, "unwomanly hussy"; the materialist contents himself with a coarse joke. But presently the idealist will become acquainted with a militant, and will see that she is the genuine article; the materialist will discover that there is something "sporting" in the persistence of action which is invariably met with cruel and vindictive punishment. Thus they both come round in time. It is conceivable that the tedious mechanicalism of constitutional tactics might also eventually convert them; but I must confess a serious doubt. The average man could never be persuaded to take an interest in ordinary political methods adopted by women. The ordinary political methods of men are enough for him. Militant tactics are at least interesting; moreover they expose the truly human qualities of women; and just as the methods of the "mob orator," the "demagogue," the "Limehousian" Lloyd George have succeeded where all others would obviously have failed, I cannot but foresee a similar result for the agitation of the W.S.P.U.

H. F. RUBINSTEIN.

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TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

Your contributor, D. Triformis, seems to have been led away into a serious error by his (or can it be her?) desire to deal trenchantly with the W.S.P.U As a consequence, the second paragraph of the article comes down with a run. It is now some ten years ago since the writer of a successful novel, called "The Open Question," made desperate efforts, by means of letters to the Press, and other devices, to dissociate herself from the personality of another public lady who, before marriage, happened to bear the same name as herself. The confusion still persists, apparently, even in the mind of such a competent person as your contributor. The reference to "her (Miss Elizabeth Robins's) preface to the work of Mary Wollstonecraft" applies, I suppose, to the edition in the "Scott Library." That preface, as the volume clearly sets out in two places, is the work of Elizabeth Robins Pennell, who was, I believe, in 1891, when the preface was written, prominent in the suffrage cause at a time when less was heard of it. The point may be settled by a reference to "Who's Who," where "Pennell, Elizabeth Robins," is described merely as "author; wife of Joseph Pennell, q.v.", while "Robins, Elizabeth (C. E. Raimond), actress and author," is seen to be quite another person. As author of half a dozen novels, besides the one I have named, to say nothing of that powerful propaganda play, "Votes for Women," Miss Robins possesses an identity which should have saved her from being made the subject of the confusion fallen into by your contributor.

F. G. HOWE.

* * *

PLEAS FOR THE PEERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

As Mr. Ross's articles in defence of the Peers seem to have come to an end, it is opportune to offer some remarks thereon. First of all, I would say that if the Peers are really such as Mr. Ross describes them, the sooner they are swept out of the country the better. According to Mr. Ross they are a highly privileged class, fortuitously privileged, who exert their privileges with insolence and in contempt of the feelings of others. Mr. Ross says that their superficial manners, as he has observed them in his shop, are charming. He does not pretend to know them intimately. But has Mr. Ross noticed that the manners of English shopkeepers, too, are charming? I mean the manners that they keep for parade, just as Mr. Ross means about the Peers? Take the shopkeeper from behind his counter and he may be insupportable. Strip the Peers of their accretions and they, too—many of them, at all events—will be insupportable. At the recent General Election, when some of the Peers were face to face with crowds, between whom and them the artificial barriers of respect had been broken down, they showed themselves strangely weak and lamentable. How some of them blustered and bullied, how others of them cringed to their audience! That was the Peer before a trying situation, and he was not an attractive or dignified figure. Even such of us as have not Mr. Ross's love of the peerage felt sorry at these painful exhibitions. They revealed upon how many artificial things the good manners of the Peers depended. Those manners which seemed so free, lordly, and commanding when exercised on servants and others who dare not disobey, how mean and shrivelled they appeared on a platform! Those voices, so even and melodious when surrounded by people and alert to catch their slightest

whisper, how sharp and common they sounded when trying to keep the attention of a bored crowd! Oh, warriors of the Battle of Hastings, could you see them now, how ashamed you would be of your progeny—that is to say, if the popular belief were true that your progeny is to be found among the peerage, which it is not.

Mr. Ross frankly acknowledges that he belongs to the numerous class of persons who respect a lord merely because he has a title. He even goes out of his way to have a fling at the country squire. To him, your Lord Northcliffe, or Lord Wolverhampton, or any other new peer, has greater social value (for that is all this wind of trifling amounts to) than a Cary-Elwes, a Luttrell of Dunster, or a Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton. I had thought that view confined to the daughters of a certain kind of American millionaire and to a certain kind of English actress. Mr. Ross must know that very few of the present day Peers can look down a list of their tenantry without coming on names of far better stock than their own. Disraeli's novel "Sybil" is based upon this truth.

Mr. Ross seems to have the same popular contempt for the French that prevailed in Thackeray's time. I say "popular," because you can hardly chat confidentially with a stockbroker or other business man who has no direct relations with France but a habit of running over there for a holiday occasionally, without this inner despisal of the French coming to the surface. According to Mr. Ross, all the French look cads, and all the French women what he calls "tarts." A statement like this gives one grave doubts about the extent of Mr. Ross's acquaintance with the French, and the quality of the ground from which he has observed them. Some of us have met the German and American who bring out their disparaging criticism of French domestic life on the strength of observations taken at Maxim's, Longchamps and the Jardin de Paris. If Mr. Ross has lived long in France, and this is all he finds to say about French men and women, then it is probable that, like so many other foreigners, he has lived chiefly among his own nationality. Mr. Ross's opinion on this matter is of a piece with our fat, self-satisfied phrase: "An English Gentleman." Why English? Because he who is not with us is against us. We have certain manners and habits. Anybody who has not these manners and habits, although in the abstract his manners and habits may be much more desirable, is a cad. The Frenchman does not resemble the Englishman, therefore he is a cad. The argument concerning women might be thrown into a syllogism:—The Englishwoman expects to be amused; the Frenchwoman considers she is expected to amuse. Now, "tarts" consider they are expected to amuse. Therefore, the French woman is a "tart."

Mr. Ross's "French Republican Friend" who told him that recent French diplomatic defeats were owing to the number of "plebians" in the diplomatic service, seems to have lost all touch with his country—perhaps through disgust. In the first place, what special diplomatic defeats have the French suffered of late years? Some of us thought they were rather strong in that department. In the second place, what diplomat in Europe is more worthy to represent his country than M. Cambon in London, M. Cambon in Berlin, M. Jusserand in Washington—to name only three of the French? Besides, I always thought that the French aristocratic families looked upon the army and navy and foreign service as three employments in which their sons might turn the money of the Republic without scruple. If Mr. Ross and his "French Republican Friend" will take the trouble to look over a list of the Corps Diplomatique, they will find any number of names quite well known in the Fauburg St. Germain. But even if it were not so, does Mr. Ross and his Republican friend seriously think that outside of Mr. Le Queux's ingenious romances the "Courts of Europe" bother themselves about the lineage of the small fry at the legations, so long as they are amiable and well-mannered and do their duty? And if Mr. Ross has the chance of making a few enquiries in the right quarter about the British service, he will discover that the details of family are less considered than the more practical qualities of intelligence and commonsense.

E. G. R.

* * *

GERMAN SPIES.

To the Editor of "The New Age."

May I ask for space in your columns to offer a few remarks on an article entitled "German Spies," which appeared in your issue of January 20? Mr. Eder has apparently not studied the recently-published work by M. Paul Lanoir entitled "L'Espionnage Allemand en France," and I would recommend this book for his perusal. There it will be found that the Secret Service Police of Germany is an elaborately organised body, employing a very large number of agents. At the present time the number of such agents serving in French territory is reported to be 30,000. It will also be found that the means employed by this Secret Service Police have become so notorious and questionable as to lead to interpellations in the Reichstag. On that occasion the official view was expressed by the Minister as follows: It is the right and duty of the State to make use of extraordinary and unusual means, and if the honest and estimable chief of police has made use of the means with which he is now reproached, in order to obtain for the State the advantages of useful information, I express here publicly my satisfaction and thanks.

Mr. Eder remarks: "The majority of these spies are young men in their teens, who have not yet served in the army, and another large contingent is, as Mr. Charles Lowe points out in the current 'Contemporary,' constitutionally incapable of serving in the army." Quite so; does not M. Lanoir tell us that when in 1875 the Secret Service was reorganised, the first principle of reorganisation was the total suppression, without exception, of the military element in that section dealing with foreign countries (la police exterieure)? Mr. Eder ridicules the idea of young Germans who come over here "as waiters, as clerks, or as hairdressers," being employed as spies. From M. Lanoir he will learn that the members of the foreign section of the German Secret Police are drawn from "all sections of society," that women as well as men are to be found amongst such agents, who, moreover, are not confined wholly to individuals of German nationality.

It is, of course, evident that if Lord Roberts' statement in the House of Lords is a correct estimate of the numbers of Germans in this country, namely, 80,000, "almost all of them trained soldiers," then the number of Germans acting as spies in this country could not be considerable. The danger to which Lord Roberts called attention was not in connection with spies. We know that the great general staff of the German army are accurately informed of the whereabouts of all reservists. If war broke out we may be quite certain that the very best use would be made of 80,000 trained men already landed in the enemy's country.

It is surely not unreasonable to hold the opinion that in place of treating these things with indifference it would be wiser to take such measures as would enable the Government to be accurately informed of the true state of affairs. To be forewarned is to be forearmed; to adhere to a policy of studied unconcern is to promote that ignorance in which panics and scares are nurtured.

Defence Not Defiance.

* * *

SHAKESPEARE'S WOMEN.

To the Editor of "The New Age."

Mr. Randall, in his article on Shakespeare's women, seems unconsciously to bring out clearly the sharp difference between the poetic and realistic attitude of art. Although what he says is true and apt as a refutation of the popular attitude, which persists in proclaiming Shakespeare's women as the embodiments of all moral perfection, yet one cannot help saying to oneself about the writer after finishing the article—Oh, Philistine!

Shakespeare's plays are poetic; that is, they take for their central interest moments of exalted emotion, during which fresh vistas are opened up, and during which we catch, as it were, a glimpse of something vaguely felt to exist beyond a slightly opened door. Now, these exalted moments are only obtained by the intensification of emotions and ideas, to which end the plot, actions, and characters, with their morals and manners, are subordinate; the characters themselves are often the embodiments of isolated qualities rather than individualities. If, therefore, the whole setting of a poetic play seems out of date, this does not much concern us, because it is not the central point of interest.

Now, realistic art takes for its central point of interest the non-exalted moments of life, in which we are not lifted above life, but, as it were, more fully immersed into it. Poetic art introduces us, through the emotions, into the unknown—hence the mystic element of all poetic work; realistic art intellectually analyses the known. Here plot, actions, characters are the important point—and the latter should not be split up into embodiments of one quality, but should be the mixed human embodiments of many qualities. Had Shakespeare's plays been realistic, we should be justified in challenging their morals, but surely he never intended to criticise or applaud life around him, but utilised it as he found it for his poetic art?

George Eliot complained somewhere that the Madonna face was insipid, and suggested weak and stupid women; but they are types and abstractions rather than individualities. So are the women in Shakespeare's plays.

Mr. Frank Harris' recent book resembles this article; one is irritated by the continual stress he also lays on the prosaic accidentals of the plays and the man Shakespeare, rather than on the essential poetic qualities of both, and one feels that his criticisms, though correct in a way, are out of focus. It, too, as a forcible refutation of popular moralising round Shakespeare is valuable; but surely it has been rather overpraised?

H. Pulley.

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