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

New Series. Vol. X. No. 11. THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 1912. [Registered at G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] THREEPENCE.

CONTENTS.

Subscriptions to the NEW AGE are at the following rates :—

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE worst feature of the labour unrest, and a feature which threatens to transform unrest into an uglier word, is the misunderstanding, actual or pretended, that prevails regarding its causes. It was to be expected that papers like the "Standard" and the "Daily Express" should vex their readers' minds and corrupt their tastes with mixed metaphors concerning the Red Peril. (A Prebendary of Bath, in the "Standard," for example, described the virus of Socialism as sweeping people into its net.) The "Times" also might be expected to find some far-fetched explanation, geographically adapted to the somewhat wandering minds of its staple readers. "For the first time," we are told, "numbers of our working men have imbibed the essentially un-English principles of Continental Socialism and Continental Secularism." Even the Archbishop of Canterbury is liable to err in social matters, being, indeed, as little infallible, though rather more pontifical, than the Pope of Rome. "The prospect of internecine strife," he says—meaning strikes and lock-outs—is "a spectre which we earnestly believe to be the creation of disordered brains and poisoned pens." All these journals and persons are, we say, expected to be at sea on these subjects; but the world in general does not expect that the "Daily News," under the ægis of the God-fearing Cadburys and Rowntrees, should betray not merely ignorance of economics, but malice ill-disguised against the objects of the Labour movement. The world does not expect this of the "Daily News" for the same reason that many of the public (including poor old Dr. Clifford in his lyrical dotage) swallow Mr. Lloyd George with grateful upturned eyes—the association of religious phraseology with political chicanery is not yet perfectly well known to public opinion. Nevertheless, a few more examples of deliberate suppression, distortion and malice on the part of the "Daily News," provided they continue to be held up to public gaze by the "Eye-Witness" and ourselves, will convince everybody worth convincing that the "Daily News" and its fellows are as completely in the capitalist and caucus ring as any of the admittedly privately interested journals.

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We have in mind at this moment three recent instances of the perfidy of the "Daily News." Some few weeks ago we announced in advance of any journal the delayed appointment of a new Insurance Commissioner in the person of a recent director of one of the industrial assurance companies. The circumstances attending this appointment were felt to be so fishy, that Mr. Lloyd George himself would not venture to announce it while Parliament was still sitting. On the very last day of the session, almost in its last hour, in reply to an arranged question, Mr. Lloyd George did admit that he was hoping to be able to secure a representative on the Commission of the industrial assurance concerns. He did not, however, inform Parliament that not only did he hope to do this, but, in fact, he had succeeded weeks before. He also mentioned that the difficulty in the appointment lay in the fact that the salary offered by the Government was less than the salaries already paid to these directors; but he did not state, what he knew quite well at the time, that in the particular case of the appointment he had secretly made, the compensation for the reduced salary would be paid by the company—gladly! All this, however, we did state and well in advance of the public announcement that Mr. Neill, of the Pearl Assurance Company, had been added to the English Commissioners. But did our announcement and specific statements put the "Daily News" on its guard in the interests of the public? Not at all. No comment on the job was made. As Mr. Lloyd George had calculated, the appointment was duly chronicled without a single word of protest, as dozens and scores of his jobs have already been. The organ of political Nonconformity proved itself again a real friend of corruption.

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The second instance concerns the announcement of the startling figures of the railwaymen's ballot for a strike. Chiefly as a result of its publication in the "Daily Mail"—the least partisan of journals in its

news service (we say nothing of its views)—the fact is now well known that one of the chief railwaymen's unions returned a ballot in favour of a fresh strike and against accepting the new Commission of 8,015 to 600, or over 13 to 1. That fact, had it been as well known in August as it is now, would have proved our contention that the leaders were deliberately selling their men in closing the strike and accepting the Commission. Even coming as it did, the light it threw on the whole situation was lurid. No journal professing the smallest interest in the Labour movement could fail to comment on its enormous significance. Yet the "Daily News" not only refrained from comment—which may be accounted for by sheer stupidity—but its publication of the news was perfunctory and obscure as if it would fain conceal the fact altogether. For this attitude neither stupidity nor inadvertence is a sufficient explanation. The third instance, however, puts the matter beyond any doubt.

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On Saturday last the "Daily News" published an editorial under the title of "Railways Booming," in which complete jubilation was expressed on account of increase of profits made by the railways during the last half-year. It appears that in spite of the strike, the disaffection of the men and the general dislocation of the carrying trade, the receipts of the companies were increased by nearly two per cent. over the figures of the corresponding six months of last year. As a result of this the dividends to be expected for the period now closing range from ¼ to ½ per cent. in advance of the dividend paid last year, which itself was considerably in advance of previous years. In short, the proof is now certain that the railways were better able to afford in August last a general rise in wages than ever they have been in their history. Yet it will be remembered that one of the first conditions dictated to the Government by the companies was that in return for the new Conciliation Boards, railway rates and fares should be legally raised—on the plea that otherwise the small margin of profit (exactly equal, by the way, to the total wages bill) would be swallowed up. And long before that legal countenance is employed, the companies have already raised fares and freights by 2½ to 10 per cent. The public have not only, therefore, contributed to the enhanced profits on the railways during the last half-year without the satisfaction of seeing the men's wages raised a pennypiece; but for the purely conjectural and highly-doubtful rise in wages now being granted on paper, the public is to be mulcted again of an additional railway tax. Nobody pretends that the public will get better service for its increased payments. Nobody who knows anything of railway management will believe that the total wages bill of the companies will be increased. All that will be increased is the dividend paid to railway shareholders. That is the net result of the agitation. Commenting on this successful piracy—the word is not too strong—the "Daily News" remarks: The figures "will give satisfaction alike to shareholders, workers and the general public." What more could railway magnates demand of a paid organ?

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Before proceeding to offer once more the true explanation of the present labour unrest, we may as well present our main credential—which is that we understand also the view of the governing and possessing classes. It is essential in our opinion that anybody who offers advice in public matters in a disputed affair should take pains to realise the grounds of the contending points of view. Socialists, we freely admit, have often ruined their case by an obvious misunderstanding of the case against them. Capitalists, on the other hand, rarely have the patience to examine the Socialist view. Thus it comes about that the two contending views play a fruitless game of blind man's buff. Now the employers' attitude is to our minds no less simple and—in one sense—no less natural and honourable than the attitude of the men. The idea that employers *like* to pay low wages is melodramatic nonsense. We give employers credit for heartily wishing that their employees could be made better off. Within the limits fixed, as they think, by their duty to themselves, employers as a whole, in fact, do the best they can for their men. What they desire above all things is that wages and the general conditions of workmen should be improved *without reducing profits*. They believe, moreover, that this is quite possible, and honest journals like the "Spectator" agree with them. If production could be enormously increased and new markets could as constantly be discovered, partial employment would disappear and every workman might be engaged full time and at high wages. Profits at the same time would be increased and everybody, therefore, be satisfied. Confess now, capitalists, that this is the theory you entertain.

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We cannot in these notes demonstrate at length and conclusively that this dream is utterly vain. The whole economic argument of Socialism, however, goes to prove that such an ideal is untenable as well in theory as in practice. But we can point to one obvious fact which for the casual student should be sufficient. Suppose that fifty years ago this theory had been held (as indeed it was) and that the desideratum was the increase of production and the expansion of foreign markets. Could a more complete fulfilment of the conditions of success have been anticipated than the industrial history of the last half-century has supplied? In this experimental period of fifty years the powers of production have been at least quintupled, and new foreign markets have been opened at the same rate. Yet for all that the relative position of workmen has been made worse instead of better. Nay, to take only the experience of the last decade, with what the "Times" calls the "unsurpassed material prosperity of the nation as a whole," wages have not only fallen relatively but absolutely, both in their nominal average amount and still more in their real value or purchasing power. If this has been the effect on wages of an epoch of unsurpassed production and expansion, what other better effect can be anticipated of a similar epoch now in sight? Into the economic causes of this effect it is impossible for us to enter outside a treatise on economics—a superfluous task, since it has many times been performed—but the fact we have just stated is, at least, evidence presumptive that from increased production and new markets alone there is no hope for labour.

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Turning to the other side of the question, the attitude of labour, it is clear that labour's only chance lay in establishing for itself a monopoly of one of the elements of production. Of the three factors of production, two—land and credit (or capital)—were monopolies of the wealthy classes; the remaining factor, labour, was in the hands of the workmen themselves. As by their possession of two of the three factors in wealth-production the wealthy classes could command rent and interest, so, if once they could combine, the working classes might command by virtue of their possession of the monopoly of labour a considerable share of the total product in the form of wages. Unfortunately, however, for them, combination among workmen was a much more difficult business than combination among the other classes. Obstacles existed not only from the natural enmity of the two monopolies which felt their power threatened, but from the ignorance prevailing amongst the men themselves. The enemies of trade unionism are to be discovered quite as often among workmen as among capitalists. Nevertheless, in blundering fashion and by noble assiduity, a trade union movement was actually built up, powerful enough, if not to extract the true value of its monopoly of labour, at least to give promise of one day extracting it. Therewith began also the phenomenon of "labour unrest" with which we are now so familiar. At the outset the trade union movement confined itself to what is called industrial action. By direct negotiation with employers, by strikes and the like, the unions attempted to force employers to share the product of industry more equitably. The Old Trade Unionism, in fact, hoped and believed that by industrial action alone, labour would succeed in exerting its proper pull (to use

Mr. J. A. Hobson's phrase) and in securing its fair share of wealth. This method, to the infinite disgust of reformers, broke down and became as a single instrument discredited, in the early nineties of last century. At the conclusion of the great engineering strike, when the best organised and most intelligent workmen had been routed by the employers, Mr. Tom Mann, at Leeds, pronounced the last word on the Old Unionism and the first on the New. Men, he said, we must strike again, but the next time, like matches, only on the (ballot) box. The era of political unionism had dawned.

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From 1893 onwards the history of labour has been political rather than industrial. Blunderingly as always, but pertinaciously as always, the Labour movement built up for itself a political party which entered the Parliament of 1900 some forty strong. We are certainly not disposed to underrate the services rendered by the men who constructed this new instrument of Labour. Reckoned from the inside, no less than from the outside, it was a gigantic achievement of which the authors (Mr. MacDonald prominent among them) have every right to be proud. But exactly as the Old Unionist leaders (except for men like Mr. Mann and Mr. Tillett) were unwilling to recognise the futility and failure of the method and instrument they had laboured to construct, even when its failure stared them in the face, so it is very human in the present political Labour leaders to be disposed to deny that the political instrument, alone, has failed. Manifestly, however, to observers like ourselves, the political instrument by itself has failed no less completely than the strike by itself. The method of the strike, employed singly, resulted in the fiasco of the engineers. The political method, exclusively employed between 1900 and 1910, has left the workman with a sovereign in wages whose purchasing power is no more than eighteen shillings. In addition, speeding up has been intensified, unemployment and pauperism, however disguised, have multiplied, and, at the end of all labours' efforts, Mr. Lloyd George is driven, amid the dithyrambs of idiots, to concoct legislation to supplement the perpetually declining values of wages.

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Now we put it not merely to Socialists (we do not play to the gallery), but to honest men of every party and of none: What is Labour to do now? Industrialism by itself has failed to turn the ebb of wages; political action by itself has no less completely failed. Are wages, or are wages not, to be raised? Capitalists on the one hand assure us—with unsurpassed prosperity booming in their ears—that for their part, while anxious to raise wages, they simply cannot without ruin to themselves. On the other hand, workmen are growing daily more certain that, without loss of life, not to say self-respect, honour, pride in nationality and other virtues, they cannot see wages further reduced. On the contrary, wages must be raised. If industrialism and political action each by itself has failed to raise wages, both methods must be tried together. Political action must be intensified, industrialism on a still wider scale must be resumed contemporaneously. It may be that, in this titanic struggle for its life, labour will pull about our ears the whole fabric of society. Though the tragedy will be tremendous, what honest man dare say that the resolution of labour is not honourable? Not life alone, but an even more valuable treasure is at stake for thirty millions of our fellow-countrymen: a life of self-respect. Again we put it to every citizen professing an interest in public affairs: Are the wage-earners of England to have their wages raised, or will you drive them to the desperate ruin of our national civilisation? For ourselves we say frankly that, fall edge, fall back, the only tolerable outcome of the present labour unrest is a victory for labour or the irretrievable ruin of England.

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We confess that the prospects of driving the men to desperation are growing rather than diminishing. Such lying, wilful misunderstanding, provocation and childishness are displayed on the capitalist side—in its Press chiefly—that we should not wonder if the men do not eventually spew these creatures of their masters out of their mouths. We have seen in the case of the Insurance Bill—the most patent narcotic against "unrest" ever devised—how the Press of both parties rallied to its support. What matter that Mr. Lloyd George was as ignorant of his subject as any schoolboy; what matter that he jobbed his Bill into an Act in a fashion which, if it had taken place in America, our Press would have universally cried out upon. The fact that Parliament under Mr. Lloyd George is little short of being the most corrupt assembly in the world counts for nothing with the bottle-washers and bed-chamberlains of the ruling clique in Fleet Street. The disparity between popular opinion and Parliamentary and Press opinion on the Insurance Bill has been a lesson in corruption that the public will never forget. Save for journals the number of which can be counted on the fingers of one hand, every journal in London wilfully misrepresented public opinion in the interests of Mr. Lloyd George's Bill. Why? Undoubtedly because the governing clique on both sides had assured them that the Bill had ulterior objects and must be passed. It is not likely that Mr. Astor's little pet, Mr. Garvin, would have supported the Bill and forbidden the Lords to save themselves for ever by throwing it out unless Mr. Astor himself, in the commanding voice of American dollars, had assented to this course. As a matter of fact, it can be clearly shown that we owe the Bill entirely to foreigners: Mr. Lloyd George is Welsh, Mr. Garvin is Irish, Mr. Astor is American, Mr. Carnegie is a Scotch-American, Mr. Cadbury is a Quaker; where is the Englishman who has responsibly created or passed the measure? For all this foreign aggression on English liberties our Press has not one word of protest until (as in the "Times" and "Daily Mail") protest is discreetly too late. Then, and not till then, for party purposes the Act is denounced in the hope (and as we believe, the certainty) that the public itself will kill it and credit the Unionists with its death.

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But if in this matter of palliatives—narcotics rather—the Press has betrayed Labour, manifestly in the matter of the prevalent "unrest," the Press is out to do still more. For nearly five years THE NEW AGE has now been in existence—at a tremendous cost to its founders, but that is no matter. During that period, in season and out of season, we have expressed the view that wages must be raised if civil strife in England is to be averted. Long before a great strike actually appeared we warned our readers that it was coming. Information as well as reflection told us that with the failure of the Labour party to preserve its independence in Parliament, a new industrial movement would be started in every union. All the vigorous young men of that new movement were in close touch with THE NEW AGE; and we had and have in addition the support of first-rate statesmen whose names, if we cared to disclose them, would impress snobs. Week after week we issued explanations, protests, general and particular challenges to well-known publicists to debate the new industrial movement with us, either in our pages or in their own journals. The problem, we said, was to raise wages. How did publicists and statesmen think it could be done? With the exception of the "Spectator" not a journal in the country replied to us. You may search the files of Fleet Street for a reference even to the fact that THE NEW AGE was issuing any warnings at all. That, however, was no particular concern of ours, nor would it be of any public importance if when discussion is declined the matter ends. But it does not. The only merit of discussion is that it anticipates and possibly dispenses us from the necessity of a more primitive form of dispute. A frank discussion two years, or even one year, ago would certainly have taken the edge off the present unrest, perhaps have led to its quiet settlement. But seeing its spokesmen boycotted, what was the new movement to do but put on its armour? Capitalists have refused to discuss with us; they must now prepare to discuss with militant men.

It must be admitted—and we state it with pleasure—that the militancy of trade unionists was never more pronounced than it is to-day. The columns given over to reports of the daily doings of trade unionists multiply. No sooner is the seamen's strike temporarily settled than the railwaymen are out. The railwaymen are followed by the cotton operatives. The cotton operatives will be followed by the miners. It is a thousand pities that these outbreaks, instead of occurring in succession should not have occurred simultaneously. But the lesson is being learned that sectional strikes are useless. Even when successful, Peter is robbed to pay Paul. The new industrial unionism depends upon federation. The "Times" may opine that this is Syndicalism borrowed from the Continent; but actually it is simply commonsense. With the doctrines of Syndicalism, as distinct from its method, English trade unionism has, as far as we can learn, no sympathy. A successful General Strike might, as a matter of fact, require to be supported by a theory of industrial ownership, but the theory would furl its sails as soon as the cargo was brought into harbour. The object of the present trade federation is to raise wages first to the point at which they stood in 1900 and from which they have fallen some 17 per cent., and only secondarily to raise them beyond that level. The new spirit of the men manifested in a thousand acts of reckless admirable courage gives us hope that at least their minimum demands will be satisfied. When they are prepared to starve together rather than submit they will have won.

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On the other hand, we do not disguise from ourselves the fact that the masters have a strong position. Their syndicalism, by the way, differs from the Syndicalism of the Continent in one respect only: it has been successful. Further than that, they are organised even better than the men. In Lancashire, for example, unionists are disputing the refusal of three members to rejoin the union. The masters, on the other hand, are perfectly united. Sauce for the goose, dear Press, is sauce for the gander. Beyond this passive resistance, however, the masters with the support of the governing classes are preparing an attack upon industrialism all along the line. With the support of the Government, we repeat. How is that possible, you ask? Surely it is one of the stereotyped exaggerations of Socialist writers! By no means. We would that we could say that it were. But the evidence in its support is overwhelming. On the occasion of every great strike during the last fifteen months the Government has consistently and openly supported the masters against the men. Always at the very moment when the men were about to win, Sir George Askwith or some other Government person has been authorised to bring pressure to bear—on the men. The pressure, it must be observed, has never been on the masters save nominally. In actual fact the masters have always been allowed to recoup themselves and more for any loss to which they have been put or threatened. Witness the dock strike, the seamen's strike, and the railway strike. In each of these three cases the masters have positively profited by the strike!

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The head and front of offence in the new movement is obviously trade unionism. To discredit unionism, to clip its wings and ultimately to destroy it are, therefore, the main motives in the attack upon it. Two planks in the platform of unionism are, as everybody knows, the doctrines of the Minimum Wage and the Eight Hours Day. If, therefore, either or both of these can be defeated, the prestige of trade unionism will be, temporarily, at any rate, destroyed. Regarding the Eight Hours Day, it is singular with what maladroitness the Government has seized the opportunity offered by its own nadir of unpopularity to intensify its own discredit by attempting to repeal the Eight Hours Day of the Thames shipbuilding industry. In no public interest, we are convinced, is the Government acting in this matter. From a private business point of view, the Admiralty, no doubt, is justified in buying in the cheapest market; but from a public point of view national welfare is superior to every consideration of profit. It is enough to weary saints to see a Government squandering millions on new unnecessary officials and at the same time scraping the bones of workmen of a few thousand pounds. Public opinion as well as labour opinion has agreed that it is in public interests that men should work no more than eight hours a day. If under these comparatively humane conditions public work cannot be produced as cheaply as work under worse conditions, the business of a public government is to refuse to patronise the relatively sweating shop and to stick to its own conditions. The refusal of the Thames workmen to accept a nine hours' day even at the bribe of Government work does their public spirit credit. But what can be said of a Government that puts this bribe before them? The observer must be blind who does not at least surmise that the Government is also in the armour ring against trade unionism. We might add to this the episode of the miners' demand for a Minimum Wage. But an even more flagrant example is that of the Lancashire cotton owners, with their attack on the very principle of trade unionism. Here again it is a bribe that is being offered to unions to forfeit their independence. Give up, the masters say through Sir George Askwith to the men, give up this hostility to non-unionists and in return we promise you a long overdue increase of wages. Dilly, dilly, come and be killed! Writing before the result is announced, we cannot say whether the unions will reject the bribe as the Thames workmen have done. Starvation stares them in the face, and there is none but themselves to help. It may be that they will accept the offer of Sir George the Peacemaker. But the Peace so made will last but a little while.

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Meanwhile, we ask our readers to accept neither our word nor anybody's word that the conspiracy against the working-classes is or is not taking place, but to examine the matter for themselves. The method of doing so is simple enough: put yourself alternately in the place of the men and of the masters and ask what, under the circumstances, you yourselves would do. In the masters' place, doubtless, private minded persons would use all their advantages to defeat the men at every turn. In the men's place the same persons would plot to defeat the masters. That contention being duly mensurated, the plans of campaign and the respective forces duly appreciated and weighed, the statesman must then intervene either to avert the struggle or to secure a victory for the public out of it. Supposing that it is too late to avert the struggle (and no party or even party leader shows any sign of knowing how to begin to do so), the question to ask is: On which side would the balance of victory bring the greatest gain to the community at large? If in the struggle of Capital against Labour, Capital wins—as it so often has—the distribution of wealth will grow more and more unequal. English millionaires will be as plentiful as American millionaires. Does the public want to breed millionaires at the cost of an enslaved, pauperised proletariat? If, on the other hand, Labour wins, wealth will—slowly—tend to better distribution. Millionaires will be impossible; but so, too, will be the slums and workhouses in which millionairism is bred. The choice before the public, in short, is between men and millionaires. We cannot have both. Choose! For some years to come (such is the slow pace at which labour moves) the choice, perhaps fortunately, is not irrevocable. It is with us as it was once with Charlemagne: "Whilst I live," he cried, "it is but mere fooling; but I grieve for my grandchildren."

HONOURS ARE EASY.

England, your name and honour once were dear!
Even now your name some simple hearts enthrills.
Those who abused a title given to Beer
Now have their hour—a title goes to Pills.

CHARLES WHITE.

Foreign Affairs.

By S. Verdad.

THE rise to power in England of our Philistine middle-class has naturally brought into greater prominence the worst middle-class vice—to wit, cant. This vice partakes of the nature of idealism: the desire to be left untroubled by awkward facts, a disinclination to face reality. We find all this, as we might expect, reflected in our toadying Press, Liberal, Conservative, and Labour (for, of course, our own Labour party, like the German Social Democratic party, is merely a lower-middle-class organisation), and in the utterances of our public men. When our editors and publicists start out on a canting expedition I confess that I am unable, in many instances, to decide how far they actually believe in their own nonsense, and how far they are simply talking nonsense in order to soothe and lull to rest the great soul of Hampstead or Clapham Common or Battersea Rise. This is truly an interesting psychological problem, to which, in my less busy moments, I devote myself with a great deal of zest.

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Yet of all the cant with which I have been tortured, the cant that appeared in the Press generally on January 3 was the most appalling. You remember the ghastly spectacle, of course: those New Year messages from prominent Ministers about Germany. Viscount Haldane hopes "that the future holds in store for two great nations, Germany and Great Britain, better and more intimate relations than have obtained in the past." Mr. McKenna says that "Happily there is no external cause for serious dissension, no inevitable issue upon which sooner or later, rival interests must meet and clash." Mr. Buxton believes that "This country has no quarrel with Germany. We wish her well (!) because her prosperity must be reflected in our own, and because the prosperity of nations is the best guarantee of peace."

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There's the tradesman for you! Give him plenty of "prosperity"—i.e., opportunities of exploiting his workmen—and he will be happy. Haldane, too, and his "more intimate relations." And McKenna, with his "no cause for serious dissension," which is simply an untruth.

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Often and often, when I meet Continental friends of mine, we chuckle over this sort of doltish flummery. But at the present time it ought to be stopped. I object to it because, in the first place, it is inartistic, and because, in the second place, it is misleading. There are many things about the Germans which I admire, and I hope they may get on. But I don't want them over here just yet; and when I visit their country I don't want to be confronted with the swelled-chestedness which inevitably results from what they regard, and very justly, as the symptoms of English weakness shown in utterances such as those I have quoted.

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Who ever finds this sort of cant in any other country in Europe? We are never troubled with it in Russia, for example, and in France, M. Léon Bourgeois and his followers form a small and unheeded party. How could it be otherwise, in view of the pugnacious French character? And in Germany, of course, all such wish-wash is kept severely within bounds.

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If modern England were a really sporting nation the truth could be told. There is bad feeling between this country and Germany, and it is due to more than trade rivalry. The sub-conscious feeling at the bottom of it all is simply this: One nation or the other must become master of Europe. Why not face this fact in a sporting fashion, if we are a nation of sportsmen, and let the best man win? Because, I suppose, we cannot expect to find many of our sporting instincts left after a century of base and depressing industrialism. Germany, let it be remembered, is not yet an industrial country.

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Now for a word about the plans of the German Government after the coming Reichstag elections. It has not been overlooked, I hope, that even if the Socialists come back a hundred and fifty strong, the authorities will not be greatly perturbed. The Reichstag has so few powers. It cannot turn out the Chancellor, who, as I have often pointed out, is not responsible to it, but to the Kaiser, as is the case also with all his colleagues. It may hang up a Budget, but it cannot indefinitely postpone the collection of taxes. It may merely delay legislation and cause some pin-pricking annoyance to those in authority. For this reason the Government may take steps to settle itself more firmly in the saddle by dissolving the Reichstag again and ordering new elections to be held. In such a case the new elections would not be fought on any internal subject, but much more likely on the naval question. The plan to have a big navy is popular in Germany, even among the Social Democrats themselves, as they will ready admit when not speaking for publication, and with another Navy Law the rivalry between this country and Germany would become accentuated.

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Let it be observed that Germany is still pushing forward her influence in Turkey. She desires nothing more nor less than the complete financial control of the Ottoman Empire. She does not want merely to lend money to the Porte: she wants concessions for all kinds of things, like the Mannesmann Brothers in Morocco; and the Bagdad Railway plan, to take one example, was almost a stroke of genius, and gave unending trouble for a while to our Foreign Office people. Despite this and other good business propositions, however, taxation in Germany at present falls to a very large extent on the commercial classes, while land is let off lightly. Hence the middle-class Parliamentary movement in Germany, resembling that which took place in England in the early part of last century. The aim of the Social Democrats is not so much to improve the lot of the workmen as to improve the lot of the middle-classes and to tax the agriculturists. This is the feature of modern German politics which is of particular interest to Englishmen, or should be. If the middle-classes get their full share of Parliamentary government in Germany, as they have already got it here, then the transition of agricultural Germany into industrial Germany will become much more rapid, and, in addition, the land will suffer, through high taxation, in order to bolster up the industrial system. The more complete exploitation of the workmen will then be only a matter of time. The forms of State insurance now in operation in Germany have already succeeded to a considerable extent in building up a fine foundation of slavery upon which an out-and-out industrial system will no doubt be erected in due time.

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Turkey is still at sixes and sevens, and the influence of the Committee steadily wanes. The Committee, indeed, hangs together only because there is not, so far as can be seen in the meantime, any alternative form of government. The Opposition parties, if they were placed in office, would very likely make as hopeless a mess of things as the Committee has done. Mahmud Shefket has retired into the background rather too much of late, and I hardly think that he is now sufficiently powerful to act as a military dictator pending some solution of the question as to what Turkey's next form of government should be. A large proportion of the population would be by no means sorry to see Abdul Hamid back in Constantinople. This, however, would not be calculated to please several of the Ambassadors there, for the ex-Sultan could beat them all round at intriguing. In the meantime the Italians are making no serious attempt to push forward in Tripoli. The war is proving a costly undertaking, and peace negotiations will be willingly entered into by both parties as soon as practicable.

The Third Home Rule Bill.

By Jack Collings Squire.

THE Home Rule Bill has a long drive along a dark road in front of it, and the wise man will observe the principle of "ne temere" when it comes to prophesying what may happen to it by reason of the irruptions of highwaymen or the defective vision of the driver or the unskilful packing of the load. We have not yet seen the Bill and cannot predict with certainty how the country will receive it. But it is at least true that thus far there has been very little excitement over the question, and men who went through the struggles of the 'eighties must be wondering what on earth has happened to the English people. At present, in fact, it seems as though the country is almost bored with Home Rule. The frenzy of anti-Irish feeling has died down with the disappearance of violence and disorder in Ireland and the growth in England of a younger generation which has been inured to the conception of Home Rule from its youth up. Whilst the agrarian revolution produced in Ireland by the Land Act has abated discontent in that country, Unionist opposition here has been much weakened by the fact that there is no longer a big body of Irish landlords afraid of being handed over to the "tender mercies of a Parliament at St. Stephen's Green." Which way the wind has been blowing was shown during that abortive Conference in the autumn of 1910, when the rumour that the Liberal and Tory leaders were trying to arrive at an arrangement for devolution was quite sufficient to set half the Tory Press to the performance of what somebody called at the time "unparalleled feats of logophagy." The result is that the present campaign is one of exceeding dullness. Orators are not exhilarating and audiences are not to be exhilarated. Liberal speakers have said scarcely a word worth listening to; in Nationalist quarters the most notable thing that has happened is the refusal by the inhabitants of an Irish village (at the suggestion of the League) of Christmas blankets dispensed by Lord Oranmore and Browne; and on the Tory side there has been a hollow ring about most of the speeches, and the treasonable and anarchical declarations of the Orangemen that they will take "extreme measures" against the new Government have excited more derision than anger. It looks, in short, as though people have come to the conclusion that Home Rule never was so important as they thought it, and that it is now less important than it was.

Nevertheless, the electors will have to form an opinion on Home Rule, and it seems quite likely that they may be called upon to vote on it. In a month or two all the old arguments will be going full swing. We shall be afflicted with screaming posters conveying either nothing or an exaggerated something: "Mr. Asquith's Grave Plea for Ireland," "Mr. Lloyd George demands Justice for Ireland," "Empire-breaking Bill Introduced," "Empire Sold to Germany," and so forth. Parliament will be at it for one year, probably for two, possibly for three years. Out of the welter something will come. What will it matter?

The Empire argument is now and always was rubbish. Nobody proposes to hand naval or military control over to the Irish. They have now just as much power and more inducement to "intrigue with Britain's enemies" and prepare to receive invaders with open arms as they will have when they control their own drainage and contract their own debts. For what it is worth a certain amount of Colonial and American feeling will be placated by the grant. If devolution of functions means break-up, the concession of a county council to Hertfordshire fractured the Empire in the same way as would the concession of a subordinate Parliament to Ireland. As far as Irish sentiment is concerned we are not likely to be the losers. A good deal of cant is talked about by both sides as to Irish loyalty and disloyalty. Whenever a spirited Irish Bumble refuses to put the symbol of the Union on the top of a pole and prefers to put it in the fire, one party always takes it as an infallible proof that a hatred of the faintest shred of an English connection reigns in every Hibernian breast. On the other hand, just because the King gets a decent reception from Dublin street crowds we are smothered in gush about the Irishman's "passionate instinct of loyalty" and personal affection for the House of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Very probably the ruling family and their advisers, who are sufficiently wily at this sort of thing, will contrive when Ireland has "self-government" to strengthen the ties between the island and the Throne by getting one of the Royal Princes to assume the name of "Prince Patrick" or "Duke of Gilhooly" and sending him over as Viceroy with instructions to smile. They may even arrange a Donnybrook Durbar in order to associate the Throne with the great native traditions.

Impartial outsiders must find it difficult to estimate the probable effects of Home Rule upon Ireland itself in respect of legislation and administration. The papal "Motu Proprio" decree which, although it may not have such menace in it as some people think, is decidedly ill-timed, has to some extent resuscitated the Nonconformist fears of Rome Rule. The apprehension of Nonconformists—especially those of the Wesleyan persuasion—on this point was one of the rocks which stove in Gladstonian Home Rule; and it is coming into sight again. How far these fears may be justified it is really impossible for an honest Englishman to say. When Protestants declare that they fear Catholic persecution it is not sufficient answer to say that Irish Catholics long to embrace their Protestant fellow-creatures, that Mr. Parnell was and Mr. Stephen Gwynn is Protestant, and that Catholic local bodies when appointing town clerks and scavengers display far less bigotry than do the Unionist authorities in the North. If the spirit of Catholicism in Ireland is what it has been in other countries where it has been the dominant creed, it may be taken for granted that there are at least some persons in Ireland who will want Rome to rule the roost in an oppressive manner. On the other hand, those most familiar with Ireland testify to a growing feeling against the interference of the priests in civil matters; whilst, apart altogether from considerations as to the enlightenment, the fairness or unfairness of the mass of Irishmen, there remains the factor of convenience and policy. Oppression of Protestants would kill the conditions from which it arose. Home Rule would be dead, at whatever cost, from the moment that oppression of Protestants began.

A good deal is being said in Tory papers with a disinterested concern for Ireland's welfare of the economic results likely to follow on Home Rule. They urge, with some reason, that the bitterest of Irish grievances is in a fair way to being removed owing to Land Purchase. Landlordism they say (they did not say it in the 'eighties) was doubtless a good excuse for a Home Rule movement. But a British Parliament has swept it away. An Irish Parliament now would find itself less able than a British one to forward the development of Irish industry and commerce, as Ireland will have to stand on her own financial bottom. On the face of it there is something in this. When a Redmondite Chancellor goes a-borrowing he will certainly not get money on as good terms as an English Chancellor, if only for the reason that the money-owning classes here will for a long time have fears that Irish securities are not safe, and that somehow or other a seditious Celtic Government will contrive to repudiate its obligations like San Salvador or Costa Rica, or whoever it was. But the Nationalists are quite confident on the point. They anticipate that their country will indulge in an all-round burst of industrial enterprise by way of celebrating the achievement of Home Rule. As for this, "Time will show," as our epigrammatic Premier would say. Two things are certain. One is that clearly an Irish Parliament will know far better than an English one what the various parts of the country want. Another is that if they can raise money they are, in the eyes of any liberal-minded man, fully entitled to spend it in any way they think fit. And the third is that, even if they do damage themselves economically by carrying on their own domestic government, it is their business and

not ours. If they think the sacrifice worth making they should be at liberty to make it. At all events, for heaven's sake do not let us dogmatise about Ireland's economic future merely because our prejudices incline us to think that one thing or the other is likely to happen.

But in one respect the benefits of Home Rule seem indubitable. The Imperial Parliament is bound to gain by it. The congestion of business argument may be and has been exaggerated. But the fact remains that in recent years two or three weeks every session have, on an average, been spent on specifically Irish business, and the need for taking Ireland into account has elongated the time required for other business. What has been far worse than the congestion of business has been the congestion of members. This phenomenon may be divided into two parts. In the first place, the gross over-representation of Ireland has gone unremedied, and Governments have had neither the desire nor the boldness to reduce it with the demand for Home Rule still active and unsatisfied. In the second place, the presence of a strong body of Irish members set on one thing above all others and willing to frame their Parliamentary actions with the sole object of forwarding the attainment of that thing has had a bad influence on the morale of the House, and has certainly contained within itself the possibility of inflicting serious injustice upon England, Scotland, and Wales. The Government is indefinitely pledged to redistribution simultaneously with Home Rule. The Irish, going by proportion of population, are only entitled to about one-tenth of the membership of the House. That is to say, Ireland should only have sixty or seventy members. At present she has a hundred and three. The mere reduction in itself would be a good thing. It is not yet known on what principle Irish representation at Westminster is to be based in the future. The "in-and-out" system remains the least open to logical overthrow. If, as would seem inevitable, the Government has decided to adopt that, British domestic affairs will be entirely immune from Irish interference. But even if there did remain in the House a body of Irishmen with full powers of voting on all questions, there would at least, when Home Rule had been established, be a reasonable hope that we should henceforth be free from Irish faggot-voting in Parliament. The Irish have, from their own point of view, been perfectly justified in disposing of their votes with an eye on the quid pro quo. But the process has had an air about it that has tended to accentuate the cynicism of politicians inside and outside Parliament. Few men would deny that some of the Nationalist members are in themselves and at heart anything but liberal in their outlook upon life in general and modern social legislation in particular. The inducement to blind, ignorant, or even dishonest voting gone, these men and such as these are likely, whether at Westminster or in Dublin, to develop the same differences of thought and action amongst themselves as prevail among persons not subject to their present overmastering tactical influences.

The real strength of the Home Rule movement in this country is—like the real strength of most movements with any popular hold—based not on grounds of economic or constitutional convenience, but on grounds of sentiment and theory. People who would not be prepared to respond to a dialectician's demand for a definition of justice are prepared to say that it is fair and right that a demand like this, long-continued, steady, and intelligent, should be gratified. The county of Rutland, if it were profoundly, genuinely, and permanently dissatisfied with control from Westminster, would, in the eyes of such people, be entitled to Home Rule as much as Ireland is. Happily, and this is very pleasing to the man who objects to waste, the inhabitants of Rutland have their bread very obviously buttered on one side, and are so fully aware which side that is that they never even realise that there is another side; it is like the dark side of the moon to them. If the English, who habitually apply their rough-hewn principles of justice to the cases of Turks, Poles, and such small deer, keep their heads sufficiently amid the panicky hullaballoo about the "end of the Empire" to let their generous instincts work, Home Rule will very soon be an accomplished fact. But let us labour under no delusions as to the importance of the change. The Irish at present are not a downtrodden race squirming under the ferric heel of a ruthless conqueror. When they have got Home Rule they will not be independent, and, as far as we can tell, they will not experience any great increment of prosperity unless mental prosperity be counted. They have been dissatisfied and we are going to satisfy them.

From the specific point of view of those whose chief concern is with the betterment of the social and economic conditions of the poorer classes throughout the kingdoms, the passage of Home Rule should have its advantages. In Ireland itself, particularly in Belfast, there are the germs of a strong working-class movement, and some of the most active and popular of the young Nationalists are very radical. In this country reaction will lose a red-herring which has done great service in its time. It is possible that the acuter Tories wish to postpone the passage of Home Rule, not so much because they dread Home Rule as because they do not want to lose the Home Rule cry. But if the small cliques of cranks who are crying for Home Rule for Scotland and Wales as well get their way we may have occasion to regret it. It is difficult enough to get legislation through now with capitalists grumbling that they are having to submit to burdens from which their foreign competitors are free. What if we have four Governments at home, each afraid to move, say, towards restricting the hours of labour in a particular trade until the others do? A terrible prospect of inter-Governmental negotiation and procrastination opens up. Ireland by itself does not so much matter, her conditions being so very much different from ours. But even here difficulties may be foreseen should British statesmen, some time or other in the distant future, decide to do something for the agricultural labourer. Suppose—for any example will do—there was a general desire here to fix a minimum wage for agricultural labourers; and suppose in Ireland there was no such desire. Until we know the scope and limitations of the self-government that is to be conferred upon Ireland we cannot judge how wide an area of legislation will be thus affected. But it seems only too certain that there are difficulties of this kind ahead. Apart from this, the Irish cannot conceivably be so great a nuisance to us in the future as they have been in the past.

The Peril of Large Organisations.

By Arthur J. Penty.

I.

IT is one of the signs of the times that Socialists are not so enamoured of large organisations as they were. A decade ago it was the rankest heterodoxy to doubt the benefits which were to accrue to society from their development. The organisers of trusts were then looked upon as unconscious benefactors of mankind, who, by strangling individualism, were making possible the Socialist state of the future. To-day the outlook is not so clear. Apart from transport, gas and water supply, and electric lighting, no one has come forward who is able to formulate a scheme for nationalising the trusts. It is dawning upon social reformers that the task of getting the trusts out of the hands of their organisers is not so simple as it at first appeared. For with the growth of trusts follows the loss of liberty of the citizen. Mr. Hilaire Belloc affirms that the trustification of industry is leading not to the social millennium of reformers, but to the servile state, and no Socialist has yet succeeded in disproving his position.

It is now generally admitted that certain things are better under small organisations. In the crafts and the arts, and all kinds of production in which taste and close personal attention are important, it is conceded that such industries would, "under Socialism," be better

organised under a system of small workshops; and there are a few who would admit that these small workshops should be controlled by gilds; but this is as far as we have got. The large organisation is still believed in for the major part of our social activities. They are admitted to be full of defects. But we are told they are to be revolutionised throughout. Exactly how is left to our imagination to find out. It is therefore the purpose of these articles to demonstrate that the really fundamental defects of large industrial organisations are inherent in their nature and cannot be eradicated, and will only disappear with the destruction of the organisations themselves. It is my contention that Adam Smith was right when he argued that banking only could be managed successfully by limited liability companies, and that the Fabian Society are wrong in dismissing this idea as an obsolete eighteenth century notion. For, as a matter of fact, no limited company has ever attempted to manage any industry. They do not set out to manage: they set out to exploit industry. And this is a fundamentally different thing. A limited company can successfully exploit an industry, for it can make a corner in the market by reason of the capital at its command. But that is not what we understand by managing an industry. For it produces evil results. How many examples can be brought forward of an industry which has passed into the control of limited companies and has not deteriorated in the quality of the goods it produces, and in the technical skill and economic position of the actual workers? But if one can, it will be because of some special circumstance, as may perhaps be the case of a company making some special machinery which found a market only through technical excellence. But it certainly is not so in companies which deal direct with the general public.

Now I am quite prepared to admit the convenience which often results from large organisations, especially in the retail trades. There is no denying that they simplify life for many in the immediate sense; though nowadays even the people who have been convenienced by them are beginning to realise the greater inconvenience which is resulting from the disappearance of smaller ones. How difficult it is nowadays to find anyone who can do the little things which want doing. My watch stops and I have to search about for a reliable man to repair it. The cane-seated chair wants repairing and there is nobody to do it. The seat which the large firm puts in won't stand. And so all along the line. The big firm is too cumbersome to be able to organise itself for such things. It can't give personal attention. The public is only learning to appreciate the small man now that he is disappearing.

I said that large organisations are a convenience to those who can make use of them. To appreciate them it is necessary to live outside and above them, as it were—to be independent of them. People who are so ready to praise them are invariably so fortunately placed. Like the Fabian Society, they accept them at their face value as the last word in organisation, never for a moment suspecting the mass of social and industrial putrefaction to which they give rise and which a careful study of them from within will reveal. They recognise that the workers in them are underpaid, but that they imagine is incidental—a removable defect. On the other hand, they picture to themselves an ideal organisation to which they vainly imagine all large organisations are striving after. Were that so there would be nothing to say against them. Unfortunately, there is no foundation for any such optimism. They advance by appealing not to the best, but the worst in human nature, and then in turn human nature steps in to frustrate in practice that efficiency which theoretically is used to justify their existence.

Let us take the example offered by the limited liability company. The popular idea of its organisation is something of this kind. At the head is a board of directors who control the general policy of the business, acting executively through a manager. Now he is supposed to be a very wise man who understands the business and men thoroughly. He appoints his immediate subordinates, to whom he is supposed to give a delegated control, giving and holding them responsible for the details of the work. Each of these in turn is supposed to appoint his subordinates, giving and holding them responsible in turn as to details, and so on according to the magnitude of the business. This is the popular idea, and if it were ever attained it would be a very efficient method of organisation, for ultimately there is only one really efficient way of organising, and that is to select the right man for the right place and give him full responsibility. It is the best method, because only when a man feels he is trusted can he turn out his best work. There is no need to labour the point. Experience should teach everyone this, and if it does not, then clearly no amount of argument will carry conviction.

So much for the ideal organisation as it is assumed to exist, and towards which we are assumed to be moving. Nothing is more remote from fact. Such an ideal is impossible of attainment in the modern world, for it would demand of the individual a measure of self-sacrifice and effacement such as we only associate with the lives of the saints. It is an ideal absolutely incompatible with the struggle for position which is the dominating motive in modern society. That struggle does not bring out the best in men, but the worst. The meaner motives of envy, jealousy, vanity and acquisitiveness outweigh the nobler motives of sincerity and generosity, and they operate not to perfect large organisations, but to destroy any potential efficiency which they may possess. And so now, after giving a picture of the ideal as it is supposed to exist, I will give a reverse of the picture. It is not a picture of large organisations which are comparatively new, but of what all of them, given time, tend to become. The evils inherent in large organisations are not apparent at the start. If they were, large organisations would never come into existence. On the other hand, each step in their growth is to be justified on the score of present expediency. There is always an immediate advantage to be served by turning a small organisation into a large. Large firms can buy cheaper than small ones, and there are an infinite number of economies which are to be effected, while much apparently unnecessary overlapping and friction are done away with. The evils which more than counterbalance these advantages appear at a later date, when the first organisers pass away and the control falls into other hands. Large organisations have invariably grown up around one dominating personality who had hold of all the strings. Such men are difficult to follow. It is just as impossible to bequeath a despotism in the form of a large commercial organisation as it is to bequeath one of political form. No second man can ever hold the strings in the same way, not merely because no two men are alike, but because, in order to fully understand all the little adjustments of any large organisation it is necessary to grow up with it. The loss of personal identity which overtakes the employees of large organisations and destroys for them the possibility of a career, has the equally baneful result of preventing any new manager from getting a real grip. It would not be difficult to bring endless cases to illustrate this point, but I have in mind one very large organisation which is in difficulties, where manager after manager has been appointed to save the situation. And all seem to fail. They determine to cut down expenses and discharge men who are good workers and really valuable to them, while they retain the services of men who really don't matter. This latter phenomenon, which sounds strange and improbable, is, nevertheless, quite understandable when the structure of these organisations is once fully comprehended.

To pass, then, from appearances to reality, it is necessary in the first place to note that the first weakness appears in the board of directors. Instead of the all-wise and thoroughly capable management, it not infrequently happens that the directors are mostly ignorant of the technicalities of the business they are supposed to manage. In support of this, one has only to mention that it daily becomes more difficult in the City to get directors who do understand anything technically. The old generation of men who built up organisations by a thorough knowledge of the details of their

businesses is passing away. Such men do not rise from the ranks nowadays. The men who rose from the ranks were in before the business grew to large proportions. In their place are boards of directors, who are there because they can influence orders or have money to invest. If they happen to know anything technically it is generally an accident. It is rarely if ever the primary reason of them finding themselves in their position.

Here is to be found the first difficulty—the difficulty of getting an intelligent body of control. It is a difficulty to which one can see no solution. The large organisation prevents men rising from the ranks. This is reacting upon large organisations themselves by robbing them of men capable of exercising an intelligent control.

The difficulty is supposed to be met by appointing a manager to whom they delegate their control. Sometimes this is successful. But capable managers are increasingly difficult to find. The industrial changes which make it difficult to get together a competent board of directors operate to make it difficult to get really competent managers. Moreover, such positions are more and more looked upon as billets for the friends and relations of the directors—a perfectly natural thing, though not contributing to increased efficiency. Directors have naturally a prejudice in favour of their own class, and being without technical qualifications themselves, they do not readily appreciate those who do possess them. Such men are generally lacking in the refinements common to themselves. This in itself constitutes a barrier between them. They lack mutual confidence and so they have little option but to have recourse to one of their own class.

Let us suppose that a really competent man occupies the post of manager. If the organisation is so large that a personal knowledge of the entire staff is impossible to him, his difficulties are enormous. In all large organisations there are a number of men who do not play the game. They sacrifice everything to personal success, and this introduces all manner of complications. They endeavour to improve their own position by keeping others under. Jealousy prevents things from working smoothly, and it is no easy matter for any manager, however competent, to get to the bottom of all the intrigues and feuds which exist in all large organisations, for when every man holds his position entirely at the pleasure of a single manager, and depends absolutely for his advancement upon his goodwill, it is inevitable that all manner of false relationships should tend to establish themselves, which point can be well illustrated by a popular song which had a great vogue in America when Charles Frohman became such an important person in the theatrical world. The song went :—

> I know of an intimate friend of an intimate friend of an intimate friend of Frohman.

It illustrates the point—everything in large organisations comes to depend upon influence. The realisation of this truth is a very demoralising one. Hence it is that sooner or later slackness and indifference make their appearance when merit meets with no reward.

But slackness means loss of money, and the demoralisation which overtakes all large organisations sooner or later makes itself felt on the balance-sheet. To remedy this evil by removing the cause is hopeless. The evil is organic from top to bottom, and as such is for all practical purposes incurable. And now another influence comes into play. The instinct of self-preservation on the part of the individual having endangered the stability of the organisation itself, resort is made to a desperate remedy—speeding up. The primary cause of speeding up is, I am persuaded, the inevitable catastrophe which follows organisation on a false basis. It has succeeded for the time, but, as I have said, it is a desperate remedy. It undermines all feelings of loyalty; it inevitably depreciates the quality of goods produced and the skill of the worker. Whether industrial organisations can continue long on such a basis remains to be seen. But reflection suggests that their days are numbered.

I Gather the Limbs of Osiris.

By Ezra Pound.

[Under this heading Mr. Pound is contributing expositions and translations in illustration of the "New Method" of Scholarship.]

VII.

ARNAUT DANIEL: CANZONI OF HIS MIDDLE PERIOD.

OF these poems the first two show us how far Arnaut went in his endeavour to make his word structure march with the increasing complexity of Provençal music. The biographers of Jaufre Rudel say of him, "He made good canzoni, with fine tunes and poor words to them"; and this is borne out in his music which has come down to us. The words are pulled out of shape for the tune's sake:

> "Dou-ou-ou-ous cha-ans da-u ze-e-els de-e-e-e
> lo-o-o-onh."
> "Swe-e-e-eet so-ong o-of bi-i-irds a-a-a-a fa-a-a-ar."

set to a beautiful melody, mind you!

In Arnaut's "Autet e bas" you will, if you try it in sing-song, notice that the short lines rhyming in "uce" break the rhythm of the long lines and sing themselves to the bird note itself.

> "Mas pel us
> Estauc clus."

The sound of the original is a little more clear and staccato than that of the words I have been able to find in English.

AUTET E BAS.

Now high and low where leaves are new,
The flower 's y-cummen on the bough,
And no throat or beak is muted,
But each bird his song unwasted
Letteth loose,
Singeth spruce;
Joy for them and spring would set
Song on me, but Love assaileth
Me and sets my words a-dancing.

My God I thank, and my eyen two,
That their good cunning doth endow
Me with joy so wrath's refuted;
All the shameful shame I've tasted
Joys reduce,
So they noose
Me in Amor's trembling net,
Bound to her who most availeth,
Bonds meseem a gay advancing.

My thanks, Amor, that I win through!
Aye, 'twas long, take thanks enow.
In my marrow flames are rooted.
I'd not quench them. See, they've lasted,
Are profuse,
Held recluse
Lest knaves see our hearts are met.
Murrain on the mouth that aileth,
So it finds her not entrancing

He doth in Love's book misconstrue
And is a lover shamed, I vow;
Let him, if his speech recruited
Harsh heart-harming words, be blasted;
This abuse
Both traduce
Worth. Nay! I've no such regret
If man in his malice raileth.
Let him bite his tongue mischancing.

That I love her? Is pride; is true.
I hide what joy her joys allow.
Since Paul's writ was executed
Or the forty days first fasted,*

* The point is that his lady is the finest since the Virgin Mary; this is quite pious and restrained; he has already said (Canzon II) that he is the finest lover since Cain's time. In the next canzon he goes himself one better.

Not Christus
Could produce
One like her where one can get
Charm's total, for no charm faileth
Her whose memory's enhancing.

Charm and Valour, the keep of you
Is that Fair who holds me now,
She sole, I sole, so fast suited,
Other ladies' charms are wasted,
And no truce
But misuse
Have I for them, they're not let
To my heart where she regaleth
Me with joy I'd not be chancing.

Arnaut loves and ne'er will fret
Love with speech, his wise throat quaileth,
Foolish gossip he's not chancing.

" L'AURA AMARA."

[In this opening we have the beginning of Petrarch's never-ending puns. "The bitter laurel, Laura, ah cruel, the bitter air."]

I.

The bitter air
Strips clear the boughs
Whereon
The softer winds set leaves;
The glad
Birds'
Throats grow mute and still,
Whether they be
Wed
Or unwed;
Wherefore I try
To speak and do
Her whim,
In this I strive,
Me hath she lifted so
That 'less she ease
My pain, 'tis death I'm fearing.

II.

So clear the flare
That turned my prows
Upon
Her whom my sight believes,
That bad
Curds*
Are worth others' skill.
Infrequently
Tread
Garlanded
My prayers to lie
Elsewhere; joy too
They brim
With, and revive
Hearing her words; I glow
Through all degrees
In her service appearing.

III.

Amor, beware!
Doth welcome rouse?
Not done,
My speech were such as grieves,
Turns sad,
Girds.
Nay, 'twere better kill
Thyself, agree!
Stead-
-y, well sped
In love, my high
Heart's strength keeps true
Words dim,
Yet snows that drive
And all the balms that grow
Could ne'er appease
My heart 'thout her lips nearing.

*"Aigonencs" does not mean "curds"; but no one knows what it does mean; it is here used contemptuously, and the expression might be as well rendered "two beans" or "a brass farthing."

IV.

If she but care,
Who lightly cows
—I con,
As thou'rt above worth's eaves,
Mail-clad
Herds
Of close prayers on drill
Will render fee,
Spread
Thought's last shred
'Fore her. I'd die
But hopes renew
My vim
And pray her shrive
Them and cut short my woe.
Other joys please
Me less than apples searing.

V.

Sweet thou, ah fair
Each charm's own house,
I don
The pain that thy fate weaves,
For mad
Words
Suffering great ill,
When men mocked me
Dread
Words were said;
Yet for gold I
'll not turn from you.
I trim
A true course, I've
Spoken quite humbly though
God never sees
At Doma* aught so cheering.

VI.

My song, prepare
To meet king's brows,
For one
Will judge thee grain and sheaves;
We've had
Thirds
Of worth here, its fill
Is there; you'll see
Shed
Gold, and fed
You'll be; draw nigh,
Favoured, thereto.
Tell him:
"Arnaut's scarce 'live
Except in Arago."
With each day's breeze
Toward him I would be steering.

VII.

Cast is the die:
I'll look in through
Th' heart's rim
Each eve; deprive
Her never; my thoughts go
Herward; bend their knees,
Only for her endearing.

These choppy lines do not affect the rhythm for reading, directly or necessarily; the poems in the old manuscripts are written straight along like prose. I print the verses in this form only better to indicate the rhyme scheme. Thus, in stanza V, where my translation of the movement is the most felicitous, one can see that, for the purposes of rhythm, one should read the following groups of lines as single lines: 1 and 2; 3 and 4; 5, 6 and 7; 9 and 10; 11 and 12; and for the rest the lines are not "end-stopped."

The original rhymes in two places where I have used sound shading, but I did not notice the rhyme until

* Literally: "I desire you more than God desires her of Doma," *i.e.*, Our Lady of Pui de Dome.

I had finished making my translation. I am not sure that I shirked a difficulty, for it would have been obviously less difficult to find a second six rhymes in "e" than it was to get the first six in "oughs." There is a prose rendering of this canzon in "The Spirit of Romance," more literal for stanza V, though I have in this metrical version corrected one or two errors of interpretation which occur in the earlier one. The form is good art because its complexity is not apparent until one searches for it or presents it thus dissected.

Art and Drama.

By Huntly Carter.

A FEW years ago, when I was moving about the English provinces, I used to visit nearly every gallery and theatre, and during this time I witnessed most of the plays that toured the principal provincial towns, thus meeting some of them time after time as they appeared at different theatres. Gradually I became aware of a remarkable phenomenon. I noticed that a play which had impressed me at one theatre failed to do so at another, even though presented by the same company. This strange thing haunted me. I knew the secret of it was not in myself. For from the great evening when Miss Ellen Terry enabled me to enter a theatre for the first time in my life, and I went to see Irving in "Henry VIII," I have been as impressionable as a novice in play-going. Every good play or piece of acting that I have been able to become intimate with has had something real in it for me which carried me away. So I sought in the theatre itself the reason of my experience, and, in so doing, suddenly I was confronted with the fact that the provincial theatres were rapidly increasing in size, and the smallest of the old patent houses, such as the one near Etruria, and the free theatres that sprang up when the State monopoly in theatrical amusement ceased in 1843, were being replaced by the modern house constructed on a comparatively vast scale. Here, then, was the reason. The drama and acting were being affected by the increased size of the theatre.

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The point was new to me; it made me think. Thus it brought me to the problem of problems, namely, intimacy. I became aware that during modern times there has been a great deal of action and reaction in the theatre. We have experienced the influence of the audience on the drama, and the influence of the drama on the audience. Now we have the stage threatening to influence the drama, as, for instance, the new Shakespearean stage in Germany which is remoulding the Shakespearean drama. But what we really need is the influence of the drama on the stage, moulding and transforming it, as it has done in the past. Each great period of dramatic renascence, Greek and Elizabethan, has, in fact, created a new form of dramatic temple. If this is so, and we are entering upon the third great period of dramatic renascence, shall we not also witness the creation of a new dramatic temple? That was the question for me.

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About this time I accidentally found at Accrington a brochure written by the Earl of Carlisle in 1800. It contained, in a plea for a new theatre, matter which confirmed my new point of view. The author, himself a dramatist, observes that when Mrs. Siddons played in a smaller theatre than usual her acting gained vastly in importance. He then examines the point whether histrionic genius is not largely affected by the size and structure of the theatre. He finds that some of the theatres of his time are too large for the eye and ear. In consequence, neither the author nor the actor is fully appreciated; hence he believes arises a decline in tragic writers and actors. In his view the interior of the theatre should be fully adapted to keep the audience in their seats, and the stage should be of reasonable dimensions so that the players' powers could be understood and appreciated. Beyond this he makes a survey of the smaller theatres and notes their influence alike on the audience and actor. He considers, too, the huge structures of Greece and Rome, necessitating all sorts of mechanical contrivances to remedy defects and inconveniences. The players, for instance, were built up with immense quantities of drapery, with masks, cothurni, etc. His suggested plan for a new theatre is, however, after all, a poor affair. It is mainly based upon considerations of box-office receipts and the safety of the audience, and is a conventional structure, horse-shoe in shape. This plea for a small theatre is valuable as revealing that the desire for the spirit of intimacy in the theatre has been the ruling desire throughout.

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Shortly afterwards I went across to New York, where I met Ibsen in literary form for the first time. The result was peculiar. For quite three years I had Ibsen on the brain, or, more correctly speaking, in the pocket. Wherever I went I was attended in state by Nora on the one hand, and by Hedda on the other. These two never left me, and they were always whispering in my ear, or both ears, things about the good time coming for the drama in England as soon as we fully understood the direction of its development. These ladies were very fond of going through a process of soul revelation, always in a true mystic spirit, in order, it seemed to prove, that what the drama needs to attain greatness is a simplicity of spirit lending itself to simplicity of means. As they emphatically declared, when brought to their knees at moments of self-interpretation, it is useless for men to devise, as they are doing, a simplicity of means till they have an appropriate spirit to wear them. They assured me that they themselves had been conceived in the true spirit, the spirit underlying the great folk-tales. Like each of Ibsen's principal characters, they represented, indeed, a leaden symbol of human philosophy transmuted to one of pure gold by the fiery experience of truth. Each character expresses a phase of mankind questioning Fate or Human Destiny, and learning the mind of the strange thing, and as such is cosmic and eternal. Thus Dora is Everywoman—in one dress; Hedda, in another. These bold souls simply freed themselves from the cage which we call the physical body, clapped their wings and conducted me to where Ibsen had mapped out the new drama—the drama of Everyman and Everywoman.

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Thus listening to these two I came to see that Ibsen's dramas do contain and do convey the spirit of the great folk-stories. Divested of their crudities of modern science, such as Lucas's out-of-date theories of heredity, they are nothing more than Sagas. As such they are conceived with an economy of thought built up with an economy of means, that demand a corresponding presentation. In order to become intimate with the mystical spirit of each ancient and terrifying legend, set to work by more or less conventional machinery, to express the truth of an eternal morality, every word must be heard, every nuance felt. A mood of true inwardness has to be created in the audience as perfectly as throat and body can do it. In fact, a vision has to be recreated and maintained, and it is, therefore, necessary to perfect a temple as a dwelling place for the vision. In my article next week I will describe the theatre which to me seems the best suited to express and develop the new form of drama.

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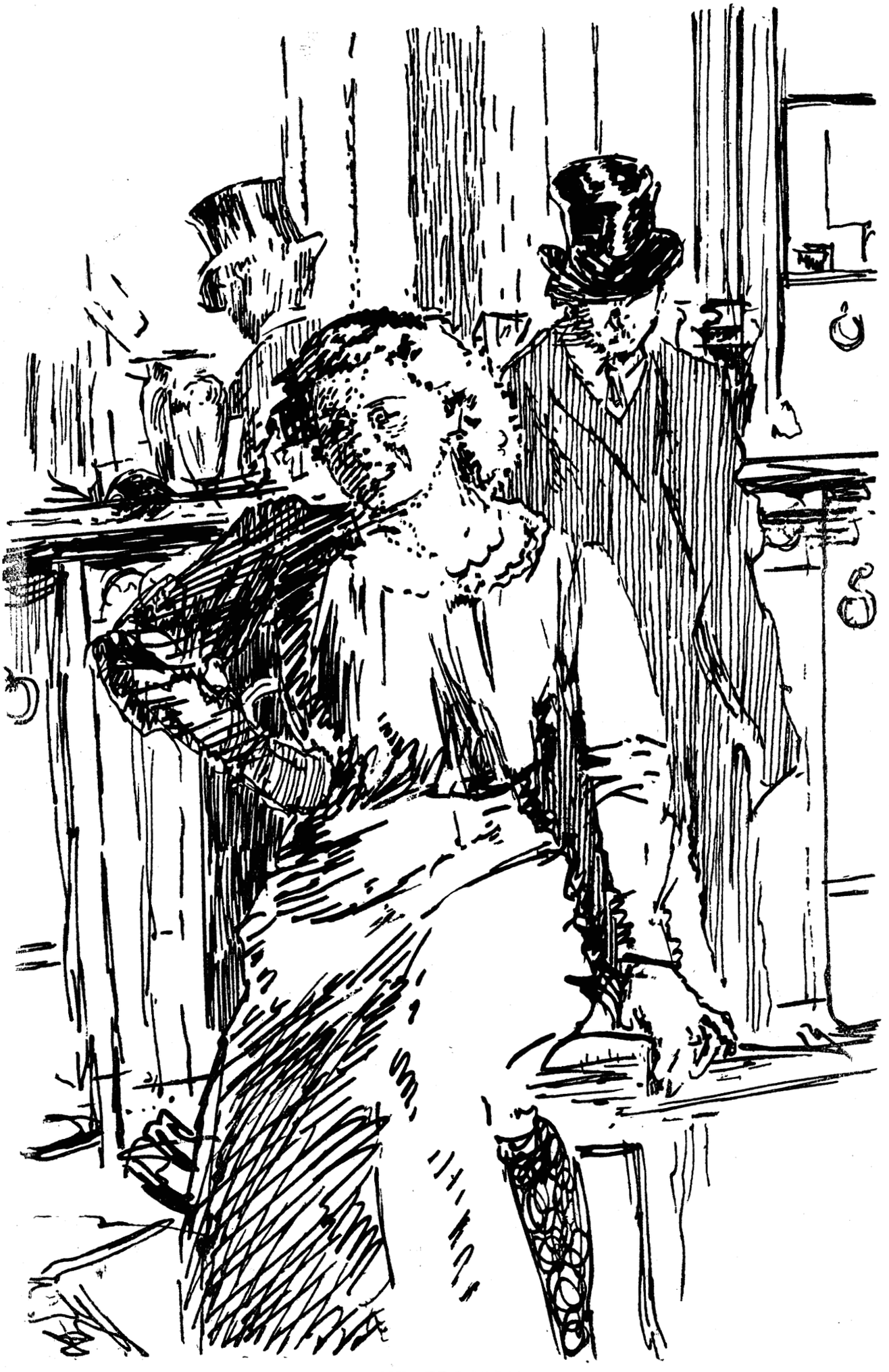
There is an unusually telling exhibition of studies of Versailles, Fontainebleau and Spain by Alexander Jamieson, at the Carfax Gallery. The work shows great progress, especially in colour. The advance in this direction may be seen by comparing the Dieppe picture, excellent in design, with the latest of Fontainebleau. In the latter the artist has lost none of his design and has added a great fullness, freshness, and variety of colour. I hope to return to these pictures later. Meanwhile, I advise all who are interested in the modern development in painting to see this exhibition, which contains some of the strongest modern work produced by a London artist.



THE PROPOSAL.

The Heart of an Englishman.

By A. M. Ludovici.

She cowed him by her tragic eyes,
Bedimmed and moist with aching love,
And argued that no compromise
Must keep them from where passion drove.

She left long tresses on his coats,
Erotic verses in his room,
And daily sent him perfumed notes
Intended to dispel his gloom.

For Serfdom was the breath of Life
To her who knew to do and dare.
She did not ask to be his wife;
She dreamt of things more brave, more rare.

For if she loved she worshipped you;
This followed as the fruit the flow'r.
She gave her Serfdom where 'twas due—
To things of price, and pride, and pow'r.

And when she could not find these things
She foisted them on things she found;
Just as a Highland sower flings
His precious seed on doubtful ground.

But oh! how cruel to relate!
And madd'ning for the lady true,
Who well deserved a better fate—
His forte was abject Serfdom too!

He doubted whether she were sane,
To lie so prostrate at his feet;
And begged of her time and again
To be more tempered and discreet.

It harassed him to hear her sigh
As if her soul were oceans deep,
Nor could he see the reason why
She wept as only Cupids weep.

Her passion breathed through ev'ry pore;
It made her great, it made her wise.
It burst the locks of any door
Concealing secrets from her eyes.

He could not think that these things were
Quite normal, and the risks he ran
Appeared too great for any fair,
Clean-minded, upright Englishman.

But for a while, she held him fast.
Her haughty lips, her wakeful skin;
Her hands like white-clad angels cast
To bid but gods to enter in.

Her eyes that seemed as if they'd brook
No reference to flesh at all;
Yet which at times at him would look
Like those of any cannibal.

Her brow like lilies washed in dew,
As pure as any child's you kiss;
Yet packed with schemes of darkest hue
To save her love from Nemesis.

Thus for a while he bore the strain,
And grew so pale and discontent,
That all his friends could not explain
Precisely what his pallor meant.

He had his doubts that these things were
Quite moral, and henceforth began
To dream of some enchantress fair
More suited to an Englishman.

His sister's friends were pink and white;
They wore their tresses down their backs,
And did not challenge love to fight,
But waited for the man's attacks.

Nor did they call him "god" or "king,"
Or stretch his wits to notions new,
Or bid him think or do a thing
That clashed with his own point of view.

His dullest side they took to be
The very trait which in the end
Would help them to a mastery
Of all in him least prone to bend.

And thus they backed his spirit weak,
With blue-eyed wonder and delight,
So that he daily grew more sleek,
And smug, and fond of what was right.

One night then with a sense of sin,
He went unto his lady-love—
The lady with the "wakeful skin,"
Whose passion was described above.

He strode into her little flat,
His cheque-book in his pocket, and
A twist about his coat and hat
Designed to make her understand—

That in the future he'd resolved
No more unto her flat to come,
And that upon him it devolved
To grant her a solatium.

She gazed at him quite undismayed.
She's soldier's pluck, although a *girl*.
And having calmly called the maid,
Asked her to show him to the door.

Her lips grew white as he retired,
A beaten thing with head downcast.
And all her pride and pow'r conspired
In vain to love him to the last.

For base indeed he looked just then,
As with her parlourmaid he went
For ever from the sight and ken
Of his so-called "entanglement."

The front door closed; her life was done.
She'd given more than some can lose.
And though "experience" she'd won,
'Twas not the kind she cared to use.

Death beckoned softly, but her eyes
Refused to see, as some eyes can.
It seemed too great a sacrifice
For any upright Englishman.

She therefore vowed that she would live,
Even in shame, if honour failed;
And mankind she would ne'er forgive
Her dead young love—reviled, impaled!

* * * * * *

Meanwhile, her lover, crushed but free,
Went out to wed his schoolgirl mate;
But since it was his fate to be
A slave, he blindly met his fate.

He's governed now with ruthless skill,
Though not with "haughty lips" and heart.
And oft he dreams in sadness still
Of once when he was ruled with Art.

Present-Day Criticism.

AFTER a time of storm and stress—Romance. That is an irony which will never cease to confound men who believe in war as a preparatory school for the sterner virtues. The battlefield is no sooner tidied up, the vanquished bewept, the conqueror belauded, and everybody warned to profit by this tragic illustration of the uncertainty of fortune, than man Jack goes off to tempt from that same fortune her airiest gift—romance. Not to lay the allegory too low in lily-white arms, we point to the field of Literature where that great interminable Philistine of realism is rearing up against its David, the new age spirit, and, prophetically, we announce a romantic movement to follow the defeat of the giant. 'Twas ever thus: and nothing besides historical evidence and experience is needed to foretell here. But what sort of romantic movement? It should be the most uncommon kind. Not the kind that has made the very word "romance" anathema to orderly men. The reaction will not be merely from abuse of severity, puritanism, but also from an abuse of liberty. We revolt not only from Cato, but from Catullus; not only from Cromwell, but from the Cavaliers; not only from Frederick, but from Rousseau; not only from Victoria, but from Swinburne.

In fact, we are out against an uncommon sort of Philistine—a Philistine who has picked up and arrayed himself in some old rags cast off by the children of light, a Saturday-to-Monday, *romantic* Philistine, a gay dull-dog, coldly and lasciviously perspiring, and in the midst of his adventure getting ready to boast of the whole tedious affair. And that creature typifies modern realism. Perhaps he was always the same, a chill, vicious animal, eternally publishing everything. Catullus, Suckling, Jean Jacques—yes, very likely! No doubt, at least, that the time has arrived to correct our notion of Philistinism as it prevails in England. The old Philistinism—"respectability with its thousand gigs"—no longer exists. The descendants of that scarified order have put on a protective resemblance to their contemners, have varnished themselves with some adulteration of culture, and now sprawl in realistic novels and the literary columns of the halfpenny Press. Oh! very broad indeed. Them afraid of things as they are and plain speaking? Why, there is nothing they will not say. We hear them boasting now of their knowledge of all unseemliness, praising and admiring everything, so only it be broad enough, crude enough, plain enough. And we wish they had been left in their gigs.

One unconscious service they have done to literature. They have made it impossible for the new romantic movement to dabble about and thus be lost in the swelter of the sexes. England has read all there is to be written on this subject. We are ready to die of a surfeit of absolutely understood females and their sex relations. Sue, Diana, Esther, Mrs. Warren, Mrs. Tanqueray, Mrs. Maxon and a thousand other whatnots have passed before our gaze from bedroom to salon, from the kitchen to the grave and back again, and back again till we know all about them and find them damned monotonous, no subjects for art at all, creatures incapable of a romantic feeling and certain to let you down with a run if you credit them with any but cat-like desires. The new romancer will not be able, even if he wished, to set up woman as an ideal. He will have to give her the subordinate place she naturally occupies; the place given her by Homer, who only let Helen loose on a chain—by Cervantes, whose one fair damsel betook herself to the solitary hills—by Malory, who exhibits her as a mischief to everybody the moment she is allowed to look over the garden wall. She is tediously bad or dull. After all, the fine stories of the world are little concerned with the relations of men and women. They tell us about adventures which symbolise the battle of the soul. They take us seeking for honour with Achilles, for purity with Perceval, for an ideal with Quixote, for self-reliance with Prospero, for self-conquest with Arjuna, for simple courage to go forward with the Musketeers. The line of such romances is our line. Thank Fate, we have no other! We must follow it.

In *those* days there dwelled a man in the country of ————. He was a great lord and possessed a noble castle and wide lands. There he passed the time in contentment, governing his domains and giving entertainment to neighbour and stranger, but especially to intelligent ones. A troubadour came to the castle who told the most marvellous histories of foreign places and peoples and sang so sweetly of otherwhere that the great lord could not contain his curiosity, and so set forth one day with a retinue of friends and handymen to see the wonders with his own eyes. He locked the front door at departing and took the key with him, and as it was a magic key—though only he knew this—you will see that the castle was quite safe even when I tell you that all the side and back doors were left open. And he wandered over the whole known earth while twenty years sped around the wheel of time. At length he turned homewards and came, travel-stained but ever so wise and well informed, into his own region. There the retainer people ran to meet him. So ill they looked, so starved and ragged. "What now?" exclaimed the great lord. And all in tears they answered: "Master, in your absence an enemy hath taken possession. Look you where your castle is occupied from wall to tower by foreign men. They have bolted and barred every gate, and we have to live by begging as best we can." But you can imagine what happened. The great lord took out of his wallet the magic key and he opened the front door, and up with a terrible war-cry he rushed with all his friends, and very soon there was not a foe left in that castle.

* * *

The "English Review" for January contains the most desperate article that ever was written. Surely only despair could have driven Mr. Austin Harrison into such abysmal depths of bad form. We are aware that the literary taste of the "English Review" is so infallibly wrong that any other review would be safe in accepting whatever work Mr. Harrison rejected; but even the stuff he prints rarely, if ever, has sunk to the low level of his own article. "We come down to a shilling," he announces; but if his style indicates anything, it indicates that he will shortly have to give his review away. The persons whose type of conversation he imitates—(understand that he is dining with a great editor and confiding as to the reduction in price of the "English Review." "The old brandy was awfully good," Mr. Harrison writes. "I helped myself to another glass. 'Look here,' I said, 'People will pay a shilling, don't you think?' 'They will,' said my host sententiously, 'for the right article.' 'Well,' I ventured, 'we've got the goods.' . . . 'No matter if a man is popular or unpopular, you'll publish the stuff, if it's the big stuff?' 'The big stuff, yes. Always,' I replied. 'You'll really give the public the half-crown matter of the 'English Review' at a bob?' 'I will,' and I felt as if I were being married. 'No stodge?' 'No.' . . . We shook hands cordially, and Dan looked so surprised that he dropped his cigar-ash down his waistcoat. . . . 'Do you know,' I said, grabbing some chocolates which I intended to share with someone upstairs, 'I believe at a shilling the ladies will join us.'")—the persons, we were saying, for whom that style of literature would be good enough, are too wearied from the day's work at the counter to read anything but "Comic Cuts," where they can find Mr. Harrison's humour much better done, and for a penny. And the persons who write so do not continue to edit English reviews; they curse England and go to luckless America. We suspect two things; firstly that Mr. Harrison had a bad headache, and secondly that the old brandy had not really very many cobwebs.

Très Spirituel.

Translated from the French of Alfred Capus by N. C.

PIERRE BRYON had returned to Paris after travelling for two years in America and India, and the dinner given by his old friends to celebrate his return was over. Cigars were being lighted up and the traveller asked :—

"What has become of our witty friend Davenois? The most brilliant man about town, the papers used to call him. He isn't dead, I hope?"

"Dead?" said one. "He was at the first night of the Vaudeville yesterday."

"Is he as amusing as ever?" continued Bryon. "Does he still tell delightful stories? Did he write the Club Révue this year?"

His friends looked from one to another, surprised at first; then there was a general laugh.

"That's too good!" cried one of them. "Bravo! Bryon isn't so far behind the times, after all!"

"Well, not bad for a man who has spent two years away from Paris. The Club Révue by Davenois—not bad, I think". . . .

"That idiot of a Davenois!" shouted a third.

"Oh! Davenois' witticisms."

Bryon listened to these sallies, stupefied.

"I've said something ridiculous?" . . . . An extra volley of laughter greeted the question.

"I don't think I can be mistaken. Davenois—Oscar Davenois, that must be the man?"

"Yes, yes, that's the man. Oscar!"

"Why would it be odd that Davenois should collaborate in the Révue? For ten years he did the reviews of the theatres and he was always very amusing."

One of the convivial friends approached the traveller and slapped him on the back. "You are making a mistake, old man; I assure you you are either making a mistake or you're pulling our legs. It isn't nice of you."

"Forgive me, but I assure you——"

"You are speaking seriously?"

"Good heavens, yes! I've known Davenois for a long time, and Davenois has always had the name of being a very witty man. Ah! I see, you are having me on; don't let's talk about Davenois any more."

"On the contrary, let us talk about him," said little Rambert. "There is a misunderstanding. I've known Davenois for years, and never is he spoken of except as 'that idiot of a Davenois.' He's a good fellow, I admit; no malice in him, but——"

"And I assure you," broke in Bryon eagerly, "when I went away, scarcely two years ago, Davenois enjoyed a great reputation for wit. I've seen you all, every one of you here to-night, splitting your sides over his stories. The newspapers reported his witticisms."

Then Birr, old Birr, demanded silence with an imposing gesture. Everyone became suddenly quiet, and his sharp voice rose.

"My dear fellows, Bryon is right. In 1889, Davenois had the reputation in the clubs and on the boulevards for an extraordinary wit. How he came to possess it I do not know. Did he deserve it? That does not matter much.

"From time to time people asked me: 'Do you know what Davenois said the other day? He is an amusing chap.' They told me what he had said. Sometimes it was amusing, sometimes it was not. There were even papers which reported it the next day. Personally, I was never much struck with Davenois. Now if you want an amusing fellow, take Cardoné; he has no money, he follows no profession, and he spends forty thousand francs. That's something rather more than Davenois' witticisms.

"What age is he now, Davenois? Forty-five—yes. He has never done anything either, but he has an income of sixty thousand francs well invested. He doesn't speculate, he gambles a little. He follows the fashion down to the merest details, and it would make him ill to be told that, under some circumstance or other, he had not acted in the irreproachably correct manner. But that was at the time I speak of; since then he has changed somewhat.

"He had the same taste in women as in dress. A woman who was not up to date simply did not exist for him. On the other hand, from the moment a woman became the fashion he did not hesitate to make sacrifices. When the hour of another arrived he left the first as one orders a new frock-coat from one's tailor.

"His friends conducted their lives on the same principles. One might have called the Davenois clique a court of last appeal in matters of pleasure and elegance. No one could afford to ignore the high authority and reputation of its president.

"On certain days they thought it well to affect a gross attitude. After dinner they would turn their steps towards some establishment or other in Montmartre and contemplate, with a pre-occupied air, the choregraphic exercises which are a speciality there. They would then return to the club and retail their experiences. Davenois excelled in these recitals.

"One evening, when there were five or six of them sitting round a table looking on at the quadrilles, a woman well known at the place came up to Davenois and, without addressing a word to him, quietly fished his monocle out of his eye; it had no string attached to it, the correct method. Then she drifted out of sight, seeming to attach no importance to so familiar an action.

"Davenois contented himself with an indulgent smile. Five minutes later she returned and dropped the monocle into his bock, murmuring: 'There you are! there's your eye!' Davenois found this amusing in the highest degree and invited the lady to sit down. Then he looked at her and she burst out laughing in his face: 'Heavens! how stolid you look!' Davenois, my dear chaps, was completely bowled over. He asked her name; she was called Boulotte simply, and for two years he hasn't left her side. You know her, don't you?

"Boulotte wasn't one of those women who, when they rise in the world, blush for their origin. In a day she learned the art of wearing wonderful clothes, but she never lost the habit of swearing every time she opened her mouth. Between ourselves, it wouldn't surprise me to learn that it was this habit of hers which gained Davenois' respect. It changed his whole conduct in life.

"I was with them a great deal at first. As the prince was at that moment bringing out Mdlle. Chienne, he was delighted to push Boulotte, and pride made him bring out his savings, for he had saved considerably, always having been as correct and careful over his expenditure as over everything else.

"She had taken a fancy to me, though she welcomed me merely as 'old bald-head,' and I was in some degree her confidant.

"I shall never forget her astonishment when I showed her one day in a newspaper a cutting which commenced: 'A charming saying of D——, the wittiest of our men about town, . . .' D——, I explained, was Davenois.

"'They're laughing at him to write that,' she told me.

"'Not the least in the world.'

"'What! they write seriously in the newspapers that Davenois is a witty man?'

"'Certainly they do.'

"'And you, Birr—do you think so too?'

"I replied with all sincerity:

"'I'm certain of it, my dear. No one could be wittier than Davenois. He says the most delightful things. It was he who said——.'

"And I repeated to her one or two of his best-known sayings.

"'They're perfectly idiotic!' she cried.

"Rather vexed, feeling almost as if it were a personal matter, I was silent. My silence exasperated her.

"'I assure you, Birr, Davenois is an imbecile, and you must all be worse fools than he. Oh yes, he's a good fellow well enough, he is very nice to me; but really, he's too stupid in conversation.'

"And she looked at me with a defiant air. I went away, shaken in my conviction. From that day Boulotte set to work with an awful concentration to demolish Davenois' reputation for wit. Why? I can't tell you. When one said he was brave or generous or elegant she approved; she seemed even flattered. But if the slightest reference were made to his intelligence she fell into positive transports of rage. And she repeated ceaselessly the same sentence: 'I am very fond of him, but no one—no one could be so idiotic in conversation.'

"Every time that Davenois made a joke and people laughed, she shrugged her shoulders scornfully; 'I suppose one can say idiotic things like that if one likes!' You know what a joke is—everyone must find it amusing or it at once becomes idiotic. Little by little Davenois' jokes ceased to carry conviction; and, unfortunately for him, he continued to make them.

"To-day he passes for being the stupidest fool in existence. And Bryon is perfectly right. Only two years ago he had an enormous reputation for wit."

Francis Jammes.

By Richard Buxton.

THE use of images to express a subtle or complicated meaning is a dangerous method in imaginative literature, fascinating as it may be, successful as it is in the hands of a master; but in criticism it is absolutely fatal without explications and qualifications. I should not dare to describe M. Francis Jammes as a satyr without this prelude and without some subsequent reservations and additions.

The word "satyr" has been, unfortunately, used occasionally in England, frequently in France, to designate a certain highly-unpleasant type of literature, and to class M. Jammes among such writers would be to commit a flagrant injustice and to be guilty of unpardonably bad criticism. He is not a satyr in the sense that would indicate lechery and drunkenness, but merely in his elemental methods of thought and expression. I can think of no author, old or new, who so well deserves the hackneyed, misused adjective "naïve," in its general and not in its special sense. He is a phenomenon certainly without parallel in all the literature of France, probably in all the literature of the world. To call him a survival would be meaningless as a criticism of his poetry, since his method is decidedly an innovation; but to offer this word as a criticism of his mind and outlook would at once come as near to the mark as is possible in contemplating so startling a figure. He has a simplicity of thought that, if it is not, indeed, a survival from the earlier ages of man, is at least what we are accustomed to attribute to primitive minds. As a matter of fact, he is possibly in his naïvety some centuries before his time, and not some millenniums after it. Totemism and exogamy is as amazingly complicated an institution to us as, perhaps, the marriage-law of modern Europe to Jammes. Let us call him a survival, however, since it presents some vague idea of the contours of his mind, which I hope to make clearer presently by a detailed criticism of his work. He is the last of the satyrs, who finds himself not utterly strange in the world of to-day, and who has known how to take what is best out of our civilisation. He has found, like Pierre Louys' Callistô, that the modern world has discovered one new pleasure, and the satyr contentedly sucks at his pipe and occasionally writes verses about it, as about all the ordinary things of life.

It is not difficult to understand that he was a source of considerable bewilderment to his early reviewers. A mind trained to the subtleties of Gustave Kahn might well find the simplicity of Francis Jammes hard to understand, and an ear accustomed to the music of vers libre may be excused for mistaking Jammes' easy measure for the work of a foreigner who had not understood the rules of French prosody enough to break them thoroughly. The form in which his first *plaquettes* were issued conduced to mystification, and mystification enough there undoubtedly was. The reviewer of "Vers," 1893, in the "Mercure de France," thus expressed his feelings and his suspicions:—

> This little book appears with attractions which are mysterious and exceptional. The name of the author is unknown. Is it a pseudonym? And it seems that the spelling of it is not very exact: James would be more correct. The book is dedicated to Hubert Crackanthorpe and to Charles Lacoste. . . . Mr. Hubert Crackanthorpe exists. He is a young English writer who has published a volume of stories, very remarkable, it appears, and a little in the manner of Maupassant, entitled "Wreckage"; the second object of the dedication is unknown to me.
>
> Further mysterious attractions; this little book, apparently English, is printed at Orthez in the Basse-Pyrénées. And the few words written by hand in the copy which I have here are in the handwriting of a clumsy little schoolgirl.

These words indicate the impression which M. Jammes made and which he might have been expected to make on the critics of symbolism. He was not a Parnassian or a romanticist; but, on the other hand, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Laforgue and Kahn had left him absolutely untouched. He had no predecessors, and it seems impossible to believe that he can have any followers. He has given us poetry which is pure inspiration, absolutely uninfluenced by any man; but if disciples gather round him they will do no more than give us ingenious imitations of his mannerisms, laboured descriptions of scenes and emotions in the very heart of which he lives and feels.

In 1898 he published his first volume of importance, and the general quality of this is characteristic of all his work. He calls it "De l'Angelus de l'Aube à l'Angelus du Soir." In March of the previous year he published a literary manifesto in the "Mercure de France" entitled "Le Jammisme." This might have been regrettable but for the final clause in which he entreats all poets to bind themselves not to found literary schools. The principles which he enunciates are so general in character that almost any form of poetry might be held to be guided by them, except, perhaps, that which is decadent in the true sense, such as the work of Robert de Montesquiou. The chief tenet of his creed is that truth is the praise of God and the only object of poetry. All things are good to describe which are natural, such as men and women, bread, swans, lilies, and sadness. Of things which are unnatural he takes the curious example of a turtle encrusted with jewels, "because," he says, "God has not created turtles to this end and because their homes are in ponds and in the sand of sea." This would seem to be aimed at the really extravagant Decadents, who, like Oscar Wilde, declared that all things natural were unfit for art. Wilde's bark was worse than his bite; it is difficult to trace a connection between his critical and his creative work, but on the Continent decadents did peculiar things.

Truthful description of natural objects is then to be the motive of his poetry, but this is easily to be gathered from his work, and hardly needs explanation. Possibly this manifesto with its naivety of phrase was intended to prepare the minds of those who were to read his volume in the following year: his statement of his poetical principles contains no point which really requires elucidation, but it is a glimpse of a curiously uncommon mind, and would prevent too great a shock when the poems themselves appeared.

This book, together with three further volumes of collected work, "Le Deuil des Primevères," "Le Triomphe de la Vie," and "Clairières dans le Ciel," and two small volumes of "Géorgiques Chrétiennes," recently published, form the sum of M. Jammes' work in verse. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he has not passed through the transition from traditionalism to originality, or vice versa: his method develops more pronounced peculiarities when he is roused by sorrow, or anger, or love, becomes less singular when his spirit is at rest. These alternations are to be observed from the very first, and in his last work his technique is so regular that we may suppose middle-age to have brought to him the tranquillity he desired; that is to say, the technique is regular, but the clearness of vision, and the fidelity in rendering what he sees are as startling

and as peculiarly his own as in his earliest poems. What he sees and feels he will render, and his poems are full of life and truth because he sees with clear eyes and takes an absorbing interest in what he sees. His metre is well moulded to his purpose. It is not vers libre, with its complicated harmonies, but what might be called familiar verse, not diverging very far from the classical tradition, but absolutely neglectful of any other rules than those of sound. The description goes on, mostly rhyming, but sometimes not, generally in lines of an even number of syllables, but varying when it pleases the poet. It is this freedom from all poetical rules that has freed him from all "poetical language," and has given his verse its singular sincerity and charm. Take, for example, this opening to "Le Vieux Village" :—

Le vieux village était rempli de roses
et je marchais dans la grande chaleur
et puis ensuite dans la grande froideur
de vieux chemins où les feuilles s'endorment.

Puis je longeai un mur long et usé;
c'était un parc où étaient des grands arbres,
et je sentis une odeur du passé,
dans les grands arbres et dans les roses blanches.

The simplicity of the language is such that not one word can be altered or removed : the perfection of the description could not be enhanced by the most elaborate decorative devices. The instance is typical. All the poems are of this freshness and truth which give immediately to the reader not merely a picture of what is described, but also a glimpse of the mind which describes it. By virtue of the childlike simplicity of his style he can say what no other man could possibly say in verse. What other poet of our time could describe the furniture of his dining-room not once but many times and yet be neither satirical nor ridiculous?

M. Remy de Gourmont has described Jammes as a true bucolic poet. This unfortunate word conjures up in us visions of Amintas and Corydons playing pipes and making refined love round impossibly woolly lambs in a preposterous Arcadia. But Jammes follows no conventions : he does not copy the great writers of pastorals, he has invented the form for himself and presents it in all its primitive freshness.

The house with roses and the wasps' low tune
should be full and we should hear, in the afternoon,
the vespers; and the grapes, like lucid stone,
should seem to sleep beneath the heavy sun.
How I should love thee. All my heart should be thine,
that hath but twenty years, and my mocking mind,
my pride, my poetry of roses white;
and still I know thee not, thou art not yet.
I only know that if thou wert alive
and wert with me at the bottom of the field,
laughing we'd kiss beneath the golden bees,
near the fresh river, under the thick leaves.
And there the sun's heat only we should hear.
Thou would'st have the nut-tree's shadow on thine ear,
then we would join our mouths, cease laugh and play,
to say our love that we can never say,
and I should find upon thy red lips there,
the taste of roses, wasps, grape-clusters fair.

Nearly all of these poems may be said to come under the heading of pastorals. The "jeunes filles" that Jammes loves to describe are the true successors of the shepherdesses of Theocritus. His love-poetry shows the same characteristics as his less passionate work : simplicity and sincerity; and the women whom he loves are young and healthy and unashamed of their passion. His long narrative poem, "Jean de Noarrieu" may be mentioned in this connection. Jean, an educated man, leaves the town where he has been living and comes back to the estate which belongs to his father. He takes into his house as a servant, Lucie, a peasant-girl of seventeen, who has eyes like the flowers of lint, hair that seems powdered with ripe grain, skin like bread, and a mouth like a gooseberry. These last two comparisons seem curious, but are highly characteristic and certainly convey to the reader a very definite image of the ideas in the poet's mind. Jean loves Lucie, but she loves Martin, one of his shepherds, who takes the sheep up into the mountains at Barège. Jean is unhappy, thinks of playing the stern master, but finally relents and blesses them. This is all the story, but it is full of the most exquisite detail, full of scenes both convincing and beautiful and contains one perfect lyric :—

Si l'aconit est bleu
comme tes yeux;
si la cascade est vive
comme ton rire;
si tes jambes sont lisses
comme les buis;
si tes cheveux sont comme
les toits de chaumes:
. . . .
Pourquoi ne vas-tu pas
à la montagne
qu'étourdit, le matin,
l'odeur du thym?

Examples of these delicious love-lyrics could be multiplied indefinitely. They form a startling contrast to the sultry atmosphere of some of Jammes' contemporaries, in their freshness and freedom from hypocrisy, inverted and otherwise. Jammes is not sensual, but sensuous : the cult of evil has no attraction for him. Before leaving this side of his poetry I cannot forbear from quoting "Je sais que tu es pauvre" in full :—

I know thy poverty
and modest is thy dress.
I have my woefulness
and that I offer thee.

But thou art more fair
than the others and thy kiss
is sweet; because of this
at your touch I despair.

Thou art poor and this is
the reason I love thee;
thou wishest from me
gifts of roses and kisses.

For thou art a young girl;
books have put in thy head,
and the tales thou hast read,
dreams and fancies that whirl,

of roses one gives
and of flowers wild and free:
thou believ'st that poesy
speaks of flowers and green leaves.

I know thy poverty
and modest is thy dress.
I have my woefulness
and that I offer thee.

In a note to his fourth volume Jammes announced his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. This has a curious sound in view of the religious sentiment visible in his previous works, but at all events this may be noticed, that after his public confession of faith follows a long poem, or, rather, a sequence of poems with a religious bent. "L'Eglise Habillée de Feuilles" must take high rank among his works and among the religious poetry of our time. The same simple reverent attitude that Jammes observes towards nature and man he observes to God, and the genuine humility, faith and love which make up his soul seem to have found their true expression in Christianity. Previously he had written a series of "Fourteen Prayers," including the beautiful "Prière pour aller au Paradis avec les ânes," and it is difficult to see what vital change from his attitude in these poems necessitated the warning he felt due to his readers that "L'Eglise Habillée de Feuilles" was written after his return to the Catholic church. Be this as it may, the sincerity of his religion, of his faith and of his humanity, shines through every line of this marvellous poem :—

And like a flower each prayer to heaven goes,
we know not how. And some are fairly clad,
heavy with perfume like a tuberose,
and some are stained and colourless and sad,
like pansies from a scanty flower-bed.
The Poet sees them mounting overhead
to the Father who weighs gold and silver alone.
'Tis he that knows the worth of every flower
that comes to him. And only to him is known,
above our hate, above our vanity,
if vervains, with their blue humility,
are more or less than pinks, far-sought and rare.
For tenderly, like an old sailor-man,
who has felt the wind and thunder in his hair,
over the gulfs of the pearled heaven God holds out his hands
to sufferers who bring their miseries
hidden in diamonds or primroses.

A word must be added with regard to Jammes' plays or poems in dialogue, " Un Jour," " Le Poète et sa Femme," " La Mort du Poète," and so forth. These are in a way summaries of the total effect of his works. With their choruses of young girls, their scenes in gardens and cornfields, their sturdy peasants, and the dreamy, gentle poet, they are full of the spirit of Jammes. Only in that amazing production, "Existences," is to be found a spirit of bitterness, of weary experience, that seems absolutely foreign to the author. This play is a heap of scenes which are absolutely unconnected and are filled with horrors of all kinds—suicide, infanticide, and the rest. It would be just to call it an attempt at realism, were it not that all the inanimate objects, from the grass to a poster in a lawyer's office, keep up a curious and charming commentary, bringing one touch of fantasy into the play. A note affixed by M. Jammes to " Le Deuil des Primevères " gives reason to suspect that " Existences " was written in order to upset the critics. At all events, the author felt called upon to hint that it would do so before it was published. Fortunately this accumulation of horror stands alone in M. Jammes' work. In order to forget it, it is only necessary to read the beautiful conversations and choruses of " Le Poète et sa Femme."

The taste for M. Jammes' poetry is doubtless an acquired taste. John Addington Symonds has left on record how his ear was repulsed and revolted by the uncouthness of Whitman, but how at length he became a warm admirer of that poet, and eventually was able to forget his roughness. In the same way, Jammes' verse appears at first sight not merely uncouth, but even a little ridiculous. As the reader proceeds, however, he finds that he gets the poems into focus, he begins to see these things as the poet sees, and realises, moreover, that it is a beautiful way of regarding the world. This is the essence of the genius of M. Jammes: he has a beautiful way of regarding the world.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

MR. BELLOC'S ANTI-SOCIALISM EXPLAINED.

Sir,—I beg to share with your readers an important discovery I have made. Those amongst them who are Socialists will, no doubt, instantly realise its significance. Who, would they say, has been and still is the most formidable opponent of Socialism in England? Not the "Daily Express" or the "Standard" or the Anti-Socialist Union—none of these. Any Socialist could wipe the floor in public debate with critics of the calibre of Fleet Street hack journalists. No, the most formidable anti-Socialist has been the most sincere and intellectual of them, namely, Mr. Belloc, and it is in regard to him that I have made my discrediting discovery. It is widely known that Mr. Belloc's case against Socialism rests on what he calls an elementary fact of human nature, the desire to own. This desire to own personally is, he tells us, both fundamental and ineradicable. Any system, therefore, which runs counter to this desire is doomed to dissolve and fall. Socialism runs counter to it; therefore Socialism, if ever it be established, is doomed to fall. This powerful argument derives all its strength, it will be seen, from the dogmatic statement that men desire to own personally and will always desire so to do. Disprove that statement and Mr. Belloc's case does more than fall to the ground, its ground falls with it. Unfortunately, however, the statement cannot be directly disproved. It is impossible to prove a negative. Hence, though one may adduce many facts to the contrary, they can all be regarded as exceptions. Indeed, both Mr. Belloc and his disciple Mr. G. K. Chesterton invariably describe such "exceptional" people as amiable cranks, intellectuals, or what not. If you should present Mr. Belloc with a number of people or even a whole nation manifestly and strenuously denying that they want to own personally, Mr. Belloc's reply would be simply that they were fools, exceptions to the great rule of human nature. And there in that impasse the argument has hitherto rested, for on a dogma has Mr. Belloc built his anti-Socialist church.

It occurred to me the other day to try Mr. Belloc's conviction by the test suggested in the case of plenary conviction by Nietzsche. When Nietzsche discovered a person suffering from an acute form of dogma, he advised that the dogma itself should be left undiscussed, and the attention should be turned to the idiosyncrasy of the person holding it. Every dogma rests on an idiosyncrasy, he taught. Hence, in dealing with dogmatic persons, one's aim should be not to refute them, but to explain them. I come, therefore, not to refute Mr. Belloc, but to explain him.

How comes Mr. Belloc to hold this dogma that men desire to own privately? The whole development of civilisation has obviously been its denial—but, there, I will not attempt to refute. The answer is that Mr. Belloc has some predilection in favour of this belief. He has personal motives for preferring that his dogma of private ownership should be true rather than that the dogma of communal ownership should be true. Both forms of ownership are obviously possible, and both have existed historically. Both, too, have dissolved in course of time. In short, there is no inherent difference intellectually between them. I repeat, then, my first answer to the problem of Mr. Belloc. Mr. Belloc holds his dogma of private ownership *because* he is predisposed to believe and to prefer it to be true.

But to what is this predisposition due? What private personal reasons has Mr. Belloc for grounding himself on this rather than on the contrary dogma, the private, personal, individual, isolated view rather than the public, popular, general and communal view? Is it not because, as a devotee of the Catholic Church, he has been and is accustomed to *separate* himself and the thoughts of a select group of his co-religionists from the nation and humanity at large? Between the Catholic Church and the secular State there has ever been and ever must be war. There cannot be two contending sovereignties. In opposing, therefore, the expansion of the power of the State Mr. Belloc is negatively attempting to establish the Catholic Church. Whatever enlarges the secular State reduces the Catholic Church. Socialism would enlarge the secular State, therefore Socialism is inimical to the Catholic Church. But, say the Catholics, human nature is instinctively Catholic. Hence human nature must be instinctively opposed to the enlargement of the power of the State, hence to Socialism, hence to the dogma on which Socialism rests. Voilà.

I conclude, therefore, that in opposing Socialism on these grounds Mr. Belloc is a good Catholic but a poor publicist. How can a man be a good publicist whose prime dogma is that men instinctively prefer private to public possession, their little clique or Church to the nation or the race? Nonsense!

Come, rejoice with me, for I have found that which was missing—an explanation of Mr. Belloc's anti-Socialism.

F. T. WARREN.

* * *

THE LAW AND THE WORKERS.

Sir,—Perhaps you will allow me a brief, final word in a correspondence which has become rather unprofitable. In his last letter Mr. C. H. Norman evaded all my main contentions with characteristic skill, and also managed to introduce a few of those terse little personalities which, though irrelevant, help to make his epistles such spicy reading.

Now, if Mr. Norman is agitating for a Women Workers' Minimum Wage Bill, he has the sympathy and support of most people. If all wages were raised uniformly, manufacturers would still be on an equality with each other as regards cost of production. Home competition would thus be unaffected; foreign competition, of course, would be another matter.

But why, in the name of commonsense, does Mr. Norman not drop these weird and melodramatic threats against the unspeakable, etc., etc., employers. His vague penalties are childish without being funny, and it is high time they found their way back to the kindergarten.

W. GILBERT SAUNDERS.

* * *

REACTION v. REPUBLICANISM.

Sir,—I regret that Senhor Bragança da Cunha is offended by the phrase as to "keeping his hair on," in my article, but I was thinking of the well-known story of the late Max O'Rell when he was French master at St. Paul's School, and the schoolboy's free rendering of "calmez vous." I still maintain that a gentleman who lets himself go to the extent of calling his political opponents "raving maniacs," including under this phrase, presumably, the whole of the Portuguese Congress, and even the bulk of the Portuguese nation, does not show that spirit of sane and sober judgment which entitles him to be treated, at least *pro hac vice*, to any other argument than chaff.

Senhor da Cunha evidently thinks that a man who finds himself for the nonce in possession of the forces of the State has the right to ride roughshod over the lives and liberties of the people of that State with perfect impunity; further that anyone slaying such a man, well knowing, moreover, that in doing so he is sacrificing his own life, is to be styled a "murderer," and that any view conflicting with this one "is sufficiently confuted by stating it." Well, this may be so as regards the Senhor's royalist friends, relations and circle of acquaintances. But, fortunately, the

world is not made up exclusively of reactionaries and royalists. It contains also a few Republicans, Democrats, and Socialists. For such it will be rather Senhor da Cunha's view that will be "sufficiently confuted by stating it."

I may say that I have not overlooked the quotation from Brito Camacho's speech, but I deny that a tribute of recognition to those who have given their lives in the cause of the people can in justice be described as appealing to that people's "worst instincts." The exhortation quoted from Ramalho Ortigao was obviously intended merely as a counsel of expediency at a time when the republican cause was not yet ripe for energetic action on the part of its followers, and hence is purely irrelevant to the present issue. The other quotations consisting of passages torn from their context are equally ineffective for Senhor da Cunha's purposes. We all know that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and that the most devoted adherents of a cause are apt to be the most severe in their criticism of any small defects accompanying its realisation, and this without any weakening in their devotion to the cause itself. Certainly nothing Senhor da Cunha has brought forward in any way invalidates my information as to the substantial agreement as regards essentials of the Portuguese Republican leaders.

E. BELFORT BAX.

* * *

SOCIALISM AND BANKING REFORM.

Sir,—Your printers have made a rather serious error in my letter of January 4. Instead of the sentence reading as it should, viz., "the legal restrictions upon banking have much to do with the practice of usury," I am made to say the direct opposite by reason of the word "not" appearing after "have."

Although competition has been allowed and even encouraged in the production of commodities *our* laws—and in fact the monetary laws of *all* nations—have strictly forbidden any and all competition in cheapening the medium of exchange and maintaining its supply equal to the demand. Hence usury—which is as much a creation of law as smuggling. For this reason also our so-called "Free Trade" system has failed to accomplish what its founders fondly hoped. For this reason Consols continue to fall, the purchasing power of money fluctuates at the caprice of speculators, unemployment is rife, strikes continue threatening, and our whole economic edifice is unstable and liable to topple over at any moment.

ARTHUR KITSON.

* * *

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

Sir,—In his first letter (December 7) Mr. Topley stated that "*the* great advantage" of Proportional Representation is that it will enable the electors to choose a representative in whose judgment and character they have faith—"a man instead of one of two loose conglomerates of vague policy." I asked him to explain how he reached this conclusion. Instead he explains (1) the Belgian system of election; (2) the method of working the system he himself advocates; and (3) the difference between a "block list" and the single transferable vote—all of which matters I am tolerably familiar with.

In the matter or arguments against Proportional Representation one suffers, as I pointed out in my last letter, from an embarras de richesse, but as Mr. Topley has ignored the two objections I brought forward in the first place I will stick to them and state them again.

My first contention was that Proportional Representation will increase the power of party managers, and I mentioned how this had actually happened in Belgium. Mr. Topley objects, however, to my referring to Belgian experience on the ground that the system in force there differs from the one he advocates. I will therefore drop my Belgium and accept his Tasmania, where the system (Mr. Topley's system) was actually abandoned for a time because it was found (in the words of the Report of the Royal Commission) that it "reduced the importance of the personal factor" and caused "personally popular candidates who had little political backing" to lose their seats. Subsequently the system was reintroduced on the ground that its practical convenience under the peculiar local conditions outweighed this disadvantage.

But the disadvantage remains—and will always apply to any system which involves any considerable increase in the size of constituencies. It is no use Mr. Topley urging that under his system the elector need only vote for one or two men on the list, and can ignore the rest if he does not know them. For it is not the first choices, but the later choices that will decide the fate of the election and the ultimate complexion of the House of Commons. In, say, a seven-member constituency it will be the third, fourth, and even fifth choices that will matter—a fact which the majority of the electors will probably never appreciate, but which the party managers will know how to use.

Mr. Topley states that my second objection was "that proportional methods will give undue influence to special interests." I suppose it is only courteous to assume that he read my letter, but if so he must have totally forgotten its contents in his endeavour to reply. For I wrote no sentence which could possibly have such a meaning or anything like it. In point of fact I expressed no opinion as to effect of the proposed system on the influence of special interests, but if I had it would have been the exact reverse of that which Mr. Topley attributes to me.

My second objection, as anyone who cares to refer to your issue of December 14 can see for himself, was stated perfectly clearly in the following terms: "Under Proportional Representation there would be a grave danger of men being elected on single issues, and being wholly irresponsible on other issues." In other words, there would be a great many more "safe" seats whose occupants would be comparatively indifferent to public opinion; and so the system would (to quote myself again) "tend seriously to reduce the control (admittedly insufficient now) which the country can exercise over the day-to-day decisions of the House of Commons."

At the end of his letter Mr. Topley enumerates certain other advantages which he claims for his system. I cannot answer them fully within a reasonable space, but I may attempt to do so briefly.

1. It would "encourage sound men to come forward frankly on their merits."

   Answer: Why? The experience of Belgium and Tasmania is the reverse.

2. "It would encourage a living interest in politics among the thoughtful."

   Answer: Why, on earth?

3. "It would content all sections of opinion with the knowledge that they were getting fair play."

   Answer: If so, the said "sections of opinion" are more stupid than I take them to be. An arithmetically proportionate number of representatives they may get, but if that proportion happens to be small "fair play" is the very last thing they can hope for.

4. "The apparent 'swing of the pendulum' would be reduced to its proportions, and consequently the decisions of the House would have greater moral authority at home and abroad."

   Answer: What are the "proper proportions" of the swing of the pendulum? Presumably they are those which correspond most accurately to the swing of public opinion. If so, the swing of the pendulum may or may not be wide of its proper mark under the present system, but under Proportional Representation it would certainly be much wider of that mark. For it must be remembered that owing to the strong tendency of the electors to stick to their party through thick and thin, the actual transference of votes very greatly *under*-represents the swing of public opinion. Consequently, if the swing of public opinion is to have its due effect on the House of Commons we must find some means of neutralising the dead weight of the strict party man of exaggerating the actual swing of votes. The means of achieving this end provided by our present system may be imperfect, but at least they are better than none.

5. "It would render the member more dependent upon his constituents and less dependent on the executive for his re-election, giving him some measure of control over the latter."

   Answer: I presume this means that the party system would be weakened. This, for reasons already given, I entirely deny.

6. "It would strengthen the personnel of the House of Commons."

   Answer: To this I can only say again, Why, on earth? I do not wish to dogmatise on the point, but it seems to me that in view of the tendency of Proportional Representation to eliminate the "personal factor," the reverse would probably happen.

Finally, let me quote a sentence which occurs earlier in Mr. Topley's letter:—"The parties are," he writes, "at any rate in fair proportion to their supporters." Here we have the assumption on which the whole case for Proportional Representation rests, namely, the assumption that it is desirable that the proportions of the different parties in the House of Commons should correspond with arithmetical accuracy to the proportions of those parties amongst the electors. My opinion is that such a correspondence is not only undesirable, but would, if invariably obtained, destroy the whole basis of representative government. If Mr. Topley were to consider this fundamental assumption of his he might come to agree with me or he might not, but, to judge from his letter, I doubt whether he has yet even realised that it is an assumption, or that there are any other theories of representative government besides the crude à priori propositions and the superficial logic of John Stuart Mill.

CLIFFORD D. SHARP.

THE STORY OF A LETTER.

Sir,—On the occasion of Mr. Lloyd George's speech at Whitefield's Tabernacle on October 14, I forwarded a letter to the right honourable gentleman in these terms:—

October 15, 1911.

Dear Sir,—In a letter dated September 19 last, addressed to Mr. Gladstone, M.P., relating to the proposals of the Insurance Bill, you stated: "The Insurance Bill provides that for every 4d. paid by the workman he shall receive 9d. To aid the workers' contributions the sum of £17,000,000 per year is to be subscribed by employers and taxpayers." In yesterday's speech this statement was repeated and elaborated by you.

Knowing how occupied your time must be, I had waited until this speech in the hope of receiving some enlightenment upon one vital matter, namely, where the £17,000,000 "free gift" and all the other moneys to be expended under the Bill are coming from. I have carefully read your speech, and as I find no reference to this aspect of the question I have no option but to trouble you directly.

As there are no modern instances of manna falling down from the heavens, presumably you would not suggest this £17,000,000 "free gift" to the working classes will owe its existence to the suspension of natural laws. There remain only three possible sources from which it can come: from the employers, from the general community, and from the working classes.

Your argument is that the employer will contribute 3d. a week in addition to deducting 4d. from his workman's wage. Mr. Churchill stated at Dundee that the difference between Liberalism and Socialism was that the former had no intention of attacking capital. If the employer refuses to pay the 3d. a week out of his profits, and the Government cannot *compel* him to do so, but pays it by economies in labour or in increasing the price of his goods to the consumer, what becomes of the "free gift"? The vast body of consumers are the working classes. On the assumption I have made, which I think you will admit is a reasonable one, I cannot understand where there is any "free gift" by the employer to the workman, or an addition of 3d. a week to wages as some advocates of the Bill have asserted.

Coming to the contribution by the State, the gift is still more illusory. What is the State for this purpose? Merely the taxpayers, who contribute to the revenues of the State. The greatest body of taxpayers are the working classes, who pay most of the indirect taxation. Really, you are robbing Peter through indirect taxation to pay Peter, which strikes me as remarkable finance. You complain that no one offers an alternative scheme. May I humbly point out that a reduction of indirect taxation by the amount of the State's contribution, its so-called "free gift," would give an immediate benefit to the mass of the working classes, and would check the upward tendency of prices, which is causing great hardship throughout the country. In any case, to take £2,000,000 from the working classes by indirect taxation on tea, beer, tobacco, cocoa, etc., then to return it in the form of a State contribution to National Insurance, and call the transaction a "free gift," is an abuse of language which I hesitate to characterise.

You have also repeated several times that there is no expense of administration thrown on the workers under the Bill. I assume you mean that the salaries of officials will be drawn from the general revenues of the country. Still, one of the heaviest burdens upon the community, in which is included the working class as large contributors to the revenues derived from indirect taxation, is the salaries of officials. Where the benefit is in not attributing the salaries of insurance officials to the insurance funds, but in placing them upon the general revenues of the country, I totally fail to grasp. You also take credit "that the Government are finding a million and a half to build sanatoria throughout the country." Most of this money will be wasted in construction and administration. There is only one remedy for consumption, namely, to provide the workers with healthy conditions, good houses, good food, and plenty of recreation. Wages are so poor at present that these necessaries of health cannot be obtained. But why deduct 4d. a week, or, if my view be sound, 9d. a week, when the workers are admittedly in such a wretched condition?

The Duke of Devonshire pointed out the other day that the problem of the future was the better distribution of wealth. The power of the landlord and the capitalist, as any economist knows, is so tremendous and so impossible to check in these days by means of palliatives that the cost of such measures as the Insurance Bill will be deducted from the earnings of the workers. In fact, the whole cost will be transferred to them before the six months has expired after which the benefits begin to accrue. The one fund which could not be put upon the pockets of the workers would be the profits of a nationalised industry. But to-day there is no such fund available. This is one reason why a certain kind of social reform injures solely those whom it is intended to help. The figures of death from starvation in London have been rising steadily in the last five years.

I apprehend this is what affected the minds of the Kilmarnock electorate, who were somewhat incredulous of the reality of 9d. which they were to receive on the payment of 4d., with the result that the Liberal member is now representing a minority of that electorate. How that election can be claimed as an endorsement of the principles of the Insurance Bill I have utterly failed to comprehend.

Apologising for troubling you at such length, and pleading as my excuse the seriousness of this question,—I am, sir, yours faithfully, C. H. NORMAN.

Right Hon. D. Lloyd George, M.P.,
11, Downing Street, S.W.

To this letter I received a formal acknowledgment, dated October 17:—

Dear Sir,—I am desired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th inst. on the subject of the National Insurance Bill.—Yours faithfully, E. GOWERS.

After waiting a few days I wrote:—"I have received a formal acknowledgment of my letter of the 15th inst. criticising the Insurance Bill, and should be glad to know whether I shall have any more detailed reply, as I intend to obtain publication of my letter in the Press."

Several days having elapsed, I forwarded my letter to several newspapers, by which it was published, others, including the "Daily News," declining it, with the usual regrets. On November 1, after such publication, I received this letter:—

Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 18th ultimo, I am desired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that he regrets that your previous letter appears to have been mislaid. He would be very glad, however, if you would send him another list of the questions you desire to raise.—Yours faithfully, JOHN ROWLAND.

On November 3 I replied:—

Dear Sir,—With reference to your letter of 1st inst., I have the honour to enclose a copy of my letter to you of the October 15, relating to the National Insurance Bill.—Yours truly, C. H. NORMAN.

On November 9 I received this acknowledgment:—

Dear Sir,—I am desired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to acknowledge the receipt of your letter on the subject of the National Insurance Bill.—Yours faithfully, JOHN ROWLAND.

I awaited the progress of events. On November 11 I received this letter:—

Dear Sir,—I am desired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to express his regret that an earlier acknowledgment has not been sent of your letter of the 15th ultimo, which is receiving consideration.— Yours faithfully, JOHN ROWLAND.

There the correspondence at present stands, and I am still wondering when, if ever, I shall hear the result of Mr. Lloyd George's consideration. Can it be that Mr. Lloyd George is in some difficulty about answering this plain criticism of his social policy, which, under present circumstances, must increase misery and destitution? Without sound and drastic economic reform, sentimental social reform is criminal cruelty. C. H. NORMAN.

* * *

EAST ON WEST.

Sir,—There appeared recently in the columns of "El Moayyad," a newspaper of good repute in Egypt, the first instalment of a lecture upon "Marriage," given at the Government Officials' Club in Cairo by Amîn Efendi Ahmed, an employee of the Education Department. It consists of a letter which would seem to have been written to the lecturer by an Egyptian student here in England. After describing the (to him) amazing freedom allowed to English maidens from the earliest age (he was acquainted with a number of them, one a member of a "high-class family") this correspondent writes:—

"You know of the disgraceful, shameless doings which happen on the nights of dances, when the wife forsakes her husband to dance with another, and goes off with him alone (let us not ask what happens afterwards); the maiden quits her betrothed to enjoy a dance with one she deems more love-inspiring."

Such things, he says, may be "amusing sport," but they "lead to social corruption." From this, and from the general liberty enjoyed by girls in England, he concludes that chastity is scorned among us.

"The women of the West know nothing of virginity," we read, "nor do they consider it harmful to lose it. I have endeavoured to elicit their exact opinion on this subject, and I asked many girls . . . . but never found one who seemed

to understand what I meant." The writer is shocked by an obtuseness which seems to us so eminently satisfactory. The self-conscious maidenhood at present cultivated in the East is not compatible with social freedom.

He goes on to relate a conversation with an English girl which, though natural enough in Arabic (if one could imagine the occasion!) will not bear reproduction in more squeamish languages.

The writer's attitude, it will be noticed, differs little from that assumed by ultra-Puritans of our own race; though here the sensual point is more in evidence. One sees no reason to regard it as a studied insult, a matter for national indignation, as the "Egyptian Gazette" (the organ of the English colony in Egypt) did on its appearance, quoting Lord Cromer's dictum that "it may be doubted whether, even in the Middle Ages, the general coarseness of European society was ever on a par with that of the modern Egyptians"—which, after all, is mere *tu quoque*. Morals in all ages follow climate; and the Egyptian Muslim has some virtues which we lack. The latter gives expression to the usual Eastern view which we had imagined was realised by everybody at the present day—a view which has not altered since the days of Solomon—of woman simply as the source of certain pleasures, whose only dignity is in the bearing of male children. There is no reason to suppose for a moment that the writer was anything other than an earnest and sincere inquirer in the cause of science. But the fact of his inquiry cannot be too widely published in these days, when Oriental students—many of them well-bred, charming fellows—flock to England. For one among them able to appreciate our point of view there are a hundred who regard the free behaviour of the Western woman as an evidence of her depravity.

With several Eastern tribes—the Druzes, for example, among whom there is sexual equality—it is a custom for the women, who go barefaced among members of their own community, to veil at once on the appearance of a man of alien faith and customs for fear of misapprehensions which might lead to rudeness. To adopt some slight veil of reserve with Orientals here in England would mean no loss of dignity to our free women.

MARMADUKE PICKTHALL.

* * *

ATHEISTIC OR CHRISTIAN.

Sir,—Allow me to enter an emphatic protest against the practice, of which Mr. Egerton Swann's letter is an exaggerated instance, of dubbing everything good, human, democratic, socialistic—Christian; and everything bad, cynical, brutal, oppressive—Pagan or Atheistic.

It is useless for the clerical interest and its friends to attempt to keep up the sham and exploded pretence that the world is indebted to the Christian religion for aught save sterile and degrading dogma, persecution of opponents, and sheep's-character ideal of false humility, with the hypocrisy it engenders. As a matter of history Christianity has always been on the side of those things Mr. Swann unjustly calls Pagan and Atheistic, and which are in truth neither Pagan nor Atheistic, but which might be more accurately described as Christian. It is significant at least that those who have waged war on them most consistently have not generally been Christians, but sincere and whole-hearted Atheists.

If Mr. Swann looks further into the matter, subduing the while his pro-Christian prejudice, I think he will have to admit that the fundamental fault lies not so much with the Dean of St. Paul's or any other individual clergyman, as with that fraudulent amalgam of debased Judæa-Pagan dogma and cult called the Christian religion itself.

E. BELFORT BAX.

* * *

PRAKRITI.

Sir,—With no end of satisfaction I learn conclusively that the quality of the female urges her to try and roll all things in mud. I have always thought so, especially when the laundry has just come home. But you will be accusing me of frivolity. Well, look at this latest addition to my chamber of horrors, stuffed with evidences of woman's materialising efforts. 'Tis a Poem by Miss Katherine Tynan, and very illustrative of the mudpie theory.

"O'er Mother's breast His fingers go,
Constraining that sweet stream to flow
So soft and small,
To whom that milky world is all.

"Myrrh, spikenard, such precious things,
The Kings have brought the King of Kings,
Who, dronken-deep,
Falls like a full-fed lamb asleep."

Yes, sir, that is the Christ Child, whom merely men like Raphael portrayed as a so exalted babe, a god-child, indeed—you remember that brow? Perhaps some female will now tell us what brand of safety pins Mother used. What?

T. K. L.

* * *

A WELCOME CORRECTION.

Sir,—In THE NEW AGE of January 4 your dramatic critic quotes a sort of recommendation of my play "Strife," which has been issued by the Drama League of America, and makes on it the following comment: "The name of the master-mind who was guilty of this primitive effort is not disclosed. Perhaps Mr. Galsworthy was responsible for it. If so, there should be something on the Statute Book to prevent authors from endeavouring to increase their incomes by publishing their plays in headlines that improve no one—not even the six silliest persons in a community."

May I just say that I knew nothing whatever of the recommendation till I saw it quoted a few days ago in the "Daily News." I am sorry that your dramatic critic should have thought his insinuation so probable as to have justified him in making it.

JOHN GALSWORTHY.

* * *

"NEW AGE" NOVEL CRITICISMS.

Sir,—I have been giving myself the pleasure during the holidays of reading through consecutively the detailed criticisms you have lately published of novels, and your references to novelists, in the series of "Present-Day Criticism." Like, I imagine, many of your readers, I have been more bewildered than illuminated by the brilliant and caustic comments of your reviewer as I read them week by week. At one time I was bound heartily to agree with his judgment, even when it was most severe; but at another I was staggered and shocked and even offended by a criticism, written in a similar vain, but directed this time against a work which in my judgment was as different from the first as chalk from cheese. For example, I was impressed as well as delighted by the review of Mr. Stacpoole's "Blue Lagoon"; but when the same measure was meted out to Mr. Wells' "Ann Veronica"—a novel as far from the first as Ibsen from Pinero, I was at my wits' end to know what standard of value your critic had employed. We do not expect surprises from an accomplished critic, and particularly from a critic who assumes the editorial mantle. We desire to feel that the same standard that is applied to one novelist (I assume, of course, that THE NEW AGE does not adopt the detestable habit of giving its novels to different persons to review) is applied to another; and we desire to have the satisfaction of knowing that, if we cared to examine the criticisms comparatively, or if the critic cared to state his standards, we should find the judgment of one review congruous and proportionate with the judgment of another. In criticism, as in law, the first natural demand is that the application of the rules should be uniform as well as without fear or favour. Your reviewer, I admit, is without fear or favour; but until I had examined his reviews as a whole I had not realised how very far they are from being uniform.

What I have discovered, indeed (or I think I have), is that your critic has not only no sympathy with what he calls circulationist novels, but he has no sympathy with novels at all. Novels, I should say, bore him; not merely bad novels, but all novels. It happens occasionally that for some personal reason a novel like Mr. Horniman's "Captivity" pleases him, but this is not because it is a good novel simply, but because certain views expressed therein please your reviewer. On the other hand, a work which, *as a novel*, is of equal if not superior merit, Mr. Bennett's "Hilda Lessways," for example, fails entirely to draw a word of praise. The conclusion to be drawn from this is, as I say, that your critic disapproves of the novel form altogether. At bottom he appears to say: "Novels in any case are dull; the better they are constructed the worse they are in effect; the best novelists are therefore the worst; in making fun of one or two you are really destroying the whole form."

Now this attitude, while comprehensible and perhaps meritorious, is quite incompatible with a fair judgment of the relative merits of novels actually published. As novels, there are obviously good, bad, and middling novels. It is the business of a reviewer to judge their rank and to justify his verdict by an appeal to the best standards of the novel form. But when a critic is secretly convinced that no novels, good, bad, or indifferent, ought to be written at all, he ceases to be a critic and becomes an iconoclast.

If I may presume to make a suggestion I would beg your reviewer to reveal to us the real facts of the case. If he has standards in the novel form, comparable, let us say, to the standards of poetry selected by Matthew Arnold, let him name them. Your readers will then know what models of excellence in the novel genre your reviewer sets his

compass by. If, on the other hand, your reviewer, as I suspect, despises novels indiscriminately, we are entitled to ask that he should deliver an attack on the novel as an art-form directly, and leave the discrimination of the relatively good and bad in that order of work to a critic who at least has some sympathy with the form.

A PUBLISHER'S READER.

* * *

PICARTERBIN.

Sir,—M. Herbin has produced a picture which nobody seems to understand (neither those who like it nor those who dislike it). Is there any possibility of understanding it at all or not? Does it express anything? Does it produce any impression? It seems to come under no established rule of art works. We are accustomed to classify art works more or less in the following way:—(1) Purely emotional; (2) thought pictures; (3) dreamy; (4) visionary; (5) symbolical or allegorical;; (6) natural; (7) decorative or applied art. But it evidently suits none of them.

Mr. Herbin's picture is by no means purely emotional, as it is too lifeless and stiff. It is not logical, healthy thought, as it is not understandable and clear in its meaning.

It is not a dream, too, as it possesses something like a pre-supposed plan, and all its lines and shapes are too definite to produce the impression of a dream. It is not visionary, for the whole picture, as all its details, is too hard and toilsome to produce an impression of vision, and its general impression and meaning are quite uncertain. It might be symbolical or allegorical, perhaps (we do not know the intention of the artist); but as it is not founded on natural or on conventional symbology, so it conveys no idea to the mind of a spectator. This picture is not natural, too, as it does not deal with the laws of light, shade and perspective. It cannot also serve as applied art, though the whole of the picture with all its details produces the impression as if it were a motive for wood carving. Still, it does not answer this purpose. If we try to imagine this panel carved in wood, we should immediately see that it can neither be applied as a decorative motive, being too capricious and unrhythmical, nor can it be used as an independent piece of art, being too inanimate, unemotional, meaningless.

Does it mean that M. Herbin's picture expresses nothing at all, that it is void of all thought and meaning?

No, it produces certain impressions (rather unpleasant, but strong and intrusive). What does it express? A clairvoyant person accustomed to visit lunatic asylums would immediately recognise in this picture a thought form of one of its inhabitants. It is neither the dream nor even dreamy thought of a healthy person. It is highly chaotic and unsound thought; impertinent and unemotional *idee fixe* of a madman.

Does this mean that M. Herbin is—from the point of view of art, at any rate—a lunatic himself, or that he is a genius capable of expressing madmen's minds?

If an artist is a healthy minded man, a genius expressing in his picture a madman's thoughts, it ought to produce an impression of health, harmony and life, in spite of its contents. But if a picture produces a definite impression of unhealth and lunacy, it is quite evident that the very artist is a madman (even if he tried to express a healthy thought).

Still a picture painted by a genius madman, though very unbalanced and unhealthy, may possess all the marks of genius. Is M. Herbin's picture such an one?

Unfortunately it is not, because if it were such, it should necessarily be emotional; but it is quite free from that, being a purely intellectual production. And without the emotional element there is really no art at all, as the whole of art is founded on human emotions, just as science is founded on intellect. So that M. Herbin's picture may be perhaps a scientific or technical discovery, but in no way a piece of art.

W. WROBLEWSKI.

* * *

Sir,—The study of things in balance is generally called statics, but if Mr. Carter really prefers to call it dynamics it is all right so long as we know what he means.

I admit having added "emotion" beside "intellect," for in my foolishness I thought that all art which was worth twopence was based on emotion: that this was, in fact, the point of distinction between art and science. But I willingly retract, for, to tell the truth, the drawing evokes but little emotion in me, and this distinctly of the nightmare order. If a cramped nightmare is better than a free-flowing boundless dream, then no doubt M. Herbin has won.

Mr. Carter's lump of sugar really bears out my contention exactly, unless the argument is to be taken as running thus: "If you look at a piece of sugar it disappears and only the essentials remain; therefore if you look at the essentials of nature they disappear and only crockery remains." Not, I must remind Mr. Carter, *only* a pint pot, but also a basin of oranges, a ham, and lots of other little things. I must repeat that the idea that all these can be the result of unfree-willed dynamics is untenable. Two explanations seem possible: (1) that M. Herbin's mind turns to such kitchen matter, which I think is very unlikely; (2) that he believes, in common with many others, that things can be looked on as counters and used without carrying any connotation with them. This is a huge mistake, but is very common among artists of all kinds. They may produce a man with a black eye or a dirty face and be annoyed because their audience cannot see the beauty of the picture because of the dirt. Anyone knows that by a curious unconscious magic we see only what we intended to draw and think we have drawn. To disabuse ourselves of this we may either put the thing away for a long time, or use a looking-glass—which for some reason we resent less than the looking-glass of our friends' eyes.

The whole question is really whether the artist is working for himself or others. If for others, then he must study their point of view if he wishes to convey his meaning and secure their applause. If he will not trouble to do this he is working for himself, and must be content to be understood by very few, and have as his crowd of followers those who prefer to hold second-hand opinions.

The modernists have not yet got to the stage at which they are well advised to exhibit their productions. When an artist has proved himself by capturing men's minds and emotions, then his drawing of a cow at the age of two years may acquire an interest, psychological or antiquarian—but seldom artistic. Many ordinary artists of the better sort have in their rubbish-heaps scrawls which it would be difficult to differentiate by definition from some of the modernist work. But they consider them, rightly or wrongly, as inco-ordinated and immature attempts to express their emotions, and do not expect others to admire what they recognise is still unborn, though struggling so hard within them for birth that they themselves can almost see it in the chaos.

M. B. OXON.

* * *

Sir,—In your issue of 21st ult. Mr. Huntly Carter refers to himself as "Mr. Sickert's best friend." I hope, then, he is satisfied with these "Sickertonian" pronouncements in the current "English Review."

(P. 304). "Till it occurred to Mr. Roger Fry, over-ballasted by excess of learning, and to Mr. Lewis Hind, flighty perhaps for the opposite reason, to take it into their amazing heads to find salvation in the 'spoof' of Matisse and Picasso, the critical Press has been somewhat gravelled for lack of matter."

(P. 311.) "The conspiracy of semi-unconscious 'spoof,' which is looked upon by some as an alarming symptom of the artistic health of the present day, is in reality a very small and unimportant manifestation. . . . The modern cult of Post-Impressionism is localised mainly in the pockets of one or two dealers holding large remainders of incompetent work. They have conceived the genial idea that if the values of criticism could only be reversed—if efficiency could be considered a fault, and incompetence alone sublime—a roaring and easy trade could be driven. Sweating would certainly become easier with a Post-Impressionist personnel than with competent hands, since efficient artists are limited in number; whereas Picassos and Matisses could be painted by all the coachmen that the rise of the motor traffic has thrown out of employment." *Good*-bye, Mr. Carter!

May I add, apropos of this, the following amusing experience in a recent visit to the Alpine Gallery? I was discussing the Picasso affair with a distinguished critic and painter; a modern of the moderns, whose works I cordially admire in the main; and he delivered his soul thus:—"Picasso is a derivative, and a derivative is a rotter, and once a rotter always a rotter, so there's an end of *him*." But, I cried, we are *all* derivatives, *you* are a derivative (a gasp and a shrug in reply); we are the sons of our fathers and cannot escape the main results of centuries. Roger Fry, here, is a derivative; for he surely couldn't have painted these things ten years ago, before he knew Cézanne and Gauguin, etc.? And if you are going to try to be underivative, where are you going to begin; from naked intelligence?—and how are you going to convey that to the spectator? You want your pictures to be understood, and, perhaps enjoyed; mere puzzles are of no use to anyone; but if you won't talk an intelligible language how do you expect to be understood, and if you talk in the current language you must use current formulas, current expressions. Otherwise you ought to allow admission to your shows only to those who can pass an examination in the ethics of your cult and who are thus likely to be admirative of your efforts. And anyhow, why not be consistent? Take

the No. 41 in this gallery as an example, with its admirably and truly painted water, and its sensitively treated aerial distance; why do the tops of the trees on the foreground bank stick tightly into the middle distance beyond? why is there not the same truth to aerial planes as in the distance? etc., etc., to numberless other instances. But bad draughtsmanship will soon bore and annoy this really fine colourist, and we may hope for pictures from him that can be sanely enjoyed throughout.

I feel I ought to apologise for this lay intrusion of my critical feelings, but incompetence, or the wilful simulation of it, exasperates me, as I am sure it does also the enormous majority of picture-gallery frequenters.

FREDERICK H. EVANS.

* * *

Sir,—I am not immortalised as yet, for my ode has never been published—and even if you were good enough to print it in THE NEW AGE, I am afraid it would not out-run many pages of runes; but perhaps you could find space for a few stanzas:—

Awake—Victorian Cook—awake!
And give those lengthy ears a shake:
Throw off that patchwork coverlet,
Once wrought by good old grandmamma:
And with the Tinted Venus knit,
Come let us see you do a split
Upon Herbin's linoleum:—
Hurrah!
He comes, he comes—
(An *obligato* on the drums);
The glad New Age hath heard.
While round about the jocund claquers (sic) roar,
He comes to test our oilcloth floor:
Oh, Cookums, shall I call thee bird,
Or but a silly bore?

Soft sounds Picasso's mandoline!
While rosy-red Platonic loves
Are plucking feathers from the doves
To make him pens withal:
To thee, oh mighty Mandarin,
To thee alone the critic's functions fall,
Etc., etc., etc

Oh, Mr. Editor, I am ill at those numbers; but I should like to talk to you a little about Plato—and a good deal about myself; but I am afraid you would not be interested. but in any case I've got a motto which is:—

"Virtutem videant, intabescantque relictam,"

and the meaning thereof is, "You will all be very sorry for all this some day."

And now a little about Picasso. "Dis crambe thanatos." Excuse my early Victorian familiarity with the classics. I have been following Mr. Huntly Carter's advice. Regularly, after morning prayers, I have propped up "Picasso" against the milk-jug, and sat at gaze; but, alas, that kind goeth not forth by gazing. I suppose a little brain force is required. I am afraid my case is hopeless. As the Scotchman said of the joke: "It's nae use, I canna see it." But, anyhow, I have never miscalled those who say they can; but the longer I look myself, the more the picture dissolves itself into a mass of butter, stuck all over with black hairpins and licked into holes and hollows by the domestic cat.

Well, I suppose I must submit to the fate that Mr. Huntly Carter says awaits the likes of me. Not far from where I live, adown the vale, amid the verdant landscape, a fair-walled lunatic asylum exalts her towery head. She's waiting there for me.

But as for thee, my gentle Wide-a-wake, go thy ways, and bombinate *in vacuo* along with the rest of the Flapdoodles, leaving me in peace to enjoy the headache I have got from reading your letters.

HAROLD B. HARRISON.

* * *

Sir,—Scientific quaintness is the distinguishing feature of Mr. Robert Fowler's communication. From time to time I have unearthed up and and down the country canvases by Mr. Fowler, and oddly enough without noticing that they were founded upon the rudiments of paleolithic science and paleographic observation. If I had detected in them the litter of a paleolithic student I do not think I should have derived a quarter of the artistic pleasure which they have given me. Alas, when next I go to view Mr. Fowler's important studies what a change will be there. I shall find myself looking for the faces and facts of ancient science. And I shall see the dear dead gods outlining themselves in scientific trees and bushes, even in haunches of boiled mutton, their unlovely profiles nicely balanced by the many and varied strange data. In subdued lights I shall see the dim figures and piercing eyes of professors standing on the threshold of the infinite arrested by an eternal voice which says: Thus far shalt thou go and no farther. I shall see the high lights on bald pates that have long ceased to shampoo. I shall inhale the musty odour from shiny alpaca coats and greasy skull-caps; while from the woods, the streams and the adipose clouds will emerge the goblins of scientific wares which subsequent research with which the professors are not acquainted will prove to be worthless. I shall be aware of all this, and it breaks the heart of me to say so.

To think that this unsuspected scientific world in which apparently Mr. Fowler moves, but has not his being, should be discovered by a printer's error. It might have remained for ever hidden from my view if only the line had been inserted which says, "according to mechanics matter has weight," continuing, "according to the geometrical definition." Then there would not be the need for me to set Mr. Fowler right by reminding him what was said at the great meeting of the British Association at Leicester, which will be remembered in the history of physical science for the astonishing discussion on the constitution of the atom, in which, I believe, all the great modern researchers into the ultimate elements and forces of matter took part. Lord Kelvin maintained the idea that ether is an elastic solid, therefore ponderable. He refuses to abandon the atom as the ultimate unit of matter; while Sir William Ramsay, hot on the heels of his own discovery, the new elements, helium, neon, krypton, and xenon, maintained the theory of the latest school of philosophy, namely, the divisibility of the atom. Thus while Kelvin continued to regard the atom as the ultimate indivisible unit of matter, and the electron as as electric atom, the younger men agreed to divide it. Now, if, according to its definition, an atom is that which cannot be divided, it follows that as soon as an atom is divided it is no longer an atom, and the parts into which it is divided are no longer the constituents of the atom which has ceased to exist, but atoms themselves. Moreover, they remain atoms till divided again. I use this argument to illustrate the stupidities that arise from the incautious use of terms, even among scientists themselves. Mr. Fowler is not aware of these stupidities or he would have discovered that underlying my examination of the points in question is an indictment of the unintelligent use of terms, both metaphysical and physical. But if scientists go off the line in this fashion, who are accustomed to breakfast off the Hon. R. J. Struut's chemistry, to lunch off Professor Armstrong's organic chemistry, to dine off Sir Oliver Lodge's philosophy of electricity, finishing the day with a debauch of scientific devilries, what can we expect from non-scientific persons in picture and music-producing circles who dash round to the scientific department of the nearest museum for bites and snacks of the great and ever-spreading tree? Why no more than from the boy who was asked to name the eight great powers of the world. He graduated them as follows: Gravity, electricity, steam power, gas power, horse power, the army, navy, and police force.

Rivers flow because no one can stop them, once wrote a budding scientist. Some persons appear to write letters for the same reason. It is difficult to understand what else could call forth the ingenious concoction by Mr. E. C. Taylor. Mr. Taylor has laboured hard over my "article on Picasso" (doubtless meaning Herbin) and now requires a long course of analytical lectures on art and photography in order to see the defective point in his understanding of my argument that photography is burying realistic forms of art (not destroying painting), and unconsciously directing original minds to seek internal inspiration, or, in other words, to explore the world of intuition. Of course, photography will not destroy public interest in the works of Messrs. Nicholson, Pryde and Co. I never said it would. On the contrary, it will increase the market value of such photographic ware by demonstrating that when photography has reached a certain stage of refinement it is passed through the artist. And this in the same way as—according to the small boy—"When the cow has been milked it is passed through a sieve." On referring again to Mr. Taylor's letter I see it may have another cause. Mr. Taylor has just written an elementary article on Bergson in a January review. Can it be that in advising me to lap "a little elementary Bergson" he is slyly advertising the fact?

HUNTLY CARTER.

MR. JOHN REDMOND.

Printed for the Proprietors, THE NEW AGE PRESS, LTD., by A. BONNER, at the Chancery Lane Press, 1, 2, and 3, Rolls Passage, Chancery Lane, W.C. (and 38, Cursitor Street, E.C.) Agents for South Africa: CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY, LTD.
Published by the Proprietors at 38, Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane, E.C.