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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
NOTES OF THE WEEK	49
FOREIGN AFFAIRS. By S. Verdad	52
BANKRUPT TURKEY. By Allen Upward	53
GEORGE V. THE HOPE OF IRELAND. By L. G. Redmond-Howard	53
HOW HOLBEIN BAGMAN PLAYED THE DEVIL.	54
THE REPRESENTATION OF SHAKESPEARE.—Letters from Professor Edward Dowden, Mr. Sidney Lee, Judge Madden, Mrs. Charlotte C. Stopes, Dr. A. W. Ward, Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton, Mr. Patrick Kirwan	55
BENJAMIN DISRAELI. By Francis Grierson	58
ABERGLAUBE. By Cecil Chesterton... ..	59
BOOKS AND PERSONS. By Jacob Tonson	60

	PAGE
PERSONAL. By Oliver Davies	60
A LITERARY SUPPLEMENT.—Reviews by Alfred E. Randall, Edmund B. d'Auvergne, Dr. H. Campbell, Huntly Carter.	
THE MAIDS' COMEDY. Chapter III.	61
A RUSSIAN BEGGAR. By Stephen Graham... ..	62
AN ENGLISHMAN IN AMERICA. By Juvenal	64
SILVERWORK AND JEWELLERY. By Huntly Carter	65
ANTON TCHEKHOV. By Ashley Dukes	66
VERSES. By E. H. Visiak	68
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR FROM Wordsworth Donisthorpe, J. S. Whitehead, John Kirkby, Beatrice Hastings, H. M. Lennox, Henry Rose, O. E. Post, Harold Fisher, R. Ford	68

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

WE take no particular credit for having been the only journal in England to predict the failure of the Conference and the inevitability as well as the desirability of an immediate General Election. Various papers from the "Times" downwards on the morrow of the announcement began examining their files to discover a single prediction of theirs which had been fulfilled; but it was all in vain. Neither in the result nor in their supposed inspired guesses at the subjects of the Conference's discussions had they proved correct in any particular; and we take all readers to witness that never before has the ineptitude of our press been more manifest. As a matter of fact, there is only one safe rule in political speculation: it is to put yourself in the place of the responsible principals and to ask yourself what you would do in the same circumstances. Thus sympathetically disposed, it was easy to foresee that from a Conference constituted as this was, and originating, as we have many times said, in purely adventitious circumstances, no result in the form of agreement could possibly come. The balance of power in the parties being so nearly equal, neither felt itself justified in conceding points in discussion which a new trial of strength in the constituencies might prove unnecessary. There was only one possible tribunal, namely, national opinion; and until that could be taken, both parties were right to give away nothing.

* * *

Writing on the eve of the Cabinet's decision, we are unable to say whether the General Election will be

fought in December or in January. The balance, however, of desirability is in favour of December, if for no other reason than that the sooner the election is over the better. For January there is this to be said: that the new register would be ready and the campaign might by that time result in a decisive and irrevocable verdict. Nobody would be able to say afterwards that a victory had been snatched or that the country had not had time to give the subject of discussion its second thoughts. On the other hand, it is probable that the country is as clear now as it is ever likely to be; the same issue was canvassed in 1906, again in January of this year, and has been vividly beheld on the background of the concluded Conference during the last nine months. Admittedly the Liberal project of modifying the Lords' Veto is in one sense a leap in the dark; but no more desperate than dozens of leaps the country has taken before in the direction of Democracy. And we believe the country is disposed to take the leap at once. Finally in favour of December is the consideration that two Electioneering Christmases in succession are too much of a good thing. Not only festivity, but trade suffered last winter, and very badly, from the General Election. That may be avoided this winter by crowding into an already wonderful year the crowning wonder as well as nuisance of a second General Election. The New Year might begin under happier auspices.

* * *

December or January, however, it will be necessary if the Election is to be decisive, that the issue should be crystal clear. At present there is a natural disposition among the party men on both sides to start recriminations over the corpse of the Conference; but not only will these have to cease among the responsible leaders at least, but something like a disciplinary and self-denying ordinance against excessive abuse on both sides must be passed. After all, it is obvious to any fair-minded person that the country is entitled to have the case pro and con the House of Lords fairly presented to it; and we will frankly admit that a case can be made out for both sides of the controversy. But if deliberate lies, vulgar abuse, and gross perversions of fact are to be the stock-in-trade of disputants on both sides, it is highly probable that the country will return another equivocal verdict. We implore the men of weight on both sides not only to state their case lucidly,

but to state the case of their opponents fairly. We assure them that it will be counted to them for votes.

* * *

As examples of what should be avoided we turn to the current "Observer" and "Nation." Mr. Garvin, in his editorial notes, is so obviously at his wits' end to know what to say, that he finds it necessary to shout. And what does his shouting convey to us? Only the impression that Mr. Garvin believes the Unionists have a chance of winning if they abuse Mr. Redmond sufficiently for collecting money in America! We have once or twice expressed our estimate of Mr. Garvin as the least reliable politician in leading journalism; let us now add that by his present attitude he appears to us to be about to lead his party to their second débâcle. Of the "Nation" we are afraid we must say what was said of the Bourbons. Our readers will remember that the "Nation" distinguished itself in February last by pretending, in face of an almost universal opinion to the contrary, that the result of the January Election was decisive. It is true that a Liberal majority of 250 had been reduced to a few score, and that a party had been split into a coalition; it is true that every sensible person, including the late King, realised instantly that the country was sitting on the fence. Yet the "Nation" must needs choose that moment for protesting that not only was the country decided, but it was sufficiently decided to make the King's guarantees to Mr. Asquith a "foregone conclusion."

* * *

This blind fanaticism was somewhat reduced by the sequence of events which began by ignoring the "Nation's" opinion entirely and ended by completely falsifying it. In the course of subsequent months, indeed, the "Nation" admitted, if we remember rightly, that its estimate of the situation had been wrong. Otherwise, how can it have assented to the Conference, or even have tolerated a single week of Mr. Asquith's vaticinations? If, in fact, the January decision was "a clear mandate," then all the Cabinet indecision of the last few months has been rank treachery. But such nonsense even the "Nation" could not write, and hence we were left to suppose that it had seen the error of its ways. What was our surprise and disgust, then, to read in its current issue these Bourbon words: "It ought to be considered possible that the Crown might accept Mr. Asquith's advice without imposing on the electorate a repetition of the clear mandate of last January." In comparison with this, Mr. Garvin is Socratically fair and Mr. Strachey clairvoyantly truthful. Unfortunately by such an attitude not only Bourbon crowns have been lost, but Democratic victories may be imperilled. Let us repeat our contentions of last spring: first, the election of January was indecisive both in numbers and in weight; secondly, the clarity of the "mandate," even if the numbers had been less ambiguous, was dubious on account of the admixture of the issue of the Budget; thirdly, a Constitutional King who ventured, under the circumstances, to put his sceptre into the scale would have been guilty not only of folly, but of unconstitutionality; and, finally, a revolution so precariously wrought would be in danger of being unwrought within a few months or years. Now all these considerations have precisely the same weight to-day as in March last. Nothing has changed except the atmosphere. Consequently it is sheer bigotry to pretend that what proved so patently untrue several months ago is suddenly become true at this moment.

We will go further and frankly contend, in advance of the result, that if the coming General Election should prove no more decisive than the last, the case against the House of Lords must be regarded as unproven. Why not? It is, we admit, of the utmost importance that the Lords' question should be settled; in fact, it is a condition precedent of a score of political measures designed to lift England from the mud of poverty. But, after all, England cannot be lifted against her will; and no Democrat would desire to do so. Hence if the present campaign should fail to yield an unmistakable verdict, in weight, if not in numbers, our business will be not to force the event but to profit by the failure to succeed next time. And the direction of our efforts should be the education of public opinion by fair means and in the spirit of truth. Meanwhile, however, it remains a question, to be settled within a month or two, whether in fact public opinion needs to be further enlightened. We do not think it does, but the issues, as we say, must be made clear and kept clear, if the proof is to be forthcoming.

* * *

The gravamen of our charge against the House of Lords is not, however, that it maims Liberal measures in particular. On that ground, no doubt, the Liberal wirepullers will endeavour to urge their cause; but it is no sufficient ground to those of us who recall with gratitude certain Liberal measures which were refused sanction by the Lords. Neither have we any intention of comparing, still less of contrasting, the intellectual merits of the members of the respective Houses. The real grounds of offence are, first, that the House of Lords is not a nationally representative body, however it may desire to be so; but the House of a class; secondly, that the House of Lords does definitely impose the veto of this class upon the will of the nation as articulately expressed in the Commons; thirdly, that in regard to the future alone the prospective and necessary measures of Social Reform are threatened with death at the hands of the Lords; and, fourthly, that the proof of this inability of the Lords to transcend the limits of their class vision was demonstrated in their rejection of Mr. Lloyd George's Budget. Due weight must be given to all these counts in the indictment, but in sum we trust that their effect will be to pose the issue not so much as Liberalism versus the Lords, as the Commons v. the Lords, or Democracy v. Oligarchy. Barren as these phrases may sound in the ear, they have a meaning infinitely surpassing in depth the superficial watchwords ordinarily employed.

* * *

To one serious misconception on the part of the Unionists we would draw attention on the threshold of the fight. It is that under the proposed plan of Mr. Asquith the Lords would lose everything. The "Saturday Review," we think, takes the most extreme view of the position that would result if the Premier's resolutions were carried. "It makes very little difference whether the House of Lords remains in name or is ended." How short-sighted! If we were not certain to give the impression of disingenuousness we could easily demonstrate that the Lords have a great deal to gain in power by losing in prerogative. Even in respect of nominal power, it is obvious that the right to reject a Bill twice before accepting it will give the Lords a very considerable weapon of delay, revision, and even of practical veto. Time and circumstance are not often so favourable to Bills of any radical importance in the Commons that the same Bill can be carried there three times in two years. Again, it is contrary to fact to conceive the interests of the Lords as entirely dependent on the powers of their own Chamber. To our regret there are as good Lords in the House of Commons as in the Upper Chamber itself. The vision of Socialism immediately swamping the Lords when

their veto is modified is ridiculous. In all probability the Commons will become more conservative exactly in proportion as their responsibility increases. All these considerations make the loud bleating of the Lords' bell-wethers sound excessively timid, and not only timid but stupid. It is not the immediate liberation of Radical measures that we anticipate from the declension of the Lords, but the opening up of vistas of hope. While the bare prospect of Democratic and Socialist legislation is bounded by the impassable ring of the Lords' absolute veto, not only is little done, but little is attempted. We shall count the greatest gain from a victory over the Lords the enlargement of the popular horizon and the new impetus that it must give to hope and to will.

* * *

On another ground, too, it may be urged that the effective strength of the Lords is open to a transformation all the more valuable for being spiritual rather than material. It is well known to advanced students of contemporary history that the Lords have brought disaster on themselves by neglect of brains and by their failure to realise their responsibilities. We may take it as an axiom that whether a cause be right or wrong, if it knows how to attract and to employ the best minds of the nation, it is sure to win. Now in various ways it is obvious that the English nobility have alienated the best minds of the English nation. Far from seeking them out as their forefathers did, they have for many years neglected and despised them. What, for example, do modern art, literature, science, the drama, music, architecture, and the crafts owe to the noble class? Is there a patron among them of any discernment? And not only have they neglected their duty of maintaining culture, but they have cynically and selfishly shirked their responsibilities in the matter of mere decency. We say deliberately that no noble class is worth a moment's thought that has permitted England in its hands to become a morass of almost hopeless ugliness and poverty. To whom was the keeping of these islands given by fate and circumstance if not to the noble families, whose heads still sit in the Upper Chamber? And what account have they to render of it? No steward of Empire but would deserve instant dismissal with everlasting obloquy who neglected his office as the Lords have neglected theirs. And this is clearly the feeling of England at this moment. The common people are indifferent when they do not hate them; the artists and intellectuals despise them. In their hour of need the English nobility has neither a people to pity them nor a brain to devise for them. Will they realise this and learn from it? In that is their only hope.

* * *

Mr. Churchill's action as Home Secretary in sending police instead of soldiers to the strike district of South Wales has been severely criticised from opposite points of view. "Justice," as usual, takes the single line of damning at hazard everything in the way of "law and order" that anybody in power attempts. The "Saturday Review," on the other hand, deplores what it calls Mr. Churchill's blunder in not despatching soldiers at the first sign of violence. Surely both these journals have written without a moment's reflection; or the opinion of neither of them inspires the smallest confidence in their discretion. The broad facts of the situation are that there is a strike, that the masters have endeavoured by the use of blacklegs to break it, that the men have retaliated by attacking the blacklegs and destroying a little property, and that finally the Government is compelled to intervene. Doubtless this is terrible enough, but it is after all only an incident in the long industrial war, and as such calls for no special wonder. What is more, the circumstances at Tonypandy are in no sense serious enough to justify the employment of the last resource of all government, namely, the Army. On the contrary, as we have been informed by eye-witnesses, the scenes in Tonypandy at their very worst were not much more sanguinary than a town and gown fight at Cambridge or Oxford.

To leave it at that, even if somebody was killed in the tumult, is plainly better than for a Government to have blood upon its hands. It will not be forgotten that Mr. Asquith lost a good deal of prestige by condoning after the event the shooting down of Featherstone miners; and Mr. Churchill has probably taken that hint as well as the example of M. Briand in France. We at any rate are disposed to congratulate Mr. Churchill on his first encounter with the endless civil war of industry. So far as he has gone, we do not see that he could have done better.

* * *

But while admitting the right of Governments to maintain order—always, be it understood, with the minimum of force required for effect—we deny that the duty of Government either begins there or ends there. As a matter of theory, a Government only requires to use force when it has neglected already its work of prevision. It is now some three months ago that we plainly warned the Cabinet that the "unrest" in the Labour movement was fast rising to a head, and that the temper of the men was growing desperate. This could readily be foreseen by anybody who was acquainted with the labour world, knew of the breakdown of collective bargaining and the dissatisfaction it produced, and realised the moral reaction of the unions on discovering that their political action was doomed to fail. Under these conditions a statesman would instantly have begun the work of assuaging the grievances before they had time to become articulate, still less before they had become active. As everybody knows, however, both Mr. Churchill and the Cabinet generally allowed things to drift as usual until the North was in a blaze and South Wales was a furnace of passion. Then, it is true, Mr. Churchill intervened with moderation and good sense, but by that time the main damage had been done. Even as it is, let nobody suppose that the strike is over or that outbreaks will not occur again. On the contrary, they will occur again; and we hope they may. The conditions of labour, both in South Wales and in the North, are such that, as we repeatedly observe, it is the duty of men, being human, to refuse to serve under them. If the governing classes do nothing serious to remedy them, then the governing classes must be put to the trouble, and we hope they will be, of being periodically exposed to revolts. Even in these they suffer infinitely less than the poor devils whose very revolt is something of a relief.

* * *

In the matter of the South Wales dispute, for example, it is perfectly certain that not only are the men humanly and morally right, but the action of the owners in attempting to break the strike by means of blacklegs is contrary to public policy. To import blacklegs into the mines under the eyes of the men whose homes are being starved to enable them to fight is to overtax human endurance. We have no right to expect Welsh miners to be archangels of toleration; or to die quietly. Nobody, in fact, did expect it. Hence it was absolutely certain that given the attempt to introduce blacklegs there would be riots. Who, then, was responsible for the riots, and who should be blamed? We have no hesitation in saying that the fault lies at the door of the Government itself. Knowing the inflammable character of the situation and foreseeing with certainty the result, the authorities would have been acting well within their rights in refusing absolutely to permit blacklegs to be imported. That would have involved doubtless some breaches in time-dishonoured traditions of Laissez-faire, and possibly have led finally to the establishment of a national living wage, with the State as the guarantor; but we shall arrive there eventually, and it may as well be by force of circumstances as by reason. The plain fact is that Mr. Churchill's action, comparatively commendable as it was, establishes nothing, illuminates nothing, relieves nothing, and anticipates nothing. Having failed to prevent the strike, it is now his business to end it; and if he turns the military on to a few mine owners he would win an immortal renown.

Foreign Affairs.

By S. Verdaz.

A LOT of loose talk is circulating about Persia. Some of it was "splashed" in the "Manchester Guardian" of November 7. This Midland organ, which really does represent a section of Radical opinion, had a special article, and also a leader on the subject. By pointing out what is actually wrong in the information given by the "Manchester Guardian," and wherein its information differs from mine, we may, perhaps, be able to feel our way towards the truth.

* * *

The special article begins by explicitly contradicting the official statements conveyed to Messrs. Reuter on the subject of the loan. Reuter said that application had been made to the Imperial Bank of Persia. "We learn that, on the contrary," says the "Manchester Guardian," "the Persian Government has made no application to the Imperial Bank of Persia. The arrangements for a loan, entered into by the Persian Government, were with Messrs. Seligman, a firm of high standing in the City, and these arrangements would have been carried through but for the opposition of the British Government. . . . The amount of the proposed loan is £1,200,000, and the interest 5 per cent. . . . The negotiations had the approval of the British Foreign Office, and were accepted on October 10 by the Persian Government."

* * *

Now, the information which has reached me from official English sources is that this statement is rather sweeping. The "Manchester Guardian" accentuates it in its leader by the words: "No one outside the Foreign Office has been aware that as long ago as early in October Persia had been offered and had accepted a loan for this purpose [i.e., to put down disorder] from a British firm." The English Foreign Office maintains that it did not know the nature of the Persian negotiations with Messrs. Seligman, that it was kept in ignorance for several days regarding them, and that when it did ascertain their nature it took immediate steps to check them in its own diplomatic interests.

* * *

Indeed, the Seligman question is after all a trifle when compared with the view the "Manchester Guardian" takes with regard to the policy pursued by the British Government in Persia. As narrow in its mind as the rest of the Liberal Press, the "Manchester Guardian" is unable to understand that the policy we are pursuing is the only possible policy in the circumstances. The leader writer grumbles because Sir E. Grey has not protested against the presence of the Russian troops in the north. Why should the Russian troops not be in the north? Are Manchester men so unimaginative that they cannot foresee what would happen if the troops left? Why is no protest made against the presence of the Turkish troops? "Happily it is still not too late for us to retrace the course we have so wrongly undertaken," says the "Manchester Guardian." What course? The course of financial interference. The fact is that Persia, at the present day, must be closely watched and held in check, and the best check is the financial one. The writer in the "Manchester Guardian" does not say so in explicit terms, but he would apparently like us to lend Persia money, and watch her play ducks and drakes with it.

* * *

In this great paper we still find the old Liberal notion that the views on abstract subjects like security and justice are the same in Persia as in England; and the imposition of certain financial control is judged exactly

as if the Persians were Englishmen. In reality, of course, the case is different. The Persians are afflicted in a great degree with the trickery and sharp dealing which we usually associate with Orientals. It is true that they want more money; but the hopelessly corrupt administration of the country does not augur well for its proper spending. Hence it is only natural that the two Powers most interested should exact certain guarantees.

* * *

In another part of its leader the "Manchester Guardian" speaks of the "melancholy history of our dealings with Persia." There is no excuse for the employment of such a phrase. The Liberal Press might as well make up its mind that we stand in the same position towards Persia as the master of a reformatory school to the boys under him. This may not be a pleasant thought for the Persians themselves, or for their sentimental sympathisers here. But in this paper we are not called upon to consider the feelings of either group.

* * *

The writer I am criticising, however, gives himself away in one sentence, and perhaps disarms further criticism: "It is difficult for a plain man without a clue to the spider's web of diplomacy to understand why" etc., etc. It is difficult for me to understand why a "plain man" should be writing leaders for the "Manchester Guardian," and, above all, why he should write about subjects which he says he has no clue to.

* * *

The results of the American elections are not such as to make me believe that Mr. Roosevelt's star has definitely set. The ex-President made a mistake no doubt in first of all severely criticising Mr. Taft's administration and afterwards bestowing his benediction upon it. It will have been observed, however, that Wall Street showed great anxiety to have the Democrats elected, and the Democrats as allies of the financiers is a new spectacle. It does not appear that the wages of the workman are going to be better, and with a Republican majority still in the Senate exceptional reductions in the tariffs are scarcely practicable. It may be that in another two years public opinion will have veered round to Mr. Roosevelt, who seems to have been well supported in the Middle West. In fact, I am inclined at the moment to think that this is very likely. "Father has nothing to say now, but you will hear from him later," said Kermit, conveying the paternal greeting to the crowd after the result of the Dix-Stimson part of the contest was known. Be on the look-out for father's message.

* * *

M. Briand also made a mistake when he took M. Lafferre into his Cabinet. He thought, apparently, that such a notable Freemason would have been of considerable influence in attracting lukewarm supporters; but the man has alienated as many as he has induced to vote for the new Ministry. M. Lafferre's connection with certain army "informants"—"l'affaire fiches," as the punsters call it—has not been forgotten. A well-known Deputy has summed up the situation concisely by saying that, although M. Briand has talent enough for fifteen, he has not sufficient political morality for two. His vote of confidence this time was carried by a majority of 87, while his vote of confidence on the last occasion ran well into three figures.

* * *

I believe it is perfectly true to say that M. Briand has the country with him in the policy he is pursuing against the strikers; but it is questionable whether he has the voters with him. If every citizen of France who is entitled to vote could be induced to take sufficient interest in politics to record his view in the ballot box, the result would be staggering to those who prate about the stability of the Republic. It would also make the Duc d'Orléans and Prince Victor Napoleon take an even greater interest in France than they now do.

Bankrupt Turkey.

By Allen Upward

(Author of "The East End of Europe: the Report of an Unofficial Mission").

II.—What is the Ottoman Nation ?

UNFORTUNATELY for the ambition of the Young Turks to repeat the triumphs of the Japanese, the circumstances of the two empires have hardly anything in common.

Japan, at the moment when it first entered on the task of its own emancipation from European tutelage, was a compact country, containing a homogeneous population approaching forty millions. One in race, in sentiment and in language, the Japanese had a national history of over two thousand years; and the national unity was symbolised in the person of a sacred Emperor who was able, without vanity, to address his people on the outbreak of war, in language which puts to the blush the pretensions of the Bourbons and Habsburgs: "Seated on the throne of my ancestors from time immemorial."

Superior in moral force to the strongest governments of Europe, Japan had no Poland or Ireland to hold down; and its internal peace was troubled neither by Legitimists nor Socialists nor Clericals. More important still was the resource which it possessed in the character of its people, at once brave and loyal, sober and hardy, industrious and intelligent.

With all these advantages in their favour, the patient toil of a group of great statesmen during a whole generation raised Japan to the level of a European Power. How many of these factors of success are at the command of the impatient young officers who, on the very morrow of the revolution, began to talk of reconquering Bosnia and Bulgaria, if not of advancing to the gates of Vienna?

The region over which the Crescent still floats extends from the Adriatic to the Indian Ocean, half of it desert, and the rest thinly populated by a number of inhabitants estimated at twenty-six millions. But these inhabitants are split up among nearly a dozen nationalities, each profoundly distrustful of all the others. Divided by blood, by language, and by religion, they are divided most of all by their common history, a history of five hundred years of mutual strife, of oppression, spoliation and massacre. The very name Ottoman, put forward as a healing symbol of national union by the Turks, is, in the ears of Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians, Syrians and Arabs, the historical symbol of barbarism and tyranny. The language for which the Greeks are asked to exchange that of Homer, and the Arabs to renounce that of the Koran, is a language without a literature and without a scientific vocabulary. Such a language is an intellectual handicap which keeps the Turks themselves below the mental level of their subjects.

Instead of the proclamation of an Ottoman nation being a means of concord, every step taken to realise such an ideal is felt as a new form of oppression by all the other nationalities in the empire. The programme of the Young Turks has not even the merit of originality. Formerly they said to their Christian subjects: "Become Muslims, and you will be equal with ourselves." To-day they say: "Become Ottomans." The Albanians might demand: "Do you become Albanians." The Greeks might answer: "Do you become Hellenes."

In the same way the English have been saying to the Irish for seven hundred years: "Become English." The Russians have called on, first the Poles, and afterwards the Finns, to become Russians. Nothing can be more simple than to exchange one's nature, language, religion, and national traditions for those of one's hereditary enemies. But men are so prejudiced.

This Ottoman nation consists of a race of conquerors encamped among the conquered like the Normans among the Anglo-Saxons after the Battle of Hastings. In three centuries the English absorbed the Normans, but in five centuries the Turks have neither been able

to absorb their subject population nor to be absorbed by it. To accomplish such a fusion will require a stronger chemistry than that contained in the word Ottoman.

Already the Young Turks have found themselves with a Poland on every frontier, in Arabia, in Syria, in Armenia, in Macedonia, and in Albania. They are in a minority almost everywhere. Their barbarian dialect is so little used that they have been obliged to introduce French on the footing of a second official language, even in the capital of the empire.

Out of such materials a nation cannot be created offhand.

But the supreme obstacle to the success of the Young Turks is found in themselves. Man's character is his fate, declared one of those Greek philosophers whom the Young Turks will find it a little difficult to transform into Ottomans. The Turks possess many admirable qualities. They are endowed with the supreme human virtue, courage. Their rural population is sober, peaceable and honest. Christian missionaries from Europe have admitted that, man for man, the Turk is better than any of his Christian neighbours. Under the direction of a superior government the Turks would probably prove themselves to be as fine a people as the Gurkhas or the Sikhs.

Unhappily they are deficient in the very qualities most necessary for the task the Young Turks have taken in hand. They are wanting in perseverance, wanting in energy, wanting in intelligence, wanting above all in the virtues of an administrator—wisdom, tact, firmness and the love of justice. The Turk in office is the worst Turk. The Young Turks themselves made a brilliant success of their revolt; they have made nothing but failures ever since. As a Turkish politician remarked to the writer, it does not follow because a man can make a revolution that he can also build a house.

The word Ottoman has no magic for any but Ottoman ears. To offer it to Arabs and Albanians is as tactless as to offer it to Armenians and Greeks. A cage of animals hostile by instinct to each other cannot be converted into a happy family merely by calling the canaries cats.

George V. the Hope of Ireland.

By L. G. Redmond-Howard

(Author of "John Redmond, the Man and the Demand").

EARLY in March, when I was preparing a biographical study of my uncle, John Redmond, I was talking over the Irish problem with a well-known Tory barrister of the Middle Temple.

As we discussed the prospects of a Home Rule Bill in the immediate future, he asked me whom I considered to be the greatest of Home Rulers. Without hesitation I answered "Morley," and upon his saying it was not he, I went through all the most familiar names in vain. Then in reply to the same question from myself, to my amazement, he answered that Edward the Seventh was the greatest English Home Ruler. That the late King had always retained the first impressions of sympathy for Ireland inherited from his stay at the Curragh, when a young man, I knew. "Poor old Ireland," for example, was a phrase continually upon his lips, and no one was more genuinely popular with the mass of the people, but I was anxious to learn for what reason my friend called him the greatest of English Home Rulers.

Thereupon he told me that it was a very well-known fact that the late King did not view the prospects of a new subordinate parliament with disfavour, and that it was a common story that once, when Prince of Wales, he had been so impressed by the acuteness of the political crisis had assumed under the leadership of Parnell, that he had declared "that if ever he should come to the throne, it would be one of the greatest ambitions of his reign not to leave behind him with the crown of England that inheritance of Irish discontent which he had inherited from the misrule of his ancestors, and which had been handed down as a kind of sword of

Damocles over the Empire, and that he thought such an amicable entente could be secured by Home Rule."

Not unnaturally I pressed for place, time and circumstances, in which this remarkable utterance was supposed to have taken place. These he was unable to give me, but instead said that it was such common knowledge that its truth might be assumed. It was unsatisfactory as a mode of proof, but it is certainly a fact which should find its place in the history of the most distressful country, if it could only be verified.

Whether it be true or false, however, like the myths of ancient days, it is not without significance: for the very fact that it has been believed is evidence that it is characteristic, and to say that it is characteristic is second only to saying it is true.

The late King is probably the only Sovereign who has been sincerely regretted in Ireland since James II, but if his death is felt for one cause more than another, it is the loss of that world-famed tact of his, which made him a diplomatic genius and which, if occasion had offered, would probably have found some solution for the greatest of all Imperial problems, the loyalty of Ireland.

The new King is, so far, an unknown figure as a personality, but no Sovereign ever ascended the throne of England on whom more hopes have been placed than George V. The time is rich in possibilities; ripe for new measures. Men are tired of the racial strife, the hundred years' war of English politics. Young men are abandoning the purely "emotional patriotism" which was looked upon in England as such a danger, and the only really widespread enthusiasm is more economic and objective. There is thus a splendid opening for an entente cordiale led by a diplomatist sovereign.

Chief among those in the van of this movement is Mr. William O'Brien, whose change of attitude from rabid hostility to the utmost courtesy, forms one of the most significant developments in the study of Parnellism. And it seems a pity that upon the death of the late King, when the Dublin Corporation, and even so ardent a Nationalist as Archbishop Walshe, paid public tribute to his memory, Mr. Redmond and his party did not come forward gracefully with some official act of condolence. The act would have been untraditional no doubt, but it would have been diplomatic, and would have won the hearts of the English electors more potently than any political campaign. But there have not been wanting signs of a coming peace in his many utterances.

The great key to the Irish problem is the spirit in which it is approached, and never more so than at the present crisis was there need for a "New Spirit." What is required, as Mr. William O'Brien once said, is a great press movement to inaugurate an entente and show by the mutual co-operation of Nationalist and Unionist, that Home Rule will bring in a reign of real peace, and not a political fight. But in addition to that journalistic attempt, which a few influential newspapers could turn into a reality, there is needed its personification in some royal initiative. More is wrought by politics than by force of arms, but much more by diplomacy. Hence the hopes placed in George V.

A great personal interest and love of Ireland has not been displayed in centuries by any English monarch; it was therefore impossible to reciprocate it; and strange to say, the word "Tory," which was synonymous with all that fervid adherence of Irishmen to the Stuarts, has now become a synonym for those who hate England most.

One who has seen the Empire, and knows the loyalty of the great Home Rule Parliaments of the great Commonwealth of the great Dominion, is the very man for the situation. The Irish are instinctively loyal; but loyalty, like love, takes two. If, however, it could be said of George V merely that he had by his love of Ireland brought back its loyalty, it might be less grandiose than the title of "Peacemaker" conferred on his father, but it may be confidently stated that it would have conferred a greater boon to the empire. At least, it would be completing what, if the story of the greatest Home Ruler be true, was the father's greatest ambition.

How Holbein Bagman Played the Devil.

THE Hospital being in debt to the tune of a couple of thousand pounds, notwithstanding the closing of a ward, and other curtailments of the services for which the Hospital is looked to every year by one out of every twelve of the borough inhabitants—and this having gone on for an intolerably long time—small wonder at last that citizens collected together and determined to hold a bazaar. It should be a Historical Bazaar, with stalls and stall-holders dressed in costume appropriate to a score of by-gone centuries. The Saxon period, the Norman period, the Angevin, the Elizabethan, the Stuart and other periods were quickly taken up, and Holbein Bagman, when he was asked what he would do, said that he would put on the costume of the Future, and appear in horns, claws, tail and hoofs as the symbol of the fashion to which the world was hastening in defect of Socialism. Since Holbein Bagman always jests when he is serious, everybody laughed, and nobody thought more of the matter. On the opening-day of the Bazaar, however, Holbein Bagman was as good as his word, and appeared in the costume he had indicated, and played, as events turned out, a part in keeping with it. To him had been allotted the function of seconding the vote of thanks to the Marquis, who was to perform the opening ceremony with due parade and dignity. The Marchioness was also invited to be present.

Behold us then, on our opening-day, arrayed on the platform of the Town Hall, the Marquis and the Marchioness in the centre of us, and below us on the floor the stalls set round the walls, with their merchantable charity, enclosing as in a frame a compactly wedged mass of the hats and the heads of everybody who was somebody, and anybody who was nobody, all assembled together for the delight of doing good, and the love of our time-honoured Nobility. Irrespectively of that twin-starred cynosure, the objects that most attract admiration are the hennius of ladies who have donned the Gothic; and the horns, claws, tail and hoofs of Holbein Bagman, who presents a scarlet, diabolical and altogether mediæval apparition by the side of them.

The Chairman sets the ball rolling, as chairmen do, and calls first upon the Treasurer to read the list of subscriptions. A clap of laughter greets the Treasurer as he unfolds a roll which reaches to his feet, and there are frequent outbursts of applause as the name of donor after donor is recited, the sitting member, the rival political candidate, the leading burgesses, the leading business firms, etc. The part he liked best of his subscription list, said the Treasurer, and here I doubt if he was quite sincere, was the account of the half-pennies contributed, in weekly collection boxes, by noble hearted British working people, eager to relieve the sufferings of their brothers and sisters. There were nearly a hundred thousand half-pence, but fortunately we heard about them in the lump, and not in the item, like the guineas.

The Treasurer having made his bow to us, the way was clear for the Marquis, whose rising was the signal for cheers and the presentation of a bouquet to the Marchioness, and whose subsequent resumption of his seat after the halting delivery of a memorandum upon the topics of "helping the poor," "noble work," "charitable effort," etc., was accomplished in the glamour of magnesium light and the taking of an instantaneous photograph. The Chairman said his duty was then to call upon the mover of the vote of thanks.

The Reverend Prebendary Jerusalem informed the Marquis that had it not been for the profound instinct of ceremony and order which resides in British hearts, we should have risen to our feet spontaneously with one accord to bless him for his noble deed in coming among us and lending his encouragement to us. The Marquis had recently written a letter to the boys of the Reformatory, and we longed to thank him for it, but we had been unable to thank him. Let us thank him now for the noble and consoling words he had written, and the

noble and inspiring words he had spoken. What would England be without its Marquises and its Marchionesses? He was about to tread, however, upon more debateable ground. The proposal had been mooted in the borough to throw the Hospital upon the rates! What more shocking proposal could ever be put forward? Of what good effect were rates? Who was ever known to become a better man by paying a rate? What were our feelings when we saw the demand note upon our dinner-table, and what were our words? It depended very much upon whether we were a clergyman or not what we said when we saw the demand-note. To pay a rate improved nobody's character, whereas to give to the Hospital improved us all. Let us look around us with pride, as he did, and think how much better we all were for being there. The ladies who had worked for the stalls were nobler moral beings for having done so. The subscribers who had given to the subscription-list were nobler moral beings for having done so. The working people who had contributed their half-pennies were better men and women for it, and the Marquis himself was a nobler man, if that were possible, for having come among us. No! to throw the Hospital upon the rates would be deplorable. Long let the Hospital be sustained upon the warmth and the sympathy of noble British hearts!

It was with more than purgatorial fires, more than a burning indignation, that Holbein Bagman listened to these clerical ineptitudes, and with almost a prayer, forgetful of his character of the Devil, that he reminded himself of the importance of clinging to what remained of his sense of humour. For only a jest could gain him a hearing. He seconded the vote of thanks to the Marquis, he said, as a regrettable necessity (some laughter, it being understood that Holbein Bagman is a funny fellow). What had we to thank the Marquis for? Ought not the Marquis rather to thank us, first of all for the bouquet which we had presented to his wife, and then for the compliments we had given him, and then, also, for a whole lifetime of bouquets and compliments which we had assured to him, simply because he was a person of rank. (More laughter mixed with signs of misgiving.) What had the Marquis done for us compared with what we had done for him? Talk about rates, had we not paid him his rents with exemplary regularity (laughter) to spare him the pain of losing his tenants—never grumbled when we could not gain the extension or the renewal of our leases upon terms that quite suited us (laughter)—always blessed the name of his agents who knew so well how to conceal the firm hand in the velvet glove, always felt that if we were proud of anything, we were proud of the Marquis, and of his intimate relation with the welfare and prosperity of the town (Hear, hear), his intimate and sympathetic association with the thriving or the misfortune of any and all of us? Nay, any bit of virtue we had in a public way, any bit of civic work we were doing, we always felt that our virtue was the brighter and our work the easier if the Marquis would come and shine upon us, and patronise and approve us. We did not feel ourselves complete without him, and would the Marquis be insensible to the debt he owed us for such a feeling? Well, ladies and gentlemen, this is unusual language for the Devil (laughter) and it is time I begin to shine forth in my true character. Naturally I cannot place myself in all things upon the same side as the Church (laughter) devoted as I am to the aristocracy (laughter). But in common with my reverend friend and fellow-worker, if he will allow me to call him so (laughter), I derive much pride and satisfaction from the events and circumstances that have brought us here this afternoon. A Hospital plunged in debt, wards shut up, patients shut out, a staff over-worked, a committee anxious how to make both ends meet, all these things are, naturally to me, occasions for rejoicing, and temper the dismay with which I am obliged to look upon the excellences of the voluntary system. What I lose in one way by the ennoblement you accomplish for your souls by your deeds of charity and compassion, I more than make up for in another way by the destitution and degradation into which you allow the sick to fall, by the misery, the heartlessness, the premature death, the crime, which

are my rich harvest from disease that is allowed to be neglected. Once municipalise your Hospital, and the present arrangement which seems to suit, equally well, your Deity and Myself, will begin to be disturbed, not at all, as I think, to my advantage (the beginnings of a murmur). Ladies and gentlemen, in the name of the Devil I tell you that I am well content, and that you are all of you mine! (Shouts of "No No,," and disturbance). The Subscribers are mine because they allowed their names to be read out while you applauded them; the Marquis is mine because he is too fond of bouquets and compliments; the Prebendary is mine because he worships titles, and the stall-holders (Holbein Bagman was now shouting above a din) and the rest of you, I take you all to myself, you are all of you damned, because you think it right and possible to cultivate your hot-house plant of virtue upon the pain. . . . (but here the Devil, although he had climbed upon a chair, could be heard no longer).

A Symposium on the Representation of Shakespeare.

Conducted by Huntly Carter.

IN view of the manner in which certain Shakespearean plays are presented to contemporary English audiences, and of the manner in which they might be presented, as suggested by the Shakespearean Exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, the following questions have been put to Shakespearean critics and scholars:—

1. *Would you say that Shakespeare had any intention with regard to appropriate decoration for his plays? Did he write for an imaginative audience and not for scenic aids?*
2. *Do you think, therefore, Shakespeare ought to be played without scenery and unabridged?*
3. *Do you believe that the beauty of Shakespeare resides in the spoken word, and the utmost attention should be given to the delivery of Shakespearean verse?*
4. *Or do you agree that Shakespeare wrote for scenic aids? He was restricted by the capabilities of the Elizabethan Theatre, and if he had had the unimaginative audience of the present day to deal with, and the modern scenic aids at his command, he would have employed the latter in the production of his plays so as to obtain a proper balance of visualised scene and spoken word? But even admitting this, is the present tendency to overload Shakespeare with scenery and to make extensive "cuts" in your opinion a departure from the spirit of Shakespeare's work and therefore a diminution of its beauty?*
5. *Have you any criticisms or further suggestions?*

PROFESSOR EDWARD DOWDEN, M.A., LL.D., D.C.L.

1. I know nothing as to Shakespeare's intention with regard to appropriate decoration.
2. I do not think that Shakespeare ought to be played without scenery.
3. I think that appropriate scenery does not detract from the beauty of the spoken word.
4. I have never felt beauty of scenery to be a departure from the spirit of Shakespearean work, nor a diminution of its beauty.

DR. SIDNEY LEE.

[Extracts taken by Dr. Lee from a volume of essays, "Shakespeare and the Modern Stage" (Constable), which largely discourses, as its title denotes, on methods of representing Shakespeare on the modern stage.]

1. Shakespeare's splendid prelude to his play of Henry V. is a spiritual appeal to his audience not to waste regrets on defects of stage machinery, but to bring to the observation of his piece their highest powers of imagination, whereby alone can full justice be done to a majestic theme. The central topic of the choric speech is the essential limitations of all scenic appliances. The dramatist reminds us that the

literal presentation of life itself in all its movement and action lies outside the range of the stage, especially the movement and action of life in its most glorious manifestations. Obvious conditions of space do not allow "two mighty monarchies" literally to be confined within the walls of a theatre. Shakespeare is not complaining that his plays were in his own days inadequately upholstered in the theatre, or that the "scaffold" on which they were produced was "unworthy" of them. The words have no concern with the contention that modern upholstery and spectacular machinery render Shakespeare's play a justice which was denied to them in his lifetime. As reasonably one might affirm that the modern theatre has now conquered the ordinary conditions of time and space; that a modern playhouse can, if the manager so will it, actually hold within its walls the "vast fields of France," or confine "two mighty monarchies."

The fact that in Shakespeare's day boys or men took the part of women, and that their renderings in such conditions of characters like Lady Macbeth and Desdemona, proved popular and satisfactory, seems convincing testimony not to the ability of Elizabethan boys, but to the superior imaginative faculty of adult Elizabethan playgoers, in whom the needful dramatic illusion was far more easily evoked than it is nowadays.

The costumes had no pretensions to fit the period or place of the action. They were the ordinary dresses of the various classes of the day, but very often of rich material, and in the height of the current fashion.

2. Plays which are wrought of purest imaginative texture call solely for a scenic setting which should convey effective suggestion. The machinery to be employed for the purpose of effective suggestion should be simple and unobtrusive. If it be complex and obtrusive it defeats "the purpose of playing" by exaggerating for the spectator the inevitable interval between the visionary and indeterminate limits of the scene which the poet imagines, and the cramped and narrow bounds which the stage renders practicable. That perilous interval can only be effectually bridged by scenic art, which is applied with an apt judgment and a light hand. Anything that aims at doing more than satisfy the condition essential to the effective suggestion of the scenic environment of Shakespearean drama is, from the literary and logical points of view, "a wasteful and ridiculous excess."

[Then follow passages which raise a plea for simplification of scenic appliances, and reduction of supers, allowing suggestion a free hand.]

3. Shakespeare has declared with emphasis that no amount of scenery can secure genuine success on the stage for a great work of the imagination. He is no less emphatic in the value he sets on competent acting. In "Hamlet," as every reader will remember, the dramatist points out the perennial defects of the actor, and shows how they may and must be corrected. He did all he could for the Elizabethan playgoer in the way of insisting that the art of acting must be studied seriously, and that the dramatist's words must reach the ears of the audience clearly and intelligibly enunciated. [Hamlet's speech to the players is quoted.]

4. There is an unexhilarating endeavour that is sometimes made by advocates of the system of spectacle to prove that Shakespeare himself would have appreciated the modern developments of the scenic art—nay, more, that he himself has justified them. This line of argument serves to confirm the suggested defect of imagination in the present generation. The well-known chorus before the first act of Henry V. is the evidence which is relied upon to show that Shakespeare wished his plays to be, in journalistic dialect, "magnificently staged," and that he deplored the inability of his uncouth age to realise that wish.

[The lines are quoted at length, beginning: "O for a muse of fire that would ascend," etc., ending, "Turning the accomplishment of many years into an hour-glass."]

There is, in my opinion, no strict relevance in these lines to the inquiry whether Shakespeare's work should be treated on the stage as drama or spectacle. Nay, I go further, and assert that, as far as the speech touches the question at issue at all, it tells against the pretensions of spectacle. Shortly stated, this splendid prelude is a spirited appeal to his audience not to waste regrets on defects of stage machinery, but to bring to the observation of his piece their highest powers of imagination.

In the most influential circles of the theatrical profession it has become commonplace to assert that Shakespearean drama cannot be successfully produced, cannot be rendered tolerable to any substantial section of the play-going public, without a plethora of scenic spectacle and gorgeous costume, much of which the student regards as superfluous and inappropriate. His accepted tradition of the modern stage ordains that every revival of a Shakespearean play at a leading theatre shall base some part of its claim to public favour on its spectacular magnificence.

[Dr. Lee further deprecates the sumptuous mountings of modern managers, the late Sir Henry Irving, Sir Herbert Tree, etc., as well as the deliberate pursuit of scenic realism, as being antagonistic to the ultimate law of dramatic art. He favours Mr. Benson's principles: "Short Runs," "No Stars," "All-round Competence," "Unostentatious Setting," and "Shakespeare and the National Drama."]

RT. HON. JUDGE MADDEN, P.C., LL.D.

The fact that Shakespeare presented in his plays many scenes which lend themselves to scenic treatment suggests that he would have availed himself of this additional attraction to the playgoer if he had not been "restricted by the capabilities of the Elizabethan Theatre." Indeed, he has told us so. In the prologue to "Henry V." the chorus invokes on behalf of the poet-dramatist—

"A Muse of fire that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention."

But adds on behalf of the theatrical manager—

"Pardon, gentles all,
The flat, unraised spirits that have dared
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object; can this cockpit hold
The vast fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air of Agincourt?"

The audience is thus appealed to—

"Piece not our imperfections with your thoughts."

Shakespeare, in the absence of scenic aids, was obliged to appeal to the imagination of his audience. I doubt that they were more imaginative than the ordinary playgoer of to-day, or that Shakespeare would have so regarded them. We know that the "groundlings" were "capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-show, and noise." He appealed to their "thoughts" because he could not appeal to their senses. But I have no doubt that he would gladly have appealed to their senses in aid of imagination, and that if he had "the modern scenic aids at his command" he would have rendered the "scaffold" less "unworthy," and remedied the "imperfections" for which he offers an apology.

I think, therefore, that Shakespeare should be played with the scenery best adapted to illustrate the action of the play. With regard to the question of what is called "the present tendency to overload Shakespeare with scenery," I recognise that the tendency exists, but I do not regret it; for I believe that tens of thousands are thus brought within the sphere of the influence of Shakespeare to whom he would only be a name if his plays were presented in the manner in which they were staged when Shakespeare spelled ruin.

Scenery, pageants, and decorations which seem to me to overlay "some necessary question of the play" may be no more than are necessary to constitute a counter attraction to the pantomime, the musical comedy, or the music-hall.

I certainly answer your third question in the affirmative. I hope that a National Theatre will be founded as a memorial to Shakespeare, in which his plays will be presented, with appropriate scenery, and (so far as may be) unabridged. In what I may call popular presentments of his plays I see no objection to abridgment for the purpose of bringing a drama within manageable bonds. Ben Jonson was not afraid to say, in his blunt way, that Shakespeare might well have blotted one thousand of his lines. I have no doubt that Shakespeare would recognise the propriety of judicious cutting, for he was content to leave his immortal dramas to the mercy of his fellows Hemming and Condell, to be dealt with as they thought fit for the purposes of the theatre in which they were interested.

MRS. CHARLOTTE C. STOPES.

(Author of "Bacon-Shakespeare Question Answered").

1. It is perfectly certain that Shakespeare considered every condition under which his works would be produced before he finally completed them. On the public stage he knew that he would have an open platform, a curtained recess at the back, with a balcony, tapestry, and a few movable articles of furniture; that his light would be from above, as the theatre was open to the sky, and the performances by daylight. Everything else had to be filled up by the imagination of the audience, whom he made fellow-workers with himself. (See prologue, "Henry V.") To guide them by associated ideas to form a reasonable conception of the scene, he introduced numerous passages and leading words which lose their value if they are not used as he intended them to be. One department of decoration he did not neglect. The performers wore handsome clothes according to their ranks in life, then much more clearly distinguished than now.

But these remarks only refer to public theatres, such as

"The Theatre" and "The Globe." He also played, however, at Blackfriars, a private theatre, where the performances might be at night, by artificial light, and with richer decoration. He also played at Court, both by day and night. There is evidence that there was much more of the nature of scenery in these private performances, but it was of a kind much simpler than modern scenes, and did not seem to be changed during the performance until the reign of James I., and then with but little delay.

2. This question can be answered in at least three ways, according to the person interrogated. If a stage-manager, he would say that whatever he did, he must try to please his public, that the public now-a-days is so accustomed to illustration and pictorial art, that fine effects must be given if he wished to attract a good audience. If, however, he had good and effective scenery, he must take time to change it; he must begin punctually, and end nearly punctually; therefore, as the scenery cannot be cut, the poet must be.

If an actor be asked, he would probably answer, "Yes." Scenery forms a becoming background to his careful get-up and studied expressions. Besides it saves him trouble. He might be allowed to forget a word or even a line without notice, if the audience are held by the glamour of a pretty picture. If, to make time, some of the parts must be cut, he would say that if they did not cut his part it need not matter much.

If, however, a scholar or a student of Shakespeare were asked he could only reply: If you wish to understand Shakespeare's plays you must set them on with the limitations by which he was bound; you must give no scenery, no pause, no acts, no scenes which interfere with the sense of Shakespeare's composition or delay the rapidity of its production. There must be no "intervals for conversation" when the master-poet has raised the feelings of his audience to a high pitch of expectancy, no time for the fervour of a passion to cool. If there is no scenery, no delays, there is no need to abridge the plays on the plea of closing-time. There would be time enough to hear what Shakespeare has to say for himself—and he cannot be understood otherwise.

3. Shakespeare's language is always intended to help towards the elucidation of the character which uses it. The greatest care should be taken in its delivery, to mark the rhythm and express the emphasis. It must be remembered that elocution was a more important factor in stage-success than it is now. There are frequent contemporary allusions to this fact. At the same time it was a rapid though clear enunciation; it did not waste time, it did not allow the listener's attention to flag. But to realise the beauty of Shakespeare's verse, every word must be weighed, every pause balanced. It cannot be reduced to the level of everyday conversation, for though Shakespeare depicts real life, it is life expressed in a poetic form, and on a higher plane than the common-place.

4. This has already been answered in the previous paragraphs. We must never forget, as I fully explained in an article on "Elizabethan Stage Scenery" ("The Fortnightly," June, (?) 1904), that the sixteenth century in this country did not develop pictorial art. There were few native painters, even portraits were uncommon, and were generally made by foreigners. The forms under which the artistic aspirations of the period were expressed were architecture, music, and poetry. The modern drama was its own special creation. In our own times the relations of thought and feeling to art are changed. Poetry palls on the public; we are poor in dramatists; we are weak in imaginative power; we do not become fellow-workers with Shakespeare, as we must be if we would understand him. But meantime there has been evolved many schools of pictorial art; the public hungers for it; books grow popular by their illustrations; art has been vulgarised amid poster advertisements; and it is this modern taste for illustration which is at the root of the popularity of stage-scenery.

MR. THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON.

Scenic adornment may be, and, indeed, is, in our time, overdone in representations of Shakespearean plays. But as Shakespeare was a joint-manager and an eminent man of business, as well as a poet, and knew that in dramatic art the primary quest is illusion, I think he would have seized upon most of the scenic aids to illusion in his own time, at whatever period he had lived. Some one has said (I think it was Coleridge), "A play is a third something between a poem and a picture," and Shakespeare, notwithstanding the restricted capabilities of the Elizabethan stage, seems to me to be always conscious of this.

Of course, I think that the beauty of Shakespeare resides in the spoken word, and that the utmost attention should be given to the delivery of Shakespearean verse. But with all my respect for those enthusiastic students of Shakespeare—some of whom are among my intimate friends—who would have his plays given exactly as they were written, and

without scenery, I cannot forget the enormous difference between an Elizabethan audience and an audience of the present day in regard to imaginative belief. There is all the difference in the world between an Elizabethan audience and an audience of our own time.

As I have said on a previous occasion, when discussing "Cymbeline," the absorbed attention with which an Elizabethan audience must have followed a play constantly strikes with amazement the student, not only of Shakespeare, but of his contemporary dramatists. In order to capture the imagination of the audience no aid was needed from scenery. Take, for instance, "The Wisdom of Dr. Dodypoll," a very popular play at that period, and in some scenes a very beautiful one. Without the aid of scenery of any kind to keep the imagination alive, an Elizabethan spectator of this play was able to follow a jumble of unconnected incidents which the modern reader even at his leisure in his study, finds it almost impossible to follow. In fact, I never did talk with any Shakespearean student who could give me a lucid précis of this bewildering play. A still more wonderful instance of the power of attention shown by an Elizabethan audience is afforded by Tarrington's "Two Tragedies in One," where a poetic version of "The Babes in the Wood," and an English murder-drama as realistic as "A Warning to Fair Women," and as direct in its method as "Arden of Feversham," are intermingled in alternate scenes. And yet these plays were followed without the aid of scenery, followed with intelligent eagerness by these amazing Elizabethan audiences. The fact is that in Shakespeare's time people went to the theatre, not merely to be amused, but also to be instructed and informed. As regards the "groundlings," they were only brought into touch with literature by the acted drama.

DR. A. W. WARD, LITT.D., Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge.

1. I cannot but suppose that Shakespeare intended the decoration for his plays to be as appropriate as it could be.

2. All experiments are interesting.

3. I believe that the beauty of a Shakespearean play largely lies in its diction and versification, and that therefore great attention should be given to the delivery of the verse or prose it contains.

4. Any tendency to "overload" must diminish the effect of that which is overloaded. As to "cuts," they were probably in use in Shakespeare's time, and no doubt were regretted by him either as necessary or as unnecessary evils. But an "extensive" cut is a phrase which requires definition.

MR. PATRICK KIRWAN.

[*Mr. Kirwan is dealing with the subject of Shakespeare and natural scenery.*]

The chief difference between open-air playing and that within a theatre seems to me to lay in the abolition of the proscenium and in the consequent freedom of action.

This is particularly marked in the case of Shakespeare as coming more nearly to the conditions for which he wrote.

The erection of a picture-frame was no doubt injurious to the free growth of the drama, for it added the restrictions of the painter's art to those absolutely necessary to dramatic production—that is to say, to the incarnation of a wave of emotion.

In Shakespeare's day people came to hear, but afterwards they came to see. Thus the art was changed from the prominence of the literary element to that of the pictorial.

I very much doubt if Shakespeare would have welcomed the proscenium, as it would have tended to cramp his art, diverting the attention of the audience from the telling of a story to the seeing of a picture. He would no doubt have welcomed scenery as suggestive and helpful to mood, but as a secondary consideration and not as a primary.

His impatience of constraint is shown in the increasing malleability of his verse in the successive plays, and in his gothic abhorrence of the straight-waistcoat restraint of the old classic forms of unity of action and of scene.

Now, open-air playing brings the whole thing nearer to Nature, gives the picturesque element without the strictly pictorial, and gives added space to the performers, thus allowing more freedom from constraint in playing and a secondary stage whereon we may see the doings of people who are of secondary consideration in the story.

It should be mentioned that the late Dr. Furnivall suggested the subject of this symposium, and wrote concerning it a day or two previous to his death.

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Benjamin Disraeli.

By Francis Grierson.

THE nineteenth century may yet be called the most "dæmonic" of all the centuries of the Christian era. At its beginning three men were living who, in the words of Goethe, "were controlled by the dæmonic afflatus of their genius," namely, Byron, Bonaparte and Disraeli. Of these three Bonaparte and Disraeli attained the miraculous. A mistake has been made in alluding to the first half of Queen Victoria's reign as a period of sentimentality. As a matter of fact it was sentimental only in art; but the long necks in the pictures of Rossetti were more than matched by the long heads in Parliament; the languorous eyes in Burne Jones were more than rivalled by the Mephistophelean glances of wily Whigs and the Machiavellian winks of a Tory Demiurgus whose advent all the wiseacres failed to predict and all the fools failed to prevent. No; the novels, the manners, the fads, the fertile impudence, the dazzling folly of Disraelian wit more than counter-balanced the lotus-languors of the come-into-the-garden Maudies of the early Victorian period. Byron was a sentimental Don Juan who turned the heads of women and the stomachs of men. Disraeli turned all heads, touched all fancies, wrought upon all hearts, opened all pocket-books, filled all imaginations, and brought to the festive board of British politics the spice of a new life, a ragout unnamed in the political cook-books, unknown to the most fastidious faddists of the Parliamentary palate, a dish of birds of a feather which had refused to flock together, but which, when caught, killed, and baked in a pie, rose when the pie was opened and sang in chorus "Rule Britannia," to the baton of Benjamin Disraeli, Prime Minister of England by the Grace of God, most of the landlords and all the publicans. Never before was such a thing seen with the naked eye, never was such a thing heard with the naked ear. People who were not stricken with wonder would be likely to remain unmoved at the sound of the last trump.

Bonaparte struck terror into all Europe, but he did so with sabre and bullet. People could see him at the work even if they failed to understand how his work was done.

He seemed to his soldiers to be part of themselves. They regarded him as a descended God made one with the common esprit de corps, democratic as well as dæmonic; they followed blindly where they could not see, and obeyed willingly what they could not understand. With all his colossal originality Napoleon the Great was less dæmonic, less Oriental than Disraeli. Bonaparte often blundered, and he came to his defeat through a blunder that showed more madness than sanity. He possessed will, tact, daring, originality, but he lacked patience and composure. The serene Hebraic spirit was not his. Serenity means supremacy. Once lose the sense of equanimity and the balance of power is gone. An ambitious, irritable man is doomed. That was the doom of Napoleon. The supreme minds are those that know themselves. A man can afford to wait when he understands his own powers, the meaning of parties, the pretensions of his enemies, and the chimeras of the world. While men with limitations are in a hurry, the others, possessing a sense of the eternal, are never tempted to force events, never tempted to hurry through the phenomena of life.

Understand a man's mind and you can defeat him in his aims, his plans, his ambition. No one understood Disraeli. And yet the man in the street will tell you he understands the wit in the play, the clown in the circus, the dandy in the red waistcoat. Not these do people understand. What people understand is the speaker without wit, the writer without humour, the politician without imagination, the preacher without passion.

Beau Brummell died in 1840, and in that year another dandy found himself in a conspicuous place on the stage of London life. But what a difference between the two dandies, Brummell and Disraeli! The first was a fool, the second a genius who played at burlesque because he

knew the fools would like it. Captivate them and you have won half the battle. The foolish are won through the sight, the weak through hunger, the vain by flattery, the wicked by ambition, the cunning by promises, and the wise by knowledge and judgment. The new dandy made up his mind to give all a taste in turn. In the beginning he made himself as picturesque as it was possible to be without becoming a peacock or a bird of paradise, and he managed to surpass them in his strut and rival them in colour. He was a human chanticleer. He began to crow as a chicken and fought in the Parliamentary cock-pit when his spurs were mere corns and his wings pin feathers. Well might the Puritans cry, Coxcomb! He lost no time. He stormed the barnyard first, the hen-house second, the House of Commons third, then the lordly House of the Turkey Cocks, whose cry is, Gobble, gobble, and let the poor sparrows take the crumbs. The idle were intensely amused, society was kept bobbing up and down like a devil in a bottle, but the men in search of power were seized with mingled feelings of wonder, fear, admiration, and panic. Whence came this Titan who began his career as a social mountebank? Who was this Jew without prestige, this politician without a pedigree, this upstart without a fortune? Well might his enemies scratch their heads and ask if their pyramid of statescraft did not hide more mummies than men, more dummies than live issues.

We are a peculiar people.

When we call a statesman a charlatan we mean that he has the true political afflatus; when we call a poet a charlatan we mean that he has the true poetic afflatus, and when we call an artist a charlatan we mean, of course, that he possesses the Whistlerian root that will grow not brussels sprouts, but roses with thorns enough to make prickly foolscaps for every R.A. in the three kingdoms. As Disraeli rose step by step he was greeted with stronger and stronger epithets. The admiration of his enemies knew no bounds. They cried in a chorus, "Charlatan, mountebank, adventurer, impostor!" In the meantime he kept his wits, he stored his irony, he reserved his sarcasm and wore on his face the imperious mask of perpetual serenity, nature's hall-mark of dæmonic genius. Nor did he walk alone in his dashing glory. He was surrounded by social meteors, sparks from the wheel of fashion and passing fame, dynamical dandies, Count D'Orsay, Bulwer Lytton, Brummell, and others, who made Disraeli's sun appear all the brighter in comparison with the dandies who wanted but a whiff of creative afflatus to make their intellects shine like their clothes.

Disraeli was a bard who preferred Oriental prose to verse, and the poetic license of Parliament to the practice of Byronic rhyme.

He was the first modern to turn the tables on the prophets by forestalling their predictions, the greatest practical pessimist since Moses, the clearest seer since Daniel. It required a serene eye, an unruffled brow, and a menacing top-knot to enter the lion's den at Westminster with nothing but words to allure and nothing but manners to fascinate. He was not long there when he began to twist their tails, pull their teeth, singe their manes, and clip their claws without using so much as a sniff of chloroform. He soon became the whip of the whole menagerie, as well as tamer of lions, wild cats, hyenas, and the leopards who longed to change their spots as well as their seats.

Like all men of dæmonic genius, he had his moods, his days, his seasons, when he thought, spoke, and did what he pleased. At one moment he lured the proletariat from the flesh pots of Egypt by a mess of pottage, at another he kept his party from attempting a second crossing of the Red Sea before he was ready to divide the waters, at another he swapped hobby horses in the middle of a doubtful stream, and he actually hobbled the Liberals to the skirts of unhappy chance at a time when Gladstone and his bishops were getting ready to walk the aisles of untrammelled freedom in the most flowing robes ever invented to show off the new and flouncing crinoline.

Aberglaube.

By Cecil Chesterton.

ON a tranquil summer evening in the year A.D. 2240 two men were sitting outside the doorway of a remote country vicarage in Cumberland, smoking and sipping excellent ale (of State manufacture), while they chatted over old times.

Mordaunt Grayling was a distinguished public servant, who, from his office in London, exercised a general control over the educational system of England. Just now, however, he was taking a fortnight's holiday, and was spending it with his old college friend, Father Shard, the parish priest of the little Cumbrian village at the lights of which they were gazing as they talked.

"You must find yourself getting a bit rusty in these parts, Shard, said Grayling. "Don't you ever feel you want to come up to London and be in the centre of things again?"

"Well," answered the priest, "I do feel like that at times. But one gets used to it. And after all, a priest has always plenty to do. Upon my word, I get so much interested in my people here that I hardly think of anything else."

"You find them interesting?"

"Very. It's quite fascinating to watch their quaint primitive ideas on some subjects."

"I should have thought," remarked the Controller of Education, "that our system of universal instruction would have eradicated almost everything specially primitive."

"Oh, they all go to the public schools, of course," said Father Shard, "but all sorts of queer traditions are handed on from father to son all the same. They wouldn't talk about them to strangers, you know. They'd be afraid of being laughed at. But they believe them, or half-believe them, all the same."

"What sort of thing do you mean?"

"Well, for instance," the priest went on impressively, "I could point out a dozen men and women in this very parish who believe in Heredity."

"Heredity?" exclaimed the official. "What, that extraordinary nineteenth century fancy about people transmitting qualities to their children?"

"Yes," answered his host. "I could show you men and women, sane, level-headed men and women in other respects, who'll swear to noticing the qualities of parents reappearing in their children."

"And these people have been to our schools!" cried the educationist. "Upon my word, it's enough to make one despair of human progress!"

There was a long silence; it was the priest who finally broke it.

"I suppose you would think me quite mad," he said, "if I told you I thought there was something in it?"

"My dear fellow!" laughed Grayling.

"Well, I do," retorted Father Shard.

"Oh, I know your love of paradox."

"But, look here," said the clergyman, "we both believe in witchcraft."

"Of course," replied the other, a little contemptuously.

"Yes, of course," Father Shard went on. "You admit it. You teach it in your public schools. Every child is taught how to know a witch by putting iron under her chair and how to hold its fingers so as to avert the Evil Eye. And yet, after all, is the evidence in favour of witchcraft so very much stronger than the evidence in favour of heredity? On what evidence can any theory rest except a great mass of human testimony? And here is human testimony in abundance to the truth of the doctrine of heredity."

"Of course, you can use sophistry of that kind on any side of any question," was the sharp rejoinder, "but you know as well as I do that there is no possible comparison between the two cases. Witchcraft is a matter of perfectly well ascertained scientific truth. There may be differences of opinion between the daring young disciples of Professor Beetling and the orthodox school which adheres to the conclusions of Chough, but as to the facts there is no dispute. To attempt to put such carefully verified scientific discoveries on the same plane as the fancies of a few ignorant and credulous rustics—"

"Why do you call them credulous?" asked the priest.

"Because they believe in heredity!" retorted Grayling, somewhat irritably. "What better proof of credulity could you find?"

"But why does the idea of heredity seem to you so incredible?"

"Oh, don't be so silly. Of course it's incredible! Every modern man must feel it to be incredible! The question isn't arguable!"

"I see that it isn't," replied the priest quietly.

There was another interval of silence, and then Grayling said:—

"You'll be wanting to revive Darwinism next!"

"No! No!" laughed the clergyman. "I wouldn't go so far as that! All the same, I feel that these old theories would never have got such a hold on man's minds if there hadn't been some element of truth in them. Now, even Darwinism—"

"Oh, go to blazes!" exclaimed the other impatiently.

"Well, we'll leave Darwinism aside for the moment. But, while you're rebuking credulity, let me ask you whether you don't think we're getting a little credulous about witchcraft."

"Credulous! About witchcraft?"

"Well, of course, I don't for a moment doubt that witches do exist, but, after all, they are exceptional. Is it really necessary to have all these Home Office inspectors going round from place to place to smell out sorcery?"

"A most necessary precaution," replied the official sententiously. "The business is becoming a national danger, and its possible effects on the future of the race are appalling—perfectly appalling."

"But it's so easy to make mistakes," pleaded the clergyman, "and, after all, the whole subject belongs to the realm of the doubtful and unknown."

"Doubtful and unknown! Rubbish! There's no scientific doctrine more thoroughly established. If you can't trust universal observation—"

"But in this part universal observation is on the side of heredity."

Mordaunt Grayling became suddenly very serious.

"My dear Shard," he said, "no doubt it's very amusing to talk as you do, but do you realise what you may be doing? Haven't you read history? Don't you know to what frightful consequences this delusion of heredity led in the early part of the twentieth century? Haven't you heard of the evil madness which seized upon mankind and the sickening cruelties to which that madness led men otherwise humane and public spirited? Have you tried to conceive the horrible moral and physical torture inflicted on harmless persons in that age because some idiot thought that they might transmit some quality to their children? Surely you don't want to bring back those horrors! Surely even you would sicken at the thought of their ever darkening the earth again?"

"Oh, I admit that the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries went mad on heredity," replied Father Shard. "I don't defend them or the savage laws they passed under the influence of their panic. Only I think there must have been just a little fragment of truth for them to go mad about."

"Oh, you are incorrigible!" exclaimed Grayling, and carefully placing two nails cross-wise on the doorstep, he followed his host into the house.

Books and Persons.

(AN OCCASIONAL CAUSERIE.)

By Jacob Tonson.

HERMANN SUDERMANN'S latest novel, "The Song of Songs," has at length been published in England (John Lane, 6s.). We seem to have less curiosity now about foreign fiction than we had a dozen years ago. This present edition has been printed in America, and is no doubt part of the American edition with an English title-page. The book was issued in the United States some time ago, and has, I believe, aroused a certain interest there. Although the translation is obviously not complete—perhaps it is very far from being complete—it still runs to 640 pages, and English critics will probably employ half the space which they devote to it in pointing out that it is "leisurely" and "long-winded," and beyond the fashionable length. They will also assuredly mention Mr. de Morgan, for no reference to length in novels is nowadays complete without Mr. de Morgan's name. "The Song of Songs," however, is not long-winded, nor even leisurely. It is long merely because it describes a very large number of events. But according to current English critical standards, it is the number of words—and not the number of words considered in relation to the number of events—which make a novel long-winded or the reverse. It does not seem to have occurred to any critics yet that though Fielding and Thackeray wrote novels of similar length, Thackeray is long-winded while Fielding is rapid. Sudermann is rapid, very rapid—the narrative runs smoothly, and the 640 pages of it may be accomplished without any abnormal effort.

* * *

Having said that the book is long-winded, the critics will further say (with a certain condescension) that it deals with ordinary average people. But it does not. It merely deals with credible people. Whenever the average honest English critic encounters in a novel a group of characters that seem true to life, he at once sets them down as "average" folk. He has probably never exercised his imagination to an extent sufficient to enable him to realise what an "average" person actually is—even an average critic. And if any really capable novelist did set about to give a completely faithful portrait of an "average man," the critic would certainly condemn it as pessimistic, sordid, cynical. Fortunately no really capable novelist is likely to commit such an artistic blunder as to offer the situation of a hero to an individual quite inadequate to the situation. Still it is a pity that critics, even the more thoughtful ones, are so warped by the universal sentimentalisation of our fiction that they cannot distinguish between that which is true and that which is ordinary.

* * *

"The Song of Songs" deals with the "demi-monde"—in the French sense of the term. That is to say, with that world which lies between the "monde" and what we in England call the "demi-monde." Its chief character is naturally a girl. It is a good book; not very good, but decidedly better than one has the right to expect from the author of such a piece of theatrical clap-trap as "Heimath"—known to enthusiastic Anglo-Saxon audiences all over the world as "Magda." Some of the more tender and some of the more sordid scenes are excellently done (in a somewhat messy German way), and from end to end the desire to be at once truthful and lyrical is steadily apparent. But the novel is streaked with sentimentality, because it is also streaked with cynicism—outside England the two qualities are seldom to be found apart from one another. In particular the use of the precious musical manuscript, "The Song of Songs," is painfully sentimental. On the whole, a novel which an adult-minded person may read without intellectual humiliation!

* * *

Mr. G. K. Chesterton's new book of "Daily News" essays is entitled "Alarms and Discursions" (Methuen's). It is something like the last collection, but

perhaps rather more fragmentary and rather more higgledy-piggledy. And a few of the essays seem to touch the extreme of brevity. The worst part of the book is the introduction excusing it. Mr. Chesterton, after relating an allegorical dream, likens his essays to gargoyles—"this row of shapeless and ungainly monsters which I now set before the reader. . . . These monsters are meant for the gargoyles of a definite cathedral. I have to carve the gargoyles because I can carve nothing else." All which is inoffensive. But the priest of Mr. Chesterton's dream filled up all his gargoyles—"all the ugly things of the universe"; "and when he had done it the rich and influential went into a passion of applause and cried, "This is real art! This is Realism! This is things as they really are!" Or, as Mr. Chesterton quite differently expresses it on the very next page: "Realism means a lost donkey going nowhere." Mr. Chesterton makes "the high boast" that he is a mediævalist and not a modern. He may be, but we nevertheless regret that he cannot perceive the excessive crudity and strident feebleness—I hesitate to say the intellectual vulgarity—of this kind of writing. His essays, though "journalism," needed no apology. It is doubly a pity that he should have written for them an otiose apology which, in the domain of philosophic ideas, can only be described as "yellow journalism."

* * *

A recent very interesting French book is "L'Ame des Anglais," by the lady who is certainly at the present time the most brilliant writer on the regular staff of the "Figaro." She signs herself "Fœmina." These essays originally appeared in the Literary Supplement to the "Figaro," and they attracted attention, including mine. Among sundry epigrammatic phrases, I remember: "Every Englishman is an island." The book (printed by Bernard Grasset) is very much subtler than anything written about the English by that quite other lady "Pierre de Coulevain." Also: "Marie-Claire," the novel by a working sempstress of mature years, Marguerite Audoux, which Octave Mirbeau has been magnificently booming for a year past, is now at length published. If it does not prove to be very wonderful indeed, Octave Mirbeau's prestige will assuredly suffer.

* * *

The latest half-crown novel is "Natasha: The Story of a Russian Woman," by Anna Brodsky (J. M. Dent, Ltd.). It is a mild but faithful work, and deserves attention; and it has the extrinsic interest of having been written in English by a Russian.

PERSONAL.

MEANEST parson, proudest Pope,
You are fools to hug the hope
Of salvation, if you live
By the alms which poor men give.

Dear, fair lady, diamond-eyed,
Tell me, what avails your pride,
If it bring you to the Hell
Where the damned-for-ever dwell?

Light-limbed athlete, you whose strength
Mocks a season's strenuous length,
Wherefore is your prowess spent
On a death-devoured event?

Monarch holding in your hands
Half the earth's wide seas and lands,
I should like to hear you say
What post-mortem realms you sway.

All is vain and flesh is grass;
Each applause were an alas,
Were significances seen
As the truth that fields are green.

Pulpits, empires, peoples pass,
Love alone rules race and class,
Love which wears, as poets know,
Purple, while the Kings wear woe.

OLIVER DAVIES.

The Maids' Comedy.

CHAPTER III.

*Exhibiting a partner in an old-established business
pursuing her occupation.*

As everybody knows, distance is deceptive when seen through very rarefied atmosphere. The purple hills which Dorothea expected to reach by noonday were, in fact, sixty miles away. Noon brought the damsels to a convenient shady place beside a brook; and the sun having grown too intense for bearing, they decided to rest. Dota Filjee off-saddled the palfreys, and then produced from one and another of her pockets a store of eatables which she had gotten from the liege lord's castle. Sandwiches and buttered rolls, and cakes and dried fruits and a bottle of sherbet powder; and for Dota's self a tiny wedge of biltong, that famous sun-dried meat, which must be shredded between slices of bread, and never bitten. Besides these things Dota had brought away a drinking cup which folded into itself; and a knife.

Now, as they sat eating, a travelling cart, drawn by four splendid mules, came jingling along the road. The hood was up, and the damsels beheld an exceedingly plump and handsome dame seated with a maid, behind the driver. When the dame caught sight of the two girls, she called to the driver to pull up, and smiling with a great show of affability, she cried out: "Pretty ladies, may I beg the favour of lunching beneath your tree?" Dorothea replied, "If you please to do so, madame." But Dota Filjee could not even stir for marvelling at the richness of the newcomer's dress and equipage. As the dame was assisted out of the cart she exhibited boots of crimson kid and silk stockings, and her petticoats glittered like foam of the sea. Her top dress was of white embroidery so fine that it lay like a veil above a slip of blue satin; which slip fitted well to the lady's figure and made her appear somewhat graceful once she was fairly standing on the ground. She wore not a hat or bonnet, but a crimson satin kerchief wound turban-wise about her black hair; and her ears and bosom and fat white fingers blazed with jewels. Dota Filjee decided that this must be some queen, and was awestruck. "Bring the hamper Georgette," said the supposed queen, when she settled among cushions laid on the grass. "Depêche-toi! J'ai faim pres qu'a mort." And so on, proceeding in such French as it was fortunate nobody save Georgette was able to criticise. "Ah! my pretty loves," she said, turning at length to the damsels. "And what may you be doing so far from anywhere as this God-forsaken spot?" Dorothea was about to answer that she was travelling upon her father's business, but Dota Filjee suddenly recovered from her trance and burst out: "We are Damsels in Distress seeking the protection of a Courteous Knight."

Hearing this unusual communication the plump dame stared at each of their faces and then fell back in a fit of laughter. Her diamond earrings rattled and the tears began to roll down her cheeks. "Ah, la la!" she screamed. "Quelle chose!" and she laughed again fit to burst her laces. But Georgette came running and propped her up and whispered something in her ear, and then she changed her manner and declared, with admiring smiles, that she was near killed with delight, for that now she had discovered the objects of her whole life's search. "Oh, oh!" she cried, almost going off into fits again, but holding herself down by words. "Oh, my sweet young things, the whole world is pining for such as you! The world is dying, my dears, for lack of

innocent Damsels in Distress. I wouldn't have staked a cent on ever setting eyes upon such a thing again. You bring me new life, indeed you do! And now to luncheon, if you will honour me?"

Dorothea having already eaten as much as she desired, she excused herself and went away with some sugar for the ponies, which had strayed a distance in spite of their hobblings.

Meanwhile Dota Filjee was experiencing such feelings of grandeur and importance as made her tremble and fear it was all a dream. The banquet spread by Georgette, the prim handmaid, surpassed anything our young friend had ever imagined. The service of glittering silver and rich ivory, and fine-cut coloured glasses and wondrous china was set upon a damask cloth; and although Dota knew none of their names, the things themselves impressed her as having come out of some splendid palace. The plump dame leaned among her cushions and passed each moment with some pleasantry or an even more charming invitation to this and that viand. And with every dish, Georgette poured into the glasses a different coloured wine.

"Ma foi!" exclaimed the dame, rolling her big black eyes upon Dota's glowing face. "Ma foi, but how I do love country innocence and beauty. It's worth its weight in gold if it only knew it, but, thank the Lord, it doesn't! Daisy-fresh and violet-sweet it is, and nicockolorum popsy!" It was a merry old dame in the way it chuckled and poked at Dota's dimpled cheeks. "Can you sing, ducks?" she enquired, and Dota Filjee replying bashfully: "Yes! I know the Song of Altisidora to the Cruel Knight," the dame begged for a verse, so Dota warbled the stanzas she remembered best:—

Like a ravenous kite
That takes its flight
Soon as't has stolen a chicken,
Thou bear'st away
My heart thy prey,
And leav'st me here to sicken.

Three nightcaps, too,
And garters blue,
That did to legs belong,
Smooth to the sight,
As marble white,
And, faith, almost as strong.

Two thousand groans,
As many moans,
And sighs enough to fire
Old Priam's town,
And burn it down,
Did it again aspire.

Since, fugitive knight, to no purpose I woo thee,
Barabbas's fate still pursue and undo thee!

At this performance the dame professed herself struck with admiration, and she filled with her own fat, silky hands a deep glass of sparkling golden wine and requested the charming singer to pledge their mutual love! "Now, my dear," she whispered coaxingly, while Georgette gathered up the cloth, "do tell me all about yourself. Where are you really bound, and who is that proud young damsel, your mistress?" "I think she be not proudly forsooth," replied the loyal Dota. "No, no. I mean not so much proud as high and courtly mannered," rejoined the dame hastily. "I am heart-broken not to have seen more of her; but look you, could you not induce her to pay me a visit at my town house?" "That I might," replied Dota, "if you would proffer your assistance in discovering a Courteous Knight." "Scores of them," declared the dame, pursuing her lips. "Scores—hundreds! They are perpetually besieging me to find them Damsels in Distress.

See, here is my address on this packet," and here she dived into a bag of golden chain and produced a tiny sealed packet. "Accept all you find inside without thought of thanks, and since I must be going on my way, as the mules are impatient, let me inform you that I sleep to-night at an inn two leagues onward. You can't miss it if you keep the road. Join me there, and make your arrival known to me before eight in the morning, and I will hire a large coach so that we may proceed altogether, a merry party!" So saying she summoned Georgette, and with much more effort than she had needed to alight from the cart, managed, with assistance, to hoist herself up again. Dota, watching, did not know whether most to wonder at the twinkling of the crimson boots or to envy the white foam of the silken petticoats. But almost immediately the driver whipped up, the mules dashed ahead, and the spangling, jingling caravan was away.

Poor Dota Filjee was overcome with the wine she had drunk; she had not even sense to put the packet in her bosom, so it fell among the grass, and she soon toppled back and went dead asleep.

Now, a small flat-headed serpent in a bush close by had been awaiting its chance to pick up the crumbs of that savoury feast. Snakes dislike human beings and are terrified of approaching their haunts. But this flat-headed reptile was hungry, and, besides, there was now nothing moving beneath the tree; so it glided along and drew in many a sumptuous fragment. At last it wriggled up over a tall mound and so nerveless and still was this mound that the little beast thought no evil, but lay prospecting from the eminence for further dainty bits. But, in fact, this mound was the body of Dota Filjee. And there they were, Dota beneath the snake, when Dorothea returned and saw them. The snake reared up his head and glared, but he made no spring, for Lady, scarcely thinking what she did, fixed her eyes upon his, two golden eyes like steady fire, and she spoke to the snake in a singing tone and moved backwards. And he followed her, circling like a race of bright rings across the grass, until he came beside the hole where he lived; then in he popped. Dorothea made a circuit back to the tree. "Dota, Dota!" she cried, half-fearing that her friend was dead, but Dota Filjee sat up, drowsily:—

Three nightcaps, too,
And garters blue. . . .

she sang, and Dorothea could not help laughing at this remarkable moment for singing the verses of witty Altisidora. But instantly a great change came over Dota Filjee, her face went very pale and she shook as if in mortal fright, and she said, with difficulty, for her teeth chattered: "Oh, mistress, Tante Kinkje has been here to pas op vur mij! She showed me a *slang*, and its face was like the face of that fat woman. And the *slang* crawled up on my neck, but Tante Kinkje took it by the tail and dashed it *dood* on the ground. I am very frightened, mistress, and I wish you would take me away from here *dadelyk nu* at once!"

Dorothea thought she would not frighten her further, so she replied, "A dream, poor Dota! Well, we will go now directly. Let us hurry away while it is cool for riding." Dota Filjee then scrambled up, exclaiming, "May I never behold such a thing as a snake with a woman's face." She looked around and up the road, as if still in fear, and said, "Mistress, I do think we had better leave this road altogether and follow that bridle-path there instead. It must lead somewhere." Lady agreed.

And so it happened that a frowning fat dame went off from her inn in a very vile temper; and that, long afterwards, an honest old black mammy found a tolerable fortune sealed up in a packet which lay rotting among the grass beside Boom Sluit. Whatever name had once been written upon the envelope was obliterated; wherefore the Field Cornet of the district had no choice but to deliver good gold into the palms of a verdommed nigger!

(To be continued.)

A Russian Beggar.

By Stephen Graham.

UNHAPPY Martha! I saw her to-day at the porch of a rich church. The church was full of people, and the priests in purple robes moved to and fro among the ikons, whilst little surpliced boys, white as angels, swayed the censers. The rich images, deep set in jewels, exhaled strange influences out of the gloom. The famous wonder-working Virgin looked over her flowers at the grove of wasting candles around her. Voronof, the merchant, clad in furs, held a taper in his well-worn fingers and stood before the ikon. Did Mary see him as he placed his votive light among those others? He bowed to the ground and crossed himself in deep devotion.

Martha, the beggar, stood outside in the porch among others who, like herself, were tattered and starved. She was there before the service began and she watched the people going in to pray—the rich Moscow matrons in heavy silks, the elegant young ladies who tripped daintily up the steps in their new goloshes, the young men in high collars and smart German ties, the portly business men in deep overcoats. She saw these pass by and prayed them with unavail. Then in his carriage came Voronof the merchant; the fine black horses knew whom they were carrying, and the driver, looking impossibly large and important, knew that the one who sat behind him was no ordinary man. Slowly, and with dignity, the merchant alighted on to the pavement and made his way to the church door, whilst the beggars, half awed, half desperate, almost barred his way with supplicating hands.

None of the worshippers had looked at Martha; if by chance they glanced at her face, they took away their eyes immediately. Martha was not pleasant to look upon, she had no nose, her eyes looked like the handles of a pair of scissors. There were the marks of sin on her face, evil features, lines of hunger and crime and dark abysses where horror lurked. The eyes of the worshippers going to Mass avoided the defilement of looking upon an evil sight. But Voronof, the merchant, with his suave, grave eyes looked at her, and, as it were, started. A tremor passed along his lip, but he passed, and even he gave nothing; he walked straight by every beggar away into the church, and not one of them was a farthing the richer. It is not a custom to give alms before Mass, but there are copecks for many when the worshippers come out. Other people followed Voronof, till finally the church was full, and the beggars knew by the singing and the incense that the service had commenced.

Martha waited, Martha with her few rags about her, not enough to hide her grey breast, her poor, grey, withered, outcast breast, itself a rag. She stood at the door with the others, stood there with a blank mind and lived strange lives under an unmoving suspense of rags.

She had no words. When the people went in, her life flame faded low and dull, her brain was too starved to yield even thought words. She only waited there unmoving, scarce a finger twitching. You would have said she was sleeping as an overtired sentry slumbers at his post. But one soul of hers was looking through its eyes quietly and without exertion. One soul, and before it on a grey disc, it watched two spots that moved together and apart fretfully. Martha stood with her shrunk body loose in her rags, her poor feet flat on the stones, her lips dried together, every word starved out of her mind. She looked into herself silently at the black spots on the grey disc—will they come out, won't they come out.

Those who were nearest the church door would stand best chance. The beggars furtively eyed the gendarme at the corner and fought for places. A turbulent cripple squirming at Martha's knees shuffled over her feet, but she did not notice him. She watched the grey discs, and now there appeared on it little sharp zigzags playing nervously; then other zigzags appeared, opposing ones, fast moving; the picture was full of fretfulness. Martha in the church porch shut her eyes—

devils catch them, fiery devils burn them, grind them to powder, burn them, strike them down, catch them,—burn them. . . .

Voronof was kneeling at the altar. A priest consecrated and broke the holy Bread, and gave to the worshippers; another priest consecrated the Wine and bore the golden chalice to those who had partaken of the Bread. "This is the Bread of Life and the Body of Christ, this the Wine and Blood. Whoso eateth of the Body of Christ entereth into His portion and taketh His cross; whoso tasteth the Wine drinketh of His cup." The choir sang the chorus of the Mass. Then someone half opened the church door.

There was a whiff of incense and a burst of music. Martha started. But it was long before the end of the service. She was cold. She would have stamped her feet and run about, but she was too hungry; if she moved a muscle she would feel more hungry. The spots and the zigzags and the grey disc had vanished now, and Martha opened her eyes. A dreamy film was before her and a soul looked into it and listened, listened to the ghost of a song—quite a starved little song, and far away:—

"Poor Martha,
Unhappy Martka . . ."

What then. Was she pitying herself? How had she come to sing that little song? Over and over again, hastily, and in thin notes, the little tune ran. Now it was full of excitement and then in a minute it was slow and melancholy again, first as if she were sobbing to herself, then as if she were singing a child to sleep, rocking it up and down in her arms, and then again madly and frantically in breathless repetition. After a moment the excitement was over, and she was back again listening to someone gently crooning. She trembled and looked at the door. Over and over again, and then faster and faster sounded the song, and then shorter, so, "poor unhappy Martha, poor unhappy Martha." Suddenly the other beggars looked at her, for she broke into an excited shudder—eugh, heugh, heugh, heugh. . . .

Then all was calm again. She saw a space cleared away in her mind; there was a little room and a table in it, and she kissed the table. It was a little empty table. Martha fell quite flat upon it and could not raise herself. . . . Then suddenly she had raised herself, and the table had disappeared, and she saw her sister Vera and again the plaintive little song was humming in her mind.

And the song was full of wistfulness and tears, she would have wept if she could. But suddenly she saw piled baskets of white bread, baskets, baskets. . . . The church door opened, someone was coming out; at least the music and the incense burst out and the voice of a priest sounded also: "And Jesus loved;" the other beggars smartened up and rubbed their hands. Martha half awakened. But at the word "loved" the door closed. No one was coming out.

"Jesus loved!"

"That Jesus gave away piles of money," said ugly Peter, the paralytic. "I wish he would come to church, we should all get roubles."

No one paid any attention, but Martha blinked. Jesus, who was he? Was there a man called Jesus? Martha saw a face in front of her, suave, grave.

A policeman was staring at them, one by one, as if searching for a criminal.

"I've seen Jesus," said Martha calmly.

Ugly Peter grinned. The policeman stared as if in doubt whether he ought to arrest anyone. "One of her customers," said a street arab, smearing the glass of one of the ikons with his dirty coat. "Here, I want you," said the official, pretending to dive among the tatterdemalions in chase of the urchin. A smile and a frown dwelt together on the policeman's face, he had forgotten Martha.

"I've seen Jesus," thought Martha to herself, as the face of Voronof the merchant hovered before her imagination. "I've seen Jesus." Then the grey disc again appeared and a lump of stale bread whirled about on it; it fell towards Martha, then rolled back, came to

her, ran away, impishly. Martha was full of fretfulness and hope—what would it be, then, a piece of white bread at Smolin's, a piece of white bread, a long piece of white bread, or would it be only a lump of black bread. Lumps of white and black bread danced and jumped up and down before her on the disc. In a minute they would be coming out. "Lord God, be merciful."

So it happened; the priest pronounced benediction and raised the high gold cross above the people. All bowed before the sign, and thereupon shuffled along the passages of exit. The church door opened and the worshippers issued forth, and to right and to left, according to custom, distributed farthings to God's poor collected there. But the crowd of beggars without had become almost as numerous as the worshippers within. Martha moved forward and stretched two skinny, yellow hands—two, that she may have two chances. Poor Martha, one, two, three passed her. She trembled, the zigzags played on the grey disc—"catch them, burn them, grind them to powder, burn them." But she found sounds and words. "For Christ's sake, for Christ's sake spare me one farthing, one little copeck, a copechka, for Christ's sake, oh Lord, oh, Lord God, a poor sinner begs, a poor old sinner. Bread for the love of God, bread for an old sinner?" And the wild zigzags still meant "Burn them, kill them, damn, grind, burn." "Be so good, kind lady. Remember Christ, remember a sinner. Ah! good prince, God bless you, God remember this to you on your day." A man in furs was fumbling in his pocket. He would evidently find something for the old woman; he found a large coin, and put it in Martha's hands mumbling a blessing. The skinny fingers closed and she looked up. She looked up and saw the face, and exclaimed, "Jesus!" And Voronof, for it was he, hurried across to his carriage and in a few seconds was gone. Martha was left standing; she opened her hand and saw the coin—it was bright and silver. She had never seen the like before, a silver rouble, a large and wonderful coin. "Jesus," she said, staringly at the delicately engraved portrait of Nicholas the Second. She put the coin to her lips, felt it all round with her fingers, looked at it, gloated over it, and there was joy which found no words, only she saw absurd pictures of tables with piles of flour upon them. But as the coin lay in her palm a red, hairy, hungry hand rushed in and snatched and the coin was gone.

"Rrr! Give me that money, devil, beast, give it back, give it back before I tear out your eyes, cross eyes, scabby beast, you starved beggar, you beast!" Martha tried to get back her money from the grinning fellow who had stolen it, she threatened, pulled, scratched, agonised. . . .

Then suddenly in her heart the zigzags were gone, and she simply saw Vera and her mother, and she heard again the ghost of that unhappy song—poor Martha, unhappy Martha. Something had broken in her. The beggar struck her in the mouth.

"It was silver money. Give it back," she spluttered.

"Now then, you diseases, you maggot beds," said the gendarme hurrying up. He pushed the thief into the roadway. The latter slunk away quietly, and Martha recognising the dreaded voice of the policeman also passed out humbly. The beggar shook his fist and swiftly disappeared. Martha was left.

The afternoon passed fruitlessly. She left the tavern at dusk and moved unsteadily along the high road. That was the road along which Voronof's carriage rolled easily away. It led into the West End, to the clean streets and the large white houses. The beggars are not allowed up there.

A handsome equipage came quickly round a corner into one of the fashionable squares, black horses, a fine driver, and, sitting at his ease, an elderly gentleman. It might have been he. Martha reeled on the pavement and clutched at a lamp post. The carriage crossed the square and was gone. An irate policeman strode over and asked what she wanted there.

"Jesus," she whispered.

"You won't find Jesus here," said he with a grin, and turned her back.

An Englishman in America.

By Juvenal.

ON my last visit to America I considered New York a city of foreigners, ruled by American citizens living under American laws. Now I find the foreign element still more accentuated. Yet typical Americans come here from every State in the Union to see the sights. They live for a few brief days or weeks in the cosmopolitan swim, and although many find the current against them, yet all find amusement and distraction, all manage to "shoot the shutes," without much trouble and without great expense. New York is to the provincial American what Paris is to the man from Marseilles. But if the man in the moon were to take it into his head to visit the glimpses of mother earth in search of what Americans used to call "razzle-dazzle," he would turn his aeroplane towards the lights of Broadway some time about midnight.

Broadway is astounding. It is American only in the form and height of its buildings and the fact that it is on American soil. In everything else it is a mixture of foreign people, foreign tastes, and foreign emotions. It is what the old Palais Royal was to Paris, and I do not know of any street or boulevard in Europe with which to compare it. Broadway is unique. But it is not so in any æsthetic sense. It is not like a unique pearl or an antique cameo. I liken it to a big wart on the rapacious nose of a Yankee Shylock, or a flaming carbuncle on the neck of a bloated billionaire. I have an impression that the wart needs toning down, that the carbuncle needs lancing. One wonders how long the inflammation can keep on without killing the patient. But some people can endure a lot of impossible things and go a long way before dropping dead.

America is the country for sudden deaths. Heart disease and apoplexy take the place of the aristocratic and long-enduring gout of the Englishman. In America the quick death is the correct thing, especially with the rich merchant and the fast financier. The rich American has but little time for culture and no time to die. An Englishman begins to wane at forty, an American at twenty. Study the faces of the people you see on Broadway. The play used to be the thing, but now the thing is the face. The real American face is like nothing else in the civilised world of faces. You can, if you have taken your degree in the art of physiognomy, distinguish the American faces on Broadway from the hordes of foreign faces to be seen on this incomparable pavé. Here I am able to recognise all the old-world types in spite of their American clothes: Germans from Berlin, Scandinavians from Sweden and Denmark, New York Frenchmen and New York Italians, Russians from Petersburg and Odessa, Irishmen from Cork, Cockneys from London and Scotsmen from Glasgow, to say nothing of half-breeds from every country and clime in the world; but they cannot copy the American face.

The American face is matchless in its expression of ennui. These faces can laugh and smile, but somehow when they smile they make one think of a snow-flower peeping out at the sun while the roots are half frozen. But what is it they want? In what have they been so grievously disillusioned? What did they expect in the beginning? All these are questions for someone to answer.

This brings me to the curious psychological question: Why do Americans allude to European countries as played out and effete? Why, if they think Europe so effete, do so many thousands of them work like slaves to save money enough to go there for a few weeks or months, and, having gone there once, long to return? These are interesting questions, and I have been trying to solve them. But this is not all. Why do so many thousands of well-to-do and wealthy Americans take up

their residence in Europe? These questions are bound up with that other question of racial ennui. Frankly, I believe Americans are not tired of their own country. For one reason the American abroad never loses the fixed expression of ennui and general lassitude. What ails Americans is universal disillusionment. They are tired of existence. This is the secret of the freak banquet, the phenomenal suppers, the impossible statements, the rage for show, the delirium for new and ephemeral sensations.

Broadway is the centre of quick and giddy sensations. It is like being in a sort of time-machine or lift which whirls the mind through space right from the beginning of Adam's paradise down to the bed-rock of civilised pandemonium where Pluto and his minions dance the can-can in Offenbachian orgies; where La Belle Hélène still allures by her fatal charms, and modern Hectors are mad enough to risk being hitched to chariots and hauled by the heels around the ramparts of the American Troy, simply to kill time, that is to say, to be shut of mortal ennui.

I see plenty of people who look contented, but they are mostly Teutons and jovial Irish. New York is the most paradoxical city on the globe. All good Americans are supposed to see New York before they die, and yet the typical American face is not often seen on Broadway. The Americans are soon tired of any new sensation. A German will do the same things day after day and year after year, and remain contented. Give him good beer, good music, good eating, good company, and decent pay, and he is happy. With the Englishman it is much the same, except that he wants burton instead of pilsner, beef instead of some form of pork, a pipe instead of music, an income without income-tax, death without death duties, and solitude to brood over the mysterious dispersion of the Twelve Tribes; give him these things, and you have as happy a man as you could find anywhere outside Colney Hatch or Wormwood Scrubs.

John Bull always seems more indifferent than he is; Brother Jonathan always tries to seem more contented than he is. It is difficult to find an American who is frankly pessimistic. No matter what they think or feel, Americans always seem full of hope. All have great expectations. All see billions of golden eagles hovering in the air. The Broadway atmosphere scintillates with electric lights. Walking here in the evening any time after nine o'clock the mind is fascinated and the eyes dazzled with a maze of electric lights, and when the dry north-west wind blows over the city the air becomes charged with an indescribable magnetic force, and what with this magical air, the dazzling lights, the illusive dreams of the hour, the temptation of the brilliant bars, restaurants, theatres, the freeing of the spirit from the thralldom of ennui for a brief space, the visitor to New York, whether an American or foreigner, is borne along on the tide of excitement with an astounding impetus.

I know all the famous streets of European capitals. The Nevski Prospect in Petersburg is not Oriental enough to be fascinating and not modern enough to be very interesting; the Friedrichstrasse of Berlin is without any special charm or novelty; the Grand Boulevard in Paris is the best of them all, but none of them have the snap of Broadway; symbolising the wealth, the romance, the rush, the originality, the vim and vertigo of the new world.

The theatres of Broadway are a study all to themselves. Even the "Dramatic Mirror" of New York admits that the Broadway theatres have got rid of the classical, have got rid of Shakespeare. What the Broadway world demands and gets is farce, melodrama, sentimental fustion, and a mixture of music-hall and circus, rag-time music, and cheap jokes. The Broadway patrons refuse either to think or weep.

Perhaps the wells of their hearts have run dry and they have no tears to weep; and as for thinking, no doubt they are tired thinking of dollars during the day and prefer to think of Dollies during the evening. But I am more than half inclined to lay it all at the door of indifference and callousness. The typical Broadway crowd is blasé. Let there be no mistake about that. And yet how excited they can get! All this sounds contradictory, but remember where we are, what city we are in, and what the street is. There is but one real Broadway, and the denizens of the place match the street.

* * *

The Broadway joke is a cross between a cockney cuss and an American cuspidor. The audiences here are anæmic; but not from want of good living; no people eat so much rich food. They suffer from anæmia of the brain brought on by a plethora and confusion of sensational emotions. The Broadway laugh is a gush of uncontrollable hysterics. Nowhere in the world are the signs of general neurasthenia more glaring and universal. I have never seen, even in a Spanish bull-ring, more signs of delirium than I witnessed in one of the Broadway theatres. But it is all over in a few hours at the most, and the cheap acting, the quick-lunch jokes, and the stuffed-dummy sensations are forgotten by the hysterical crowds who seek something new on the morrow.

* * *

The theatres of Broadway must not be confounded with other New York theatres. Critically speaking, Broadway and the real New York are two different things. Broadway is only American as a show street. The real New York is to be found elsewhere. Thousands of the best people, the serious Americans, have their homes in the outlying towns, in New Jersey, Staten Island, Long Island, Connecticut, etc.

* * *

In these notes I shall deal with my impressions as they come day by day. Politics, society, authors, books, editors, artists I shall discuss with candour and without partiality.

The Recovery of Art and Craft.

By Huntly Carter.

IN his very technical and really valuable handbook* Mr. H. Wilson devotes a chapter to "Old Work and Old Methods." He is anxious to dwell on the wisdom displayed by the eleventh century monk Theophilus contained in the preface to his work on "Divers Arts." Theophilus, who appears to have addressed himself to the serious issues of life in terms of archaic theology, thus counsels the aspiring workman. "Whatsoever thou art able to learn, understand, or devise in the Arts, is ministered to thee by the grace of the Sevenfold Spirit." Thereupon follows a long analysis of this enlightening sentence, in which there is no suggestion to prove that Theophilus himself would have recommended the study of the concrete or justified it, in some directions. On the contrary it seems to argue in favour of the importance of the creating of something out of nothing. "By the Spirit of Wisdom thou knowest that all created things come of God, and without him there is nothing." These are words calculated to direct the mind to a wider sphere of activity than is immediately concerned with the concrete world. They are all the more noticeable because to some extent they contradict Mr. Wilson who has evidently overlooked their meaning in directing the student to Theophilus himself for hints and suggestions on design motives. Mr. Wilson would have done much better to direct the budding designer to a preliminary study of Blake and his manifestations of a wonderful instinct for design.

That Blake united the highest imaginative qualities to the requisite technical means of expression may be gathered from his Book of Job. This combination would not seem to be rare—except in civilised countries. In wandering about New Guinea I have dis-

covered it very frequently in the work of mere savages, whose design was often full of invention and wrought with the utmost delicacy of workmanship. It was work indeed exhibiting an original and just understanding of the natural sources of decorative beauty. The conclusion I have reached is that the best design is instinctive design. Though Blake could not hand the designer that singular artistic instinct for seizing unhesitatingly upon the pictorial element of ideas, and translating them into appropriate speech of sensuous design, there is a great deal that Blake could communicate. He could teach him to understand the extreme value of a command over the expressional resources of natural form, as well as sympathy with the suggestive significance of his subject. Under Blake's guidance the designer would quickly develop taste, while developing elsewhere the requisite touch to give it full expression. Probably the utility designer will object that he does not need to cultivate the gift of inspired vision for the sake of achieving a design for a pudding bowl. The reply is that it was not necessary for Blake to cultivate it for the sake of achieving the design of "the ghost of a flea." But he did it nevertheless, and the utility designer is advised to study the result and learn how really interesting such commonplace things as fleas become when treated as ghosts. So might all commonplace things in life be transformed, by art, into beautiful ghosts, and no one would regret the change. And the ghost-like design could still be adapted to useful purposes. There are of course many uninspired designers who have not even the ghost of an idea. Perhaps it would be safer to send these to the cellar for ideas, if they can be trusted to dig up appropriate ones.

It is somewhat remarkable that Mr. Wilson, beyond the reference to Theophilus, has hardly touched upon the important question of inspired *v.* "paper" design. It would have been more to the purpose if he had neglected the first part of the old fellow's chatter and devoted the space to a consideration of accidental design upon which Mr. Lethaby has touched very briefly in his preface. As Mr. Wilson himself knows, the manipulation of the material is full of suggestion, and the moment the student sets about fingering it rightly, beautiful and unsuspected designs come leaping at him. If he has been trained to see and select he will have no difficulty in detecting and realising many of the beauties that lie hidden in the lumps of virgin gold and silver. But many imaginative designers need to have this pointed out, so that they may train themselves to the essential point of seeing and doing. If art and craft are going to bring beauty into life it cannot be sufficiently emphasised that the artist-craftsman should possess an instinctive feeling for design and decorative effect; and should always aim to enlarge the imaginative scope of his work. Moulding life into sensuous forms, decorating it with the essence of artistic invention, such will then be his sole occupation.

In his pursuit of the practical in Theophilus, Mr. Wilson has drawn many passages from his treatise wherein the old fellow describes his methods and processes. I should say these are just as useful to art-craftsmen of to-day as Cennino Cennini's mediæval art methods are to painters; no more, no less. Old methods and processes may be copied if they have stood the test of time and have been handed to us by efficient craftsmen. But at the same time invention should be kept busy discovering new ones. The old masters should not be tyrants as well as teachers. The difficulty of making the guardians of the old masters understand this is still very great. Mr. Wilson's book is open to one other objection. It makes no reference to appropriate design. If the student turns to the pages of the book it will be for instruction in methods and processes; the craftsman's tools and how to make them; the distinguishing qualities of the materials; and how in particular to make beakers, candlesticks, and spoons. It is, in short, a practical treatise on the subject with which it deals, written by an eminently practical teacher, one who knows his instruments and how to use them.

* "Silverwork and Jewellery." By H. Wilson. (Hogg's. net.)

Modern Dramatists.

By Ashley Dukes.

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VIII.—Anton Tchekhov.

TCHÉKHOV'S plays are the most interesting that modern Russia has as yet produced. A certain questioning of life is all that they have in common with the work of Tolstoy and Gorky. Tolstoy sought the meaning of life among the peasantry, Gorky among the city slums and the lower bourgeois class, Tchekhov among "the intelligence." Russian society is divided into two classes; "the intelligence" and the rest. That "intelligence" includes the entire educated community, and it represents as a whole the most advanced civilisation in Europe. It is largely freethinking and revolutionary, and its capacity for making political revolutions is limited, firstly, by military and police rule and, secondly, by the inertia of the mass of the people. It is perhaps embittered by national failure, but still full of life. Tolstoy and Gorky set to work, with their different views and temperaments, upon the dramatisation of the inertia; Tchekhov chose to deal with the driving force of modernity, politically impotent for the present, but individually all-powerful. That is why his plays must always be the more interesting. His types belong to an aristocracy of thought, and, further (since intellect alone can be of little service to the dramatist) to an aristocracy of feeling. They possess the capacity for great drama because they are at once highly sensitive and highly differentiated among themselves. The capacity for great drama, be it noted; not necessarily its achievement. A play or a novel crammed with "intellectuals"—poets, playwrights, novelists, teachers, journalists, actors and Bohemians—is not necessarily a great play or a great novel on that account. The class or profession of the characters matters nothing; their potentiality as individuals is all-important. If the same degree of sensitiveness and differentiation can be created among other types, the same material for great drama will result. The achievement depends upon the author, his temperament and his skill as a craftsman. Personality remains the magical word which opens the dull mountain of the actual and shows us the real.

It must be said at once that Tchekhov can by no stretch of imagination be called a great dramatist. He cried "Open Sesame!" to actuality, but the reality behind was only vaguely outlined, and he died before he could perfect the new dramatic form which he attempted to create. His plays are a series of original experiments rather than a finished whole. I propose to deal here mainly with the two four-act dramas "The Seagull" and "The Three Sisters." "The Seagull," it may be noted, was given recently by the Scottish Repertory Theatre in Glasgow. This play is full of the atmosphere of the Russian "intelligence." It depends altogether upon elusive moods, and only by entering very fully into these moods can the spectator find its tragedy even remotely credible. The weakness of Tchekhov's strikingly original technique is that his characterisation depends so much more upon what the characters say than upon what they do. They seem at first sight the most irrelevant people that any dramatist could devise. They stroll casually upon the stage, talking about the weather, their supper, their ailments, their preferences, their views, their philosophy; and from this fluid mass of conversation there crystallizes very gradually the conception of each individual as a separate entity. The conversation is always extraordinarily good, and so the individual conception which emerges, without having the rigidity of the theatrical "type," is always clearly defined.

Tchekhov retains the form of the four-act play, dealing throughout with the same group of persons. He is concerned with ideas only as the means of drama, and what he lacks is sense of the theatre rather than dramatic sense. As to the ideas themselves, he has clearly used the young poet Constantine in "The Seagull" as his mouthpiece.

Constantine is the son of an actress, one Irene

Treplewa. Irene has a liaison with Boris Trigorin, a novelist-playwright. These three, with Irene's brother Sorin, and a young girl named Nina, are the chief characters of "The Seagull." Constantine and Nina are lovers. The play passes at Sorin's country house, where Constantine has set up an open-air theatre, with a rough stage, a curtain and a background of lake and sky. He has devised it for the performance of a symbolist play of his own, with Nina as actress, and his mother and the remaining guests have been invited as spectators.* Early in the first act Constantine explains his purpose to Sorin:—

Constantine: . . . To me the Theatre of to-day is no more than an antiquated prejudice, a dull routine. When the curtain rises, and all these accomplished actors, these priests of a sacred art, endeavour to show, by lamplight, in a room with three walls, how ordinary people eat, drink, love, move about the world; when a morality is preached to us in trivial phrases and pictures—a wretched, commonplace morality convenient for household use; when the same old story is dished up again and again in a thousand variations; then I can do no otherwise than fly as Maupassant fled from the Eiffel Tower, whose triviality threatened to shatter his soul!

Sorin: But you must admit that the Theatre is an important factor in civilisation. . . .

Constantine: New forms are what we need, new forms. Better have nothing at all than cling to the old tradition.

The new form is presently forthcoming. The guests arrive, and when they are seated the curtain rises, disclosing Nina seated upon a stone:—

Nina: Men and lions, eagles and partridges, antler-crowned stags, geese and spiders, silent inhabitants of the waters, starfish and all creatures invisible to the eye—in a word, all living beings have completed their dismal course and are extinguished. For many thousands of years no living creature more has found refuge upon the earth, and the poor moon above lights her candle to no purpose. No longer do the cranes awaken upon the meadow with their merry song, and among the forest limes no cockchafer is heard. It's cold, cold, cold! It's empty, empty, empty! I'm afraid, afraid, afraid! The bodies of the living have fallen into dust, and the eternal Cause has changed them into stones, into water, into clouds. But their souls have been merged into a single soul. That world-soul am I! In me live the spirits of Alexander, of Caesar, of Napoleon, of Shakespeare, together with the soul of the meanest worm. The reason of mankind and the instinct of the beasts are blended in me. I know all, all, all, and every life that is in me I live through afresh.

[Will-o'-the-wisps hover about her.]

Irene: That smacks of decadence!

Constantine (reproachfully): Mother!

Nina: I am lonely. Once in every hundred years I open my lips to speak. My voice sounds chilly in the emptiness; no one hears me. Even the will-o'-the-wisps are deaf. Each evening they are born of the foul quagmire, and they flicker till the dawn without thought, without will, without life. From fear lest I should awaken life within them, the father of eternal chaos, Satan, completes each instant a change of their particles, as in the water and the stones; they change unceasingly. In the whole universe my soul alone remains constant and unalterable. Like a prisoner thrown into the depths of a well, I know not where I am nor what awaits me. One thing alone has been revealed to me—that in the grim wrestle with Satan, author of material powers, the victory will be mine; and that then soul and matter will be blended in noble harmony and the kingdom of the world-purpose will begin. But that can only be when, after a long, long roll of centuries the moon, bright Sirius and the earth have crumbled into dust. Until then horror, horror —

[In the distance two red points of light are seen.]

Nina: Satan, my enemy, approaches. I see his hideous eyes of fire —

Irene: There's a smell of sulphur. Does that belong to the piece?

Constantine: Yes.

Irene (laughing): An original effect!

Constantine: Mother!

[Dorn takes off his hat.]

Nina: Since there are no longer any men—

Pauline (to Dorn): Put on your hat. You'll catch cold.

* These passages have been rendered from the German, and they are intended only to illustrate the trend of the play. The translator of "The Seagull" for the Scottish Repertory Theatre is Mr. George Calderon.

Irene: The doctor took off his hat to Satan, author of material powers.

Constantine (raging): The play is over! Down with the curtain!

Irene: Why lose your temper?

Constantine: Enough! Down with the curtain! (Stamping his foot.) Let it fall, I say!

[The curtain falls.]

Constantine: I ask your pardon. I had forgotten that only some few chosen pieces may be written and performed. I presumed too much. I—I—

[He goes off to the left.]

Constantine, always hyper-sensitive, becomes embittered by this failure. With his play he loses Nina. For Nina, it seems, has the soul of the player. She despises failures and worships success. Trigorin, "the famous author, whose name is in all the papers, whose portrait is sold in every picture-shop, whose books are read throughout the world," becomes her hero. Constantine lays a dead seagull at her feet, and threatens suicide, but Nina is unmoved. The pose of symbolism is lost upon her, but she is fascinated by the pose of paradox and ennui which Trigorin affects:—

[Trigorin enters, writing in his notebook.]

Nina: Good morning, Monsieur Trigorin.

Trigorin: Ah, good morning! Things have taken an unexpected turn. We shall probably leave to-day. I may not see you again. A pity! I seldom meet young and interesting ladies. That is why the girls in my novels are for the most part so falsely drawn. I wish I could change places with you, if only for an hour, just to find out how you think and what you are.

Nina: Ah, I would change places willingly, Monsieur Trigorin!

Trigorin: Why?

Nina: Just to learn what a famous author feels and thinks. How happy you must be!

Trigorin (shrugging his shoulders): I? H'm—very kind of you! You speak of happiness and fame. For me these are pretty words—forgive the comparison—as pretty as marmalade, a confection that I never eat. You are very young—and very naive. (Taking out his watch) I must get back to work. Time presses. You have touched my sore point—but let that pass. Look at my charming and delightful life a little more closely. Day and night one thought pursues me: I must write, write, write. Barely is one novel finished, when I am driven to begin a second, then a third, a fourth—post-haste, whether I will or no. Where is the charm and the delight, if I may ask? It's a mad, helter-skelter chase. Here I am chatting with you, but not for a single instant does the thought leave me that upon my writing-table there lies an unfinished manuscript. (He points skyward.) Do you see the cloud there, shaped like a piano? Immediately I think, "At the first opportunity this piano-like cloud must be mentioned." Or there is a scent of heliotrope. It occurs to me "This delicate scent suits the mood of a summer evening." Every word, every sentence I hear or utter excites my literary sense, and all these words and sentences are stored in my workshop until opportunity comes to use them. And when the day's work is over, and I take my seat in the theatre or go fishing—do you imagine that I find relaxation? Never! In my brain I feel the work continue—it rolls about like some heavy iron bullet—new material! I long for the hour when I can sit down once more at my table and write. So it goes on, year in, year out; I have no rest from myself. At the beginning of my career I was constantly troubled by other cares. A morbid struggle for recognition; after praise, doubt of its sincerity. I trembled before my public, and each time that I produced a new play it seemed to me that the brunettes were hostile and the blondes indifferent. I was tortured beyond description.

Nina: Yes, but the inspiration, the act of creation in itself—does that not make you happy?

Trigorin: As long as I am writing, I am satisfied. Even proof-correcting gives me pleasure; but the moment my work is published it is loathsome to me. I have one feeling only: it was not what I meant to write; it was a mistake which should never have been published at all. I wrangle with myself. (He laughs). But the public reads it. "H'm. Yes." And says to itself, "Neat enough, clever enough. But he's not a Tolstoi." Or: "Excellent, but not to be compared with Turgenev's 'Father and Sons.'" So it will be to the end of my life; all neat and pretty enough, but nothing more. And when I am dead, and my friends pass by my grave, they will say: "Here lies Trigorin. He was a good writer, but Tolstoi was better."

Nina listens eagerly to this persiflage. She longs for

the life of the city, of the artist, of the theatre. Presently the note-book comes into play again. Trigorin observes the dead seagull—"a fine bird," as he remarks. It provides him with material for a short story:—

"By the shore of a lake lives a young girl. . . . She loves the water as passionately as a seagull, and is herself as free and happy. By chance a man passes by one day. He sees her, and in the boredom of an idle hour he ruins her, just as a huntsman shoots a bird."

The fable proves true, and Nina becomes Trigorin's mistress. Meanwhile Constantine attempts suicide, and appears in the third act with a bandaged head, morose as ever, but otherwise little the worse. The guests leave for Moscow, and Nina goes to the same city to seek an engagement in the theatre.

The fourth act passes two years later, in a tragic atmosphere of reminiscence and disillusionment for all the characters. Constantine is still living upon his uncle's estate. His books and poems, published under a pseudonym, have brought him recognition, but no peace of mind. The theatre by the lake stands empty, its curtain flapping in the wind. Trigorin, as usual, is just finishing a new book. Irene is still playing Magda and the Lady of the Camelias. Sorin still laments the ineffectuality of his existence. Life, art, love—they all move in the old rut. Nina's history is told. She had a child. The child died, and Trigorin left her. She failed at first as an actress, and moved steadily downward in her profession. But for her, the family party in Sorin's house is as complete as in the first act. Irene, Trigorin, Dorn and Sorin settle down to a game of cards before supper. Sorin falls asleep and spoils the game. Constantine is left alone:—

Constantine (turns over the leaves of the manuscripts upon his writing-table, and takes up a half-finished sheet): I have spoken so much of new forms, and now I see that there is no escape from the tyranny of routine. (He reads.) "Upon the table was a radiant bouquet of flowers. . . . her pale face, framed in dark tresses". . . Radiant, framed—those are trivial! (He crosses them out.) I leave them to Trigorin; he has a pattern ready-made.

Then Nina comes. She, too, is in the grip of routine:—

Nina: So you are an author, now. You have become a poet, I an actress. The whirlpool has caught us both. How gaily I used to live, as a child! When I awoke in the morning life sang and danced within me. I loved you then! I dreamed of fame and happiness. And now! To-morrow I must set out for my winter engagement in Ufa, cooped up in a third-class carriage with dirty peasants. In Ufa the nouveaux riches will pester me with their clumsy love-making. Oh, life is so vulgar!

She must go back to the theatre, however, for nothing but work can satisfy her:—

Nina: Good-bye. When I am a great artist, you must come and see me play. Promise! And now—(she takes his hand). It's late. I'm so tired that I can hardly stand.

[Constantine prepares to accompany her.]

Nina: No, no. Don't come. I can find the way alone. . . . If you see Trigorin, say nothing. I love him. I love him more than ever—material for a short story, ha, ha, ha! Oh, Constantine, how splendid it was in the old days—you remember—my first appearance in the theatre on the shore. (She declaims): "Men and lions, eagles and partridges, antler-crowned stags, silent inhabitants of the waters, starfish and all creatures invisible to the eye—in a word, all living beings have completed their dismal course and are extinguished. . . ."

[She embraces him and hurries out. Constantine, alone, gathers all the manuscripts upon the writing-table, tears them up, throws the fragments into the fire and leaves the room.]

Irene, Trigorin, Dorn and the others return. In the midst of their conversation they are startled by a shot:—

Irene: What was that?

Dorn: Oh, nothing. Some chemicals must have exploded in my medicine-chest. Don't trouble to move. (He goes into the room on the right, returning immediately.) Just as I thought. A bottle of ether has burst. You would hardly believe what power a couple of grammes of the stuff can generate.

Irene (seating herself at the card-table): What a start it gave me. It reminded me of the time when

Dorn (turning over the leaves of a magazine): My dear

Monsieur Trigorin! May I trouble you for one moment? Two months ago I read an article here—some correspondence from America, and I wanted to ask you . . . (He takes Trigorin by the arm and leads him down stage). The question interests me greatly. (In a low tone) Make some pretext to get your friends away. Constantine has just shot himself in the next room.

There the play ends. Constantine leaves the world to its charlatanism and routine. His death will hardly cost Trigorin a sleepless night, and may even provide useful material for a new novel. Irene will doubtless mourn for a time, but black probably suits her; and in any case she will shortly return to the theatre to interpret Dumas and Sudermann with renewed emotional power. Dorn will grieve sincerely, but then Dorn is only a poor country doctor. Literary Russia will not be greatly troubled by the loss of its youngest poet. A poet more or less; what does it matter? The routine continues.

I turn now to "The Three Sisters," another tragedy of disillusionment.

It passes in a provincial town. The three sisters are Olga, Mascha and Irene. Olga, the eldest, is an unmarried school teacher. Mascha is the wife of a lecturer in the gymnasium. Irene is a telegraph operator in the post office. All three were brought up in Moscow, and their ideal of life is a return to the city. Their father, a brigadier-general, died early and left them with the alternative of marrying or earning their own living. Mascha married at eighteen, and found her husband a bore. Olga and Irene are equally dissatisfied with their work. They have a brother named Andrei Prosorow, a scholar who hopes for a professorship in the Moscow University. Moscow, indeed, appears to all of them the distant paradise. Throughout four acts they talk of it, but in the end they all remain where they are. Andrei marries unwisely and falls into a groove as secretary to the local town council. Olga continues at her school. Mascha falls in love with a married lieutenant whose regiment is transferred elsewhere. Irene seeks a way of escape by betrothing herself to another officer, who is killed in a senseless duel. The removal of the regiment deprives the family even of their acquaintances. Andrei sums up the situation in the last act:—

Andrei: We have hardly begun to live, when we grow tedious, dull, lazy, useless, wretched and indifferent. This town of ours has existed for two hundred years. It has a hundred thousand inhabitants, and there is not one among them unlike all the rest. It has not given birth to a single hero in the whole course of its history; it has produced no thinker, no artist, no personality of the smallest importance, no one who could arouse a burning desire to emulate him. The people here do no more than eat, drink, sleep and die. Others are born, who eat, drink and sleep in their turn; and, lest boredom should destroy them altogether, they seek variety in gossip, brandy, cards, intrigue. . . . Wives are unfaithful to their husbands, and the husbands lie and pretend that they have seen nothing. The vulgar tradition descends upon the children, clouding their minds until the spark of divinity within them is extinguished, and they grow up to be just such pitiable, trivial, commonplace corpses as their fathers and mothers were before them. Shame upon such a life!

If this play were unrelieved, it would be intolerable. It is relieved by its note of revolt, by its distinction of dialogue, and by its plea (more insistent even than in "The Seagull") that comfort and civilization alone can give no dignity to existence. To the cry of "Life is vulgar, therefore art is debased," Tchekhov replies with "Art is debased, therefore life is vulgar." His demand is for a standard of living rather than for a standard of life. Individuality, with him, comes first.

And so with all his plays. It is as if the author said: "We live in a civilization accessible only to the few. Here are the few. I show them to you for an hour, with their culture, their books, their plays, their theatres within the theatre, their learning and their wit. Their existence represents the last word in modernity. They are dissatisfied, unhappy, often dulled and broken. What is the meaning of it all? What is modernity? An episode. The motive of life? A mystery to which every individual has potentially the key. I give you the picture-puzzle of existence in fragments. Seat yourself

here in the prison cell, and piece them together as you please. I write only for those who want to understand. Life and art—those two must be placed side by side. Yes, go on. You have discovered a part of the secret. You are building, creating. More fragments here and there—the scheme grows clearer. Now hold it up to the light . . . See, you have made a window of stained glass."

That is the drama of Tchekhov.

POEMS BY E. H. VISIAK.

LITTLE BOY.

LITTLE boy with eyes blue,
Once I looked just like you.

Little boy with eyes bright,
Once my heart was so light.

Little boy with eyes blue.
I wish I were like you.

IT NEVER CAN HAPPEN AGAIN.

THE dingy crept in 'neath the still moonshine,
Crinkling the silver scum;
And a brawny ruffian stole ashore,
And landed a barrel of rum.

He trundled the barrel up high and dry;
The boat lumped in the wave:
But a swab of a lurking excise man
Let fly from the mouth of a cave.

The smuggler lifted a hand to the moon,
And waved his arms amain:
"Why, cheer up, old salt," said the excise man,
"It never can happen again!"

ASPIRATION.

If you were aught that steel could pierce,
Abhorred self of me,
To 'scape the body of this death,
A murderer I would be!

If I could reach you, self of mine,
I'd tread you into clod,
Insulter of my lofty soul,
Blasphemer of my God!

If I could catch you, ghost of me,
I'd grip you till you died,
And plunge you into flaming hell,
For ever there to bide!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

MAN'S EQUAL, "POO IKKY SING."

Sir,—On October 6, I asked the women of England among your readers a plain question: Do they desire the equality, the legal equality, of the sexes or do they not? It is not a difficult question. Do they desire, and are they willing, that a partnership between man and woman shall be treated in precisely the same way as a partnership between man and man?

It is hard to conceive a more pitiable spectacle than a crowd of noisy women clutching at their rights with one hand and clinging to their privileges with the other. I concede a woman's rights (including a right to a vote), and I protest against her privileges. She cannot at the same time play the double rôle of Man's Equal and of "Poo ikky sing." Let her choose between the two. If a pick-pocket gets his pocket picked he deserves neither reparation nor sympathy. Women who will not renounce their privileges deserve neither help nor sympathy when they fail to obtain their rights. In a country where both kinds of partnership may, in certain circumstances, be dissolved, it seems easy to insert a covenant in view of such a contingency. Why childishly wait for it to happen and then run screaming to the State for redress? Men provide for the

contingency before it happens: and so dispense with the services of the twelve liege buttermen. It is the duty of the State to enforce the fulfilment of contract, but not of vague expectation. It women are really incapable of making their own contracts, and taking care of themselves: well, they must be taken care of, like children and idiots. But if so, they must not put in a claim to take care of me—in other words, to legislate for others. If Woman is willing to be Man's Legal Equal, good. If she prefers to remain "Poo ikky sing," good also; but let her speak out. She "shan't" be both. Most women have no definite opinions: some have opinions but lack the courage to express them.

Consider the difference in the treatment of men and women in cases of breach of promise. You ask a man in the hunting-field whether he is willing to part with his horse, and he says "Yes"; but there is no contract. You may find on better acquaintance that the horse clicks or is touched in the wind, and you cry off. Does he run weeping to the State for damages?

But if you ask a woman to marry and she accepts, a solemn contract, we are told, has been entered into, the breach of which entitles the disappointed party to heavy damages. All the salutary safeguards against precipitancy, misunderstanding, indefiniteness as to date of completion, insufficient evidence (usual in the case of agreements between men) are thrown to the winds where women are concerned. You cannot sell a cottage without a written document clearly stating the terms agreed on; but you have only to call a woman a rosebud or a turtledove, and she seems to have a sort of lien upon you and upon all you possess for evermore. There is nothing definite, nothing clear, no solemn stipulations. But the collected tittle-tattle of acquaintance, servants and gossips, and the inanities of lovers' correspondence are examined, tittered over and weighed by a dozen buttermen who value the heart-wound in £ s. d. according to their fancy. A gallant young captain dances attendance on a gouty but childless uncle for twenty years, only to find his own name unmentioned in the will. Hard luck! but no damages. The same gallant young captain encourages a lady to expect to become the mistress of his household and then disappoints her. Hard luck! again; but this time damages (say £3,000) in addition. It is cruel and therefore wrong to raise expectations which are to be disappointed. In some cases possibly the deceiver deserves a horse-whipping; but there is no more reason for the State to step in as comforter in the case of women than in the case of men. If, however, the former desire and require the special tutelary protection of a parental State, let them place themselves unreservedly in its hands, without claiming a share in the management—by legislation or otherwise.

WORDSWORTH DONISTHORPE.

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THE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE.

Sir,—May I, as an old reader of your excellent journal, be allowed to make a passing comment in your columns on the exceedingly valuable article on "The Constitutional Issue" (November 3). One paragraph in an otherwise instructive article is so false to history that one wonders whether your correspondent is so close a student of contemporary political life as his article would lead one to suppose. It is: "The Licensing Bill was forced on the Liberals by the teetotal section, and it very nearly wrecked the whole party at the next General Election." It is the first clause of the foregoing quotation that I most strongly take exception to, while not entirely agreeing with the latter.

As I happen to have had the privilege of propagating in different parts of the country the foundation principles of the Licensing Bill (1908) before the bill itself was presented to Parliament, I can safely say that that particular bill received the strong support of many thousands (some hundreds of my own interviewing) of the most prominent non-teetotal and "moderate" citizens in the country.

Furthermore, admitting the Act of 1904 to be a violation of national rights in the interests of a few, it was inevitable that, sooner or later, its reversal would be attempted; and certainly, in the interests of the nation, imperative that it should be. That the bill was meant to achieve, and in addition, to embody in legislation some of the recommendations—by way of a long-overdue instalment of reform—of the Royal Commission on Licensing appointed by a Tory Government about twelve years previously. To state in cold print that such men as Mr. Asquith, non-teetotalers and representatives of the majority, the "moderate" men in the kingdom, had anything "forced on" them is to state something which is, on the face of it, palpably absurd.

I can also safely say, as one who addressed scores of meetings—almost wholly open-air—in various parts of the kingdom during the late General Election, that it was not the Licensing Bill that "nearly wrecked the whole party" (and presumably their fortunes) at the polls. Your correspondent must seek the causes elsewhere. They are legion.

J. S. WHITEHEAD.

Sir,—I have read with interest the article, "The Constitutional Issue" (November 3), but cannot quite gather what the writer is driving at. It would appear that his one desire is to rid the present Constitution of the House of Lords, but he does not suggest what second chamber he is going to put in its place.

I do not agree with him that it would be a good thing to do away with party government; for if this ever became a fait accompli very little legislation would be accomplished, as each member (and I assume that the House of Commons would be composed of Independents) would have his own pet theory, and would always be expounding it and bringing in bills to obtain its end.

Two questions which at once confront the reader are:—(1) Who are the "sober-headed men of moderate views"? and (2) will a General Election be fought upon sober-headedness and moderation of views?

No, sir, I do not think it possible to do away with party government, or indeed, advisable; and the country having been subject to it for more than a century such a revolution would tend to bring disaster to the State.

A CONSTITUTIONALIST.

* * *

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

Sir,—Mr. Kenneth B. Scott's reason for reprieving Broome would introduce some complications into the movement for the abolition of capital punishment. If Broome is to be acquitted because he is "one of those men whom we do our best to organise and train in the science and art of slaughter," then what Smithfield fires will be slow enough for Dr. Crippen, who was brought up to a liberal and life-saving profession? If you debit society with Broome's disadvantages in life, clearly you must give society credit for Crippen's advantages.

I am afraid Mr. Scott has not paid enough attention to Lord Alverstone's caution to the jury, "This is a court of law, not of morals." In other words, human justice is an expedient dictated by the self-preserving instinct of the State. Divine justice, of course, is absolute; but, as Mr. Blatchford has shown, according to absolute justice the only person who ought to be punished or rewarded is God; and He is not before the court. So the State (with which we are in the innocent habit of identifying ourselves for all purposes for fear anybody should think we are anarchists) pursues the perfectly consistent course of hanging those killers who are merely annoying to it, and rewarding the formidable ones; and it is not likely to be moved by taunts of cowardice. There are lots of people in Mr. Scott's boat, who think they can advance steadily on heroic a priori principles with their eyes shut. If he had kept to the case of Broome I should have said nothing, but I strongly resent the damage done to the cause of anti-militarism by remarks such as his, which bring us anti-militarists under strong suspicion of namby-pambyism. Now, anti-militarism is a healthy objection to being drilled into inability to distinguish the real enemy, coupled with a lively refusal to fight like a machine at the word of command in somebody else's quarrel.

I wish both sides in the discussion of this subject would be more philosophic. Last Sunday I listened to an S.D.P. eulogium of military training, which ended most ineffectively with the words, "Of course, it's all very regrettable!" Wherefore? If you've got the right fellow by the scruff of the neck, it is advisable you should enjoy kicking him. If you are regretting it all the time, the chances are he will not be properly kicked. The only regrettable thing about a soldier's business is that he usually fights the wrong persons, and gets nothing out of it. For regular soul-destroying cruelty, the stock-farmer's business will beat the soldier's, any day.

JOHN KIRKBY.

* * *

THE TRUST IN CRIME.

Sir,—How long are the fearsome torturings of diseased men and women in prison to be permitted? It is sickening to have to live and work in the midst of such things. Murder is frightful enough, but what words are there to describe the chill horrors of judicial murder? A homicide is an insane person, and doctors should deal with him, not lawyers. Motive is no proof of responsibility; to sane persons want of money, or jealousy, or hatred, are sufficient motives for murder. The fact is our brains are sound, and we are therefore not subject to the mysterious fever which convulses homicides. Further—a fact never to be understated—so soon as we fortunate ones betray signs of unusual disturbance we are looked after by our friends. The cowardice with which a whole nation persecutes the few diseased persons whose trouble ends in murder is a thing to marvel at. And let anyone go round with a petition for a homicide. They will find how great a factor cowardice is! Medical testimony seems to agree that the insanity of most criminals who have once passed the crisis usually takes

a year to re-develop it. It is thus that homicides sometimes present a normal appearance in court.

This reign began with the execution of Jesshope, an epileptic—that in the middle of London, while we were all breakfasting. Some of us did what we could for Jesshope, and apparently quite in vain; but since that wilful judicial murder a jury has refused to convict (in spite of the judge and prison doctor) on the ground of epilepsy, and at least two others have been reprieved on this ground. A committee of doctors would certainly have prevented the merciless trials of these diseased men. Why should the Home Office not employ a committee of doctors instead of the present infallible experts on spots of blood and pyjamas and various other circumstantial evidence, which, so far from being, as Lord Coleridge asserts, beyond manufacture, could every bit have been manufactured? At present expert evidence for the defence is at the mercy of an unscientific judge, and the sort of treatment a scientific expert for the defence may expect has been shown in the Crippen case. Part of the evidence (all purely circumstantial) against Broome was the discovery in his room of nineteen pounds ten in gold; the further discovery by the police in the place of the murder of a paper showing the marks of exactly twenty coins; and the still further discovery, by Dr. Willcox, of some chips of gold on that paper. Those marvellous chips had, of course, come off those marvellous sovereigns! Another bit of evidence was the discovery of scratches on Broome's face, and the ultimate discovery by Dr. Willcox of some skin on the murdered woman's nails, which had been cut off and sent to him by the police. In the case of a man lately charged with murder, the police produced a waistcoat worn by the accused, which had a button missing. A button was found near the murdered man which, said the police, matched those on the waistcoat. It needs an expert eye, however, to know the exact match in buttons: and that expert eye was supplied by one of the jurymen! On such hairbreadth chances men's lives are allowed to depend.

How loth legalists are to give up their clutch upon "criminals" may be known from the recent establishment of criminal courts for the patronage of such individuals as prosecute children. No child ought to be prosecuted! A sentence to a reformatory is sentence to imprisonment. We have seen within the last few weeks a poor little Huckleberry Finn of Liverpool, who seized a boat, provisioned it with biscuits and sticks of chocolate, and set off down the Mersey to rescue some playmates from a boy's "home," sentenced to five years' imprisonment, and his tiny comrade to a warder's birching. I remember the case of a little girl, named Dorothy Neville, who was sentenced to five years for running off round the road with a costermonger's barrow! That child must have served almost three years already. The fact that magistrates can be found to undertake such work sufficiently proves their character. While the English permitted children to be hanged—not so long since—judges could always be found to sentence them to death. Lord Alverstone—in 1904—sentenced to death a youth of sixteen. And we know that this judge is so little affected by his terrible occupation that, after condemning Crippen, he can go and distribute prize tea-spoons. Death-sentencing is, obviously, mere billiards to the Lord Chief Justice. Not so to all of us! We loathe it. We cannot work well while such things are happening as the persecution of children and lunatics. Two days after the Crippen trial, Lord Alverstone, hearing an appeal, increased a man's sentence by three years. This young man, William Smith, *has already been in a criminal lunatic asylum*. He needs expert treatment, and should never be let loose at all, for his mania is definitely homicidal; but if something is not done we shall most probably see this lunatic one day solemnly and expensively tried and sentenced to death—and Almighty God have mercy, etc.!

These things will go on until doctors take their true position in the State, and it is the business of humane persons to devote at least some portion of their time and energy to demanding the medical investigation of every so-called "criminal" case. For my part, I feel forced to do so. In order to write at all I have to banish newspapers, crammed as these are with the reports of the judicial torture of diseased persons. But I know all the time that the dreadful business is going on, and it needs a very powerful inspiration to shut me off into the world of poetry long enough to complete a work, while sick men are being hanged, sick women sent to lonely cells, and high-spirited girls and boys dragged away to imprisonment for all their young years. There is a wide wave beginning to rise against these things, as may well sweep them all away. I, personally, am astounded at the pace of this wave of humaneness. I could not induce several papers to insert even a paid advertisement of the petition for Dickman. To-day, they are voluntarily advertising the petition for Crippen. A copy of this petition lies at THE NEW AGE office.

BEATRICE HASTINGS.

S. VERDAD, DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM.

Sir,—I do not quite follow the reasoning of Mr. S. Verdad in his Notes of last week. He appears to me to come into sharp collision not only with the writer of your "Notes of the Week," whom nevertheless he praises (as indeed we all do), but also with himself. Writing of M. Jaurès' advocacy of the General Strike, which your readers will remember you commended, Mr. Verdad leaves us in no doubt that in his view Jaurès was simply a "blind fanatic." Mr. Verdad's ground for condemning Jaurès and our own Socialist leaders is that the Governing classes are never moved to reform by fear, a palpable error to anyone versed in English history, and an error even to Mr. Verdad himself; for in the very next paragraph he commends your own views on Democracy precisely because "they alarm the upper classes." Now, what are we to make of this? Will Mr. Verdad tell us plainly how the governing classes are to be persuaded to reforms if not by fear? But, then, again Mr. Verdad falls into an error for which Nietzsche would never forgive him; he confuses the tactics and morality of the governed with the tactics and morality of the governors. For instance, he condemns Jaurès, the agitator and spokesman of the governed for failing to realise the point of view of the governors: he asserts that Jaurès in place of Briand would do exactly what Briand has done. Very likely he would, for the position and consequently the duty would be an entirely new one. As popular agitator, for example, Briand was driven to defend the General Strike; as Premier he was driven to suppress it. But Mr. Verdad must not therefore conclude that eight years before becoming Premier M. Briand was a "cloudy utopian," or that M. Jaurès is now. Of course, popular education looks like "cloudy utopianism" from the point of view of the governing classes, just as their own conduct looks like despotism and tyranny to those who are governed; but each is practical in its own field and determined by circumstances similarly. Were it not so, the so-called conversion of Briand the agitator into Briand the Premier would be miraculous, which it is not. Briand demonstrated his practicality as agitator quite as unmistakably as in his rôle of Premier; and it is open to us to predict that if Jaurès or even Hervé were suddenly raised to power they would handle their new power just as effectively as they handle their present power. Indeed, I think few will deny that the better the agitator the better the governor and, in general, the more violent in method the agitator, the more despotic in government he would be found to become; for a violent agitator is only a despot off the throne! Regarding our English agitators, Shaw, Blatchford, Keir Hardie, and the like, their fault is not that they are circumscribed. We all are by our circumstances. Their fault is that they do not agitate effectively. They irritate, as Mr. Verdad says, but they do not intimidate. But the blame even of this is largely due to public opinion, which, as you rightly say, is still an infant in England.

H. M. LENNOX.

* * *

MAETERLINCK'S SYMBOLISM.

Sir,—In his review of my book, "Maeterlinck's Symbolism: The Blue Bird," which appears in your issue of November 10, your critic writes:—

"The author proudly dismisses the theory. . . . that the Blue Bird means only the ideal in general, and substitutes his own guess that it is 'the symbol of celestial truth, the truth which is essential to Man's spiritual well-being.' Really, who'd have thought it? Maeterlinck himself says the Blue Bird stands for happiness, so there you are. To save ourselves further trouble we have tossed up for it, and Maeterlinck's guess has won."

May I—without asking how that which is stated after careful analysis and on a basis of evidence can rightly be called a "guess"—be permitted to point out that by adopting the method of partial quotation your critic gives an entirely false impression of my exposition of Maeterlinck's play. He ignores my comment on page 17: "When we realise this we see that when the play-bill tells us that the Blue Bird stands for happiness the statement needs to be amplified or qualified. Primarily, the Blue Bird is not the symbol of happiness. But just as from bread we get sustenance, from celestial truth, which is what the Blue Bird typifies, happiness may be derived." Even on the page from which your critic quotes, page 14, the relation of the play to the ideal of happiness is recognised, for I say: "The purpose of the play is to represent in types and figures the search of Man after the highest things of the spirit; the happiness which is more than once spoken of in the play is simply the happiness that comes from right seeking, and the reward of attainment."

If your critic will point to any single passage in the play in which happiness is referred to in a sense which is not perfectly consistent with these statements I shall have a much better opinion of his perspicacity than I am able at present to entertain. And, if he does point to such a

passage, perhaps he will at the same time explain, or, if he can, explain away, the presence in the play of a remark which I refer to as indicative of the author's intention, viz., that in which Tytyl inquires as to the quarter loaves which scramble out of the bread-pan, and receives from the Fairy the reply, "They are merely the souls of the quarter loaves who are taking advantage of the reign of truth to leave the pan in which they were too tightly packed."

As to the statement, "Maeterlinck himself says the Blue Bird stands for happiness," it would be very interesting indeed to be informed what authority your critic has for this assertion in the particular form in which your critic makes it. If his authority is derived from the internal evidence which the play offers of the author's meaning, I deal with that fully in my book. If, on the other hand, his authority is merely the note above referred to as published on the play-bill, I would ask your critic what sure ground he has for asserting that this note was written by Maeterlinck, or under his immediate direction; and further—whoever be the author of the note—what ground there is for supposing that the statement which is thus offered for popular consumption and with which I have not quarrelled, prevents the acceptance by any intelligent student of symbolism of my larger, more comprehensive, and inclusive interpretation?

As to your critic's complaint that I take what I believe to be a fine symbolic work too seriously, I will not speak. But may I, as a reader of THE NEW AGE from its very first issue, and as one who believes that it might be still more useful than it is in the advancement of independent thought, express regret not alone at the tone of the criticism of my book, but at the tone of much of the criticism which appears under the head of "Reviews" in your columns? Of the criticisms which appear under that head there are few which do not evince a mocking, as well as unjudicial, spirit. This is a spirit which is, unfortunately, more and more asserting itself in the pages of THE NEW AGE. In my opinion such a spirit is helpful neither to authors nor to readers. It may give amusement to superficial and heartless people, but it does not help even them. And certainly it is not by appealing to such as these that a new age of any sort is ever likely to be ushered in.

HENRY ROSE.

* * *
RICHES AND POVERTY.

Sir,—I see in your "Notes of the Week" the statement that "of the annual wealth produced in England, if the few take more than they need the many must have less than they need." This implies, at least, seems to imply, an inverted view about the causal relation between "riches" and "poverty," or to speak more accurately, between unearned income and destitution. You will surely grant that fundamentally, in the economic sphere, it is destitution which is the cause of unearned income. It is the existence of a destitute minority which causes the economic insecurity of the income-earning majority, every member of which is in constant danger of becoming one of the destitute minority within more or less imminent time. And it is this economic insecurity which enables another minority to live on unearned income levied privately in the shape of rent and interest. Remove the destitute minority by adding to the functions of the State that of insurance against destitution, and it will no longer be possible for private employers so to control income-earners and keep down earned incomes as to leave room for the continued existence of a class of private impropriators of unearned income, somewhat inaccurately called "the rich." On the other hand, the elimination of this class is conceivable without the disappearance of the destitute. It is but in an altogether secondary way that unearned income, once called into existence by the presence of destitution and economic insecurity, reacts and is to some extent in the political sphere an obstacle to the equalisation of economic security. It is no doubt true that, as you put it, "poverty cannot be assuaged or abolished without reducing the income of the rich," but I believe it is of great importance for Socialists to dissociate themselves from the Radical view about the causal relations between "poverty" and "riches."

O. E. POST.

* * *
MR. JACOB TONSON.

Sir,—Surely Mr. Jacob Tonson has overstepped the mark this time. We all admire him for his broad outlook upon the great field of literature, and for the stand he has made against the efforts of certain individuals concerned in the distribution of books to narrow that field. But of late we have been most unhappy to observe that in his zeal for freedom, he has shown a tendency to fall into their error of going to the extreme, and has exhibited an absurdly exuberant delight in all novels of a sensually sexual interest for no other apparent reason than that they were such as to meet with the disapproval of the Censorship Committee. No doubt Mr. Tonson has had to wade through a great

deal of dreadful stuff in order to ascertain for himself how the Committee was performing its self-imposed task, and probably, in consequence, his taste has suffered temporary deterioration through too much contact with such miry matter. If this should be the case, it would go some little way towards explaining how a person of normally healthy instincts could come to regard as "noble" work the passages he quotes from Mrs. Elinor Glyn's "His Hour"—a circumstance which is otherwise inexplicable.

HAROLD FISHER.

[It is not otherwise inexplicable, of course. Our correspondent is not the only reader who missed, on first reading, the consummate irony of Mr. Jacob Tonson. Will he and others give themselves the pleasure of reading Mr. Tonson's article again?—ED. N. A.]

* * *
AN ENDOWMENT SCHEME.

Sir,—Mrs. Hastings has made it a temerarious matter to enter this field of discussion. I enclose my card, therefore, in proof that I have some claim to being a literary person. It seems to me that "Nemo" has misunderstood the purpose for which an endowed house for literary artists would exist. Surely one would only go there to be sure of leisure for work, and surely no writer but would leap to such a place. Gather experience out in the hurly-burly of modern life; but to mould that experience into a lasting work of art a man gains by being detached from all other scenes and occupations. Of course painters have long since stated, demanded, and obtained the places sacred to their particular work. Studios for the express use of painters may be rented in every city. Certainly, where the ideal conditions of quietude and space are supplied, rents are forbiddingly high; but the fact remains that painters with money can get what they want. Literary artists cannot. I know several literary men who live and work in these studios intended for painters, but the great drawback of the art studios is the very moderate allowance of sunlight to be obtained, north light being made the aim. Mrs. Hastings' proposition of a country place, with details as perfectly ordered as she suggests, would be more than a boon to me. May I protest against Mr. Vance Palmer's remarks upon literary artists? His letter was apparently written for the delight of pin-pricking.

S. P.

* * *
MR. SHAW AND SHAKESPEARE.

Sir,—In an interview granted to the "Observer," Mr. Shaw is represented to have made the following remark: "If Shakespeare were alive he would simply gasp at Granville Barker's superior knowledge of dramatic construction." This is somewhat as if one should say: "If the builders of the Pyramids were alive they would simply gasp at the superior knowledge of the men who constructed the American sky-scraper." It is a question of genius and of machinery. If the builders of the Pyramids were alive to-day they could learn in three weeks how to make the sky-scraper, and then turn and build more Pyramids. If Shakespeare were alive to-day he could seize all Mr. Barker's superior knowledge and then—write more Shakespeare. We have out-worn the joke of Shaw-and-Shakespeare. Apparently, now, Mr. Shaw is anxious to pass on his threadbare motley to his young disciple.

R. FORD.

* * *
THE ODOUR OF SANCTITY.

Sir,—It was the morning of a Friday toward the close of January, and they led the great Lutheran preacher through the corridors of the grim Gerangenhau.

Over the roofs of Leyden hung leaden clouds: but the roofs were covered with the unspotted mantle of winter. Fur-clad crowds gathered to watch a martyrdom; and many men as well as women wept to see the courage of his three disciples who had burned ere the Spaniards led him forth. He came starving: for to him in that moment of exaltation, after the conquest of his coward flesh, the fish they offered him had seemed a symbol of their priest-ridden worship.

As he came to the stake the mobile lips trembled, the nostrils fluttered.

"I pray you give me leave to speak?"

But the Spaniards beat their drums.

Their captain noted the constancy of the face that was in such striking contrast to his own clear-cut features.

"What wouldst say, old man?"

"I would preach peace to the citizens."

"They are cowed. What need?"

The preacher smiled scornfully.

"Have you a nose? Or cannot you smell defiance in the air? The whole town roasts meat on your Friday fast."

But the captain stared: his lips twitched: and a common soldier, who had no respect for the aristocratic repression, roared with laughter.

"That, old man? Why that is the odour of sanctity."

R. C. P.

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