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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THERE are several indications that the main struggle for the Parliament Bill is now over. Rearguard actions will continue to be fought by the Unionists to the very last line of the very last clause, but their field is practically lost. Nobody who has read the debates on the first clause can doubt that both sides feel this; and in all directions, as we ventured to say last week, men are looking towards the future rather than towards the present. How will affairs stand when the Veto Bill is law, what will prove to be the net gains and losses on either side, how can the best party advantage be made of the new situation? It must not be supposed that because the Unionists have declared the Veto Bill to be the end of all things, and the Radicals have declared it to be the beginning of all things, that either party will be without gains as well as losses. On the Liberal side Professor Morgan in the "Nineteenth Century" has already begun to sound an alarm. The House of Lords under the new conditions will not merely be permitted occasionally to delay a Commons Bill, but the exercise of its power to delay will be almost a duty. Obstruction by request, in fact, is one of the possible fruits of the Bill. On the other hand, with their absolute Veto gone the Unionists will not have quite the same confidence in their battalions. They will need to argue more in the open and, in short, to become a little more popular in their appeal.

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It will be noted that the Government's view, in Mr. Asquith's words, is "that they should disturb the existing Constitutional system as little as possible." Other observers may draw from this remark what conclusion they please, but we are inclined to take it to mean that the Preamble regarding the re-constitution of the Second Chamber will remain a Preamble. There is certainly no Government scheme for reconstituting the House of Lords, and no scheme put forward by the Unionists can stand criticism for a moment. The fatal objection to all the various suggestions made by Lord Lansdowne and Lord Rosebery is that their re-arrangements would either not work or would prove impossible to inaugurate. If there is to be any change in the composition of the Lords, nothing short of its transformation into a completely elective assembly would be possible; and this for a dozen reasons is as undesirable as it is unlikely. Yet once on the inclined plane of change, it is to precisely this conclusion that the reformers would be driven. Both parties now clearly recognising this, we may take it as probable that nothing more will be heard of the reform of the Lords until time shall have proved that the new Parliament Bill still leaves too heavy a handicap on economic legislation.

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Among the significant movements which indicate that affairs are settling down we rank in a foremost place the decision by the Unionists to construct a programme of Social Reform. There can be no mistake that this means that the Unionists are now beginning to look ahead. And not before time was ripe. The present administration cannot last for ever; and we are quite of the "Nation's" opinion that the immediate sequel of the passing of the Parliament Bill will be a Conservative reaction. Reaction, however, is an equivocal term. A Tory reaction from a certain drift of recent and promised Liberal legislation we should regard as reactionary in a good sense, if it followed a national rather than a party line. Disraeli, it may be remembered, habitually objected to be called either a Conservative or a Tory. He preferred to be regarded as an English Nationalist. In the same sense we should ourselves prefer to be considered as Nationalists rather than as anything else; and if the present Unionists, when they return to office after the next General Election, should decide to "react" nationally, they will be, we contend, in the centre line of the popular mood of the day.

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At the very lowest estimate, two distinct advantages may be derived from the formation of Mr. F. E. Smith's Social Reform Committee. If even no programme is constructed on which his party can generally agree, the Liberals will have the incentive of a rival, and the Socialist movement will be enabled to slough some of its encumbering Liberal skin. We do not propose to shout our observations on these subjects from the housetops. Mr. Balfour assures us that there is no greater fallacy than to suppose that it is useless to argue quietly and well. The difference may not be at the moment. . . . Exactly; we agree. But reason tells in the long run. And if this be true, our observations may stand, first, that the most zealous Liberal administration needs a runner-up in its slow race for Social Reform, and, secondly, that the Socialist movement needs to be disentangled from the worser elements of Liberalism. We are told, for example, that the Committee has under consideration such subjects as the reform of the Poor Law, insurance, housing, decasualisation of labour, technical education, emigration, and sweating. These, it will be remarked, contain no new principle of legislation. With every one of them in a greater or a lesser degree the present Liberal Government has already dealt or is under promise to deal. Yet if they promise no great Tory success at the polls by reason of the absence from them

of any really new principle, they certainly promise to stimulate the Liberal Party to increased exertions. The mere existence of some technical interest in such measures on the Tory side will compel Liberal legislators to frame their Bills accordingly. It would never do to allow the Unionists again what was once allowed to Lord Randolph Churchill, to complain of Liberal measures of social reform that they did not go far enough.

* * *

We confess that the chances of profit to the Socialist movement from the new impulse to Social Reform in the Tory Party seem to us rather more remote. What the Labour Party in particular *might* learn from the fact is the unwisdom of an indissoluble alliance with either of the two main parties. Suppose it should happen now that Mr. F. E. Smith can persuade his party to accept a Social Reform programme more advanced than the Liberal Party is prepared to adopt, what hostages to fortune will not the Labour Party have given away in its present glued state of alliance with Liberals! Not only will they find it difficult to drag themselves from their present hosts, but it is certain that unless meanwhile they do some solid thinking and plain speaking (both highly improbable) they will find, even if they escape, that they have spoiled the Liberals of what is of least value. What we mean is that the present close association of the Labour Party with the Liberal Party will leave the Socialist movement, long after it is freed from the alliance, burdened and weighted by all the most unpopular planks of the Liberal programme. What are the most unpopular elements of Liberalism? Its strain of anti-nationalism, its dissenting preferences, its materialism and secularism, its sentimental pacifism, its teetotalism, its effeminism, in a word, its puritanism. And what are these but the very elements which the Labour Party has appropriated and foisted upon the Socialist movement? They constitute the Liberal skin which we would fain see the Socialist movement slough. And if in the process the Socialist movement should appear to become Tory rather than Liberal, we should not be afraid of risking it in view of the danger of the present situation. We hesitate as yet to declare that the next political wave is bound to be Tory Socialism, or Tory Democracy or whatever other name a union of English nationalists of all classes may be called; but the ripple may be descried in the new Unionist Social Reform Committee.

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Mr. Belloc's attack on the Party system as it enslaves the House of Commons has been supplemented by two Unionists, Lord Hugh Cecil and Mr. Griffith-Boscawen, on the same grounds. There is just the suspicion that the Unionist attack is more interested in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons. If it could be shown that the Commons is "a corrupt assembly" at the very moment that this House is subordinating the Lords, the latter by contrast might appear whitely innocent. On the other hand, with all that the two Unionists affirmed of the Commons it is impossible to disagree, be the effect what it may. Strategically, no doubt, and from the Liberal point of view, no worse time than the present could be chosen for denouncing the House of Commons. But such of us as really desire the reform of that House, and most of all when it is becoming our only defence against Cabinet dictatorship, have no choice but to criticise it on every possible occasion, strategy or no strategy. There is not the least doubt that the House of Commons though theoretically representative and theoretically supreme over the Cabinet, is tending (we would not say more than tending as yet) to become the obedient slave of the caucuses controlled by the Front Benches. And to the extent to which it becomes this, the House of Commons ceases to be nationally responsible and naturally divides itself into groups of interested persons. It is only fair, however, to say that this process has not yet become a public scandal. We would not say with Mr. Balfour and Mr. Asquith that the House of Commons, as distinct from the Cabinet, has not lost prestige and confidence during the last twenty years. It has considerably. But the loss is not yet great enough to detract seriously from its public authority. The intelligent citizen, though growing restive with apprehension, still believes that the House of Commons grinds justice out of its slow mill. And the fact that Messrs. Belloc and Chesterton's book has aroused so much discussion and led already to some passages of rebellion in the House of Commons, proves that the belief is not yet unfounded.

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There is to be no end, it appears, to the squabble over the Holmes Circular regarding the appointment of University men as elementary school inspectors. If we had not Mr. Balfour's assurance, quoted above, that reason will tell, we should despair of producing any effect on the combatants. At present neither side will discuss the actual policy contained in the Circular; but both confine themselves to the petty question of whether Sir Robert Morant did or did not conceal his intentions from his Chief. That, we admit, is a serious matter, but it should not be so serious as to overwhelm the consideration of whether the Circular itself was wise or foolish. We know nothing of the departmental facts of the case, but we should not be at all surprised to learn that Sir Robert Morant had grounds for supposing that Mr. Runciman would not object to the policy even if he dared not openly inaugurate or commend it. That he decided to pursue it alone was, perhaps, a natural course for an official to pursue who realised that his Chief, however willing, could not be responsible. This breach apart, we do not see why the wisdom of the Circular should not be discussed. We could even wish that Mr. Runciman had had the moral courage, when he was first challenged, to defend it as his own.

* * *

It is superficially assumed by Liberal organs that Democracy in education means education of the people *by* the people. If in this nomenclature the people included all classes we should agree. But in doctrinaire circles the word people tacitly excludes everybody but the tinker, the tailor, and the candlestick-maker; and in this narrow class sense we emphatically repudiate Democracy in education. Strangely enough, the aforesaid tinker, tailor, candlestick-maker repudiate it in this form too. Nobody better than they realises the necessity of education by the educated. If they had the means—and the provision of the means is the real line of progress—they would have their children educated by the best teachers to be had, University or any other. It is only the Democratic pedants who refuse either one or the other means to them, and in the name of democracy! From all we gather, the Radicals are disposed to refuse admission into elementary schools of any inspector or teacher of a superior culture. And at the same time by an incredible meanness they do next to nothing to raise the status and standard of culture among elementary teachers themselves. If that is to be friends of Democracy, we are glad in this instance to be numbered among its enemies. Anything better calculated to keep Democracy ignorant and helpless we cannot well conceive.

* * *

What is the best way out of the existing plight of our elementary schools? The present writer has a long experience at first hand, and the conclusion forced on us is that the elementary teacher is the key of the situation. The Holmes Circular confined its recommendations to the importation into schools of University-trained inspectors. That would be so much to the good, but it would not be enough. An inspector visits a school at the outside no more than three or four times a year. The teacher is there all the time. What is needed is obviously that the spirit and intention of the Holmes Circular shall embrace the teaching staff as well as the inspectorate. Provision should be made to enable first and afterwards to compel every elementary teacher to be trained, not only in a training college, but in a University as well. That would ensure some contact at any rate of the "people" with the world of ideas.

Foreign Affairs.

By S. Verdad.

SINCE the outbreak of the peace fever recently, I have been in correspondence with a few Continental thinkers who, like myself, endeavour to enter into their political studies by bringing psychology rather than mere pedantry to bear upon them. Concerning one aspect of the peace question we were unanimous, viz., that the twentieth century would witness, in one quarter of the world or another, even bloodier wars than we had in the nineteenth : bloodier, because the natural feelings and instincts which underlie serious wars have never changed since the dawn, I will not say of history merely, but of the very beginnings of life upon earth. Struggles to the death, whether waged between fishes, animals, primitive man, or man of the historical period, have been originated by the one unalterable impulse which I referred to last week; and wars will be bloodier, again, chiefly because modern death-dealing instruments are becoming more and more perfect year by year. The battle of Tsushima, in which the Russian Fleet was annihilated and sunk, lasted only about forty minutes; and modern naval experts, British, German, French, and American, have openly declared their conviction that future great naval battles between modern fleets will be decided in even less time than this. Every year that passes sees a smaller and smaller chance of escape for those who take part in modern warfare.

* * *

Now, in England particularly, we moderns live under somewhat strange philosophic and religious conditions. Our religion is nominally Christian; but the Christianity of the Latin countries differs to an enormous extent from that of the Teutonic countries. When I say this, I am doubtless stating what is, to most readers of this paper, a truism; but the feelings, outlook, temperament—what you will—brought about by our Christianity have always tended in one direction; and to state this clearly will not be a truism : the development of hypocrisy, the disinclination to face inconvenient facts; in short, intellectual ostrichisation. The disinclination to be taught, the disinclination to be led by a capable and efficient leader, are among the baser characteristics developed by a misunderstood Democracy; and it is incontrovertible that such a state of mind is more rapidly and thoroughly developed by Lutherism than Catholicism. I say Lutherism, because the Protestantism of the English High Church is analogous in many respects to the practices of the Roman Catholics, very much more so than the practices of the so-called Low Church and the Dissenting bodies.

* * *

This attitude of mind, I must emphasise, is more thoroughly developed in Great Britain than in Germany; for Germany is considerably influenced by the views of the Centre Party, which is Catholic, and by the 18,000,000 Catholics in the various German States, who naturally form a much larger proportion of the population of 60,000,000 than do their few co-religionists in this country of our smaller population. Furthermore—and this is highly important—the great impulse given in Germany to the development of philosophy during the nineteenth century has resulted in a class of professional men and students who are uninfluenced by the strict theological scruples that play havoc in England. A German who feels himself to be above mere dogmatic theology, and who can give evidence of his intellectual capacity, is not looked at askance. To take another side of this subject, it would have been impossible for a man like Dilke, let us say, to be left out of the German political swim for a relatively trifling offence.

It is in this philosophical class—philosophically-minded people who are also men of the world not being altogether unknown in Germany—that we may class Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter, the present Foreign Minister, and Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, the Chancellor. The tale that hangs thereby is that, while pacifism has made some headway among certain classes in England which ought to know better, it has not made any progress worth speaking of in Germany. Many of our so-called political leaders and statesmen are what we may designate, for the sake of convenience, as Lutherans—for our modern agnostics (e.g., Lord Morley) are Lutherans in what Nietzsche would call their "morality" and their outlook on life. On the other hand, all the great German politicians of the present day are philosophic and super-religious.

* * *

What a strange anomaly, then, has thereby arisen! Up to the present we have always considered Germany as a land where the inhabitants were lost in the clouds of abstract, idealistic, romantic thought, a land whence no "practical" proposal ever emanated. We prided ourselves on our worldly success, on our very inability to understand abstractions (which, however, are highly necessary at times), on our "practical" nature, on our hardness of head. The German was an amiable sort of clumsy animal whom we thoroughly practical people could not take seriously.

* * *

Then came the turn of the tide, quite unperceived. Nietzsche, perhaps, was its harbinger; and we could not understand how a German philosopher could curse his predecessors and assail all the romanticists with so many hard thwacks. We failed to observe that we ourselves were fast becoming—nay, had already become—the romanticists and idealists; and when a few papers caught the peace fever the contagion was rapidly spread. This idealism, which, when it was mooted in Germany half a century ago, met with our derision, or, when we did condescend to discuss it at all, with renewed appeals to our sturdy British common-sense, has now taken hold of many of our public men; and, most glaring anomaly of all, its common-sense refutation does not come from any of our Ministers who have escaped the disease, but from hard, matter-of-fact, common-sense Germany, whose philosophic, man-of-the-world Chancellor makes merry at our expense, what time the whole Continent is wondering what these mad Englishmen are coming to. I am curious to know how this contrast strikes those Englishmen who have preserved their sanity.

* * *

One feature of the peace agitation after Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg's speech raised my gorge. Many papers had the sense to see the justice of his remarks; but a few, notably among them, of course, being the "Daily News," could do no more than abuse the German Chancellor because he represented a "backward and unenlightened" country. This, mind you, in face of the fact that all our educationists, without distinction of party, have been endeavouring for years to point out to us the advantages of the German school system and the splendid intellectual development resulting therefrom! No; it is now too late in the day to apply this sense of the word unenlightened to Germany. Uncultured, indeed, she undoubtedly is in comparison with other countries; but few nations have a better supply than modern Germany of that common-sense which we once thought was peculiar to ourselves. Summing up the position both as philosopher and man of the world, Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg has pronounced that universal peace is an absurd delusion, and that arbitration treaties tend to bring about war rather than peace. With these conclusions no one who has given any consideration to the subject will disagree.

I shall have something to say next week regarding the impending trouble between France and Germany over the Moroccan question.

The Party System.

By Hilaire Belloc.

VI.

(*d*) If the candidate has sat in a previous Parliament, ask him upon what occasion he challenged the right of the Front Benches to monopolise the time of the House, what his votes have been upon particular occasions where the time of the House was concerned, and if these are known, how he can explain his action therein.

This is a most important point and merits a short digression. The time of the House is at present wholly at the disposal of the Front Benches. When the Government declares its time schedule, a sham protest is made on the part of the so-called "Opposition" Front Bench, but the two Front Benches together know that the system is to their mutual advantage, and will do everything to maintain it. Now the system could be broken to pieces if candidates would simply pledge themselves before election simply never to vote for the closure, save in special cases when in their considered judgment this measure was necessary; and never to vote for any Government proposal which permitted the Front Benches to take more than three out of the four and a half working parliamentary days at any period whatsoever of the session.

As to the first of these two points: the closure.

It is not practicable to ask a man never to vote for the closure: there are occasions when mere obstruction must be closured; but in the great majority of cases the closure is simply moved by a Front Bench man (it is not always, but is usually, accepted by the Speaker under such conditions), and, being moved, is followed by a tedious and farcical party vote. It is moved usually simply with the object of keeping control over the time of the House in the hands of the two Front Benches. If a man pledge himself only to vote for the closure when it has his considered support, he will of course try to shirk his pledge, but he cannot after that pledge give a mechanical vote in favour of it scores and scores of times at the bidding of the machine in the course of a session. He cannot, as the vast majority of "Ministerialists" do, *always* vote for the closure. He will be under a necessity to have something to show for his pledge when he comes to answer to his constituents for his action. Now the mere knowledge on the part of the Whips that any one of their innumerable votes for closure would not be a strict party vote, as a matter of course and on every occasion, would help to smash the machine. This is a practical point, and a point of the first importance. What would happen if you could get the electorate to understand this particular dodge on the part of the professionals would be at first that the Opposition Front Bench would support the Government Front Bench, and we should have the absurd sight of the nominal Opposition closuring themselves. But that would not last: it would be too manifestly ridiculous, and in a very short time such a wedge would have been driven into the present professional control over the time of the House as would shake the whole fabric of that control.

As to the second point, the allocation of not more than three out of the four and a half working days of any week whatsoever in the course of the session to the "official" business arranged between the two Front Benches:—

The professionals and their Press would, of course, pretend that the "business of the nation" could never be got through if the Government did not take as much as it liked of private members' time. That excuse is demonstrably hypocritical. The Government, by the use of the closure, can at present have things done as quickly as ever they like; and the taking of private members' time is prompted by no necessity but the desire of the Front Benches to continue the present system; and the present system is the negation of representative government. In this, as under the other heads, a man who has not sat in the previous Parliament must be asked to pledge himself to such conduct if he is returned.

(*e*) All candidates, whether sitting members or not, must be explicitly asked to pledge themselves to accept no post of emolument within the duration of the coming Parliament and for a space of time, say three years or five years, after its close, with the exception of salaried places in the Administration or which must by the Constitution be filled by people chosen from the ranks of Parliament.

There are two classes of men from whom such a pledge should be ruthlessly extracted: the first are the lawyers who go into the House with the avowed object of professional advantage; the second are the Labour candidates.

It is the direct policy of the Front Benches to destroy the democratic character of the Labour Party by the creation of salaried posts which they are prepared to offer in the future to members of that party; and a Labour candidate should be tied down by his constituents quite as much as by any rule of the party itself, not only to refuse emolument during the session of a Parliament, but, in case he loses his seat or retires, for some definite and lengthy space of time after its close.

This point is the capital point of all.

Rub it well in in the case of the barristers and the battle is won.

Get the electorate thoroughly awake to the fact that when they send a barrister to the House they are sending a man in whose profession a long tradition exists of professional advertisement through the service not of his constituents but of the Executive, and you will have withdrawn its foundation from the whole system. There is no career in which the Executive cannot advantage a man, but in the case of the legal profession it is an open and admitted practice. If we except the Irish members we have something like one-third of the House in this position. No dishonour attaches to it: the best and most honourable of men take it for granted; they have a right to take it for granted, for it is a national custom, and is not only tolerated but applauded by the wealthier classes. But it is a custom quite incompatible with true representation. If this custom could be destroyed, promotion would still be necessary; we should still need judges and county court judges and recorders, and we should still have plenty of Government work to be done by members of an honourable profession; but it would be the better for the administration of justice and infinitely the better for the cause of true representation if promotion for men at the Bar did not go hand in hand with the service in the House of Commons of professional politicians who have no claim whatever to control a free representative assembly. The professional politicians only exercise their power by their ability to enrich or impoverish, to enlarge by certain dignities or debar from such dignities, men whose sole business it should be to speak for the people in the National Council.

Finally, in those cases where a strong local or national demand exists for a particular policy, tie your man down not to "support" it—that to-day means nothing—but to vote against the Government if by a certain date it has not been presented to the House in its final form of a third reading.

These six points of action which I have set down seem to me immediate and practical. Could they be widely acted upon even by a few men in each constituency, the system, which is already tottering, would be brought to the ground.

It is easy to foresee what criticisms so direct a method will have to meet.

We shall be told that the formation of such committees in many places would be impossible. That is true, but in proportion as men recognise that quite a small committee could be as useful as a large one, in that proportion it would be more easy to form it.

We shall be told that only some candidates would consent to give such pledges, and that of these most would attempt to evade them. Quite true. But the mere starting of the fashion would count. A dozen members pledged, for instance, in the matter of the closure, or of private members' time; half a dozen hack lawyers pledged to take no salary from the Crown; three, nay two, men pledged to ask questions about the granting of honours, of salaries and of contracts, would work a revolution at Westminster. And note that the work is of the easiest sort. It requires no elaborate organisation: it is not " a national campaign "; one man, if he can get no fellows, can have a prodigious effect by going from meeting to meeting and asking *those questions which do not regard the conventional subjects of heckling but the internal working of the House of Commons and its relation with the Front Benches.*

That is the point. The electorate do not know what the House of Commons is: they are dissatisfied and they are puzzled. All they need is to be told the truth, and in no way can they be better told it than by the suggestion of such questions as these.

[THE END.]

P.S.—Since writing the above, three excellent examples of the way in which concrete points are continually afforded in Parliament for such a campaign have presented themselves.

First we have had the vote on the " Ballot Amendment"; secondly, the arrangement for the Archer-Shee debate; and, thirdly, the putting down in favour of the Government of two blocking motions.

As to the first of these, we have nothing to do with the goodness or badness of a system of ballot. What we have to do is to ask anyone of the huge official majority (when next any one of them may go down to address his constituents): (1) Why he objected to the ballot; he will answer that he objected to it because it reflected upon the independence of members of Parliament and their responsibility to their constituents. There is no other answer. When he has given this answer ask him: (2) Since he is so particular to maintain his independence and to represent his constituents freely, *on what occasions, then, since the meeting of the present Parliament has he voted otherwise than as the Party Whips ordered him to vote?*

In the matter of the Archer-Shee case. Here again it is not a question of the rights or wrongs of the discussion. Personally I think that large damages are due, and even those who disagree with me must admit that the banging of the Executive when it acts in an arbitrary way is always a good thing even when that banging has to be done with the sham aid of the so-called Opposition (who in Mr. McKenna's place would have acted exactly as Mr. McKenna did). We must not ask questions on that, but on *why the member interrogated allowed a Front Bench arrangement of the debate to be made over his head without protest.* The hours during which the responsible Minister for the Navy can have his actions examined by the House of Commons are very few indeed. It was openly arranged by the two Front Benches that one whole day should be occupied by this one point, and there was no protest made against it by anyone but Mr. O'Grady, to whom all honour is due for his courageous action.

The third point is simplicity itself. Two blocking motions have been put down. One, I believe, deals with the Swansea School case; the subject of the other I do not yet know. Let us find out who put down these blocking motions, and cross-examine each of the members thoroughly on their next public appearance; asking whether the action was spontaneous, whether they sincerely intended to debate the motions put down; if not, why they thus abused the forms of Parliament, and so forth. Remember that the Blocking Motion is one of a half-dozen strong weapons in the hands of the two Front Benches, and remember that in order to get rid of it all we have to do is to expose it for the mass of the electorate which as yet knows nothing of it.

The Untutored Fabian.

By J. M. Kennedy.

As there has recently been some correspondence in the NEW AGE regarding the Fabian Society, an article by Mr. Edward R. Pease entitled " The Fabian Society and its Work," which appeared in "T.P.'s Magazine " for March, calls for some comment. The article in question exudes a smug, blatant self-conceit which is indescribable; but this may be tolerated in view of the remarkable light thrown by Mr. Pease on the backward and reactionary nature of the Fabian intellect and the manner in which it works.

To begin with, take the name of the society. Says Mr. Pease: " We took our name from the old general Fabius Cunctator, who saved Rome from Hannibal by playing the waiting game. We said we would not act till we knew our business. . . . That was our motto, concocted for the occasion, and bad history at that, but it served its purpose, and the wise man makes his history as he makes his science and his metaphysics, to fit his needs. That philosophy is now called pragmatism, but the name was not current in those days."

Mr. Pease is loose in his definition of Pragmatism; but even if he were accurate it would not help him, for this " philosophy," as he calls it, has never yet received the approbation of thinkers. The main point here, however, as Mr. Pease admits twenty years after, is the bad history. The Fabius in question, let me recall, was known to his intimates as Verrucosus, from an unsightly wart on his upper lip, and he was also nicknamed Agnicula (the little pet lamb), in view of his inoffensive, effeminate, non-Roman manners. Now, apart from the little-known references to this Fabius in Polybius and Florus, he should have been well known to the organisers of the Fabian Society through the relatively lengthy accounts of him in Livy and Plutarch. But he was not; for the Fabians were then, as they apparently are now, as ignorant of history as they are of economics and philosophy. Bad history, indeed! By Hercules, they didn't know how bad it was!

The demonstrations of superiority proceed. Mr. Shaw joined the society and wrote " Tract No. 2," which contained, if we may judge from the extracts given, a certain amount of wit and no substance worth speaking of. The pamphlet, indeed, is the real Shaw. If we subtract from him what he got from Schopenhauer, Samuel Butler, and Nietzsche, there remains very little originality of thought, but simply an indefinite amount of wittiness. And wittiness, however brilliant, if unaccompanied with other qualities, is, to adapt Scott's famous definition of literature, a good walking-stick but a bad crutch. Since joining the Fabians in his early days, Shaw has become spoilt by wealth and popularity, and his latest efforts, as Mr. Randall has pointed out, make melancholy reading.

However, the Committee saw that " untempered, Shaw might have made a Fabian Society vastly entertaining, but politically futile." Eight months after Shaw, then, Mr. Sidney Webb joined, and his type of mind will be appreciated by modern psychologists—on the Continent, at any rate—when they read that " he promptly demanded facts." Vulgar facts. Such is Webb. Let us consider Webb.

It will be acknowledged that Mr. Webb has had influential assistance in endeavouring to get many of the recommendations in the Minority Report on the Poor Laws carried into effect, and yet, when any of his plans have been tested, they have usually proved to be failures. He has been combated by Mr. Belloc, and Mr. Belloc has beaten him hollow. Yet Mr. Webb, although he knows that his suggestions have been recognised as complete failures, attributes their failure to every cause but the right one. He cannot see that Mr. Belloc has killed them in a series of delightful speeches and articles—ironical, remorseless, witty. Any writer who can express sound knowledge cleverly, and who relies upon imagination and insight rather than upon mere " facts," can in the long run always get the better of anyone who " promptly demands facts." Let

us, therefore, leave Mr. Webb to meditate upon the fallacy of facts.

Our opinion of Fabian originality will be somewhat lowered when we read that Mr. Webb, shortly after he joined, "saw that we had got much Socialism already. . . . Socialism was coming through Acts passed by Liberal Governments and by Tory Governments"; but the worst enemy of the Society could not have written a more damning indictment than this:—

The Fabians had made one discovery in their early days, which was not perhaps new, but which none the less is still but rarely made use of. They did their thinking collectively. Whatever one wrote the others criticised severely, minutely, and whatever would not stand criticism had to go. Now, it is given to no one man to think sanely by himself on social problems; they are too complex, too elusive, to be grappled successfully even by the ablest. A group of friends, or even a rare partnership of man and wife, can do it, but the solitary thinker, never. He always runs to nonsense. All Fabian work in the early days was collective.

This procedure, let it be remembered, was adopted some years after the publication of even so common a book as Calderwood's "Mind and Brain"; and Mr. Pease's acknowledgment that it is still kept up shows that in the course of the last two decades the light of knowledge has not shone on the Fabians. The plan of thinking collectively recalls the story of the tall tree in California. It was so high that it took two men and a boy to see to the top of it, the second man beginning where the first left off and the boy doing the last lap. This confession, however, will serve to show us why Fabian ideas are so muddled, and why they naturally take in the English people, who are a muddle-headed race on the whole. Fabian ideas are as blurred as some of Sir Francis Galton's famous composite photographs, and for the same reasons. Too many thinkers spoil the thought.

The general outlook exposed in the paragraph I have quoted is sufficient to show the Fabian mentality. The Society is unable to appreciate superior minds or new ideas; but, like all sheep, its members feel safe when herding together and baa-ing in unison. Not for them the solitudes of thought where no human being has ever left his mark before! Not for them the rambles on the intellectual heights, inaccessible to lesser men, indulged in by Moses, for instance, or Buddha, or Mohammed, or Nietzsche. One significant characteristic of all original thinkers has ever been their liking for solitude and high hills, in the purely physical sense of the term.

Who, however, would seek originality among the Fabians? Look at the photographs that accompany the article I have mentioned. Shaw, Webb, Mrs. Webb, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, Joseph Fels, Will Crooks, G. Lansbury, M.P. ("a prominent church and social worker"!), Herbert Trench, and so-forth—all of them men and women who have never contributed a single original constructive thought of any consequence, or, indeed, any original thoughts at all, to any science, art, or social movement. No; from the statements given by Mr. Pease in this account of the Fabian Society, it is clear that it was founded by a few perky, intellectual braggarts, who now try to laugh away their ignorance by explaining that a man should make his own history and science. It is clear, too, that the Society has always attracted to its ranks those who well deserve the name of cranks and intellectual snobs and spiritual materialists on the make. Far from having aided the development of English thought within the last twenty years, the Fabians have, all unconsciously, no doubt, greatly retarded it.

It is true, as Macaulay pointed out long ago in a somewhat different connection, that blockheads can never prevent true thinkers from reaching their goal; but they may gravely hinder them, just as weeds prevent the growth of flowers. No mercy, therefore, should be shown to these intellectual quack doctors, whose analogy with the average quack is shown in the exaggeration of their statements, e.g., "Sidney Webb, whose works, written with his wife, on Trade Unionism, on Local Government, on Poor Law, are already classics which have carried his name and fame to every quarter of the globe. . . ." I can assure the Fabians most solemnly that there are several quarters of the globe where Mr. Webb's books are not known, and that in several quarters where they are known they are treated with scant respect.

A humorous feature of the article which should not be overlooked—though its humour is probably unconscious—is the photograph of Mr. Wells, with the announcement: "The famous novelist and writer, until recently a Fabian, now one of the Society's severest critics." As the portraits are supposed to be those of famous Fabians, this particular one conveys the impression we might have if we went into the Vatican and saw a painting of Martin Luther, with a Latin inscription, which, translated, might read: "The well-known monk and reformer, early in life a member of the Church of Rome, but later on one of its severest critics."

As a final word, I may recall that the waiting game played by Fabius was not at all to the taste of the Romans, so they recalled him and appointed Marcus Minucius Rufus in his stead (v. Livy).

A Symposium on the Representation of Shakespeare.

Conducted by Huntly Carter.

THE following questions having a relation to the appropriate decoration of Shakespeare's plays have been put to representative Shakespeareans in this country and abroad:—

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, that 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 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?*

AMERICA.

Mr. JOHN CORBIN, New York.

1. His stage was the most artistic instrument for presenting poetic drama which the world has ever produced, and he used it to the utmost of his capabilities. It was also, no doubt, largely his invention.

2. Sometimes modern scenery can be used without detriment, and it is pleasing to the public. When this is the case there is no objection to using it. Texts may be abbreviated in accordance with an enlightened commonsense. Both are questions of practical æsthetics.

3. The utmost attention should, of course, be given to poetic reading. But the plays have values which can only be realised by acting and stage-management.

4. Whatever he might have done, he actually wrote for the old stage. To slash and transpose his text to make way for "elaborate" setting is an artistic crime.

5. I have discussed this intricate and difficult question at length in the "Atlantic Monthly" for March, 1906, and in the New Theatre production of "The Winter's Tale" gave a practical illustration. It was a great, popular and artistic success.

Mr. RICHARD G. MOULTON, Chicago.

The questions are framed on a critical basis which I do not accept. They all involve the intention of Shakespeare. Now, I hold that in the case of poetry, that is, creative fiction of all kinds, the question for criticism is not the intention of the poet, but the intention of the poem. This is sometimes expressed in the critical maxim: "A poet does not

mean: he makes." Criticism examines only what he has made, created; in this case, the plays. Whatever is reasonably involved in the structure and spirit of the play is within the "intention" of the poem. What the man Shakespeare intended is a biographical question, and is outside poetic criticism.

To those who accept this position, your questions cease to have point. It is obvious that the plays assume elaborate details of persons and places: any effort of the most progressive stage art that assists the perception of these details is legitimate and desirable. Of course this would not cover the accentuation of scenic details that were designed for mere show, or for any purpose other than the interpretation of the scenes as they stand in the text.

The playing of Shakespeare's dramas without scenery is legitimate in the way that an engraving of an oil picture is legitimate. It does not profess to display the actual drama, but that drama in a limited medium. I enjoy such exhibitions, as I enjoy engravings or etchings of oil paintings or cathedrals.

The utmost attention to the spoken word is a necessity equally when the play has full scenery, and when it has not.

The playing a Shakespearean drama exactly as it was played in the poet's time is a problem of archæology, not of dramatic literature.

Professor F. E. Schelling, Pennsylvania University.

1. I believe that Shakespeare was willing in his own time to call in all the decorative aids and effects of costume and properties which were known to his time. The proof of this is found in his introduction of masques after these became features of the entertainments at court, and in his willingness in general to avail himself of any innovation that might tell dramatically. I do not believe that Shakespeare wrote for an audience any more imaginative than ours.

2. I see no reason why Shakespeare should be played without scenery except in so far as the occasional representation of his plays in this manner is of historic and, therefore, educational interest. As regards to playing Shakespeare unabridged, while I think that he is often cut in modern times, greatly to the disadvantage of the play, I feel sure that the practice of his own time was to cut, change, abridge and interpolate, and therefore I see no reason why we should not adapt him in a becoming spirit of reverence to the needs of our present time.

3. I do most certainly believe that much of the beauty of Shakespeare resides in the spoken word, and I regard the present carelessness in matters elocutionary, especially the habitual delivery of blank verse as if it were prose, as barbarous and deplorable in the extreme. I do not mean by this that Shakespeare should be delivered bombastically or affectedly, but I have seen the beauty of too many a passage spoiled on our modern stage to make it possible for me to minimise the importance of delivery.

4. It seems to me important to preserve in the presentation of Shakespeare a happy balance between scenery, costume, and display on the one hand—all of them illustrative necessities—and the higher graces of the histrionic art. Much depends upon a judicious choice in the personality of actors and actresses, in careful coaching, not only in delivery, but in stage business, and all those many things that go to make up the art of acting. I should like to see all these things made more of. In conclusion, I would say that it seems to me that what we want more than an attempt to reproduce conditions which, however, are only barely known to us, is a careful study of these plays in all their varying aspects to the end that we produce upon the stage an entertainment made up as Shakespeare would have had it of an equal regard for the characters, their impersonation, their acting, elocution and setting. Shakespeare is like any other great classic—he must be translated into the terms of each age. One of the features of his greatness consists in the circumstance that he requires less translation than almost any other author.

DENMARK.

Professor George Brandes, Copenhagen.

1. Shakespeare wrote for the environment of his day, and he always had the scene before his eyes. Not one of his plays was designed for reading. The prologue to "Henry V." proves clearly that he was hampered by the poverty of his means, the poverty of the scene, and the small number of supernumeraries. One is therefore permitted to conclude that he would willingly have had decorations otherwise developed. He has even done so, as in "The Tempest."

2. No. The scenery of our day should be used. The pieces should be played as Shakespeare saw them with his mind's eye: Venice in all its glory; the Rialto as it was. Naturally, it is best not to abridge the plays. Only our texts are very bad; as the poet has never read the proofs of his works we are never sure of having the texts authentic. The text, then, is not sacred. And if the representation lasts too long, and bores the audience, it is permissible to abridge it, naturally, with every care and good taste.

3. No attention can be too great when it is a question of rendering poetry.

4. I approve of the efforts of Professor Max Reinhardt. He goes too far if he drowns the action in the scenery, but his efforts to render this action visible is praiseworthy. It goes without saying it would be better to play Shakespeare admirably in a barn, than to play it badly with twenty changes of scenery. But the decorations do not limit the scope of the author or actor. The theatre director cannot create genius, but he can do his utmost to prove his admiration for the poet and his work by employing every means of the painter-decorator, the technician and of the machinist, to illustrate it. I am not sure that the public of Shakespeare's day had more imagination than the public of to-day. The public is stupid, and it always has been.

ENGLAND.

Mr. Clement Shorter, Editor "The Sphere."

1. With regard to Shakspere's plays, I hold very strongly the opinion that the audience for which these plays were written was essentially an imaginative one, not having suffered the mental debilitation that arises from the production of books and newspapers, and that the audience was quite well able to do without scenic aids. I do not believe for a moment that Shakspere contemplated the decoration of his plays that has obtained during the past century.

2. Nevertheless, I do not for a moment think that Shakspere's plays should be performed without scenery and unabridged, although efforts I have seen in this direction have been entirely successful and possessed of an infinite charm. Many of these plays are so full of beauties that it is well that they should be revealed to our age in the curtailed form that is now so common, rather than that they should not be revealed at all. It is well, also, that the public should be gratified by the adventitious aid that beautiful scenery offers. To condemn the scenic display in Shakspere's plays is also to condemn the illustration of news in the pictorial journals. There are those who would do both, but I can scarcely be expected to be amongst the number. Every manager of a theatre must act according to his own methods. The beautiful work that has been done by Sir Henry Irving and Sir Herbert Tree in the presentation of Shakspere's plays seems to me to be work deserving of the highest honour. For half a century before Sir Henry Irving produced Shakspere's plays it was always said that the poet "spelt bankruptcy." Certainly several of the great actors of the past generation, including Samuel Phelps, lost a great deal of money in playing Shakspere's works. That was a form of Quixotism which can hardly be expected to continue indefinitely.

3. So much do I believe that the beauty of Shakspere resides in the spoken word that I consider the two dramatic thrills of my life were an early appearance of Miss Ellen Terry as Portia, and one of Mr. Forbes Robertson a decade later.

4. This question I have practically answered already. I do not think that there is any evidence that Shakspere wrote for the magnificent scenic aids of the present day, or ever contemplated such a thing. The theatre of his day we know did not allow of it, but with the present-day audience he would certainly have been only too glad of the co-operation of the scene-painter. I find nothing to complain of in the present tendency for what you call overloading Shakspere with scenery, nor do I make any complaint of the extensive cuts. Shakspere wrote in an age of comparative leisure. Had he lived to-day he would have adapted himself to a quite other world.

5. I consider that to spell the name "Shakespeare," as is so frequently done, is absolutely unscientific. It should be "Shakespere."

FRANCE.

Professor A. Feuillerat, Rennes University.

It is, I think, undeniable that Shakespeare knew the value of scenic aids, for whenever his plays were performed at court they were amply provided with furnishings, or to quote the very words used by the officers of the Revels, they were "set forthe with apte howses of paynted canvas and properties incident suche as might most lyvely expresse the effect of the histories plaied." For more details on this point I may be allowed to refer the reader to a little book of mine published last year: "Le Bureau des Menus-Plaisirs et les Divertissements à la cour d'Elizabeth, Louvain."

To play Shakespeare with appropriate decoration is not, therefore, contrary to the author's intentions. And this being once admitted, I do not see why we should not be justified in lending the spoken word the aid of the richest scenery that can be found. Had Shakespeare been able to take advantage of the progress made in modern times by the theatrical art he would certainly have done so.

But I consider it a mistake to stage Shakespeare's plays according to the modern method. The practice of dropping a curtain and having long intermissions while the scenes are being shifted fits plays which are strictly divided into acts, and in which each act, ending with a climax, is a whole in itself; but such a practice is destructive of one of the most striking and most essential qualities of a Shakespearean play, that is, the rapidity and the continuity of the development of the action.

But then how is a Shakespearean play to be staged? There is, I think, a way of reconciling our modern taste for sumptuous scenery with the necessity of performing the plays without any pause, and, above all, without "cuts." We should revert to the mediæval method, which consisted in placing on the stage, at the beginning of the play, all the "houses" or properties which were necessary in the course of the performance. That such an arrangement is possible on a modern stage has been shown by the production of "Coriolanus" and of "Romeo and Juliet" at the Odéon in Paris; for these two plays were staged according to a method which is simply an adaptation of the mediæval system just mentioned.

I do believe that part of the beauty of Shakespeare resides in the spoken word, and that the utmost attention should be given to the delivery of Shakespearean verse.

IRELAND.

The Hon. A. S. G. Canning.

The only questions I can answer are Nos. 2 and 5. I would think that Shakespeare's works should be played with suitable scenery, and, as a rule, unabridged, except in the few cases where expressions are termed now indecent or unbecoming, but which were not thought so at his period.

In answer to question 5, I think it remarkable that where he brings in so many London people, he does not misplace the letter "h"—so usual even to this day among London people.

POLAND.

Professor Wilhelm Creizenach, Cracow University.

There can be no doubt that Shakespeare, like the other dramatic poets of his time, regarded it as right and praiseworthy that the impression of dramatic art should be accompanied and heightened by the other forms of art. It is well-known that, like his fellow workers, he laid great stress upon splendour of costume and setting, that musical accompaniment played a considerable part in his production, and that, in "Romeo and Juliet" or the "Winter's Tale," for example, he satisfied the public desire for the dances, although the sterner Ben Jonson denounced this concupiscence of dances as a great abuse of the stage. In the same way if modern methods of decoration had been at his command, he would certainly have used and valued them. Yet he knew how to make good the deficiency in magnificent manner by the description of scenery which appears in his verse. In "Titus Andronicus" he places us with magical power in the loneliness of the forest, where the Empress met her lover Aaron. In "Henry IV." we are transported to the morning landscape before the decisive battle of Shrewsbury, in "Romeo" to the moonlit garden of Capulet, and, by way of contrast, immediately after to the quiet convent garden, where Father Lorenzo gathers flowers and vegetables at sunrise.

A modern manager cannot, of course, demand from his audience the shifting movement of imagination, as Shakespeare could from his, but I believe it was not Shakespeare's wish to distract the attention of the hearer from the appreciation of the words by too elaborate decoration. It must be added, however, that Shakespeare, who thought little of decoration, changed the scene of action very often. I remember distinctly one production of "Romeo" where the market-place of Verona was represented with admirable art, and yet when the spectators after their first joyful astonishment at the beautiful decoration wished to turn their attention again to the spoken word, the scene, which had lasted but two minutes, was already over. This example leads me to another abuse connected with the elaborate stage decoration of modern times, namely, the effort to achieve local colour and archæological exactitude in scenery. When, for example, it is mentioned in "Julius Cæsar" that the clock of the Capitol strikes the hour, why should it be necessary for the modern manager, with the assistance of an expert, to reconstruct the Capitol in the theatre with the utmost possible realism?

It is, therefore, my opinion that it will be impossible to re-accustom the modern audience to the absence of decoration of the Elizabethan theatre, but that the art of decoration should encroach as little as possible upon the representation. The desire to see (θεᾶσθαι) from which the theatre has its name, can be gratified even to-day by means similar to those in use in Shakespeare's time.

"Modern Dramatists."

By Charles Charrington.

II.

Readers of the New Age may have noticed that the criticism of Ashley Dukes' book, like Hudibras and

> Th' adventures of the bear and fidelle
> Were sung, but broke off in the middle.

This was a genuine shortcoming, and not intended as a hint to writers of plays to avoid "the end," though, by the way, the lines here quoted doubtless satirised attempts to break down the Aristotelean canon: but the weak flutterings of post-Shakespearean seventeenth drama against the cage of convention were soon stilled and "the end" is yet with us. As a matter of fact the last bit of the review reached the printer too late for insertion, and it is only the courtesy of the editor and the extreme importance of the subject, certainly not that of the writer, or even that of the book's writer, admirably as he has done his work, which permit the end of this unusually long article to see the light in a detached state. Here it assumes a somewhat fantastic air, like the tail of a painted lion the present writer once saw at a fair which got separated from the rest of the animal and wagged expressively by itself.

Ashley Dukes is certainly fortunate in having written a book which should live and grow with its subject, one of the greatest an author could undertake. In these days when the ideas of "finalism" and "perfectibility" have been exploded, real books will have to be written with more and more elasticity. It rests with the young and living writer to make his work great enough to continue its secular progress in edition after edition after he has made sure of a majority, if he will but go deep enough. In suggesting some faults and pointing out the possibility of strengthening and deepening the scope and meaning of this gallant venture, the writer has had this in mind. And if he has seemed to dwell on the past unduly, as he is now perhaps looking to a too distant future, it is because he believes that real progress in any human activity is achieved not only by mounting the heights and attempting to pierce the horizon in front of us, but also by going back beyond the highest peaks of recorded individual achievement. These sometimes conceal the gradual evolution which has produced them. In the history of the drama there has been the great mountainous country of Shakespearean drama and that of the Greek dramatists. A third great explosion of nature may be found in the drama of Ibsen. He, like Shakespeare, has been but slightly understood by his contemporaries and immediate successors. After the Germans explained Shakespeare to us he soon grew into an idol. The same fate may await Ibsen. Though Ashley Dukes is not a hero worshipper—indeed he must really make a further acquaintance with Ibsen—he has half-consciously taken him as a model. His vaunted "standard" is based mainly on Ibsen's plays. Now, to progress he must go back and yet further back again beyond the mountain peaks. In so comparatively surface a matter as painting the nineteenth-century critics led us past the finished products of the sixteenth century to the growing art of the fifteenth. In drama, which has been persecuted and hindered in every direction in proportion to its dynamic possibilities, we must go back much further in order to make genuine progress. We have been told often enough lately that a new drama needs a new philosophy. In a sense a new drama *is* a new philosophy. Each connotes the other where they do not actually coincide. It was the dramas of Plato that widened into dialogue the individual opinions of the Sophists; the dialectic of Aristotle which led the way to the dualistic disputations of the schoolmen

* "Modern Dramatists." By Ashley Dukes. (Palmer. 5s. net.)

which should have become drama. Ever since the seventeenth century, when grammar was substituted for logic, the word for the thought, writing for speech, printing for writing, the symbol of a symbol of a symbol for reality, mankind has *felt* this need for going back—back past Greek drama proper—even past the origin of the dualistic inventions of the decadence. Men have often wondered why so little of the recorded wisdom of earlier times has been preserved, and the most ignoble theories of the destruction of earlier work through jealousy have been invented. But the truth is there was nothing to destroy. Even Socrates, Nietzsche's first great decadent, did not condescend to write down his wisdom, to trust it to the symbols of symbols—written words. And the mighty Dramatic Rhapsodists who inspired, and were inspired by, the most beautiful development of human nature the world has ever seen, would have thought the men of our times who need such *memoria technicha* as books, dunces and shirkers, contemptible as the boy who writes the answer to the hoped-for question of the examiner on his shirt-cuff. They carried the wisdom of the world in themselves and *acted* it. Take, for instance, the man who has come down to the schoolboy's knowledge as the weeping philosopher, and who has been called the obscure—his obscurity consisting in our not having grown into the knowledge of him—the man from whom Hegel caught and claimed to have developed the few fragments that happened to have been reported. It is to the world which Heracleitus knew that the modern man returns, and drama reflects this tendency, a tendency to transcend logical limitation and individualistic idea, to study the forces which link man to mankind and mankind to the rest of the universe through successive stages of being. This tendency each great modern dramatist seeks to express consciously or unconsciously after his kind. And it is with these forward efforts of human genius that Ashley Dukes deals, and deals on the whole not unworthily. Thanks for the book.

The Last Gasp.

By Alfred E. Randall.

In his third preface, Mr. Shaw not only "shows us up"; but also shows, perhaps unconsciously, that his estimate of the value of exposure is greatly exaggerated. "Since Dickens's day," he says, "the exposures effected by Socialists have so shattered the self-satisfaction of modern commercial civilisation that it is no longer difficult to convince our governments that something must be done, even to the extent of attempts at a reconstruction of civilisation on a thoroughly uncommercial basis." If this means anything at all, it means that exposure is powerful for the purpose of reform. But the facts belie the boast. Even in this matter of the Censorship of Plays, Mr. Shaw's own confession proves him to be not a reformer but the showman of the evils of civilisation. Why did the Government appoint a committee to enquire into the working of the Censorship? Let Mr. Shaw tell us.

Many simple souls believed that it was because certain severely virtuous plays by Ibsen, by M. Brieux, by Mr. Granville Barker, and by me, were suppressed by the censorship, whilst plays of a scandalous character were licensed without demur. No doubt this influenced public opinion; but those who could imagine that it could influence British Governments little know how remote from public opinion and how full of their own family and party affairs British Governments, both Liberal and Unionist, still are. The censorship scandal had existed for years without any Parliamentary action being taken in the matter, and might have existed for as many more had it not happened in 1906 that Mr. Robert Vernon Harcourt entered Parliament as a member of the Liberal Party, of which his father had been one of the leaders during the Gladstone era. Mr. Harcourt was thus a young man marked out for office both by his parentage and his unquestionable social position as one of the governing class. Also, and this was much less usual, he was brilliantly clever, and was the author of a couple of plays of remarkable promise. Mr. Harcourt informed his leaders that he was going to take up the subject of the censorship. The leaders, recognising his hereditary right to a parliamentary canter as a prelude to his public career, and finding that all the clever people seemed to be agreed that the censorship was an anti-Liberal institution and an abominable nuisance to boot, indulged him by appointing a select Committee of both Houses to investigate the subject.

If I remember rightly, Mr. Shaw exposed this scandal of the censorship in the preface to his first volume of plays; with what result the foregoing passage proves. The "exposure effected by the Socialists" was not the cause of the enquiry, and it certainly did not convince the Government that something must be done. After quoting the recommendations of the Committee, Mr. Shaw says: "And so on, and so forth. The thing is to be done; and it is not to be done. Everything is to be changed and nothing is to be changed. The problem is to be faced and the solution to be shirked. And the word of Dickens is to be justified." In the face of this proof of the utter ineffectiveness of exposure for the practical purposes of reform, Mr. Shaw writes another 73 pages to "show up" the Committee and the Censorship; and the postscript to this preface shows to what undesirable results the "shattering of self-satisfaction" leads. I quote the whole passage:

Since the above was written, the Lord Chamberlain has made an attempt to evade his responsibility, and perhaps to postpone his doom by appointing an advisory committee, unknown to the law, on which he will presumably throw any odium that may attach to refusals of licences in the future. This strange and lawless body will hardly re-assure our moralists, who object much more to the plays he licenses than to those he suppresses, and are therefore unmoved by his plea that his refusals are few and far between. It consists of two eminent actors (one retired), an Oxford professor of literature, and two eminent barristers. As their assembly is neither created by statute nor sanctioned by custom, it is difficult to know what to call it until it advises the Lord Chamberlain to deprive some author of his means of livelihood, when it will, I presume, become a conspiracy, and be indictable accordingly; unless, indeed, it can persuade the Courts to recognise it as a new Estate of the Realm, created by the Lord Chamberlain. This constitutional position is so questionable that I strongly advise the members to resign promptly before the Lord Chamberlain gets them into trouble.

It would have been interesting if Mr. Shaw had shown us how the Lord Chamberlain evaded his responsibility by appointing an advisory committee; and how that committee could be indicted for the acts of the Lord Chamberlain. It is clear that the legal position of the Lord Chamberlain as the licenser of plays is exactly what it was before; and whether his adviser be Mr. Redford or this committee, he is alone responsible for his acts, and authors have no redress. Far from the Lord Chamberlain getting it into trouble, the committee is relieved from responsibility by his legal position; and Mr. Shaw has simply added a paragraph to his exposure. Our last state is worse than our first. We have escaped from the mediocrity of one to the mediocrity of many, in Disraeli's phrase: instead of one censor, we have five.

It is clear that evils do not perish by exposure in England: the climate is too mild. Charles the Second said, "it invited men abroad more days in the year and more hours in the day than that of another country." In such a climate, the veriest bantling of an abuse would not die from exposure; and though Mr. Shaw's babes need constant attention, yet they are becoming acclimatised as a consequence of his perennial care. In the course of the last ten years I have read most of Mr. Shaw's books; and in this last volume I find him airing all his old grievances, which have flourished and waxed fat with the passing of the years. They seem to have become quite English in the interval. Mr. Shaw no longer talks of them with that rancorous Irish wit that made his earlier utterances interesting; he is as deadly dull as a Nonconformist preacher. Usually in a tautological manner, he still uses the adjectives "moral" and "immoral"; words that most educated Englishmen years ago determined to ignore. But it is his test of success that shows most clearly how English Mr. Shaw has become. Speaking of the performance in Ireland of "The Shewing-up of Blanco

Posnet," he says: "The performance exhausted the possibilities of success, and provoked no murmur, though it inspired several approving sermons." Thus is Mr. Shaw sanctified: the showman has received the benefit of clergy, and will expire the odour of sanctity with his last breath.

And the reform? That is postponed *sine die*. In the preface to "Getting Married," Mr. Shaw says: "Christianity never got any grip of the world until it virtually reduced its claims on the ordinary citizen's attention to a couple of hours every seventh day, and let him alone on week-days." In other words, Christianity became an instrument when it ceased to be the solvent of civilisation: its success began with its failure, and civilisation increased as Christianity declined. Now that Mr. Shaw has exhausted the possibilities of exposure, he may begin to reform the world. If the necessary condition of his success resembles that of Christianity, the ordinary citizen will not be displeased. Mr. Shaw may write plays when he ceases to write prefaces.

Synge and Others.

By Herbert Hughes.

The Works of John M. Synge. In four volumes. (Maunsel. 24s. net.)

The Kiltartan Wonder Book. By Lady Gregory. (Maunsel. 3s. 6d. net.)

Celtic Wonder Tales. By Ella Young. (Maunsel. 3s. 6d. net.)

The place of John Millington Synge in the literary history of Ireland is distinguished and unique. He was the first of the moderns to bring passion back into Irish literature. He was intellectually aloof from any literary movement, or from any sentiment dominating any literary movement and especially the so-called "movement" of his own country. His style was emphatically his own, and it might almost be said that he invented a language; he certainly discovered one. He was generally understood to have possessed an immense knowledge of the Irish peasant; that may have been so, but his observation was so peculiar to himself that its translation into literary form often brought him more abuse than appreciation. The issue of the first collected edition of his works, however, proclaims his high rank as an artist. One must, nevertheless, dispute the suggestion that he always succeeded in reproducing the more intimate qualities of the people he observed and knew; indeed one is disposed to think that he never really knew the people intimately. To-day, on Aran, they talk of him, if you ask, as the "strange, silent man" whom no one knew. He was essentially the literary spectator of these people's lives, and he recorded not always what was there, but what his original and startling genius imagined to be there. In "The Aran Islands" he wrote beautifully about them. In that book, and the one about Wicklow and West Kerry, his prose was always simple, resembling a little the style of Mr. Hudson, with whom he shared the gift of painting in carefully-chosen but unaffected words some trivial incident, or the scene of some incident, in such a way that the memory of it haunts one for many days. He seemed to care little how his phrases sounded, unlike one or two fastidious essayists of our period, and for this reason his prose lacks music and conscious rhythm; he was never exquisite, but his epithet was always the right one and he never belaboured it out of all meaning. The volume in which he wrote his impressions of Wicklow and West Kerry is the most sympathetic of the four. There is little trace here of the cynic, the artist of grotesques, which Synge was; he is less the callous onlooker in these essays than the man interested and moved by the tragedy of life, and when he laughs at its farce it is a suspicion less unkindly.

One thing he possessed—which is noticeable in almost everything he wrote—and that was a taste for the disreputable. We will not say that it is unnecessary, or that it disfigures his books—the individual reader may or may not feel offended by allusions such as may be found here and there in his plays, in some of his verse, or (to take an example) by the incident of the drunken flower-seller in his sketch of a Wicklow fair—but it certainly pulls one up unexpectedly. That particular Wicklow fair would have been incomplete without the drunken scene, and when Synge puts it in we have no right to be annoyed. His impatience with mere refinement was extreme, as many speeches in his plays show. It is highly marked in the "Tinkers' Wedding," which is little more or less than a pamphlet of revolt. It is by way of being a travesty, partly based, it is said, on fact; but a travesty without humour or wit or tolerably good sarcasm is a poor thing, and "The Tinkers' Wedding" hardly escapes failure.

The best plays are certainly "Riders to the Sea" and "The Playboy of the Western World." The former is closer to life than anything he ever wrote. Technically it may have several minor faults, but the drama has a certain Greek dignity, and the language is simple, yet extraordinarily vivid and poignant. The "Playboy" is undoubtedly his masterpiece. It should, however, be clearly understood by English readers that no Irish peasant talks as Synge's peasants talk in this play, and that no set of Irish peasants would behave like Synge's set of Irish peasants. But what matter? They talk beautifully, they behave fantastically—that is all. (I do not say that any one of Synge's phrases can be accounted unlikely. Quite the contrary. Synge kept a notebook. His *apologia* will be found in the fine preface to the play.) I have never quite understood why there was such a hullabaloo in Dublin at the first performance. The theatre was a pandemonium. Even in London at the Queen Street Theatre nearly the whole of the last act was inaudible for the hissing, which had maintained a fine crescendo from the fall of the first curtain. Who on earth would take the "Playboy" as a criticism of Irish life, and why? Synge himself suffered a good deal from his friends at that time, some of whom were indiscreet enough to try explaining the play, and only succeeded in being very uncomfortable.

The language in the play is superb. It is a mosaic of poetry. There are phrases in it that could only have been uttered in an ecstacy of imagination. For sheer language the love scene in the third act is surely the finest thing in our modern drama. As played by W. G. Fay and Marie O'Neill there was no unseemly "passion," no rhetoric, no attitudinising, no tomfoolery of that sort. All that was necessary was expressed by the low, beautifully-toned voices of the players. Synge did not feel compelled to arrange a tableau on the lines of a certain popular picture entitled "Vertige." This was Synge's *vertige*:

Christy: . . . And when the airs is warming in four months or five, it's then yourself and me should be pacing Neifin in the dews of night, the time sweet smells do be rising, and you'd see a little, shiny new moon, maybe, sinking on the hills.

Pegeen: And it's that kind of a poacher's love you'd make, Christy Mahon, on the side of Neifin, when the night is down?

Christy: It's little you'll think if my love's a poacher's, or an earl's itself, when you'll feel my two hands stretched around you, and I squeezing kisses on your puckered lips, till I'd feel a kind of pity for the Lord God is all ages sitting lonesome in His golden chair.

Pegeen: That'll be right fun, Christy Mahon, and any girl would walk her heart out before she'd meet a young man was your like for eloquence, or talk, at all.

Christy (encouraged): Let you wait, to hear me talking, till we're astray in Erris, when Good Friday's by, drinking a sup from a well, and making mighty kisses with our wetted mouths, or gaming in a gap of sunshine, with yourself stretched back unto your necklace, in the flowers of the earth.

Pegeen (in a low voice, moved by his tone): I'd be nice so, is it?

Christy (with rapture): If the mitred bishops seen you that time, they'd be the like of the holy prophets, I'm thinking, do be straining the bars of Paradise to lay eyes on the Lady Helen of Troy, and she abroad, pacing back and forward, with a nosegay in her golden shawl.

One is fascinated by such unusual richness of imagery. And then the fascination ceases. The stories, or incidents, upon which Synge built his plays are always interesting or novel or amusing; but it can-

not be said truthfully that any one of his characters is quite alive. Maire, in "Riders to the Sea" comes fairly near to that desired condition, but if, instead of the speeches written for her by the author, she were to repeat softly some fragments of a simple multiplication table with her head bowed between her knees she would remain equally effective. The Playboy himself, truculent and sly and boastful and something of a low-comedian, is interesting mainly because the language he speaks is impossibly quaint or, as in the love scene, wildly poetical. In the hands of a more accomplished, a greater dramatist, than Synge, such a character as Christy Mahon in similar circumstances would have become immortal; even the exceedingly fine acting of William Fay, with whom the part will for a long time be associated, could not bring the character over to this side of the footlights.

John Synge, after all, was a story-teller rather than a dramatist, and a poet before either. Of actual verse he apparently wrote very little, but what has been published is characteristic. It is frequently harsh and sinister, even morbid. Of the twenty-two original poems exactly half deal in one way or another with death, mostly in its unpleasant aspect of bodily decay. This is entitled "To the Oaks of Glencree":

My arms are round you, and I lean
  Against you, while the lark
Sings over us, and golden lights, and green
  Shadows are on your bark.

There'll come a season when you'll stretch
  Black boards to cover me:
Then in Mount Jerome I will lie, poor wretch,
  With worms eternally.

Although Synge's humour could be at times boisterous enough, there can be no doubt that for some years before he died his work was conditioned to some extent by the great physical suffering he endured and the consciousness that his death would be an early one. This painful fact is made clear by a glance at these verses. Only one or two show any sign of serenity at all. This, for instance:

Still south I went, and west and south again,
  Through Wicklow from the morning till the night,
And far from cities and the sights of men,
  Lived with the sunshine and the moon's delight.

I knew the stars, the flowers, and the birds,
  The grey and wintry sides of many glens,
And did but half remember human words,
  In converse with the mountains, moors, and fens.

John Synge's contempt of criticism and his unhallowed defiance of most things in this world are expressed in the following effective curse, written "to a sister of an enemy of the author's who disapproved of the 'Playboy'"; it is a little indelicate, perhaps, but one may be forgiven for quoting it once:

Lord, confound this surly sister,
Blight her brow with blotch and blister,
Cramp her larynx, lung, and liver,
In her guts a galling give her.

Let her live to earn her dinners
In Mountjoy with seedy sinners:
Lord, this judgment quickly bring,
And I'm your servant, J. M. Synge.

* * *

Probably not six members of the Irish Parliamentary Party will ever read Lady Gregory's "Kiltartan Wonder Book." Yet no blue-book that was ever issued concerns them more. I know of no other book of Irish folk-tales so close to actual language of the fireside. There is the smell of peat-smoke in every phrase; but it is impossible to avoid the aroma of the editorial note-book occasionally mingled with it. Lady Gregory knows the country people of Western Ireland as well as any other living writer, but she does not quite escape self-consciousness in writing down their precious stories. Her transformation of dialect and pronunciation into very simple and readable English is good, and the stories are excellent, all of them. Anyone accustomed to listen to folk-tales must be aware of some omissions, and while it may be admitted that the omissions in themselves are not always regrettable, yet they have the unhappy effect of making the narratives appear a little insincere sometimes. Nevertheless, Lady Gregory has carried out her task with skill, and obviously her little book is very much above the average of its class; it is nearly a model of what a folk-tale book, not ostensibly scientific, should be. The illustrations do not seem to have much justification.

* * *

If Miss Ella Young had done without illustrations and persuaded somebody to design a less "national" cover for her book, one might praise her "Celtic Wonder Tales" without reserve. It is not possible to read her book without feeling that much labour has been put into it, and that the labour has been joyous and carried through with tremendous love. No one, in this age of Celtic scholars and experts, understands the mythology of Ireland better than Miss Young. Her knowledge is more than literal; it is above and beyond mere scholarship. As one reads one is pleased to find that there is no suspicion anywhere of cant about the "wonder" of these tales, or any of the usual sentimental nonsense accompanying modern versions of epics or old stories of this order. Miss Young gives the stories for what they are worth in language that is simple and charming. Her prose has a splendid rhythm—the sort of rhythm novelists have to avoid—and it is so full of music that one must read it aloud. She has avoided using the now familiar "Kiltartan" dialect in her narratives. This is a triumphant achievement. Synge's rendering of fragments of Villon, and Petrarch's "Laura," and other items into "Kiltartan" is clever and amusing for the moment, but it presently becomes insufferable. In his "Deirdre of the Sorrows," likewise, he employed a similar speech and, as I think, with little success. It is a local manner of speech indelibly associated in one's mind with the kitchen and the stables, and an aristocratic tragedy like "Deirdre" sounds foolish and banal in the language of cooks and grooms. After a surfeit of "Kiltartan" one is greatly relieved to turn to Miss Young's book and read her fine English prose. Of its kind it is the most important book since Mrs. Hutton's "Tain" with which it will rank as a first-rate rendering of epic tales. Gods and devils and fighting men are nicely assorted. And the tales are well contrasted; some are mystical, some humorous. They touch many subjects—the genesis of the world for instance; the creation of a nationality; the beginning of music. As tales of sheer adventure two or three must take their place beside the most thrilling stories of the Arabian Nights. They are probably as ancient, moreover. We may be sure Miss Young's renderings are authentic. We are positive they are excellent to read. Her "Conary" may rank as the best-told heroic tale in modern Irish literature.

Reflections.

By Albert Guinon.

[THE following aphorisms by M. Albert Guinon appeared in a recent number of the Paris "Figaro," and have been specially translated for THE NEW AGE by J. M. KENNEDY.]

(1) Science, however admirable it may be in its own particular sphere, can never take the place of religion as a school of respect.

(2) Man perfects himself after religion, while science perfects itself after man.

(3) Too many people mistake vivacity for intelligence.

(4) Too great a belief in science is one of the least scientific things it is possible to imagine.

(5) In the body social the working classes are the muscles, but nothing more.

(6) Socialism is a very attractive moral idea, and a very poor psychological idea.

(7) When workmen, in order to shelter themselves from the law of supply and demand, call for the fixing of a minimum wage, they are acting against their own interests. For, in all scales of charges, the minimum price very easily becomes the only price.

(8) Socialists conceive the organisation of society in much the same manner as it might be conceived just after a shipwreck.

(9) The recent reforms in French orthography are well suited to a Democracy; for they set on the same plane those who can spell and those who cannot.

(10) One of the most certain means of tactlessly irritating the popular soul is to look, with all the curiosity of idle loungers, at workmen who are engaged in their task.

(11) The popular classes, among whom material probity is almost universal, are, on the other hand, only too much given to breaking their word in the course of social conflicts. It would seem that, in their eyes, honour is merely a tax which need only be borne by the wealthy.

(12) The whole meanness of politics lies in the fact that the easiest way of causing discontent among one's supporters is to show one's self just towards one's opponents.

(13) A happy mixture of knavery and goodness: it is this, perhaps, out of which the best statesmen are made.

(14) By virtue of granting "rights" to everybody, Democracy is the most certain destroyer of kindness and generosity.

(15) When women admire a man's intellectual worth, they admire it, above all, as one of his forms of strength.

(16) In France, while the spirit is levelling, the nerves are not.

(17) In most cases English gaiety is only a movement of the body.

(18) What is most agreeable in the Englishman is that he combines an absolute lack of pretentiousness with a strong feeling of personal dignity. On the other hand, the Frenchman is only too often both pretentious and undignified.

(19) We should see our friends often, rather than for a long time.

(20) Let us not be afraid of humiliating people when giving them something. They are always less proud than we should be in their place.

(21) When a literary work is in question, the word "translation" does not stand for very much, and the word "adaptation" stands for nothing at all.

(22) For certain natures music is the most dangerous of narcotics.

(23) It often happens that, when women marry late, they remain rather old-maidish even after their marriage.

(24) The style of newspaper feuilletons is analogous with the gasping and panting of bad tragedians.

(25) On the stage, what is natural in diction must always be made subordinate to this essential principle, namely, that the public has above all come to hear.

(26) When a man is no longer influenced by a particular feeling, he should show himself courageous enough to discontinue its outward manifestations.

(27) Whatever else he may do, a dramatic author who cannot write great feminine parts cannot be said to belong to the first rank.

(28) When we become intimate with certain people, we come to experience the same feeling of disappointing fatigue as when we try to grasp a vacuum with our hands.

(29) It is but right that our minds glitter like fire and ice time about.

(30) Certain people are possessed of sad natures, with all the defects of a joyful nature.

(31) A young child has only half a muscular sense: he has the sense of direction without that of distance.

(32) There is a rude form of politeness.

(33) When you wish to make men happy through disinterestedness pure and simple, begin by convincing them that you have an interest in doing so, otherwise they will become suspicious of you.

(34) True elegance is a flower which blossoms only in temperate climates.

(35) What sustains friendship is not identity of temperament, but identity of education.

(36) Let us be glad to give; let us know how to take; let us never ask.

(37) The human mind acts in such a routine way that when we see anyone for the first time we at once endeavour to recall somebody who resembles him.

(38) Thanks to his imagination, a writer may enjoy all the pleasures of drunkenness without the dangers of alcohol.

(39) We should, from time to time, sort out our friends just as we sort out old letters, retaining some and throwing others away.

(40) When people bear no ill-will, this is due much less often to kindness of heart than to interest.

(41) The men who are capable of unbounded jealousy when they are in love are likewise those who are capable of a cynical philosophy when they are not really in love.

(42) The staging of a play must above all be useful and adapted to its purpose—and then true, if this be possible.

(43) In its chaotic little brain the young infant has only one instinct completely developed: that of blackmail.

(44) People who are in the habit of travelling make indifferent parents and very trustworthy friends.

The Non-Committal Man.

By Robert a' Field.

I sat adrift before a litter of shells in one of those seaside saloons where oysters lose their local habitation and glide away like airy nothings. I was wondering whether anything could appear more definitely finished with than mollusc shells. Crumbs of the brown bread remain to frolic in your waistcoat folds; the squeeze is not all parted from the lemon; in your tumbler frothy bubbles testify of activity; and, as for the vinegar, the pepper, the sauce—their very plenitude derides the incapacity of the oyster to say willy or nilly any more. In once, he has been used up.

"It may be," I suggested to myself, "that the mollusc is a creature too decided of purpose. Consider the vinegar, the pepper, etc.—all the indefinite, slippery contingent of an oyster banquet; *they* are not determined to do nothing but condiment an oyster: au contraire, they are prepared to lend a smack to any really relishable creature. Indispensable to the oyster, they may be; yet when he has fleeted e'en from memory, they remain, speckly augurs upon the table of futurity."

I had entered the shop, rushed by a rash eye into the decision that I might as well as tiffin. Ten minutes since! And now I sat outside my dozen, lamenting. A little decent hesitation would have edged me past the window.

I mourned my impetuosity; and, wandering over to the barometer and noting that it was set Fair, I warned myself that this was probably weather to be wary in; the sort of broadly smiling confident weather when the tourist may bound away, clothed in enthusiasm, only to return wet through. 'Twere well enough for the tourist provided he had some companion to blame. He then might say: "I had not made up my fat mind to go out. I went to oblige Yorick." Whereafter he might slip his damp clothes off and dry ones on and sit him down to meditate, between drinks, on the superiority of indecision over that uncomfortable determination to go somewhere and do something which poor silly Yorick, etc., etc.

Now I, through a lamentable difference of domestic opinion, was alone in Nickling-on-Sea. Mary, whose idea of a holiday is to settle upon a place, look up the excursion time-table and write for lodgings, had declared her mind made up for Deal. I, on my part, was quite

willing to arrive at Deal; but not to set out for Deal. Mary, proving quite incompetent to veil the inevitability of Deal, and, moreover, describing my beautiful, free nature as "shilly-shally," I avoided the tedious epithet and the house, and faring forth with Liberty, meandered in at Nickling.

Let me mention now that if I had been forced at the cannon's mouth to choose a town. Nickling that town would have been. For Nickling is less irritatingly positive in its demands on one than any town I am acquainted with. All its "shows" are truly "side" shows. With the exception of the Castle, and even that is perched almost out of vision, there is nothing I need see. The very beach is amiably indefinite. I walk along the sand: I appear to be doomed to stroll on to a dogged Forever—when lo! a clump of rocks sets me free to lounge in sunny uncertainty. Even the tides are in agreement with Wait-and-See. I imagine a wish to paddle among the pools: by the time my socks are nearly off the water runs high upon the beach. If, then, I speculate upon the pleasures of a surf-bath, before I have concluded my bargain with the machine-man, lo again!—I behold the shining ripples leagues away.

No! Nickling never binds me to a rash engagement.

Nickling, then, I could not blame for my reckless hurry about the early oysters. I was about to begin to discover to what my precipitancy might have been due when a stir sounded in the shop below.

"Up the stairs, sir—a very nice room!" I heard mine host say with the settled conviction of his sanguine class.

Quick, firm feet took the stairs in a bound. I shuddered, and blinked my eyes to see a big, scarlet-headed man dash in, and, sitting down broadside on, hide the vacant chair opposite me.

"Fine day," he declared.

"It may change presently," I hazarded.

"Oh, no! Glass is set fair. Won't fall this side of Christmas. Ha, ha!"

He had that flamboyant hair which might at any moment turn ultramarine. His body was so huge and his voice so loud that he appeared extraordinarily unlike a turnip; yet such is the divine irresolution of Nature thought I, that, probably some change of mind while she sat inventing the vegetable, accounted for Bluey.

I called him Bluey to clothe his uncompromising redness.

"You've finished," he informed me. "Funny! I never yet got into an oyster bar but what I found some feller just finished and ready to expatiate on the departed. It's a recommendation, however, to see you unable to stuff in any more."

"Do tell me how you arrived at that conclusion," I implored him.

"Well, you ain't intending to have any more."

"I—I hadn't absolutely decided," I assured him.

To my consternation, he dashed to the stairhead. "'Nother dozen for the first gentleman, John," he sang out. "And an extra stout." He returned to the table. "There, you're having this lot with me. My name's Harvey."

I picked up from beside my plate a sealed letter which I had not yet read and handed it to the positive individual to serve in lack of a card. He scanned it.

"Emily Jones! Oh, beg par'n! Emil! Half French, I see. Enn-tent cordial for ever! Hullo, here's the oysters!"

And now, do let me say that I never, in all my tremulous career, swivelled half so long as Harvey did in the matter of pepper or no pepper.

He glanced up presently and seemed astounded at my empty plate. "You're no giddy amateur," he adjudged me, almost wittily I thought. Then he blushed and leaned towards me confidingly. "I say—this is my *first time*, to speak the gospel truth! I say, I've been watching you—it's up and down with 'em, eh—swig 'em before you look—ain't that the way?"

I allowed myself to be persuaded that I could show Harvey how to manage oysters. Yet even my more or less expert demonstration failed to prove the man's own theory. I ate eleven before I felt justified in inducing Harvey to attempt the twelfth, but still another exhibition had I to make. Then Harvey changed the subject.

"I've got to get to Pott Level to-day," said he.

"Ah, you live there," I rejoined, most dogmatically, I confess.

"Live there—not much! I'm going for the walk. Come?"

I evaded. "I believe I did go there once," I said. "I fancy I had tea in the hut of an old fisher lady who lived at the foot of the cliff. But I suppose she may be long since departed."

"Nothing of the sort. She's bound to be there yet," Harvey insisted. "We'll go and look her up."

Ah! with good reason had I warned myself to be cautious for the rest of this obstinately fine day.

I found myself being dragged towards the East Hill. It is the longest way to Pott, but Harvey's infatuated determination it was to miss not one yard of the regulation fourteen-mile procedure.

"A mere sprint," he characterised it, adding: "It's no use walking to Pott if you go by trains half the way. Let's be stickers. Shrimps alive-o! Come on, Emily."

I began to wonder whether I objected to Harvey's manners or whether they refreshed me.

Presently I begged him to sit down with me at the bottom of the hill, as I wanted to make sure that I really desired to proceed. Harvey snorted; yes! I'll almost swear it was a snort. He swore, too, and absolutely refused to sit down. Steelily he glared at my already recumbent figure. His iron foot pawed the ground like a bull's. His hands clenched as if he were about to take himself by the horns. I never saw a less mistakeable incarnation of Purpose. I never saw a man in such a temper.

I turned from the vision; I re-turned. The vision fizzed and spat about like fire and water. I blew hot and cold on him. I half staggered to my feet as though I would proceed; I dallied and half clung to the grass. I cried; and laughed; and threw up my head; and hid my face. At last I thought I felt a gently-certain kick somewhere. I looked around to make sure. Harvey was gone!

Not altogether. Far up the hill, a speck went skyward, and down to my ears crept an echo which sounded like "Yah!" I wonder, I wonder!

Lives the old fish-wife still at Pott Level:
Lifts she her oft-beshouldered basket?
Ask it of Harvey whose paths never swivel,
Ask it, oh, ask it.

I do not know, so I've no call for saying.
Down on the hill-sward, with haunches planted,
I wondered whether of going or staying—
Which 'twas I wanted.

But Harvey, that purposive individual,
He knows! He went onward and nowhere abided;
While I lay down on the hill side so gradual,
Still undecided.

Rare, gallant Harvey! He dashed for the Level.
I cried: "Kiss me, Harvey! Farewell!" He scantling
Paid me attention except to say, "Drivel!
Silly old bantling!"

O, Hesitation! None that I recollect of poets hath ever extolled thee, but all with one accord have condemned. "He who waits to see is lost!" Yet is thy embrace so fatal—more fatal, for instance, than walking fourteen miles? Who knows whether Harvey's corpse may not, even now, be decorating some thorn-bush? I don't. Poor Harvey, poor dear, dear Harvey, what an awful end perhaps you came to!

Books and Persons.

By Jacob Tonson.

A little too much importance has been attached in certain London papers to the banning of "The New Machiavelli" by the Municipal Libraries of Manchester and Birmingham. One is certainly somewhat surprised at the action of Manchester, which, as a rule, is less barbaric in the arts than any other provincial city, and than London. But all sorts of books, good and bad, are constantly being censored, for the most fantastic reasons, by Public Library Committees. Mr. Burman's excuse for censoring "The New Machiavelli" was that it is "opposed to conventional morality." What price the Old Testament, Mr. Burman? Mr. Burman, you should know, is the chairman of the Book Sub-Committee at Birmingham. A more interesting case than either Manchester's or Birmingham's is that of Wallasey. Wallasey is locally known as the "bedroom of Liverpool." Here the Libraries Committee discusses at length "The New Machiavelli" without once naming it. Mr. G. J. Atkinson, evidently courageous, said, "May I ask the name of the book?" And Alderman J. Wright, the chairman, replied, "I do not think it would be wise." It appeared later that the explanation of this judicious discretion was a fear of an action for libel by the author. I have several times predicted that some day one of England's ten thousand municipal censors will let himself in for a good expensive libel action, and I shall be charmed to see that day. The Wallasey chairman said that he was "not favourable to having any book circulated in the district that he would not like to place in the hands of his wife and daughter." Well, of course, it all depends upon the alderman's attitude towards the reading of Mrs. Wright and Miss Wright. (Kindly note that not I, but the alderman, brought these ladies into the discussion.) But no doubt the alderman's rule for censoring means that Wallasey citizens should be deprived of some of the major works of the two greatest modern English novelists—to wit, Thomas Hardy and George Meredith. There are about fifty episodes in Thomas Hardy that would cause grave disquiet to the alderman, and as for the prostitute scenes in "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel". . . . ! Well, the fancy staggers. I do wish that the alderman would read "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," if he has not already done so, and state publicly whether he objects to the circulation in Wallasey of this famous masterpiece, consecrated by the awed praise of innumerable critics of two generations, including certain celebrated ministers of religion. In regard to "The New Machiavelli," a curious fact is that it was never submitted to the Books Sub-Committee at all. Mr. Savage, the librarian, did not deem this formality necessary. Mr. Savage said with majestic simplicity, at the meeting of the whole committee: "*I* censored the book." He made no references to wives and daughters. When last I heard of the affair the book was being reconsidered by the fathers of Wallasey.

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Strange that there should be all this fuss about so mild a work as "The New Machiavelli"! These Librarians and these fathers don't keep their eyes open. They don't know what is being produced in this country of ours. "The New Machiavelli" is reticence itself compared, for instance, to Miss Violet Hunt's "Tales of the Uneasy." These stories contain the best work by Miss Hunt that I have yet read. They are powerful, sincere, frank, and the real expression of a temperament. I have seldom read, in any language, a tale more direct, cruel, horrible, and decadent than "The Tiger Skin." Here is true decadence, with the distinction of true decadence. Except for the calm, self-unconscious, and audacious brutality of the tale, nobody could trace in it a woman's hand. Men cannot equal women in this line. They dare not. Many persons, even of good literary stomach, will not care for "Tales of the Uneasy." I read it with interest. I should very strongly object to it being censored. And I do not for an instant anticipate that it will be censored. It is only timid males, like H. G. Wells, who get themselves censored.

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I have received from the United States a volume entitled "Essays on Russian Novelists," by William Lyon Phelps, Professor of English Literature at Yale (New York: The Macmillan Company). It is valuable because it contains very full bibliographies of all the principal Russian novelists from Gogol to Andreev (prepared by Mr. Andrew Keogh). The criticism is large-hearted and fairly good, while never inspired. One is surprised to read that in the author's opinion the case of Dostoievski "is in itself valuable evidence" of the truth of the Christian religion. He is utterly wrong about Andreev, whose work is never better than second-rate. When he says of "The Seven that were Hanged," that it bears "on every page the stamp of indubitable genius," he fatally shakes our confidence in his judgment. Andreev has no more permanent value than Gorki.

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"Success in Literature," by W. M. Colles and Henry Cresswell (Methuen, 5s. net), is a modest enough work, consisting chiefly of citations, nicely dove-tailed, from classical authors. The introduction is sententious. But the chapters on "Style," "The Literary Worker and His Work," and "Form and Treatment" are good. Impossible to read them without profit! Mr. Colles, by the way, is a literary agent. I fancy that he was once a leader-writer on the "Standard." If so, "Standard" leaders have declined from what they must have been when he wrote them. For "Success in Literature" is of a vastly neat workmanship, and the honourable corps of literary agents is to be congratulated. It remains now for Mr. J. B. Pinker, who was once an editor, to produce a book on, say, the eccentricities of editors.

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Selma Lagerlöf's "The Girl from the Marsh Croft," translated by Velma Swanston Howard (Werner Laurie), is the first book I have read by the holder of the Nobel Literary Prize, which she won with "The Story of Gosta Berling." The translator says that in the new book the author has "abandoned romanticism and has entered the field of naturalism and realism." If this is realism, what must her romanticism be like! However, it is not bad stuff, for all its ingrained sentimentality. It is purely imitative, but it has a mild and fragile distinction. The volume is a collection of stories. The cover and the title-page bear no indication that the volume is not a novel, and raise every presumption that it is a novel. The wording of the introductory note is ambiguous. There is no table of contents. I have already persuaded Mr. John Murray to state plainly that a book of stories is a book of stories, and not to leave the reader to discover the fact for himself, after he has obtained the book. I hope, faintly, that I shall eventually persuade other publishers to adopt the same course.

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"In response to a widely-spread lack of interest in my writings, I have consented to publish a small and unrepresentative selection from the same," says Mr. Aleister Crowley in the preface to "Ambergris" (Elkin Mathews). I surmise that one reason for the widely-spread lack of interest in Mr. Crowley's admirable verse has been the price of it. Thus "Rosa Mundi," a quarto pamphlet of seventeen pages, is sold at 16s. Perhaps I ought to say it is offered. Happily "Rosa Mundi" is included in "Ambergris," and a fine poem it is. Mr. Crowley is one of the principal poets now writing. Yet if any mandarin had to write an article on our chief living poets he would assuredly not mention Mr. Crowley.. I doubt if he would mention Lord Alfred Douglas, who has, I imagine, produced immortal things. On the other hand he would not fail to speak at length about Mr. Laurence Binyon, with extracts! Why are Mandarins thus?

An Englishman in America.

By Juvenal.

NEW YORK is now a city without a past. In America there is a present and there is a future, but the past is without any influence. Everywhere the insurgent spirit may be seen and heard. The impossible is now happening and the most orthodox pulpits in New York are not behind the fashion of novelty and change. Politics, religion, society, millionairism, instability, sensation, all seem bound up together in one bag tied with the blue ribbon of plutocratic luxury out of which will jump some day, when the ribbon gets untied, such a collection of bipeds, quadrupeds, venomous light-winged vertebrata, Miltonic angels and Dantesque demons as were never known in the heavens above, the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth.

* * *

One of the most astounding things in this astounding metropolis is the garb of religion put on by the Fifth Avenue millionaires in their fashionable churches. Dr. Aked left his pulpit in Liverpool four years ago to take charge of the Baptist Church on Fifth Avenue, where John Rockefeller is the idol of gold; but Dr. Aked has not been able to carry on his work according to his own ideas, and he may now accept a call from a Congregational church at San Francisco, while, at the same time, Dr. Jowett leaves a Congregational Church at Birmingham to occupy the pulpit of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church. Evidently millionairism has proved too much for Dr. Aked and it is going to prove too much for Dr. Jowett, who will have charge of a church belonging to the wealthiest religious denomination in America, whose real God is Mammon.

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On Sunday, April 2nd, Dr. Jowett made his first appearance before an American audience, and attracted a crowd that the greatest English actor or Italian tenor might have greeted with pride. From a spectacular point of view it was a great success. For weeks Dr. Jowett's first appearance in an American pulpit was the subject of fashionable talk, and the affair was looked forward to as a social function in the Presbyterian world, which means the financial quasi-religious element of Wall Street.

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Long before the service began a large sign was displayed at the door bearing the words: "The Church is filled to its capacity." Many people, worldly-minded sinners, stopped as they passed, and remarks could be heard such as, "Full house," "All seats taken," exactly as at the theatre or the opera. One man said: "I give him two years here," another said; "one of two things must happen, Dr. Jowett will tell them the truth and they will get rid of him, or he will succumb to the New York fashion, tickle their worldly vanities and remain a sort of pet lamb in the midst of the sheep and the goats, to say nothing of the bellwethers of finance."

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I have heard the churches on Fifth Avenue alluded to as the "Sunday Music Halls" and the "Sunday Opera Houses." Thousands have been attracted to the Baptist church on this Avenue in the hope of seeing John Rockefeller. When they cannot get a glimpse of the "old man," they are quite content to look at his son. The crowds that fill all these churches on a Sunday morning are attracted by the razzle-dazzle "tone" given to these meeting places by the millionaires and their fashionable wives and daughters. The preacher comes in to the show as a sort of master of religious ceremonies, and his sermon figures as a sort of light dessert after a feast of music. He is paid to make himself visible at the proper time just like the organist and the singers.

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For the time being Dr. Jowett's brilliant début before an audience of such wealth and fashion has caused a kind of panic in the ranks of the Fifth Avenue Baptists who regard him as something more than a rival. At one stroke he has taken the shine off the Rockefeller Church and dealt their prestige a mortal blow. Will the good Baptists raise their Christian hands to heaven, turn up the whites of their eyes like ducks in thunder and cry for blessings on the heads of the Presbyterian elders? or will they mutter damnations between their gold-filled teeth and secretly shake their money-grubbing fists at the other church as they pass by, and mumble not from the wheat pit, but from the pit of the stomach: "Bless ye, bless ye in the name of the Lords of creation; 'Trust' in the Lords"?

* * *

In all seriousness does Dr. Jowett hope to influence a body of American millionaires by suave phrases, religious eloquence and polished sentences? That is what thousands of people are asking in New York to-day. How can he expect to succeed where so many others have failed; and what do New York millionaires want with fine thoughts expressed with a high degree of literary culture? The truth is, they want the luxury of the finest preaching which money can procure. They purchase this kind of thing as they purchase diamonds, Rembrandts, and prize-dogs. But they can sit calmly in their pews. They will never be troubled with a rough-and-tumble dissertation upon hell, never have an angry fist shaken in their faces by a modern John Knox. All will proceed according to the wishes, whims, and ambitions of the millionaire, his wife and all his family.

* * *

Query—who suffers the most, the rich American who has retired from business, his idle son, or his idle wife? Rich women in New York are now trying to find amusement and distraction in writing novels or visiting the Bowery poor. To make a surprise visit to the bad lands of New York, the rich dames put on their most bewitching frocks and their most costly picture hats, for these things are supposed to interest the outcasts more than fine sermons. Many of the idle rich have taken to what Mr. Dooley calls "pothry," but I think the favourite occupation is that of novel writing. It is true many of these fashionable dames are too busy seeking to be divorced from their wicked husbands to have any time to spend in slum visits or the writing of "pooms" and novels, and between Reno and the Red Sea of matrimony their imagination has more than enough to brood over. They revel in the high, clear air of Nevada while awaiting the legal number of days to pass before being able to obtain a decree in full, and during all this the husbands in New York who are supposed to have "supped so full of horrors" that they are not likely to want any more, are anxiously waiting for the hour when they can take another waltz on the Blue Danube of destiny with a fresh matrimonial partner.

* * *

Fearful and wonderful are some of the reasons given for divorce. Here are samples: for snoring, three cases; for shaking the bed by coughing, one; for having the tooth-ache, one; for hanging round the house, one; for being contented to remain the possessor of a simple million, a thousand cases; for having the blues, fifty; for not owning three motors, ten; for not getting in with the English nobility, one hundred and fifty; for being rheumatic, three; for using an ear trumpet, two; for wearing green goggles, one; for stuttering, four; for eating with a knife, one; for eating peas with a spoon, one; for having cramps, two; for not being able to swim, one; for not being in the swim, about three thousand, four hundred and fifty-five; for having the nightmare and shouting murder, one.

* * *

The American millionaire who marries a woman who belongs to the smart set is in for a rough time, no matter what happens. Yet the fashionable woman does not always play the game single-handed. The mere man, that is, the mere human worm, is beginning to show signs of turning. When the wife takes to

drinking "highballs" before her meals, when the different drink poisons begin to affect her nerves, when she begins to "sass" the husband not only in the home but in public restaurants, the mere man, in order to get a divorce, will often hasten the end by giving the woman "rope enough" that she may hang herself, as they say here, and this she frequently does, not in private, but in public.

Drama.

By Ashley Dukes.

"Lady Patricia" (Haymarket Theatre).

Sophistication triumphs at the Haymarket in the hasty change from Mr. McEvoy's "All that Matters" to Mr. Rudolf Besier's "Lady Patricia." Finding no considerable demand for rough diamonds, Mr. Trench has dressed his shop-front once again with paste. The substitute is well cut, superbly polished, and at a glance almost indistinguishable from the real thing. Crude angularity gives place to symmetry and glitter; provinciality to town-bred elegance; blunt tough-mindedness to fragile delicacy; the plebeian (if one may venture the phrase) to the patrician.

Paste diamonds, then, for the Coronation year; the year in which, as Mr. Frohman, astutest of shop-keepers, has prophesied, there will be no burning desire for serious drama. "Parisian diamonds," one might say, were it not for a trifling disparity of angle instantly evident to the expert eye. The models differ. The French comedy of flirtation tends to the eternal triangle; our British variant, to the eternal square. The square is the safer, as well as the more substantial, design. A scheme of husband, wife and lover, or of wife, husband and mistress leaves an "odd man out," at some risk of distressing a sympathetic audience, and can only be lightly treated if a plea of justification be entered by endowing the odd man with some vice such as jealousy or intemperance or coldness, and inflicting domestic trials as a punishment. But if husband and wife are both engaged in philandering, morality is appeased. The indiscretions cancel out. If the philanderings are innocent, we may be entertained. To ensure complete success the author needs only to set up a game of general post within the eternal square; an exchange of partners in which the unmarried are finally married and the married reconciled. His comedy of manners then acquires new dignity as a prop of the social order.

In "Lady Patricia" Mr. Besier follows this familiar course. He has no ambition to be earnest. Irresponsibility is the play's chief charm; irresponsibility sophisticated. To watch Mrs. Patrick Campbell glide through Lady Patricia's trifling adventures, from her first comfortable perch in the oak-tree where, on a summer afternoon, she recites Browning and communes with Nature, to her last comfortable exit upon her husband's arm, when she discovers a new sensation in repentance, a new æsthetic joy in being forgiven, and a new satisfaction in expiating her peccadilloes by attending matins in Normanborough cathedral, is in itself an evening's entertainment. Upon the journey she makes great play with the rich, languorous tones, the down-cast eyes, the sinuous gestures and all the subtler, milder arts which keep one for ever dangling between silent appreciation and outright laughter. This comedy of sentimental puppets is quite unsentimental. The fin-de-siècle pose satirised belongs properly to the end of the nineteenth century, but that matters little. The play makes no sympathetic appeal—no emotional appeal, indeed, of any kind—and Mrs. Patrick Campbell is the very actress to carry it through. She poises between her finger and thumb a white lily, destined to be made tipsy in a glass of wine. She drinks tea without cream on principle, to avoid producing an odious colour. Her emotions upon tasting boiled milk are a revelation. She philanders with exquisite reserve, and lies about it with the frankest self-abandonment. Decadence, with her, is a fine art. Mr. Arthur Wontner as her husband, Mr. Eric Lewis, Miss Rosina Filippi and Mr. C. V. France have caught the same spirit, and assist her well.

"James and John," a one-act play by Mr. Gilbert Cannan, is now being given before "Lady Patricia." The contrast is striking. A bank manager, after serving a term of penal servitude for embezzlement, returns to his family. James and John are his two sons. The inexorable James has nursed ten years' indignation in readiness for the meeting. John has no such passion for justice. He sets his father's armchair by the fire, with his pipe and slippers and a glass of whisky. The old man arrives. Conversation proves a failure. John and the mother go off to bed, and James remains, with folded arms, to ask the long-prepared question "What have you to say?" All the answer he gets is a shiver and "There's nothing *to* say. We're all so old." So moralising fails too, and James, after shaking hands, is left to put the chain on the front door and turn out the lights. Mr. Cannan contrives here to create a memorable impression in very few words. It is a pity that his play, with its long, concentrated pauses, should be given with all the disturbing accompaniments of a first piece. Good playgoers at the Haymarket will not miss seeing "James and John," if only for the sake of the acting of Mr. James Hearn and Mr. Fisher White; and to bad playgoers the doors might well be closed after the curtain has risen.

"The Master Builder" (Little Theatre).

With two of Ibsen's plays being performed each evening in London, and more to come shortly, the dramatic critics of the eighteen-nineties might well turn in the graves which they digged for themselves with such adjectival energy. Some of them, indeed, being still with us, have turned, and may now be observed sleeping peacefully upon the other side. Such is the magic of fame. Ibsen has become classical. Was not the epilogue of his life-work "When We Dead Awaken"?

With a classical drama, the first aim must be to secure faithful treatment. The critic is transferred from the firing line to sentinel duty, but he must be alert. The instant between "Who goes there?" and "Pass, friend, pass" is perilous. We pause at the Little Theatre. "Who goes there?" "Barker." Let us see. The password is all-important.

For Ibsen, in England, has suffered much at the hands of his friends. The existing translations, almost without exception, are utterly unimaginative, but they are at least conscientious and faithful in their attempt to convey the meaning of a dramatist in the vocabulary of a respectable solicitor. The more notable interpretations, on the other hand, are perverted. "The Quintessence of Ibsenism" bled a poet to nourish propagandists. It was quintessential only of Shaw. "The Philanderer" was a travesty satirised. The vaguer sort of feminism has done its part as a bird of prey, and the characters, from Relling to Stockmann, from Nora to Hilda Wangel, have been seized upon and labelled by body-snatching philosophers. Nevertheless, the plays have survived, and they are already beginning to shake off topical interpretation, and, like Stockmann, to stand alone.

Mr. Barker's handling of "The Master Builder" follows the tradition of the Court Theatre and the Duke of York's. That is to say, it is immensely restrained, thoughtful, and suggestive within well-defined limits. It is "produced" in every detail, but it is not an imaginative rendering. To say that it fits the translation like a glove would be too severe, but it certainly fails to illuminate the reader of Ibsen. The acting aims at the same carefully studied restraint. Mr. Norman McKinnel's Solness conveyed no more to me than—Mr. Norman McKinnel, as he has acted in a dozen modern plays of recent years under Mr. Barker as producer. Miss Lillah McCarthy's Hilda Wangel has more colour, superimposed upon what is clearly the same groundwork of schooling. Her knock upon the door belongs unmistakably to the younger generation. She strides on to the stage, like all other Hildas, with the regulation short skirt, rücksack and alpenstock.

She flings herself about the room, with a lift of the shoulder or a toss of the head, in a frenzy of impatient power. In short, she is very conscientiously free and independent and "thrilling." She does everything that Hilda is supposed to do, and it is all most admirably thought out. But production cannot make an actress. Throughout all of Miss McCarthy's work runs a strain of the artificial, conveyed perhaps most insistently by the curious intonation of her voice, which always suggests a woman telling nursery tales to children, and telling them with condescension rather than spontaneity. That will not do for Hilda Wangel. At the same time, Hilda is essentially a part for an English actress.

Some Living Poets:

MR. ALFRED NOYES.

By Darrell Figgis.

If it be a weakness to judge of a poet's achievement by his age, it is at least a human weakness. There are few poets (few, indeed, in any field) that can escape the test. Even Keats, who rose to his astonishing flower of achievement at the equally astonishing age of twenty-four, bears the mark of it on him. He himself admitted it. He rehandled "Hyperion," thinking to charge it with deeper meaning and loftier scope; and thereby gave us to know that he himself perceived that his earlier achievement, with all its wonderful beauty, was but flowerage, not fruitage. But when, as in the case of Mr. Noyes, one discovers a poet at the age of thirty with two stout volumes, representing a collected edition of poetry that includes in its bulk an epic in twelve books, to his credit—when one discovers, moreover, that this bulk is received with acclamation and (that more hardly-won trophy!) handsome sales—one wonders. Certainly one may be forgiven the thought that in unriddling this fact we may strike the central note of his work, and, striking that, illuminate the difficulty resident in all his work.

Not that a bulk of work is its own depreciation! Far from it! All things are vital with poetry could we but see it. Yet the seeing it, and seeing the rare significant deeps of it, is no light achievement, but an achievement, rather, that demands a continual refining, rejection and pursuit, a continual striving after height on height, with all that it means of self-dissatisfaction and endless desire. To paint a sunset in a sea of words is but to reproduce the sunset on paper; but to achieve what that sunset means, if it means anything, as the insurgent thought insists that it does, is to unriddle the sunset. It is to recreate a new phenomenon, even as the sunset is but a phenomenon, nearer the reality for which it stands. It is thus that poetry, the loftiest of the arts, recreates a new world of more quintessential meaning than the world of looser symbols about us. It narrows and heightens the vision of Man nearer to Finality. But such close effort does not make for bountiful production—at least, not in the days of youth, which are the days of the sharper discipline. Nor, to be frank, does such lofty endeavour receive an immediately popular acclamation.

It was not to be expected that in his early poems Mr. Noyes would display so zealous and wrapt a mission. It was rather to be expected that he would be derivative; for there are none that can avoid standing on the shoulders of the past. The toys of youth are the tools of their fathers. But there are two things that must needs excite first attention in such early poems: one is the source of the derivation, and the other is the nature of the indebtedness. And when we discover, as the most cursory reading would immediately discover, that he takes the ancestry of his song from Swinburne, the thought always begins to quail. For Swinburne was bounteous of song to the straining of patience; moreover, loud of music though he was, his music was rather resonant to the ear than illuminative to the mind.

That Mr. Noyes' early poems should have borne both these characteristics—the repetitive, wordy tendency and the superficial music—could very easily be a light matter, despite the fact that, with more courage than wisdom, he has taken his stand by them in his Collected Edition. But when we discover him proceeding, in his subsequent poems, to out-Swinburne Swinburne at his own game, the situation gets a little more than perplexed. For example, Swinburne might, in a disastrous moment, have penned the line:

> Shimmering thro' this mystic myriad sheen;

but in his most delirious moments (save when deliberately caricaturing him, as in "Nephilidia") he would never have perpetrated this:

> And watched the sea-waves wistfully westward wend.

Mr. Noyes, however, not only perpetrates it, but, having chanced on it, goes on to repeat it over and over again through the poem in which it appears.

There is another characteristic of Swinburne's that also leaves its hand on him; and that is, a musical jingle of words conveying a loose and meaningless picture—not a metaphor, for a metaphor is an illumination of the mind, since it discovers a new correlation in the universe. Thus, when Wordsworth describes Lucy as—

> A violet by a mossy stone
> Half hidden from the eye!
> Fair as a star when only one
> Is shining in the sky,

we forthwith know more of Lucy: she becomes transfigured and illuminated. But in speaking of the loves of Etain and Anwyl, in "The Progress of Love," what does he mean by the latter of these two stanzas?—the first being given to establish the sequence:

> And what if the light of his nine bright years
> Glistened with laughter or glimmered with tears,
> Or gleamed like a mystic globe around him
> White as the light of the spheres of spheres?
>
> And what if a glory of angels there,
> Starring an orb of ineffable air,
> Came floating down from the gates of jasper
> That melt into flowers at a maiden's prayer?

What in the name of meaning or significance does this mean or signify, this "orb of ineffable air," or these "gates of jaspar that melt into flowers at a maiden's prayer"? Wordsworth's flower and star are charged with rarest meaning; what of Mr. Noyes' flower and star? They are nothing to the mind; they only trip easily on the tongue or clash like cymbals on the ear.

Now all this happens to be in a poem that in its total effect ranks highly in the bulk of his present achievement: a poem that is perhaps, with one exception, loftier than anything he has yet attempted. Moreover, in it he derives from, but does not merely echo, Swinburne. In a yet later poem, "Orpheus and Eurydice," we find him eschew derivation for an extraordinary display of voiceless echoing, such as, for example:

> And over the cold, white body of love and delight
> Orpheus arose in the terrible storm of his grief,
> With quivering up-clutched hands, deadly and white,
> And his whole soul wavered and shook like a wind-swept leaf.

Sometimes such similarity arises from the fact that both poets have sung some identical theme that imposes its own manner on one and the other alike; yet this is only to put the indebtedness back one remove, for a poet must have his own vision.

In all this one strikes the secret of much of Mr. Noyes' work. For it is obvious that if he is content to echo there need be no limit to his reverberations. There is no labour in reverberation; it proceeds by automatic replication and repercussion: whereas there might have been infinite labour in singing out a true authentic note. Moreover, we can understand, too, the immediate acclamation that greeted him. It is the ideal world that all lofty thinkers yearn for, that shall immediately recognise the authenticity of a new original voice; but it is not this present world. Despite the fact that small and churlish souls take it for a cloak to cover their nakedness, Wordsworth's remark is yet true that a new vision has as its chief mission to tutor the many

to itself. But if a poet echo his forebears of song, then he will be acclaimed for a while, because he thereby shares in the reward of their labours. It saves an infinite labour in thinking to hold that the voice of yesterday is the voice for all time; and men do not love thinking. Having identified a robin's note, thenceforth they hear only robins in the forest of song; and newer comers only win recognition by imitating his tuneful throat.

It is no small task to hold fast to the loftiest; and it is but a thankless business to fault a poet in this unideal age. Moreover, it would be unfair to Mr. Noyes to judge him only by his echoes. It would also be unfair to him to judge him by that even yet more prevalent fault of his: cheapness of music and superficiality of idea, of which, perhaps, the most notorious example is "The Barrel-Organ," despite some stanzas in it that hover near a very genuine emotion. Take the following notorious imitation of a well-known popular jig:

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

This must needs sing itself immediately to the ear (its original, now forgotten, did!), but how can it help the central idea of the poem, that lies near the native haunting sorrow of the world? What a far remove it is from "Tears! Idle Tears" that voices the same mood! It is a strange poet, surely, that deliberately eschews the gold of song for the copper of a vamping melody.

Yet Mr. Noyes can do better. "The Paradox" gives us glimpses of this; and in "The Highwayman" he gives us a poem, not free from his inherent faults, indeed (who and what is free of fault?), but one that must compel eventual memory. His work is difficult to quote from, being chiefly occupied with lengthy poems; but the opening stanza of this poem will give taste of its quality:

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding—
Riding—riding—
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

It is an excellent story, well told, always in the spirit of poetry. Such another poem, though of a wholly different order, is "The Haunted Palace." It is coloured in the fashion of Keats, and its music again recalls Swinburne. Nevertheless, it is more of a personal product than much of his work, and, together with "The Highwayman," shows him in possession of what he lacks elsewhere in so marked a degree: form. It has beginning and ending, and each is contained in the other, with very little of superfluity. Here again it is impossible to quote more than a stray fragment, and yet it demands quotation, for it bears the stamp of individuality. Thus:

At last, one royal rose-hung night in June,
When the warm air like purple Hippocrene
Brimmed the dim valley and sparkled into stars,
I saw them cross the foam-lit sandy bars
And dark pools, glimmering green,
To bathe beneath the honey-coloured moon:
I saw them swim from out that summer shore,
Kissed by the sea, but they returned no more.

Moreover, "On a Railway Platform" wins attention, if only for this vision of an expected face at a rain-lashed carriage window:

Out of the desolate years
The thundering pageant flows;
But I see no more than a window of tears
Which her face has turned to a rose.

It is, however, when we approach the Epic in Twelve Books, "Drake," that we find the whole problem rise to the surface. Milton, too, wrote an Epic in Twelve Books: but the lover of that heroic poem remembers that he spent his whole life as a preparation to that end. "Lycidas," "L'Allegro," "Il Pensoroso," "Comus," he regarded as so many disciplinary exercises for his muse, having his great poem, in a form not yet decided on, always in view. And yet Mr. Noyes invites comparison by the very fact that in his exordium he invokes the aid of England, "Mother and sweetheart," even as Milton in mighty pride invoked the aid of the Spirit of God, his "Heavenly Muse." Obviously Mr. Noyes is not timorous. While still shackled, and to an extraordinary degree shackled, with the bounds of precedent song, even to attempt so individual a manner of song bespeaks him as not wanting in courage, however he may want in wisdom.

Yet, let it not be denied that that very fact is a virtue. Courage is not an attribute that much distinguishes modern poets. But courage is a virtue outside poetry; not in poetry. Mr. Noyes himself proves this. The interest in Drake is not a light interest; there are many pages that do indeed rivet and hold the attention, but it is not the interest of poetry—it does not exalt the mind to imaginative ecstasy. It is read rather as a prose tale than as a poem. There is a passage in the poem in itself sufficient to prove this by the force of contrast. It is when Drake had just slain the traitor Doughty with his own hand, and determines to remain the night with the body while his sailors return to their ships. Night comes on him; and over him towers the scaffold on which, in days gone by, Magellan himself had hung his mutineers. Across the narrow strait of water, on the opposite shore, there come

Monsters with sooty limbs, red-raddled eyes,
And faces painted yellow, women and men;
Fierce naked giants howling to the moon,
And loathlier Gorgons with long snaky tresses
Pouring vile purple over pendulous breasts
Like wine-bags.

Drake watches them at their cannibal feast. His men watch from their ships in fear of his discovery. And Night is dark about him!

He touches a mood in this that makes us see that Drake's adventures, galleons of enormous treasure, venomous Spaniards and mountainous waves belong to the far lowlier order of tales of adventure. Yet even in this he strikes a characteristic of the whole poem: for he is unrestrained; in putting out all his strength to achieve, he overachieves and spoils. It is a quality most unepical. There is a heightening that restraint alone can achieve, throwing the whole mood into such a state of trance that it will receive the supernatural as its proper air. It was so when Milton sang of Satan that "on his brow plumed horror sat." But the piling of effect on effect may revolt the thought, and can only achieve the exaggeration of the fabulous. The poem has another fault most unepical: it has not form; it is not compact; and it violates all sense of unity. Yet if it lack these virtues, it is vigorous enough. Furthermore, it has courage; not only the courage before achievement, but the rarer courage during achievement.

Bondage inevitably leaves chafed wrists and sore eyes; and in Mr. Noyes' later poems we trace the marks of his earlier serfdom. Though the echoes of Swinburne are gone, the indebtedness remains—sometimes new, and, curiously enough, at second hand through Kipling. It seems as though the spell of Swinburne leaves a man incapable thereafter of writing the subtler music of the mind; that he must needs write the broader, more immediate music of the carnal ear. Yet Mr. Noyes can catch this inner music, even though it be not lofty. Take such a stanza as this:

Mist in the valley, weeping mist
Beset my homeward way.
No gleam of rose or amethyst
Hallowed the parting day;
A shroud, a shroud of awful gray
Wrapped every woodland brow,
And drooped in crumbling disarray
Around each wintry bough.

The repetition of words in the fifth line is a favourite trick of his. Or take this sestet from the Sonnet to Meredith:

Drink to him, as men upon an Alpine peak
Brim one immortal cup of crimson wine,
And into it drop one pure crust of snow;
Then hold it up, too rapturously to speak,
And drink—to the mountains, line on glittering line,
Surging away into the sunset-glow.

Or this stanza, from one of his choicest poems, "In the Cool of the Evening":

In the cool of the evening, when the low sweet whispers waken,
When the labourers turn them homeward, and the weary have their will,
When the censers of the roses o'er the forest aisles are shaken,
Is it but the wind that cometh o'er the far green hill?

Or many passages that might be quoted from the best of his poems, "Mount Ida." Such poems are necessary. They may not embody the rapt ecstasy of the highest poetry, but they are essential; they neither vamp nor are they superficial. They aim for love and memory. And what shall be said to a poet who, with these things in him, gives us an amazing bulk of work beneath his own level, work that is not his but another's?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

S. VERDAD AND THE GERMAN CHANCELLOR.

Sir,—Permit me to express my regret that the "ubiquitous Reuter" didn't also put before Mr. Verdad the result of the division in the Reichstag following Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg's speech. It may, however, not impress him very much that the representatives of the German Emperor disagreed with the Chancellor and manifestly declared their sympathies for international arbitration. With his superior knowledge of people and politics, Mr. Verdad is probably above taking notice of such trifles as the opinion of the German Reichstag. But just compare the events in Berlin late in the evening of 30th March with Mr. Verdad's reference to the Chancellor's lucid remark that "the waging of war has largely passed out of the power of Cabinets," and that "wars are now brought about by national sentiments," etc.! At present, however, the bloodthirsty Germans apparently offer a rather poor illustration of this conception. And who believes, and does Mr. Verdad himself believe, that the waging of wars has to any considerable extent, or even in the slightest degree passed out of the power of Cabinets and certain financial interests associated therewith?

It is remarkable that Mr. Verdad should quote Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg as an authority on the all-important question of war and peace. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg is, admittedly, the most incapable and unintelligent official who ever held the highest civil position in a great Empire! I only hope that none of The New Age's readers will accept the present German Chancellor as an authority on statecraft. S. Verdad may well do it. But S. Verdad does a lot of things. Otto Bucht.

Berlin.

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S. VERDAD AND RUSSIA.

Sir,—I request you to kindly insert following lines.

In the review of "Foreign Affairs," by S. Verdad, in your issue of last March 30, I find his remarks on the constitutional crisis in Russia altogether out of place.

The stamping of Mr. Stolypin as liberal-minded may suit the purpose of finishing up a remark, but would not do here. As to Mr. Stolypin's liberal Bill thrown out by the Council, I, as every liberal-minded Russian also would say: "Timeo Danao et dona ferentes."

To call a man liberal who has plunged the country in a state of lawlessness and mercilessness—of which there has never been an idea before in the most barbaric anti-constitutional times—is either total ignorance or unpardonable carelessness. As a matter of fact it is not a Home Secretary we have now in Russia, but an all-Russian governor, which is the general opinion of every depressed citizen. And that it should be the opinion also all over the world it is the duty of every honest Russian man to correct any descriptions to the contrary met with in foreign periodicals.

Much has been done in this respect by the member of the French Parliament, M. Charles Lebuck, who has been staying in St. Petersburg in the days of the crisis, and this is the summing up of what he writes in the Parisian "Matin":—". . . I wonder where most of the English and French papers learned to consider M. Stolypin a fighter for people's rights and freedom. In the lobby of the Duma one hears only the common cry: 'The country stands before the most monstrous of reactionary movements that ever happened.'"

Riga. H.

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S. VERDAD AND SOUTH AFRICA.

Sir,—S. Verdad is not wrong in the leading facts of his article of February 16, that racial antagonism is not dying down, and the present Government of the South African Union is controlled by racial extremists, but the course he recommends is the old jingo one, and would make confusion worse confounded. Nor in his estimate of the Boer character would many agree with him in South Africa. It was a familiar assertion before the war that the Boers would not fight, a view based upon individual characters, but had the psychology of the race been taken into account, it was certain there would be a long and bitter conflict, likewise when we remember the Huguenot ancestors of the Boers, one can readily grant they are not likely to be intellectually inferior to Britishers.

There can be no comparison between this country and Alsace-Lorraine, and the Liberals did the wisest thing in fully trusting the Boers, and thanks largely to General Botha, they accepted their incorporation in the British Empire in a loyal spirit, but with the reservation that they would do their best to keep this country Dutch Africander. This was clear from the start, but Milner had his opportunity to bring about a large British immigration, with full scope and practically unlimited funds at his command, and his utter failure in this further shows the colossal incapacity of the man. He was more anxious to play up to financiers than to seek the true interests of the country.

The Boers, again, are more willing to accept a foreigner lately arrived from Holland or Germany as an Africander than an Englisher who has been born and lived his whole life in South Africa. In pursuance of their policy the Government will never appoint a Britisher to any post unless compelled to, and the higher ranks of the Civil Service and Police are open to Dutch Africanders only.

The remedy for this state of things is an increased immigration of Britishers, not abuse of the Boer, or the advocacy of absurd repressive measures.

If space would allow of it, I would also show that there was no unanimous condemnation of Lord Gladstone's action in reprieving the native in the Umtali case, and that his explanation was accepted by the majority.

Twelve years ago the British people were induced to go to one extreme in dealing with the Boers, and to remedy the injustice done they afterwards rushed to the opposite extreme.

Johannesburg. G. F. Riordan.

* * *

THE FUTURE OF THE FABIAN SOCIETY.

Sir,—I asked Mr. Schloesser the simple question, "Why should a nominally Socialist body engage its loyalty to a specifically non-Socialist party?"

Mr. Schloesser replies:—

(1) "That the Labour Party is not a specifically non-Socialist Party."

(2) "That the Labour Party is not committed one way or the other on the position of Socialism."

It is clear, therefore, that Mr. Schloesser agrees that the Labour Party is non-Socialist. It follows that he must be boggling at the word "specifically."

But I am using it correctly.

The Labour Party specifically, avowedly, constitutionally and historically has so shaped its constitution and policy that non-Socialists may join it. Further, the majority of its paying members are non-Socialist.

When I ask Mr. Schloesser why the Fabian should accept this discipline of this non-Socialist Party he answers me:—

(1) "It should and has not."

(2) "In the Labour Party alone can the Fabian be made a real Socialist."

I fear the humour of his response is lost upon Mr. Schloesser. Alas!

I may comment more fully on Mr. Schloesser's letters a little later on, but in the meantime may I trespass upon his good nature by asking a second question:—

Why is it that the Fabian, being technically affiliated to the Labour Party, is so passive in his loyalty? It's odd, isn't it? An explanation of this psychological anomaly would substantially clear up the problem.

Mr. Schloesser wants my name. Why should I encourage such idle curiosity? The argument is the thing. But I am sure the Editor would willingly vouch for the fact that I am veritably a Veteran.

* * *

THE WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT AND INDIAN UNREST.

Sir,—Surveying the suffrage movement from a distance, the most striking fact which emerges is that it is not a feminist movement, but a demand for political rights. As such it is, of course, absolutely justified; but as such its success will have just as small revolutionary consequences as other extensions of political rights have had in the past. Men who are afraid have no occasion to fear; they would

be well advised to grant the vote and all other equalities of opportunity to women as soon as possible, thereby saving further trouble and waste of time. Only a small proportion of women will take advantage of the new powers; and most of these will be so much like men in purpose and intention as to make but little difference. They will, of course, make some difference, and probably an advantageous one; but political power will not enable them to alter the structure of society, because they do not want to. Patriarchy and exploitation will continue unabated. The main factor in the enslavement of women is economic; the other factor is social convention. Only a microscopic proportion of suffragists are either Socialists or feminists; therefore, although they have every right to the vote, we shall not be surprised, pleasantly or painfully, by any remarkable consequences of the extended suffrage. Politics, particularly party politics as now established, is a poor affair. Laws merely follow, and do not create, public opinion. If women as a whole were convinced feminists they could get any desirable thing, such as the endowment of motherhood, put through at once. Nothing is ever obtainable unless it is badly wanted; and I do not think most women consciously want economic independence yet. They are much too enamoured of the "male" ideal of woman as an economically dependent being.

Indian unrest presents an exactly analogous situation. The most prominent workers demand political rights and economic redress; and their demand is abundantly justified. But the securing of these things will involve no revolution in anything essential—the "educated" classes will still remain intellectually, morally and æsthetically parasitic almost to the same extent as is now the case. But just as women could get what they wanted, if they really wanted it, so could Indians. If they really want national education they have only to boycott Government and mission schools and set about the work of teaching; instead of this, when "National Colleges" are founded they become at once merely second-rate copies of Government colleges. So, again, Indians could do a great deal to restore to their country economic prosperity if they would only employ their own builders, craftsmen, artists and musicians, and neglect European upholstery and gramophones. But all they wish to do is to make European upholstery and gramophones in India instead of importing them. Few Swadeshists care how much the workers may be exploited or degraded, so long as it is done in India, and the profits are retained by an Indian. Indians, and their English friends for them, do not claim political freedom for India as a nation on the solid ground of their fundamentally different temperament and inherited culture; but, forsooth, on the ground that they are now sufficiently Anglicised and educated to manage their own affairs—in the English way.

Just so, women and their male supporters for them do not claim political rights because they are different from men and wish to turn the world upside down. They want a share in the inestimable privilege of maintaining the status quo. They spend breath and paper and ink and statistics to prove that their brains are just like men's—that is to say, that nothing particular will come of it if power is given to them. Two heads, however, are only better than one if the contents of the heads are not exactly alike. No woman whose mind is like a man's is of so much value as a real man, just as no Indian whose mind is like an Englishman's is of so much value as a real Englishman.

A remarkable book, "The Psychology of Sex," was written some years ago by a young German named Weininger. This misogynistic work usually infuriates women, and not without reason. It declares that, as women, they have no souls, but they have souls only in so far as they rise above sex, in so far, that is, as their mentality is essentially masculine. This also is the standpoint of religious asceticism, and we find Buddhist nuns, two thousand years ago, rejoicing in their escape from their feminine, and realisation of their human, nature, in language almost identical with (though more exalted than) that of the neutral, brotherhood-dreaming sex that is beginning to be conspicuous to-day. I do not say that this religious standpoint is not philosophically sound—that is to say, ultimately true; but it is true, or valid, at any given time only for a very few (those who are ripe for emancipation—moksha), and applied to the majority it has merely a deadening or decolorising effect. For the distinction "Purusha" and "Sakti" must remain a distinction for each individual until determination (ahamkara—the illusion of individual existence) ceases for that individual. Meanwhile it cannot be denied that suffragettes who base their claim to status entirely on the ground of humanity, and not of sex, are misogynists in exactly the same sense as Weininger or the Buddhist nuns. Similarly, the Indian who ignores his own culture, and by desperate imitation shows a real belief in the superiority of Western civilisation, is not a Nationalist, however much he may wish for political and economic freedom.

It is this profound self-distrust which is the most essential weakness in the English woman's movement, as well as in the Indian Nationalist movement. Neither women nor Indians really wish to be themselves.

Ceylon. ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY.

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"IN THE LAND OF THE PHARAOHS."

Sir,—It is rather refreshing to find a lady condemning the moderation in my book, which you were good enough to applaud, but which even "The Review" of the investigator of occult sciences termed "violent."

Miss Katherine Lyons says: "The Egyptian, in short, is far too honest, far too humanitarian, and far too mild to drive the English out, for coaxings will never do it."

I quite agree with Miss Lyons that coaxings will not get the English out of Egypt; but the lady is evidently unaware that if we "rebelled actually," we should require money for this purpose, and plenty of it. The Indians may be able to teach us better manners, but the conditions are entirely different. In India England is the one responsible master of the country. In Egypt there are conflicting financial interests—notwithstanding England's "veiled protectorate"—and to "rebel actually" one should rebel effectively.

I plead guilty, on behalf of my countrymen, to honesty and humanitarianism, but as to our "mildness," I would recommend Miss Lyons to read up the fulminations of England's yellow journals — especially the London "Standard" of February 9th last. But perhaps Miss Lyons does not read the "Standard"; I have met few persons who do.

If, however, the lady will continue to have her "eye on Egypt" it may be that her hopes will, in the fulness of time, be abundantly fulfilled.

Unfortunately, there are no English "absentee" landlords in Egypt, or the Nationalists might have availed themselves of Ireland's "one or two little ways."

As the Egyptians have doubtless long since read the German Chancellor's "pacifist" speeches they will very probably march pari passu with Miss Lyons by accepting the German Chancellor's dictum: "The weak will be the prey of the strong. We intend to be strong."

DUSE MOHAMED.

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EAST-END CRIME AND WEST-END JUSTICE.

Sir,—I rarely read East End crimes judged by West End justice, not because I sicken at the crime, which is usually human and interesting, but because I sicken at the justice which is neither. To apply the methods and notions of the country gentleman to a crowded commercial city is one that no doubt has the rigidity and hard strength of the narrow mind; but such justice can only console by its purity, for it fails to do so by its quality. That it is pure and honest, singularly so, is something praiseworthy, yet scarcely admirable, for a little understanding is worth a deal of honesty. To be condemned to death by honesty does not convince the victim that he has merited his punishment, whereas if he is read with understanding and then condemned he feels at least that he has been beaten by a superior.

Of course, this is not understandable to the English mind. Were it so, it would not be so, for an absurdity understood would be an absurdity abolished in a country distinguished for its practical sense, the sense which acts when convinced. To put the matter more clearly, the English sense of justice is an expression of the English isolation, which typically lives in peace and quiet upon a country estate in a home that is its castle. When this castle becomes transplanted to the West of London it still, with locked door and manner, preserves the sanctity and isolation of the hearth. The members of the castle being intimate only with each other, and not even knowing their own servants, grow up with a remarkably narrow understanding of humanity. Consequently, instead of believing in and understanding humanity, and in justice and truth as appellations of human deeds and sayings, they believe in truth and justice as things existing in themselves. It is just to hang a man for murder; it is right to speak the truth. Such are the two axioms, backed by æons of Saxon minds, which stand up and say to the East End—Come and be judged.

The East End, which has to meet these pure but narrow-minded angels or messengers of the West, is of altogether different fabric. Its home, and, above all, its Whitechapel home, is not its earth. It is more communal; it is its neighbour's house, the street, the café or the bar. From the time the East End can toddle out of the street door its acquaintance with humanity is very large, and, consequently, it begins rapidly to understand that the quality belongs to the deed, and not the deed to the quality, that even murder may be just, and that, yet more, justice and truth are not essentially twin sisters of virtue, for sometimes it may be just to tell a lie. For instance, it may

be just to tell a lie to save a friend or even to save the East End from the West, which does not understand and takes no note whatever of the possible justice of murder, for it does not know that the quality belongs to the deed. It is just in the East End to do one's best for one's friend. That he is one's friend or relative gives him a title to protection. The spirit of clanship prevails. One clan protects the murderer, the other attacks him, and that it is alone which directs the nature of the evidence. It is feeling, not truth, human feeling, not justice. To them the judge has to be a man selected for his wide knowledge of humanity, one able to fathom their feeling—for he knows they are all partisans—and by his understanding of character to discover the rights and wrongs of the crime. If he shows himself master of the situation, they are satisfied, even loyal, for a judge is a ruler, and they respect and expect an understanding and mastery of human nature and impulses in a ruler.

But when the East finds that justice is not going to be a human question at all, but a question of fact, a fact of which a dozen nonentities gathered from anywhere can judge; when it finds the question of human passion brought down to the paltry level of a scientific demonstration, what wonder it shows its contempt? What wonder it cries out—I do not believe in your God; I will have none of His mercy?

I confess myself, as may possibly be betrayed in my letter, to a certain sympathy with the East.

G. T. WRENCH.

[A copy of the Petition for the reprieve of Stinie Morrison may be signed at the offices of the Humanitarian League, 53, Chancery Lane, E.C.—ED. N.A.]

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SHAKESPEARE OR BACON?

Sir,—It is for Mr. Samuel Waddington to substantiate his plain statement that "The law referred to in the 'Merchant of Venice' was not the English, but the Italian law in force in Venice in the sixteenth century," and to tell us by what authority, or on what date, he "understands" it to be "correctly stated in the play." I would ask him also to explain what he is driving at in his final paragraph. "Perhaps it may well to point out that nobody but the author would have a complete set of these 154 sonnets, many of them being of a very private and confidential character, and that the author himself therefore probably sent them anonymously to the publisher. Mr. Sidney Lee is of opinion, and I agree with him, that the Sonnets were published without Shakespeare's knowledge, as otherwise he would himself have written the dedication, and would not have allowed his name to be printed on the title-page with a hyphen between the syllables." I can make neither Shakespeare nor Bacon of it. Does he mean that the author (Bacon), who alone had "a complete set of these 154 sonnets," sent them anonymously to the publisher direct, and not to Shakespeare (his literary proxy), who otherwise "would himself have written the dedication," etc.? I would gladly have Mr. Waddington's substantiation and explication before venturing to reply to him. Mr. Waddington is bold in agreeing with Mr. Sidney Lee under the eyes of that Baconian chieftainess, Mrs. E. Nesbit.

E. H. VISIAK.

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"ŒDIPUS REX."

Sir,—Many public references having been made to a projected production of "Œdipus Rex" in London, may I be permitted to make the following brief statement:—

In consequence of the remarkable success in Berlin of Professor Max Reinhardt's production of "Œdipus Rex," arrangements have been made to invite him to come to London to produce the play under similar conditions here. In Berlin the play is being given at the Circus Schumann before an audience on each occasion of not less than 5,000 persons. At the 40 performances which so far have been given, at least 200,000 persons have been present.

It is now proposed that the play shall be given in London, in English, in Professor Gilbert Murray's translation. For its due effect, it is essential that the building for the performance shall be a very large one, capable of accommodating several thousand spectators, and that there shall be an arena in front of the stage sufficiently large to enable 500 to 600 characters to appear at the same time. The most effective and most dignified building in London for such a production is undoubtedly the Albert Hall. Professor Reinhardt, on a recent visit to London, visited the Hall and agreed that it would provide an ideal setting for the production of the great tragedy.

The Albert Hall is available for certain dates during the present season, and the authorities of the Hall have expressed their willingness to do all in their power to assist in what would be one of the most memorable events of a memorable period.

A sudden difficulty, however, has presented itself, which practically debars the Albert Hall from being used for the purpose. An appeal case heard last week before the Lord Chief Justice had reference to the licensing of the Albert Hall for theatrical performances. In delivering judgment, the Lord Chief Justice stated:—

> "It was impossible to say that it was intended to authorise stage plays in the big Hall, and the supplementary Charter of 1887 directly forbade their performance there."

This restriction to which the Lord Chief Justice thus drew attention absolutely debars the Albert Hall authorities from allowing the use of the Hall for the purpose of "Œdipus Rex," and thus also debars the public from witnessing in that splendid building, dedicated on its erection to "The Arts and Sciences," a dignified representation of the greatest tragedy in all dramatic literature.

To the chaos of theatrical licensing law, so irksome to all concerned with modern developments in the English Theatre, must now be added this irritating restriction, which serves no other purpose than to limit the usefulness of the Albert Hall.

Efforts are now being made to secure some other place for the production of "Œdipus Rex" during the present season. As soon as these have been brought to completion, a public announcement will be made.

FREDERICK WHELEN.

* * *

SHAW AS BACK NUMBER.

Sir,—In order to assure your readers that Mr. Randall's views on Shaw are not those of an isolated critic, I have pleasure in sending you a review of Shaw's last book, which appeared in the New York "Sun" on March 12 last. It is by Mr. James Huneker, whose "Overtures," "Iconoclasts," and "Egoists" are well known on this side.

J. M. KENNEDY.

The review enclosed by Mr. Kennedy reads as follows:—

THUNDER AND TREACLE.

A collective title for his three newly-published plays might be "The Showing up of Bernard Shaw." Never before has the real Shaw appeared so free from disguise as a flibbertigibbet, scarecrow, poseur, and immoralist as in this volume, which contains "The Doctor's Dilemma," "Getting Married," and "The Showing up of Blanco Posnet." And the real Shaw turns out to be a kindly, humorous old fellow, a reactionary chock-full of old-fashioned notions, and fairly exuding sentiment of the approved English variety. From a too-long residence in London he has lost his irresponsibility, his Celtic sense of disproportion; no longer for him are the joys of brilliant exaggeration and glittering half-truth. Shaw is become British, a man of soggy certitudes. Chesterton has out-paradoxed him, Wells plays the rôle of Machiavelli in better tune. Sad ending for a man who might have become the ghost of Samuel Butler. He is rich, famous, and a fribble; and like all professional Socialists, when the test of selfishness is applied, his earth theory explodes with the roar of a pin-pricked bladder. In a word, Shaw is at last a normal human being.

And how delightfully mediæval are his opinions! In "The Doctor's Dilemma," he mocks at vaccination, vivisection, the virtue of antitoxins, the viciousness of drugs, and votes for women. It sounds like the eighteenth century. He, caring more for a drainpipe than a cathedral, naturally despises the artist, and therefore hastens to present him as the typical fascinating scamp, as seen through the eyes of mid-Victorian fiction writers. Mr. Podsnap could not have assumed a more Philistine attitude. You suspect in "Getting Married" that Mr. Shaw has been reading too much Eugène Brieux, but this is not the case. Brieux, for whose plays Shaw has written a preface, deals with unpleasant actualities; his contemporary across the Channel never does. Shaw believes in marriage, approvingly pats St. Paul on the shoulder, and if he avows the ceremony a makeshift it is because better days are coming. The divorce laws of Great Britain are not in such a muddle as those of the United States, hence Shaw believes they should be. He is hot for easy divorces, a vegetable diet and rigid temperance legislation. No worse Puritan and tyrant could be well imagined than this same "G.B.S." if ever he achieved political power. But the sanctity of the matrimonial tie must be maintained, he asserts. When women get the vote, then marriage as an institution will meet its fate. The play itself is a roaring knockabout farce comedy.

Now, isn't this very old-fashioned? This leader of modern movements, like sentimental Socialists (and all Socialists are sentimentalists, inasmuch as they fall back on fairy tales and fables) will not look life squarely in the face, but views it through romantic spectacles. He once wittily remarked, and he can't help being witty even when he doesn't intend to be, that the romantic temperament is the old

maid's temperament. There you have painted in one masterly stroke the character of Shaw by Shaw.

And how you rub your eyes after reading "The Showing up of Blanco Posnet," a half-baked Bret Harte fantasy treated in the topsy-turvy method of W. S. Gilbert, and spiced after the familiar blasphemous manner of any old-time camp meeting revivalist! The English play censor must be totally lacking in humour to have forbidden the performance of this childish and sentimental episode. A lady with a past and a present, but no future, copiously weeps at the sight of an infant's hand; every one weeps, the stage drips; and the language, supposedly Americanese, is evolved from Mr. Shaw's subconscious self. But it is amusing.

The prefaces take up the major part of the fat volume, indeed, the preface not the play's the thing. They are worth reading, though if the plays are, then the prefaces are superfluous; either the one or the other. To a Dublin interviewer, a fellow-countryman of Shaw's, George Moore, said that Bernard Shaw was only the funny man in a boarding house; a witty enough characterisation for a writer who pretends to an absence of humour in his make-up. Yes, but Mr. Shaw's boarding-house is all England, and if they treat him kindly on the Continent as a benevolent grandpa getting off his little harmless quips, he is in England taken seriously, even when he jests. He is pouring out for the guileless and uncritical reading public of England small doses of Ibsen, Nietzsche, Marx, and Brieux. They wouldn't harm a child in the cradle, yet numerous disciples feel devilish and immoral after swallowing this decoction of mother's milk and ipecac. Somehow or other under alien skies his thunder turns to treacle.

What he might have become, what plays he might have written—real plays, not country lyceum discussions, punctuated by horse-collar humour—shall not be considered. That other Irishman, the poet and dramatist who gave us "The Shadow of the Glen," "Riders to the Sea," "The Well of the Saints," and "The Playboy of the Western World," the incomparable artist, John M. Synge, was content to create men and women of flesh and blood, not bogies, stalking-horses for stale theories or mouthpieces to advertise himself. Synge to-day is Ireland's greatest dramatist, not Shaw, who, as Henley said of Meredith, "writes with the pen of a great artist in his left hand and the razor of a spiritual suicide in his right. He is the master and the victim of a monstrous cleverness which is neither to hold nor to bind." And more's the pity.

* * *

A SPANISH MODERN DRAMATIST.

Sir,—I have noticed that in "Modern Dramatists," the very valuable book by Mr. Ashley Dukes, no mention is made of any of the modern Spanish dramatists. If the omission is due to an adverse judgment of the Spanish dramatists, I have nothing to say, because I consider Mr. Ashley Dukes too acute a critic to think his judgment is wrong. But if the omission is due to the ignorance of Mr. Ashley Dukes, allow me to quote the name of the best Spanish dramatist nowadays, and undoubtedly the only one Spain can present to Europe—Jacinto Benavente.

His plays are not strongly dramatical, but in some of them there are a fine satire, emotion, ideals sometimes, and over all great literary beauty. He has written profusely, but his best plays, to mention only a few, are "Los intereses creados," "Señora ama," "La noche del sàbado," "Los ojos de los muertos," and "El dragón de fuego." He is, too, the founder of a theatre for children.

Personally, I do not think Benavente stands in the line of the great dramatists coming down from Ibsen. But, to give him due justice, I believe he deserves a place in a show of modern dramatists where men like Capus and Brieux have their own.

LUIS ARAQUISTAIN.

* * *

"THE NEW MACHIAVELLI."

Sir,—It seems to be my fate to fall into arguments with Mr. A. E. Randall. It seems to me that in his article entitled "The Two Machiavellis," February 9, he misses the point of H. G. Wells's novel about as completely as he missed the point of Tolstoi's religion, and of my scheme for the "Endowment of Genius." Mr. Randall's argument, briefly summed up, is that the new Machiavelli was inferior to the old Machiavelli because he was unable to keep his sexuality on the level of salacity; because he took women with sufficient seriousness to be willing to give up his political career for the sake of one. If I have read "The New Machiavelli" aright, it was the author's purpose to set forth the idea that sex is something of paramount importance in the life of men, quite equal, in fact, in importance to politics. The difference between Mr. Wells's point of view and Mr. Randall's is illustrated by Mr. Randall's quotation from Carlyle, showing how love has always been intruded into politics. The kind of love there cited is that of a grand-duchess for an "airy, sentimental young coxcomb, rather of dissolute habits, handsomest and windiest of young Polacks"—quite a different kind of love, it seems to me, from that set forth in "The New Machiavelli." Apparently, Mr. Randall does not believe in the latter kind of love, does not care about it, and resents the idea that a man could be willing to give up a great political career for the sake of any woman.

There is one kind of love which is sterile self-indulgence, and there is another kind of love which leads to the perfecting of future generations of the race. It is the latter kind with which Wells has to deal. I, for one, am in agreement with him, that the perfecting of the race, through changes in the relationship of the sexes, is more important than any question now being discussed by any statesman prominent in English politics; that a man who strikes a blow in favour of his right to beget beautiful children does quite as much service for the future as, for instance, a man who secures a Cabinet position and devotes the rest of his life to superintending the jailing of liberty-loving Hindoos, or the shooting of "anarchist" burglars, or the teaching to the Battersea labourers of the doctrine that their poverty is caused by drink.

When I read "The New Machiavelli" it did not occur to me that anyone could so miss the point of Wells's argument. I have since found quite a number who have done it. It seems to me an illustration of the appalling cynicism of the modern young man of culture. If it is true, as Mr. Randall says, quoting Voltaire, that "women are like windmills, fixed while they revolve," then truly, not only is there no use in falling nobly in love, but also there is no use in any of the labours of politicians and statesmen. If the mothers of our race are hopeless, we are simply trying to lift ourselves by our boot-straps; for you cannot breed supermen out of the kind of creatures that Mr. Randall and Voltaire describe.

Edge Moor, Del. UPTON SINCLAIR.

* * *

AN ANGLO-SAXON CORRECTION.

Sir,—I wish to point out a strange inaccuracy in the article, "Theology.—VIII.," by M. B. Oxon. The writer states that there are three yogas or paths. Now I do not interest myself personally in Hindu and Vedic superstitions, but the most ignorant person who has been a few years in the East is aware that, in the first place, there are four not three principal yogas, viz.: the Karma Yoga, the Bhakti Yoga, the Gnani Yoga, and the Raja Yoga. There are, however, sundry subordinate ones, as, e.g., the Hatha Yoga—the end of which is to produce physical perfection. To those who desire to see the Anglo-Saxon people powerful in the future—I am not myself amongst that bewildered minority—it ought to be somewhat disconcerting to reflect upon the hopeless inaccuracy of that people—the inaccuracy of a bumptious, parochial, and narrow-minded variety of the human race—particularly when we correlate it with the low cranial index and extremely limited cranial range of that insular and very much over-rated little people.

W. W. STRICKLAND, B.A. Trin. Coll., Cambridge.

* * *

A DREAM.

Sir,—If these lines should be of any use to you, would you please put the commas, fullstops, etc., in their right places as I admit being uneducated. I have not enclosed any address because by the time you get these lines I shall probably be of "no fixed abode." F. D.

Last night I dreamed
My life on earth was ended,
And my soul was soaring
To some height above;
But halfway on the journey
I looked downward:
The scene aroused my pity
And my love.
Right o'er the earth
Were many different sections
Or groups of men,
All struggling for one goal.
Their aim? The pinnacle of perfection—
In other words, each tried to save his soul.
I saw one man rise a shade above the others,
And the light of hope was shining from his eyes,
But as I watched, ten thousand jealous people
Stretched out their hands to tear him from his prize.
Back to the earth I flew as quick as lightning,
And the tears of love were streaming down my face,
"Take courage, brother," in his ear I whispered,
And then, thank God, I saw him reach a higher, safer place.

* * *

INDIVIDUALISM AND LIBERTY.

Sir,—Mr. Carey, in your correspondence pages, advocates a union of the best of the individualist and Socialist thought. He does not, however, explain what he means by liberty, and as the individualists differ in their views

as much as individual Socialists, it is necessary that some definition be given before the subject can be discussed between the two parties. Mr. Carey appears to shudder at the thought of giving the State greater control than it at present possesses, and has in mind the breaking of its controlling influence by the establishment of small independent communities in the country. The question at once arises: Would these communities own the land or should we still have private ownership? I once heard Mr. Levy, the editor of the "Individualist," advocate land nationalisation, therefore I can imagine men of his line of thought working with a group of Socialists. I doubt, however, if Mr. Carey would be prepared to oppose private ownership of land. Yet, if it is allowed to remain, how is the liberty of the majority to be obtained? The landlord would still retain the power of forcing thousands to work according to his whim, and of keeping thousands in idleness who wanted to work. He could still insist when selling his land for building purposes that a certain standard of house should be maintained in order to keep up the value of the rest of his property. Would Mr. Carey go to the opposite extreme and say a man could build a log hut if he wished? Many cranks would do so given the liberty, and they object to sanitary inspectors calling to see that they have proper sanitary arrangements. If a family living in a log hut took fever or small-pox, would they be allowed the liberty of moving about in the district and thus spreading the disease, or would the community have the power to restrict their freedom? If liberty is not to be allowed in every sense, what are to be the restrictions? And, without State control, who will enforce them? It would be possible to fill your paper with questions on liberty; therefore, if Mr. Carey has any serious thought of a working agreement between individualists and socialists, it would be well for him to state what kind of liberty he has in view, and what community he seeks to establish.

H. D. Paul.

* * *

THE NEW JEREMIAH.

Sir,—May I submit a few heads of chapters for the new book of Jeremiah, which, in the eternal recurrence of events, is now almost due:—

The New Age—The New Wine—The Old Bottles—The Bursting of the Bottles—The Decay of Old Beliefs, Customs and Usages—The Assertion of New Rights—The Denial of Old Duties—The Attempt to Make Silk Purses out of Sows' Ears—The Failure to Distil Golden Conduct from Leaden Instincts — The New Kilkenny Cats — New Ideals and Schools of Thought Swallowing Each Other—The Intellect Devouring its Own Children—The Abyss of Intellectualism—The Race Retreats upon its Base, the Primitive Instincts — The March Back to Barbarism — Chaos Come Again—The Merciful Curtain of Everlasting Night.

Will Mr. H. G. Wells kindly fill in the details?

W. T. Horn.

British Columbia.

* * *

ON DANCING.

Sir,—We have been incited to our self-conscious elaboration of rhythmic motion by the instinctive or unconscious movements of surrounding nature—tree-tops swaying in the wind, gnats dancing in the evening shade, the silvery shiver of rushes in the stream, the stately gliding measures of the sea upon the sand. But we are not grateful. We do not dance with the dancing woods and waters. We are careful to shut out Nature from the temples we build to Terpsichore. When Wordsworth's heart danced with the daffodils, there was joy in the vegetable kingdom; the whisper went abroad that this condescension was the beginning of better things. But it was merely an incident, isolated and pathetic. Through the night we dance, but heed not the myriad twinkling golden feet of the dancing stars above us. Perhaps we shrink from comparison with the dancing universe: the mighty rhythms of winds and oceans. . . . Well we dance to our own little rhythms, unless the elemental soul of Nature is dead within us. And now and again one of us is born to make captive all the dancing sprites of the wide air and the wheeling spheres, so that they are as living fire in the limbs, and Art has a brief triumph. As for the rest of us, we dance without ideals. We dance to escape from ourselves, our thoughts, from life itself. We dance out of the commonplace into the fantastic, out of daylight into glamour. We dance into a land, where nothing means anything, and silence speaks unutterable things. We dance into the vivid moonlight of mysticism. Words break from their moorings, lest they shackle the fancy. They are dancing, too. The dancing words caress our brains with soft music: halcyon hills and the wet stillness of woods: dawn breaking over dewy meadows in June.

"Callicrates, you have danced my wife away." I take no responsibility for the name; but was it not a historic utterance? Or is it merely a conversational commonplace of ancient Greeks, a dim memory of the old Greek grammar? In any case it opens up vistas. We dance into the land of romance—a land whose morals are notoriously lax. We tear up the labels of the staid old kingdom we have left behind, and then—communism of hearts and dance—dance your dream to its finish, and the devil take the lame ones!

Who said, "Morning after"? Well, pay for what you take, and don't try and dance down Fleet Street.

Arthur E. Colman.

* * *

SACERDOTAL PRIVILEGES.

Sir,—Since (or before) the days of that eminent religionist Timoklês (of Lucian's masterpiece, "The Zeus in Tragedy") the vituperative method, it is sufficiently well known, has been in very special esteem with the supporters of every "religious," and, in particular, of every ecclesiastical and sacerdotal institution or privilege. "Anti-Cant"—may I suggest to him the propriety of easy substitution of "Pro-Cant" for his non-de-plume? — evidently has not degenerated from the immortal Lucianic type. It is not for him, therefore, but for those of the readers of The New Age who (perchance not having read my previous remarks upon this most significant subject) might be induced by his altogether unfounded assumptions, and by his vehement and calculated misrepresentations of my reasons and purpose, to think that he may have some sort of ground for them (see his latest achievement in the peculiar controversial art in The New Age of March 30), that I reaffirm my protest to have been inspired solely and entirely by humanitarian considerations. As for my credo, it is completely secular, and it does not go beyond this world. So the champion of Sacerdotal Privileges and Immunity vainly seeks to establish any connexion, on my part, with the "Anti-Convent lecturers," whom he is so eager to talk about and vilify.

He is equally at sea, when he chooses to assume that I have been influenced by "The Awful Adventures of Maria Monk." I have read (long ago) that terrible story—it may be fact or fiction so far as my means of information go—as I have read much more recent narratives of escaped religieuses. But I assure my antagonist my conceptions, as well as my convictions, have been acquired from more certain sources—from History and from Reason. Constance de Beverley, in "Marmion," condemned to the In Pace (or, rather, In Pacem)—condemned to be perpetually immured in the blocked-up cells as punishment for attempted flight—is no mere poetic or romancist invention. If reason and universal experience were not sufficient monitors of the possibilities of the results of unscrupulous ambition and of unbridled power, yet the innumerable, authentic, undoubted records to be found in special histories bear ample witness to the dreadful actualities of secret and privileged institutions. To attempt to deny or to dispute, by sophistry or subterfuge, these facts is to attempt to falsify all history, whether it be political or whether it be ecclesiastical.

"Anti-Cant" is very anxious to make it appear that I "slander unnamed nuns," and am making "malignant attacks on the [sexual] morality of convents." I have done nothing of the kind. I simply raised a protest against the continued singular exemption of these conventual establishments from the Government inspection to which all "secular" institutions and establishments more or less have now happily to submit. I have written not a word as to sexual or as to other immorality. My remarks, of set purpose, have been confined to the general statement of an indisputable fact—that where there is no sort of Government or popular control, there (from the very nature of the case, and as all human experience proves), at all events, gross abuses of powers inevitably occur, even if they may possibly be not normal and constant. One question remains to be answered. If these privileged establishments are so much above and beyond all suspicion, why the furious opposition on the part of sacerdotal authorities to inspection, and why so tremendous vituperation of the innocent advocates of it?

An Eclectic Philosopher.

* * *

ROYALTY AT THE BOAT RACE.

Sir,—Mr. Joseph Saint comments on the fact that, on the occasion of the University boat-race, Hammersmith Bridge was closed for some considerable time after the boats had passed. He says: "It was stated that the bridge was being kept closed until the Prince of Wales, who had followed the race, had returned." By whom was that stated? Exactly the same thing was done last year, much to the inconvenience of your humble servant. No royalty was following the race on that occasion, so far as I know. I did not inquire the reason; but, with my experience of the boat-race I can imagine that the police had certain excellent reasons. But, then, I have no particular grudge against Royalty, and am only An Ordinary Sinner.

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