THE

NEW AGE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE position of the Cabinet in the matter of the coal dispute is pitiable if they are depending for advice upon either the party Press or Parliament. Neither of these great organs of public intelligence has a constructive proposal to offer, but all alike are loud in their exhortations of the Cabinet to do something or other. The "Times," the "Daily Mail," the "Daily Chronicle," and the "Daily News" are particularly anxious for the Government to intervene at once. The "Daily Mail" counts every moment of non-intervention as lost, and issues orders as peremptorily to the unrest to cease as Canute commanded the tide to ebb. But how and with what idea the Government is to intervene are matters which in their perturbation these worthy journals do not discuss. The "Daily News," as we saw last week, is sententiously certain that when all is over things will not be as they were; but the direction of the desire of the "Daily Mail" is more clearly perceptible. The reference to the "whole forces of the nation" makes it quite evident that the "Daily Mail" is thinking, as usual, of soldiers. Whenever anything goes the least bit wrong, either in England or out of it, Lord Northcliffe's mind instinctively calls for the army. Knowing, in all probability, that ideas are the last things that he can command, he naturally turns to the strong right arms of soldiers, whom the country can at least pay to employ in the service of millionaires. To employ them in the service of the men about to strike or in the service of the public is, of course, a utopian notion. The form only of public service may be maintained; but in actual fact, if the Cabinet is so ill-advised as to attempt to employ the Army to suppress the coal strike, the service will be rendered to the coal-owners (and mostly Welsh owners at that), and not to the public at all.

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We are familiar, needless to say, with the real grievances of the public in this matter. They are many and they are solid. We do not relish the notion of paying 50 per cent. more for our coal before even a strike is begun; we shall relish still less the experience of doing without coal altogether. It is a travesty of a commonwealth that puts the community in hourly jeopardy of its familiar materials of life, and nobody can be more indignant than the vast body of private citizens over whose backs the battles of Labour and Capital are fought. Almost any means of settling these worrying disputes would be acceptable to the public on the single condition that they were actually means of settlement. But we have had enough of the cry of peace, peace, when there is no peace. The settlements recently conjured by Mr. Lloyd George in the South Wales coalfields and on the railways, and for which the public paid him in popularity salutes of twenty or so guns (taking advantage of which Mr. Lloyd George instantly turned dictator and rammed down our throats his detestable Insurance Act), those settlements, we say, have proved to be mere putty and paint—the first touch of nasty weather and the cracks appear. If the same kind of settlement is to be reached in the coal dispute, anxious as the public is for a settlement, the public would rather be without it. Muddle we may, and muddle we shall allow our amateur statesmen to do; but muddle through and not further in we must. A further consideration is that the settlement must not only be real and reasonably permanent, but it must concede the principle of the Minimum Wage. For this demand of the men it is certain that the public are more responsible than the men themselves. The men (God bless 'em!) would never have dreamed of demanding so humane and intelligent a privilege if the best minds of the public had not put it into their heads. Over a period of now, at least, twenty years the doctrine of the Minimum Wage has been preached, not merely by agitators and Socialists, but by every intelligent writer, speaker, and journalist. The doctrine appears as a dogma in the strangest places. In the House of Lords it may fairly be described as rampant. Sir Arthur Markham has preached it for years in the House of Commons and out of it. Church congresses, social welfare conferences, Nonconformist assemblies, Liberal newspapers, Unionist journals, sociologists, eugenists, atheists, tinkers, tailors, etc., etc.—they have all been at it. Except in first-class carriages after a bad day in the City you will never hear a word spoken against the *principle* of the Minimum Wage. If the principle alone were in dispute at this moment (and we are sadly afraid that practice is not yet in question) the decision of the public has long ago been made. The defeat of the men will be the defeat of the public, for, by every fair line of thought, the men are fighting the public's battle quite as much as their own.

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Principle, however, is good enough material to produce a glow at academic discussions of Social Reform and the Regeneration of the British Masses. But the

rule is in the application. How, in Queen Whim's phrase, to wash asses' ears without losing soap—that is the question. If only wages could be raised without reducing dividends, if only the poor could be made richer without the rich being made poorer, none would be more eager to put the principle of the Minimum Wage into practice than our wealthy classes. We ourselves are disposed to believe that the miracle can under certain conditions be performed. National production in this country is still miserably small. In 1907, a year of what the "Spectator" would call prosperity, our total national production amounted to only about a thousand million pounds' value, a wretched twenty or so pounds per head. No probable change in wages would be likely to reduce this humiliating amount. On the contrary, the release of mind and will arising from better wages and conditions would, in our opinion, infallibly multiply this disgraceful product by two or three. Twenty-two pounds per head is what we produce, in spite of unwilling, discontented, and sweated workers. Nobody with any sense would deny that the same workers minus their weights would produce more. But our argument for the present occasion does not depend upon the probability of increased production. The case for a Minimum Wage in the coal-fields is able to stand upon its own legs. Profits in this industry are enormous from the royalty owner, through the colliery companies and the railways, to the coal merchants who bring it to our doors. At its present yield the coal industry, if its proceeds were equitably divided, would be able to pay a high Minimum Wage to the miners as well as sufficiently thumping profits to the owners and carriers and vendors. There is not the least reason why it should not be made to do so; and if we were a million miners having a million wives and two million children dependent upon us, our battle cry would be a Minimum Wage for the lot of us, or Perish!

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Two superficially respectable objections have been raised to the concession of the Minimum Wage: the men won't earn it and the trade won't bear it. Examined with a little attention, these objections, it will be seen, are identical; for if the men don't earn it, of course the trade won't bear it. But what in this phrase is meant by trade? The coal trade certainly will not bear the burden of increased wages if profits and rents are also to be increased. But suppose they are diminished—the question is whether the remainder is fair compensation for the other elements in technical production. Here we are in the old difficulty of speculating in the dark on the actual profits made by our profiteers. At present there is a discussion taking place between the authors of a pamphlet on coal profits and Sir Arthur Markham relating to this very question. The authors conclude their researches into the returns of a number of coal companies by averaging profits at 10.5 per cent. Sir Arthur Markham, who *ought* to know, contends that this average is much too high. Profits in the coal industry average, he says, nearer five than ten per cent. But how are we to get at the truth in this matter in the absence of any intention on the part of coal-owners to disclose it? We can well believe that in some groups of mines the average of ten, calculated by Mr. Walbank and Mr. Richardson, is too high; but in other groups, and possibly in the mass of mines, not only Sir Arthur Markham's five per cent. is too low, but even ten is wide of the real mark. The fact is, as we have many times said in discussing the question of private profits, all business men, and especially company directors, were accurately described by David in his wrath. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot believe their word, the innocent public certainly cannot believe their statistics. To be blunt, we do not believe the coal owners any more than we believe railway directors when they plead the poverty of their percentages. The coal industry will bear comfortably every penny of additional expense that a Minimum Wage would entail. If it won't, let it bear it uncomfortably—for why should a million men be underpaid to make a thousand wealthy? The other objection is really one of local management, and presents no more difficulty in the mine than elsewhere. In the vast majority of industries men are paid a fixed wage, and supervision is provided to see that they earn it (and a good bit over). We cherish no illusions that the coal owners will not get their minimum day's work for a minimum day's wage. Let them change their managers!

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All this, however, is on the assumption that the men will obtain their demands. So they will if the Government remains really neutral or only intervenes on the men's side; but the jejune comments on labour unrest in the King's Speech, together with the idle discussion of the subject in the Commons on Thursday, tend to show that the Government has no intention of remaining neutral and still less of supporting the men. On the other hand, with what constructive proposals can the Government intervene, even if it should prefer ideas to force? Where is the light and leading to come from? In the Commons debate on Thursday the Labour Party contented themselves with advocating the nationalisation of the mines and railways. We have no objection to this if the purchase be carried out fairly and the whole cost is not thrown upon the industry itself. With the current conceptions of public finance, however, this fairness is the last thing to be expected. The conditions of purchase of the private telephones have been a scandal, and it is highly probable that the same conditions would determine the purchase price of the mines and railways. To avoid this it is necessary to realise clearly and to insist on Parliament realising that monopolies which have been merely permitted to grow up are not entitled to be bought at monopoly rates. In other words, compensation for the abandonment of a monopoly should in no case be paid by the nation. Secondly, we object entirely to the creation of a sinking-fund by means of which the men employed in any industry when it is taken over by the State pay the whole purchase price out of their wages. It is obvious that purchase by the State on these terms is merely the acquisition of property at the cost of the men least able to find the money. Look, for example, at the proposals recently made for the municipalisation of land for the use of small holders. The prospective tenants are not only to pay an annual rent (which would be necessary even under Socialism), but in addition they are to contribute to a fund which ultimately purchases the land for the County Councils. But why should they pay for land which becomes, not their own, but public property? It is enough if they pay a fair rent calculated on the relative value of the land in question. The objection may be raised that the public authority has no other means of purchase than the throwing of the cost on the particular persons whose industry is involved. From this point of view it is considered reasonable that if the railways and mines are nationalised the purchase price should be paid by the respective industries; over a period of, say, twenty-five years, the men must be prepared to accept reduced wages in order that out of profits a sinking-fund may be provided to discharge the original loan: a preposterous proposition! What ought to be done when the State purchases any great undertaking is to raise a special tax on the wealthy for the specific purpose of purchase. Railway and mine nationalisation, for example, should be carried out by a special supertax, which would set these industries free from debt at the very start. On no other terms is nationalisation a profitable investment for the men engaged in the nationalised industries.

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But it is evident that we are several generations from nationalisation. By a one-eyed Chancellor of the Exchequer like Mr. Lloyd George taxes are raised only to be squandered in riotous living. Only to think of the millions of public money that have passed through that man's hands! And what has the State to show for it? The economy of the State differs in no sense from the economy of an individual. An individual who proposes to establish his family saves his money and invests it in permanent property; he acquires wealth. A State intent on solid permanence would do exactly

the same. As a result of the enormous taxation which Mr. Lloyd George has levied the State should now be one of the wealthiest in the world. It should possess railways, mines, and a good part of the land of England. On the contrary, however, Mr. Lloyd George will leave England as poor as he found it. He has compelled her to "live up" to her income, with the result that she has not a penny with which to purchase a single large monopoly. And the proposal to levy a special tax for the purchase of the railways and mines would probably fill Mr. Lloyd George with horror. Short of nationalisation, however, what is there that the State can do in the matter of the existing labour unrest? In the Commons on Thursday and in the House of Lords on Wednesday a good many references were made to the device of co-partnery. The labour unrest, it was said, is due to the fact that the men have no interest in the profits of their industries. A system of profit-sharing, voluntarily established by the masters, would consolidate labour and capital by appealing equally to the cupidity of both. The solution of the whole problem, therefore, is to request, compel, or persuade the masters to take their men into co-partnership and to divide the spoils in the ratio of the shares invested in the business.

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We may say at once that this is a form of co-partnery with which the unions, for very good reasons, will have nothing to do. Apart from the obvious reflection that the conditions of such a co-partnery would be exclusively determined by the masters, experience has clearly proved that its effect is to break up the unions first, and afterwards to ruin the men singly. Cases were cited in the debate of successful experiments in this form of co-partnery in South London and in Lancashire; but, as Mr. Keir Hardie pointed out, the hours of labour in the former business have been increased, and of the latter we know only what Mr. Taylor chooses to tell us. Mr. Pierpont Morgan's Steel Trust, however, has sufficiently illustrated the effects of co-partnery of this kind to constitute a classic example and a standing warning. Recent disclosures have acquainted us with the fact that 65 per cent. of the men engaged in making and keeping Mr. Morgan a multi-millionaire receive less than a living wage. His own general manager, Judge Gary, admitted last week that "We men of great power have not always done right." He compared the existing discontent in American steel labour circles with the discontent that preceded the French Revolution, and added that unless capitalists volunteered for social reform the work of change would be carried out in America by a revolutionary mob. Yet the point to observe is that the Steel Trust is profit-sharing in the same sense in which profit-sharing would be conducted in this country; that is to say, a bonus is given to a selected number of workmen according to the value put upon their "loyalty" by the managers of the Trust. In Mr. Morgan's own words, bonuses proportionate to profits are paid by the Trust "to those who show a proper interest in its welfare and progress." We do not need to be told after this that men's unions in the steel works are practically non-existent. But you might as well ask Germany to disband her Army or England to scrap her Navy as expect English trade unionists to abandon unionism.

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Whatever system of profit sharing may be adopted in England, it is certain that it will not be Mr. Morgan's system with the consent of English unions. A system of profit-sharing must be devised which, far from weakening the unions, will tend to strengthen them; and we suggest to Lord Furness and Lord Hugh Cecil—both of whom advocated profit-sharing—that the safe line of progress is to associate the unions of men in their unions with the masters as representatives of the shareholders. After all, that is the natural development of the trade union in principle as well as in practice. Formed originally to protect and improve their wages and conditions of labour they have been led by experience step by step nearer to the boards of directors. Exactly as politically the proletariat have been forced by events to make an assault on the seat of sovereign power—the Cabinet itself—industrially they are being led to aim at joint control through their union representatives with their "masters" on all the great boards of industrial organisation. And when we speak of copartnery as the next step in industrial evolution it is this form that we have in mind, not the form, fatal to the unions, of Mr. Morgan in America or of Lord Hugh Cecil in England. We may even go further and say that, Minimum Wage or no Minimum Wage, this association on equal terms in management (which is practically ownership) is inevitable. Whatever else may happen, it is certain now that the trade unions will grow in strength, and their demands will be proportionate to their power. They may perhaps be defeated this year, as they were defeated in 1911; they may be defeated next year; but it is merely a matter of months before they win. And what form, then, do our readers foresee that industry will take? To concede a Minimum Wage will not then be enough, even if its concession should stop the threat of the present strike; for it must be remembered that the Minimum Wage, established in principle, will need to be maintained in fact. Suppose, for example, that as a result of Government pressure the coal owners within the next few days accept universally the principle of the Minimum—who is to see that the principle is applied? The coal managers may be trusted to see that a Minimum Day's work is done before the Minimum Day's wage is paid; but only the association of the men themselves in the management will ensure that what is being given with one hand is not being taken from them with the other. Horrible injustices to the young, infirm and old may be expected if the Minimum wage is established at the sole discretion of the masters. Nothing less than its administration by the men jointly with the owners will satisfy us that even the concession of the Minimum Wage is not at least a curse as well as a blessing.

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This is perhaps not the time to discuss with the "Eye-Witness" and the "Syndicalist" their respective objections to our proposals; for both of them are for the moment outside the narrow limits of the urgent practical problem of dealing with the immediate labour situation. The "Eye-Witness," we conclude, has no other theory to advance than the theory we have already discussed—the theory of profit-sharing. Mr. Belloc appears to be of the opinion that unless the men hold individually some actual "property" in their industries, they are and must be servile slaves. But this notion of individual property is an obsession with the editor of the 'Eye-Witness." It is impossible in large industries, depending so much upon sub-division of labour, to allocate to each employee a proportionate share in the technical proprietorship. His share of the proceeds comes to him and must continue to come to him in the form of wages, the amount and conditions and security of which must be determined by himself in concert with his fellows and with the employers' managers. Management, we have said, *is* property, and once associate a gild or union of men with the actual management of their industry and they may be relied upon to utilise their generally superior technical knowledge to obtain complete control. Until nationalisation substitutes the State for the private owners this co-management is obviously the best way out of the present difficulty. The theories of the "Syndicalist," however, lie up another street. The first issue of the new journal makes it quite clear that Continental Syndicalism, after all, *has* procured a foothold in English labour circles. How firmly established it may be time alone can show; but we venture to say that Syndicalism will prove to have all the objections of the ordinary joint stock systems. After all, it was Owen who first preached Syndicalism to the world, and the fate of Owenism will infallibly be repeated in the fate of Owen's Syndicalism re-imported from France with a French name. Mr. Tom Mavin's new journal lays it down as the object of Syndicalism to organise the workers to take over and run their industries themselves "in the interests of the whole community."

But what guarantee is there that a thousand men banded together in a single industry will be less competitive in character or more concerned about "the interests of the whole community" than the existing boards of directors are? A thousand workmen are not more righteous than ten masters; despotic power corrupts all bodies of men alike. The doctrine of Syndicalism, while not inopportune during a period of fierce discussion of industrial problems, offers society at large no solution. If profit-sharing would weaken the unions to extinction, Syndicalism would erect them into tyrants. As Socialists—that is, as members of society—we object equally to both.

* * *

The opening debate in Parliament was marked by a slip of the tongue into truth on the part of Mr. Bonar Law. Asked whether if and when he came into power he would repeal the Insurance Act, he replied, "Certainly." As a statement nothing could be more clear or more satisfactory. It is certain that nothing will reconcile the English public with a clumsy and costly poll-tax, the only object of which appears to be to produce the maximum irritation with the minimum benefits. Whether this year or in ten years' time, the Act will have to be repealed or, at least, reduced from compulsion to voluntary acceptance; and Mr. Bonar Law was well inspired by the moment's spur to answer as he did. Unfortunately for his future career and reputation he allowed himself to be badgered by those numskulls, Mr. Austen Chamberlain and Mr. Walter Long, into retreating from his manly position. In a letter to the Press, steaming hot from their oven, Mr. Law explained that what he had said he had not said. His promise of repeal was conditional on finding himself in power before the Act came into operation. If the happy event should be postponed until fifteen million people had been bled for a number of months or years he would amend it only. This withdrawal can only be described as both a crime and a blunder. It is surely a crime to permit a bad Act to continue in operation merely because it is on the Statute-book. Time will not sweeten the putrefaction the Insurance Act will introduce into our social life. On the contrary, the putrefaction will contaminate all our subsequent social legislation. Once definitely committed to the mad, bad method of compelling our poor to pay for their own poverty, and there is no end to the process save the compulsory alienation of the whole of their wages and their submission to the dictation of the scoundrels now seeking Government posts as tax-gatherers. But the blunder is not less obvious than the crime. Mr. Asquith himself pointed out that the recent by-elections have been fought not on Home Rule or on Tariff Reform, but on the Insurance Bill. Well, has the result been so unsatisfactory to Unionists that they deliberately throw away the card that has proved in every instance a trump? It is well known—to Liberal organisers, at least—that the Insurance Act is a losing card for Liberals to play. Though it is on the Statute-book and colossal preparations are being made to work it, nobody is convinced that it is seriously intended to work. In the belief that the Unionists would save the country from it by repeal now or at any time, thousands of Liberals have been flocking to the Unionist polls to vote against the nominees of their own party. Just when this wave was gathering strength and we were on the eve of the downfall of the Welsh adventurer, the inspiring whistle that was raising the wind has been changed into a long, Chamberlain drone. Mr. Bonar Law's "Certainly" was a word of victory and power. By the subsequent explanation it has become a word of defeat and continued feebleness.

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Equally to be deplored, though more easily to be understood, was the Unionist failure to take up Mr. Asquith's challenge to cite examples of recent political corruption. In dealing ourselves with such a charge we are handicapped by an excess of suspicion and a defect of legal evidence. But neither of these drawbacks applies to the position of Unionist leaders who are behind the scenes. From the public point of view it is obvious that it is no answer to the charge of corruption to deny, as Mr. Asquith did, that honours and jobs are distributed for partisan purposes. Certainly it is odd—and Lord Selborne was the first publicly to point it out—that more than half of the Welsh Radical members have improved their financial position considerably since Mr. Lloyd George was made the national treasurer. Are the Welsh members so superlatively able that every second one of them within a period of five years has become indispensable to the English State? We thought their genius lay in haberdashery. Accepting, however, the miraculous distribution of brains among Welshmen happily coinciding with the Welsh Treasuryship, our complete acceptance of Mr. Asquith's disclaimer is marred by other doubts. Mr. Smith Whitaker's appointment to an Insurance Commissionership, if not a political job, was, at least, a good job in view of his position in the Medical Association. So, too, was Mr. Lister Stead's. So, too, was the unduly postponed appointment of a director of the Pearl Company. The Irish appointments, again, have an air of aptness that is far from re-assuring; and the Welsh appointments have never been explained to our complete satisfaction. Thousands of offices were created when the Labour Exchanges were instituted. Mr. Lloyd George knows—and so do we—whose nomination was effective enough to procure appointments for as many young men as were docile. Still more thousands of jobs are being created by the Insurance Act—all open to examination and rendered void by political pressure! How comes it, then, that before the Bill was actually passed men carried appointments in their pockets? Turning from jobs to honours, the periodical Honours Lists we have never failed to describe as stinking. A good percentage of the knighthoods, baronetcies, and peerages conferred by the fountain of honour in this country are for services rendered against their country by the recipients. What *secret* services they have rendered, the Devil and the party whips alone know; but that their reward is not on public grounds nobody but a fool can believe. Referring to the most recent instance of the "unauthorised" offer of a knighthood to a theatre-proprietor of Belfast, Lord Selborne (who surely knows) remarked that it was probably offered by a "limb of the party system," and is only a fresh example of "the way the party system works." We can well believe that the funds for the lectureships of the Insurance Commissioners are not derived from public sources; but corruption is equally involved in financing a public Act by means of secret and secretly-rewarded donations. In the end, the public pays.

* * *

Mr. Bonar Law was not the only politician to commit himself last week to a "certainly." Addressing a meeting of Women Suffragists at the Albert Hall on Tuesday, Mr. MacDonald was asked if he would turn out the Government if they refused Women's Suffrage when the Franchise Bill is introduced. "Certainly," said Mr. MacDonald amid cheers and waving of handkerchiefs. The impression conveyed, no doubt, was that the Labour Party as a whole would stand or fall by the clause on Women's Suffrage; but no such heroism is really possible even if it were desirable. Such members of the Labour Party as are in favour of giving women votes will undoubtedly vote for the women's amendment, but since this has been specifically left to the House of Commons no adverse vote, in the Cabinet sense of the word, will be possible. In other words, the Government will not make the issue one of life and death. Miss Christabel Pankhurst has realised that Mr. MacDonald's heroics may prove to be as empty as heroics usually are, and in the current "Votes for Women" she demands that the Labour Party shall throw their weight against the Government "in any division—not on the Suffrage question only, but on all others—with a view to driving them out of office." The demand is, of course, utterly unreasonable, since the Labour Party is not yet a women's party. It is, besides, a demand which Mr. MacDonald would shrink from satisfying even if the subject of the action were the dearest object of the Labour Party's existence. For five

years now the Labour Party has held the Government in the hollow of its hand; for three years the Government has openly as well as secretly opposed every interest the Labour Party was sent to Westminster to conserve. On no single occasion has the Labour Party attempted to "drive the Government out of office" on any measure affecting their *paying* constituents. Is it likely that for the bright eyes of wimmun Mr. MacDonald is "going to play that game" at this time of day? Read the following sentence from the Labour chairman's recent speech at Leicester: "What an unutterable disgrace it will be if in time to come our children are to read". . . . what? That the Labour Party assisted Mr. Lloyd George to stamp out trade unionism or to sneak 4d. from men's wages? Read on: ". . . . that we assisted Russia to stamp out Persian nationality." If only our wage-slaves were in Persia, what a Labour Party we should have!

Foreign Affairs.

By S. Verdad.

A HUNDRED and ten Socialist members in the Reichstag, my boy! What would you first think of doing if you were in Bethmann-Hollweg's shoes?

Apply for my pension.

I thought so, my dear Verdad. You would recognise the hopelessness of the situation and scoot off to Rome like Buelow. And in the circumstances I should hardly be inclined to blame you. It would be imposs——

What I should first think of doing, I believe you asked? Not secondly or thirdly, or seventeenthly, my brethren, as the Court clergy said two or three centuries ago? No; I am quite as well acquainted with the state of affairs as Bethmann-Hollweg is, and, like him, I wouldn't scoot off to Rome, damned if I would! Seen the announcement by that Socialist of Socialists, Bebel, in the "Frankfurter"? He is talking about the Socialist Vice-President of the Reichstag. Give ear unto his words: "Comrade Scheidemann will go to Court, if necessary, on the occasions when the President of the Reichstag is unable to do so. Similarly he will propose cheers for the Emperor in the Reichstag when the President is absent." Fancy that, now! Imagine the guttural noises Keir Hardie would make if he were solemnly commanded by his comrades to lead cheers for King George. No; I salute the Socialists and their members in the Reichstag. They are the backbone of German Imperialism.

You greatly astonish me, and I cannot help thinking that there must be some mistake. But even if we agree that Bebel's statement has not been mutilated, and that he meant what he said, I don't see that matters are much improved. You must admit that more than four million Socialist votes have been cast, that the cost of living is high, and that there is profound dissatisfaction with the Government.

Not altogether. I am ready to agree with you in saying that there is dissatisfaction with the Government. I don't admit that it is profound, and I should prefer to express my view thus: There is considerable dissatisfaction with the methods of the Government, but not with the aims of the Government. Are you answered?

No; because it seems to me that the aims of the Government are in entire contradiction to the aims of the people of Germany. The Germans, it seems to me, want lower duties and taxes on the necessaries of life; they want to develop their trade peacefully, and they want what we know here as Parliamentary Government.

Like a true Liberal, you have failed to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential. The Germans want the things you mention, and more. But there is another thing in which they take a still deeper interest—viz., the prestige of their country. This necessarily includes their country's defence, and that comes first. Don't forget that the Germans are still somewhat primitive—they believe in making a fuss and in mailed fists, and so on. They like to hear themselves and their country talked about; they want to be treated with respect. This is a characteristic common to them and the Yankees. Teddy Roosevelt and his big stick would suit them down to the ground.

What has all that to do with the Socialists?

Only this: the Socialists share these tastes. Make no mistake about that. In four million Socialist voters the peace-mongers hardly count at all. Like our own Nonconformists, they make their voices heard in a manner out of all proportion to their numbers and weight. Now that is one great aim of the people, and it is shared by the Government. The whole nation is unanimous in the desire to secure for Germany a place in the sun, to use the Kaiser's own expression. It's like the early ages of Rome that Macaulay warbled about: there are no parties, but all are for the State.

What about the methods, then?

Ah, now you're talking. The German people would like a little more say in the formation of a Ministry, the selection of a Chancellor, and other trifles like that. As you express it, they would like what we know as Parliamentary Government. Everything else would then go on as before for an indefinite period—additions to the army and to the navy, the shaking of the mailed fist from time to time, and the customary diplomatic bluff and bluster. It is all an affair of internal politics which has little more than an academic interest for the student of foreign politics; for, parliamentary government or no parliamentary government, the foreign policy of Germany won't be affected.

Well, you think you've done, but you haven't. I shan't pass the cigars until you have answered my first question: What would you do if you were in the Chancellor's place?

Didn't you see his speech on Friday? I should do exactly what he is going to do, namely, sit tight. He said that the Socialists couldn't hold their ground, that a vigorous Germany was necessary for the stability of the empire and the peace of Europe, and that Germany couldn't be vigorous under a system of Parliamentary Government. He played a very fair, above-board game. Said definitely he wouldn't lend a hand in any further democratisation of the Reichstag franchise, and wouldn't do anything to hasten the advent of parliamentary control over the Ministry. Now we know.

In other words, he thinks his countrymen, or the bulk of them, have not yet reached a sufficiently highly educated political stage to have these advantages bestowed on them?

Precisely; and I agree with him. They haven't. The Germans generally know how to obey, not yet how to command or initiate. The Socialists will do nothing, or next to nothing. The loyalty of the army is unquestioned, as unquestioned as is the loyalty of the Socialists to the State. By the way, did you read the Chancellor's speech?

No; he is always so long-winded.

That may be, but occasionally there is an apt remark. For example, he reiterated in that very speech something that THE NEW AGE has said over and over again: that weight counted, not numbers. We have already made suitable acknowledgments to Ostrogorski. "I must warn public opinion against attaching importance to mere numbers," said the Chancellor. Put that in your pipe and smoke it.

What are you crowing about? Isn't the remark obvious? As a Liberal, I should say the same thing. Weight is always first and numbers second.

With the exception of Asquith in one of his rare non-party moments, you are the only Liberal I have ever heard say so. Don't you know as well as I do that all modern Democracy is based on nothing but numbers? Take a paper which calls itself democratic, and is so regarded by its thousands of readers, the "Daily News." What do you think it said about this statement of the German Chancellor's?

I must have overlooked the reference, I fear.

It quoted the words I have just quoted myself, and added that this "was one of the Chancellor's reactionary aphorisms." That shows some mental muddlement in regard to true and false democracy.

Poppycock in Parliament.

GRANDIOSE futility on the platform or the tribune is picturesquely described by the Americans as "poppycock." There are a number of professors of the art in Parliament—Masterman, Byles, Ponsonby, Wedgwood and others—who are notorious for their sweet words to the democracy. But Mr. J. R. MacDonald stands out pre-eminent as the master of poppycock. His speech on the King's Speech was an excellent example. Mr. MacDonald is chairman of the Labour Party in Parliament, and in that capacity had to move his party's amendment, which humbly represented to the King that the industrial unrest arises from a deplorable insufficiency of wages, and that the cure was to be found for it by "legislation securing a minimum living wage and for preventing a continuance of such unequal division of the fruits of industry by the nationalisation of railways, mines, and other monopolies." How did Mr. MacDonald deal with the subject? He first was very careful to conciliate his Liberal friends by arguing that things were much worse in countries that adopt fiscal protection. He still further pleased the Liberals by an attack on Mr. Bonar Law. (The plain man may want to know what Protection or Mr. Bonar Law had to do with it. We can tell him. The "Times" report shows that this part of Mr. MacDonald's speech was punctuated with "Ministerial cheers.") Then followed some sententious observations upon the evils of low wages. Porters were getting 17s. 6d. a week; there were two million families in this country with an income of £45 per annum; between 1901 and 1911 there had been a drop of £57,500 per week in wages; there had been a rise in prices, particularly in coal, "and the Government sat on supinely allowing these things to be done" (as though the Government was likely to do anything else); "there were important political questions to be dealt with this session, but the matter of labour unrest could not be elbowed out"; the House ought to play "a manful and useful part" in the struggle. Here the flow of poppycock came to an end and the orator gracefully subsided, having deeply impressed his Liberal and Labour friends that he was a sound Parliamentarian and a safe man.

The foregoing synopsis of Mr. MacDonald's speech is not quite complete. One passage must be given in its entirety:—

> In 1910 the wages of transport workers, excluding railwaymen, were increased by £341 a week, and 3,900 people were affected. In 1911, owing to strikes, the £341 became [illegible] £12,000, and the people affected rose to 77,000. They could not shut their eyes to the moral to be drawn from that. It was because these men were beginning to see better—the enormous unfulfilled possibility of the human mind acting in a state of freedom—that we were hearing now not the calm counsels of men who could sit and hold on, but the too hasty, angry, and enraged counsels of men who had nothing which they could keep calm about.

This revelation of Mr. MacDonald's real mind ought surely to set some of his followers furiously thinking. Here are some fighting trade-unionists, who, by taking thought and striking, have added £600,000 a year to the wages of their group. Does the Labour Party's chairman congratulate them heartily on winning wages on a falling wage-market? No; it is the result of "too hasty, angry and enraged counsels." But the suspicion arises that Mr. MacDonald was speaking satirically. He was in sober earnest; for he went on to tell the Commons that in 1906 the Labour Party went all over the country telling working men that the strike was an antiquated weapon, and asking them to trust the House of Commons and to build up political power. The workers, according to Mr. MacDonald, adopted conciliation, but conciliation and Parliamentary methods were smashed by railway directors and lawyers. This type of man "had whistled up the worst elements in the labour movement of the present time." We now have it from Mr. MacDonald that the men who are not deceived by sham conciliation and impotent parliamentarism, men who uniquely stand out as having secured higher wages for their followers, are "the worst elements in the labour movement."

Now this is not the gaucherie of a maladroit politician. Mr. MacDonald, like most of his colleagues, is heavy-handed and perversely dogmatic; but in this instance he plainly points to a fundamental difference between his own school and that of the industrial unionists, who are too often confused with the Syndicalists. Mr. MacDonald believes that everybody can be made reasonable and conciliatory by parliamentary discussion. He is seriously annoyed with the extremists who rigidly believe in the rights of property and are prepared to fight for them. They are supported by the law and the lawyers. Mr. MacDonald plaintively cries that "it is the red tape of the lawyer that stands side by side with the red flag of the Syndicalist." He thinks that the authority of Parliament will prove sufficient to achieve Socialism. He is imbued with the Parliamentary tradition. Every successful strike is a blow struck at his creed and his policy. More provoking still, he sees with dismay that the economic struggle continues, completely oblivious of Parliament and its futilities. Faced with the awkward fact that he is completely out of a fight in which he is supposed to be a prominent protagonist, he is thrown back upon a feeble meliorism that vaguely seeks to assert itself by calling for the nationalisation of monopolies and for a minimum wage. But until Parliament pays the minimum wage itself, we may rest assured that the only way it can be obtained is by the workers grabbing it for themselves, incited thereto by "the most mischievous elements in the Labour movement." No doubt it is very wrong of them not to wait Mr. MacDonald's parliamentary pleasure and convenience, but they are not disposed to sleep under the narcotic influence of mandragora and poppycock. What they want is more wages, and they mean to get them. They have discovered the limitations of political Labourism; it will lure them no longer into a land of make-believe and Liberalism. The fight is transferred to the factory and the workshop, and Mr. MacDonald and his items are left high and dry with nothing to do except talk, draw their salaries and attitudinise on popular platforms.

To do Mr. MacDonald justice, he has never obscured his position. He is a politician pure and simple, to whom the economic struggle is a disquieting and disconcerting factor. He frankly admits that the advent of the Labour Party has not benefited wages by a farthing. The one wage advance on record he denounces because it succeeded in defiance of Parliamentary methods. Like all his tribe, his answer is always "not thus and not now." And that is why his speeches are jewelled with Ministerial cheers. The Liberals know their man, deep calls to deep. The kindest thing we can say about him is that he sincerely believes in poppycock. And the Labour movement has to choose between the cult of Mr. MacDonald and the creed of those who declare that to the working masses the supreme question is increased wages.

Some Manifestations of Orangeism.

I.

I STEPPED from the Liverpool pig-boat to the quay of Dundalk at 5 a.m. on August 15, 1883, this being my first visit to Ireland.

Three hours later I entrained for Omagh, County Tyrone, to join the depôt of my regiment, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

About an hour out of Dundalk the train began to slow down and I looked out of the window. Just ahead of us was a station, at the platform of which a full train, with an engine front and rear, was standing, the platform being still crowded with people. As we drew up I became aware that a tremendous racket was going on amongst the crowd on the platform, and as soon as we had stopped there was a wild rush for the carriages.

Up to this time I had occupied a carriage of three compartments, open above the back, alone. But those who now scrambled in must have numbered fifty at least.

Now, I was able to discover what had caused the uproar so evident on approaching the station. Every man and youth was possessed of a big drum or little drum, a long flute or short fife, and everyone appeared determined that his own particular instrument should produce sufficient sound to drown all others. The effect I must leave to the imagination.

The person who had sat down on my right—a man of forty years or so—appeared to be one in authority. After a time he got something like order established amongst his friends and harmony amongst the instruments. And then I could make out that whilst my compartment were playing "We'll kick the Pope before us," the middle compartment were busy with "Croppies Lie Down." The third compartment, some of whose members, early as it was, had evidently indulged freely in the native spirit, were devoting all their wind and energies to add additional vim and volume to the strains of the "Boyne Water." A most excellent company, reflects I. I wonder what they are?

Anyway, I could chant a sweet version of the "Boyne Water" that might suit their peculiar humour.

Faith, it is a blessing for me I did not try it on them, Thiggin Tue?

Instead I turned to my neighbour:

"Are you a factory party out for a holiday?" says I.

"No," says he. "We are going to Dromore."

"For a day's excursion?" says I.

"No," says he. "To knock hell out of the Papists."

"Hum, is that so?" says I. "I wish you luck, Moyart."

At that moment I noticed that he had a broad blue sash hanging from his right shoulder to his left side; and then I observed that it bore a picture worked in silk of William of Orange, on his white charger, surrounded with cocks and stars, and other things.

Why these must surely be the terrible Orangemen of whom I've read so much. God help any poor Papist these fellows meet to-day. As for me, a stranger boy from England, wrapped up in an old "great coat," I shall pass unsuspected. At last we were off. Drums and fifes were cast aside and every man produced his revolver. Once clear of the station, from every window a continuous roll of fire was maintained till we arrived at Dromore.

At first I had a notion of getting out and seeing the "devarsion." Then I thought better of it and went on to Omagh. The next day, however, I read in the papers that—"Lord Rossmore had held a glorious demonstration, and—*two Catholic girls had been shot dead.*"

II.

In September, 1883, I joined the 2nd battalion of my regiment at Belfast, and was posted to "D" Company. My new barrack-room chums presented no marked differences or peculiarities to me. They were all young, hearty fellows, full of life and fun, willing to give a wrinkle to a "rookey" or help him out of a difficulty. On the first pay day I drew my screw and went out to sample the city. When I returned to barracks I found that most of my chums had spent their evening in the canteen, paying their respects to "Guinness." That, however, is a way they have in the army.

Some time after "lights out" I noticed a very peculiar thing, when, without any apparent reason, the words "And again," "And again," seemed to go floating around the room. They appeared to have a starting point and a point where they ended; but in the dark it was impossible to discover where the ends were.

On Sunday, when we "fell in" for chapel parade, I noticed that my right-hand man was the fellow who slept in the next cot to mine, so when the canteen opened I invited him to have a drink.

Whilst sharing a pot of porter, I asked him, "I say Barney, what was the meaning of the words, 'Again,' 'And again,' which I heard on Friday night?"

"Do you not know?" says he.

"No," says I. "The thing is a complete mystery to me."

"Well, it's like this," says he, "the fellow who sleeps near the door whispers 'Hell roast the Pope,' and then the other Orangemen around the room, one after the other, say, 'And again.'"

'Oh, oh! so that's the joke, is it? Thanks, I won't forget it."

After "lights out" on the next pay night, the litany and responses began again. I slipped quietly out of bed, went over and pinned the boy near the door by the throat, and to the accompaniment of "Again," "And again," plugged him half a dozen times. Next morning he was for guard, but instead of going on duty, he reported "sick," and I never heard the refrain "And again," again.

III.

On a Saturday afternoon in March, 1884, along with eighty-three other young fellows, I was sent from Belfast to Newtownards to go through my recruits' course of musketry.

As the party was composed of men drawn from the eight companies of the regiment, we were mostly strangers to each other.

Next morning, when the bugle sounded "fall in" for chapel, I was surprised to find that no less than seventy-four of the party were Catholics. The Catholic chapel lay at the opposite side of town to that on which the huts we occupied were situated, so that to reach it we had to traverse the whole breadth of the town. As we marched along, from every door and window half-dressed males and females popped their heads out to stare at us, we thinking, of course, that this was out of pure curiosity. But when on our way back we had reached the Market Place and found it occupied by a hostile crowd of two thousand people, we were astounded.

They cursed us, they booed us, they spat on the street and danced about us like maniacs. (I have since seen a Kaffir cut the same capers after getting outside a square nigger of gin.) And all for what? Sorrow the one of us knew for what or for why.

We were not left long in ignorance, however. Some five minutes after we had passed, the corporal, who had been to the railway station for the post, was captured by the mob and instructed to go to camp and inform us "That we had twenty-four hours' notice to clear out. That they were not going to allow any Papist bastards to be stationed in their town."

Of course, we thought this a grand joke. Here was a party of her Majesty's troops, natives of London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, etc., sent by the military authorities to go through a course of musketry, and because they happened to differ in religion from some of the civil inhabitants, they were going to be hunted out of the town. This was a new experience of which I was curious to see the conclusion. On the Monday morning, after firing ten rounds a man, we returned to camp and got our pay. Shortly after two fellows went into town to have a drink, but they

quickly returned. They related that whilst having a bottle of stout a civilian came forward and demanded to know " where they hung their hats up yesterday." Another civilian advised them to " clear out and get out of the town quick, as they were not going to allow any sons of the Scarlet Whore to pollute their neighbourhood."

About three o'clock, Lieutenant Mackenzie, who was in charge of our party, and Private Charles Cruise left the camp at the same time and went towards the town. They had not proceeded more than a hundred paces when a man stepped out of a house and threw a brick at the officer. The missile passed over the right shoulder of Mr. Mackenzie and struck Private Cruise in the back of the head, inflicting a terrible wound, from which he afterwards died. Poor Cruise fell back unconscious into the officer's arms. The sentry, who had witnessed the incident, called some of us to the officer's aid, and eight of us doubled up. The lieutenant ordered us to carry our chum to a chemist in the Market Place so that his wound might be attended to. We reached the chemist's all right; but whilst Cruise was having his head dressed a mob collected outside and threatened us with death when we came out.

The chemist was so terrified at the prospect that he suggested to Mr. Mackenzie " that he should take his men and escape by the back door." I am never likely to forget the manner in which the officer asked, " Sir, do you understand who you are speaking to? Lead on there, men," said he, "straight for camp, and remember I'm behind you and will have a life for every brick." So, covering the rear of his men, revolver in hand, Lieutenant Mackenzie conducted us back to our huts. There were no bricks.

About five o'clock we could hear the sounds of music from the direction of the Market Place, and shortly after two drum and fife bands, followed by about four thousand people, came marching towards our camp. Arrived in front of the guard-room, the bands played all the well-known party tunes, whilst the mob enjoyed itself throwing bricks, stones and sods of turf at the sentry. He, poor chap, turned out the guard, but as none had any ammunition, they were all forced to take shelter in the guard-room.

Lieutenant Mackenzie now came on the scene, and after confining us to our rooms, drew his revolver and informed the Orangemen that if they attempted to rush the guard-room, he would shoot the first man who passed the gate. The prospect was more than the Orangeman could stomach, so after more cursing of the Pope and Papists, they returned to the Market Place, where they imagined they were safe and could curse without fear. But while they had been taking potshots at the sentry, we in the barrack-rooms had been sizing up the situation. And when they retired by the straight road to the Market Place, thirty-two of us were making tracks for the same point by another route. The Orangemen arrived first, as we intended they should. One of their leaders mounted a market cart and began to instruct them as to how they should treat the " Papist rats." It was at that moment we attacked them. Thirty-two of the hated Papists attacking four thousand Orangemen with belt and bayonet, in the shades of evening. What a ten minutes was that! To have lived it was worth half a lifetime. Talk about the "Battle of the Boyne," that was child's play compared to the " Battle of Newtownards," and yet I've never heard that the Orangemen have enshrined it in song.

If any are curious as to details I must refer them to the Parliamentary debates as recorded in " Hansard." There they will find that Poor Lord Arthur Hill related the sad case of his brother Orangemen and pleaded most pitifully for us " to be transported to Bermuda for fifteen years," because we objected to being insulted or even murdered on account of our faith whilst doing our duty as soldiers.

Mr. Gladstone put Joe Chamberlain up to defend us, which he did very effectively. We completed that course of musketry, went back the following year and fired another one. And no Newtownards' Orangeman, at least in our hearing, ever called us "Papist bastards" again.

Thirty-two of us had cured them of the taste for pleasantries of that character.

Moral: To solve the Ulster problem, station a battalion of Connacht men in Belfast. Their mere presence will do the rest.

PETER FANNING.

I Gather the Limbs of Osiris.

By Ezra Pound.

XII.—THREE CANZONI OF ARNAUT DANIEL.

SOLS SUI QUE SAI.

I.

ONLY I know what over-anguish falls
Upon the heart of love so over-borne,
My over-longing that's so whole and strong
Turns not from her, nay, never since these eyes
First saw her has the flame upon them quailed.
And I, afar, speak to her words like flame,
And near her, having much, there's nought for saying.

II.

To others blind I am, deaf to their calls;
In solely her, sight, sound and wonder are born.
In all this speech I do the truth no wrong,
Yet my mouth cannot speak the heart's device;
Hills, dales, roads, plains! O'er all these were I haled
I'd find in no one form such charms to fame
As God hath set in her for their assaying.

III.

Truth, I have stood in many princely halls;
With her alone doth all praise seem but scorn.
Temper and wit are hers, to her belong
Beauty and youth, good deeds and fair emprise;
Courtesy brought her up, she is well mailed
'Gainst every sinister thing, and from her name
There's nothing good, I think, that's fled or straying.

IV.

Pleasure with her were never short or false.
I ask her watch what way my will is worn.
For ne'er shall she know it from open song
Unless my heart yield up his secrecies;
And never Rhone, when he is most assailed
By hill-torrents, knows turmoil, but the same
Is less than my heart's pooled with her, and swaying.

V.

Faint lure of other fair goes stale and palls,
And those compared to her cannot but mourn,
Seeing her grace exult above their throng.
Ah, if I win not! keen my miseries!
And yet I laugh through pain and am regaled.
For I hold her in thought, this is my shame.
God, were this actual! Ah, hope's betraying!

VI.

I am grown foreign to the tilt-yard's walls,
And all the joy of joys is from me torn
Save that one joy that's never known among
Liars. And if I know her treasuries . . .
Ill said? Perhaps, if with *you* I have failed,
For rather than speak words which draw your blame
I'd lose all words and voice and end all praying.

VII.

The song asks you to say he hath not failed.
Arnaut cares little who shall praise or blame
If only you welcome the song and saying.

RICA CONQUESTA.

The Song "Of High All-attaining."

I.

Did Lord Love lay upon me his wide largess
As I bear mine to her, with open heart,
He'd set no bar between me and the great,
For I'm borne up and fall as this love surges;
Yet, reckoning how she is the peak of worth,
I mount in mine own eyes by daring her
'Till heart and mind cry out that I'll attain
This rich conquest that's set for my attaining.

II.

I care not though delay delay enlarges,
For I sweep toward, and pool me in such part
That the mere words she speaks hold me elate.
I'd follow her until they sing my dirges.
Sure as I can tell gold from brassy earth
She is without alloy; without demur
My faith and I are steadfast in her train
Until her lips invest me, past all feigning.

III.

The good respite recalls me and then discharges
A sweet desire wherewith my flanks so smart,
Yet quietly I bear my beggared state
For o'er all other peaks her grace emerges;
Whoe'er is noblest seemeth of base birth
Compared to her; let him play justicer
Who 'th seen how charm, worth, wit and sense all reign,
Increase and dwell and stay where she dwells reigning.

IV.

Don't think my will will waste it o'er its marges
(She is so fair!), divide it or depart;
Nay, by the dove, God's ghost, the consecrate,
My mind's not mine, nor hers if it diverges!
No man desires, in all the wide world's girth,
Fortune, with such desires as are astir
In me herward, and they reap my disdain
Who deem love's pain a thing for light sustaining.

V.

Ah "All-Supreme," leave me no room for charges
That you are miserly. My love's sans art,
Candid, my heart cannot shake off its weight;
It's not the sort that bottle-madness urges,
But, as night endeth day, doth day my mirth.
I bow me toward you where my vows concur,
Nor think my heart will ever be less fain,
The flame is in my head and burns unwaning.

VI.

A cursed flame eat through your tongues and targes,
Sick slanderers until your sick eyes start
And go blind; 'till your vile jests abate
We loose our steeds and mancs. And loss submerges
Almost love's self. God damn you that your dearth
Of sense brings down the shame that we incur.
Sad fools! What blighting-star grows you this bane
To kill in you th' effect of all our training?

VII.

Lady, I've borne delay and will again
Bear long delay in trust of high attaining.

BIRD-LATIN.

I.

Clamour, sweet cries,
And melodies are bruited
About by birds who in their Sunday-speech
Pray each to each in manner even as we
To those lief ladies whom our thoughts intend;
For this cause I, as toward the noblest tending,
Should make a song beyond all competition
Wherein there's no word false, no rhyme deflected.

II.

Strayed in no wise,
In no false path confuted,
I entered in that castle without breach
Wherein that lady dwells who hath famished me
With greater lack than wrought Sir Vivian's end.
I gape, I stretch. How oft ere one day's ending?
A thousand times for her whose 'bove position
As far as sheer joy is o'er wrath respected.

III.

With clear replies,
And my talk undisputed,
I was received. And nothing can impeach
My choice of her. Good gold I got in fee,
Not copper, when we kissed at that day's end.
And she made over me a shield, extending
Her mantle of indigo, fair, to th' excision
Of liars' sight, who've serpents' tongues perfected.

IV.

God who did'st rise,
And by whom were commuted
Longinus his blind sin, Thee I beseech
That we lie in some room communally
And seal that pact whereon such joys attend.
There with embraces and low laughter blending
Until she give her body to my vision,
There with the glamour of the lamp reflected;

V.

The floweret lies
Before the branch hath fruited,
Unfolded half, trembling where birds' beaks reach,
But not more fresh than she. No empery,
Not Rome, Jerusalem, nor Tyr could bend
Me from her, as I give me, hands joined, bending
In homage to her, and in like contrition
Spain's king and Dover's might be more respected.

VI.

Mouth in what guise
Speakst thou? Art thou deputed
To spoil me of promised gifts such as could teach
Honour to the Greek Emperor or to the
Rulers of Rome, Palestine, Trebizend?
Yet 'gainst love I've no power for my defending.
O mouth, how fain thou art of my perdition.
How mad that man who hath his joy rejected.

The End.

JAPANESE EVENSONG.

Deep in the water
Smiles the almond bloom—pink as sunrise,
Yet such depth is but the phantom
That fades at dusk.
Oh, hear my song!
Balm on the breeze
Is the message of the water-musk,
But vacancy lies grey where it has whisper'd
And truth is but brief in the mellow of the moon.
Oh, hear my song!
Mist floats o'er the mountains
Rayless and blue.
Night-birds call, crying,
And my spirit yearns towards the trees.
(For what is my spirit but a pain seeking flight?)
There is refuge amongst leaves
And slim boughs sing the sorrows of the wind;
Branches sleep, cloaked
In the moon-mild kindness of the night.
Oh, hear my song!
Out from the pale shallows of my obscurity
I plead with wan hands:
I plead to share the melody of silence.

. . . . .

But the almond-flower no longer flushes on the water;
Darkness has pressed her bosom, blinding, upon the earth,
And my song dies unheard,
And my song dies unheard.

Lorimer Royston.

Views and Reviews.

BIOGRAPHY has fallen among novelists. In the hands of Plutarch it was an art; the writers of French memoirs made it a craft; Carlyle degraded it to an oracle, and trumpeted a melodramatic morality and vehement advice from behind his idols. Now it is a business by which otherwise respectable men maintain their wives and families. No man is so dead that he cannot be made alive again: if he were a prodigal son his resurrection is certain. For the maxim of the business it that a dead man is someone to be "done"; and whether he be John o' Groats or Jack Ketch there is someone to "do" him. The motive that Stevenson stated for the writing of fiction ("Byles the butcher is at the door") keeps our biographers ever on the dive; and thus we see men, resembling Falstaff in all but wit, confined in the dirty-linen basket of the merry wives of the dear departed ere they are thrown into the river. They "have a kind of alacrity in sinking: if the bottom was as deep as hell they would down." They rise with many puffs, only to "spread the compost on the weeds to make them ranker." In the hands of the novelists turned biographers, the biography of poets and literary men has degenerated into the retailing of sexual scandal by some perversion called "romance": kings and queens are used as illustrations of a morbid psychology, while genius itself has become a disease, derived from lechery and learning. It is a wicked world, and we are here because of our sins.

It is certain that the motive of the biographer will determine the character of the biography. If a man write to correct his predecessors we shall have much debating of evidence, but little biography. We shall become tolerably acquainted with the temper and mental power of the present and past commentators, but the subject himself is like to be hidden from us. There is room for only one hero in a book, and that hero is only too often the biographer. There are times when it cannot be helped; for example, when Mr. Trowbridge had to argue against all previous English biographers of Cagliostro to prove that the Grand Cophta was not Balsamo. But biography is an art not unlike drama. Characterisation is the technical triumph of the dramatist; and the biographer is judged by the same test. No amount of argument will make a character, as the unfortunate auditors of Shaw's plays are aware. It may be stated as an axiom that the first condition of biography is that the facts have been ascertained and do not need to be proved.

But the facts are not everything. When Mr. Loraine Petre wrote: "After his victory, Bolivar fixed his headquarters at La Aparicion de la Corteza, sent back his spoils to San Carlos, dispatched columns to recapture Barinas, Barquisemets, and other places, and himself went to Valencia, which he reached on the evening of December 8. On the 20th he visited the besieging force in front of Puerto Cabello, returning thence to Valencia, and again reaching Caracas on the 29th to prepare for operations in the south against Bores and Monales" he stated the facts, but the art of biography was not in him. Art is selection with a view to significance: "There is but one art—to omit," cried Stevenson. And how cheerfully our memory omits such passages! They are not biographies: they are epitaphs that are written according to this prescription. Science may claim such writers as her sons, but Art does not see great men in little facts, nor can the accumulation of them make that impression on the imagination that is her sign manual. The facts must be ascertained: they must not need to be proved; and they must not be stated as though they were of importance in themselves.

For to all men happen much the same things, and the mere statement of them does not distinguish one man from another. It was Bolivar who went to the places named, but the fact does not distinguish him from those who went with him. There is nothing distinctive in going from place to place, just as there is nothing distinctive in being born, falling in love, getting married, or departing from this life. We are interested not in what people do (unless it be something out of the common), but in what makes them do it and how they do it. Motive and manner it is the biographer's duty to make clear to us.

The manner is usually best illustrated by the quoted phrase or the anecdote; and for this reason the biography should approximate in style to the memoir. Often a man's character and the very facts that the modern biographer seeks will be revealed by a chance phrase. Who has forgotten, for example, the passage in which Carlyle accused Cagliostro of gluttony and drunkenness—at least, while he was staying with Rohan? Yet the Baroness d'Oberkirch wrote contemptuously of him that "he slept in an armchair and lived on cheese." This one phrase throws more light on the man during his most prosperous period than miles of mere citation; but Mr. Trowbridge omitted it from his text and quoted it only in a foot-note. The art of biography is not based on foot-notes.

The perception of motive is a natural gift, and we cannot accept as a biographer a man who lacks it. If a writer have a thesis he may be able to arrange his facts so that they prove it, and every action seems to have a motive consonant with the thesis. But biography cannot recognise an invertebrate straightened in whalebone stays; the man must stand by the strength of his own backbone. For example, it would be easy to write the life of Napoleon to prove that he was really a man of strong domestic affections, the motive for whose conquests was simply the desire to find thrones for his family. Mrs. Cuthell, in her recent biography of Marie Louise, almost forgot the soldier and Emperor in her admiration for the loving husband and father. But a man is a many-sided creature, and a thesis can present only an aspect of him. Selection of facts there must be if we are to have significance; but biography must comprehend the man to make his motives clear. With an egotist such as Napoleon the task is easy. He has a centre, but no circumference. His fame may radiate over a continent, but he only exists where he is and nothing thrives where he has been. A real biography of Napoleon would be no more than a short psychological study; but psychological studies demand insight from the biographer.

Nor is insight synonymous with sympathy. Carlyle's use of documents in his "Cromwell" had the insight of genius, so clearly did it present the man. But his sympathy, as expressed in his bracketed passages, made Carlyle ridiculous without enlivening or enlightening the portrait of Cromwell. Sympathy is the virtue of the parasite; the art of biography is differently derived. Yet a man must have some hold on his subject, some purpose in writing other than feeding a wife and children, if he is to minister to the art of biography. Against some background his hero must be pictured; in relation to some standard his achievement must be valued; he must find some place in some scheme of things if he is not to be a mere ghost revisiting the glimpses of the moon and dumb to all but one. In an age of science we can scarcely expect a philosophic judgment of men, and morals have become too hypocritical to be used as a test; but personality remains. It was the personality of Carlyle that put marrow into the bones of Mirabeau: his very prejudices made Voltaire alive: the vigour with which he belaboured Cagliostro raised the man from the dead, but so disfigured that he could not be recognised.

That is the test. Friend or enemy the biographer must be, not muck-raker or impartial judge, or the mere writer of a thesis. Savonarola does not live in the midway mind of Mr. Horsburgh, intent on minute corrections of detail, but in the intellectually passionate championship of Villari. Industry the biographer should have; insight he must have; but the crowning glory is that passion in presentation that limns a figure clearly.

A. E. R.

Art and Drama.

By Huntly Carter.

BEFORE examining Mr. Galsworthy's latest hatching at the Royalty Theatre I may recall his point of view as a playwright. Mr. Galsworthy belongs in general to the modern playwrights who have sprung into public view with an uncanny bundle of philosophies of life, thereby differing from the artist-dramatist who is only concerned with visions of life. He is attached in particular to the Truth-seeking Society, formed of a number of earnest but dull individuals, who, without knowing exactly what the truth is, have aimed to put the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth on the stage, with the result that no one goes to see it. In fact they have made the truth so truthful that no one believes it. Beyond this these realists have made the truth so nasty that it has been necessary to invent a few opposition truths to disinfect it. Furthermore, this society has sought to exploit the truth on the stage, so that at last the whole affair has come to bear an uncommon resemblance to Truth on a Tub.

* * *

Mr. Galsworthy has kept nicely balanced between the stage and the tub. To be precise, Mr. Galsworthy is a Socialist playwright of the narrow type evolved by the Fabian Society. Mr. Galsworthy is not a sociologist. He is far too inclined to put a childlike trust in outworn economic theories, and to neglect the recent pronouncements of biology and psychology, even allowing that he, as a dramatist, has any concern with either. That he is not a Sociologist was clearly proved by "Justice," wherein we saw Mr. Galsworthy setting to work to prove that the law as it stands is beautifully constructed to work along the lines of Natural Selection and to render Society an inestimable service by eliminating a type like Falder, that has neither the strength, courage, cunning, nor mental resources to evade the law.

* * *

"The Pigeon" makes it equally clear that Mr. Galsworthy's Socialism is exceedingly old-fashioned. The underlying assumption of this piece is that all men are equal in the sight of the economic man. A, B, C are men, therefore they are equal. Starting with this assumption, it proceeds to argue that it is wrong for one set of persons, (A) Professor Calway, with his theory, "Make the undeserving deserving"; (B) Sir Thomas Hoxton, J.P., with his theory, "Support private organisations for helping the deserving, and damn the undeserving"; (C) Canon Bertley, between the two—to arrogate to themselves the right of dictating the conduct of another set of persons, (D) Timson, a drunken cabby; (E) Mrs. Megan, a flower seller; (F) Megan, her husband; (G) Ferrand, a French vagrant. A, B and C have no right whatever to try to reclaim D, E, F and G. If the latter do not choose to work, if they choose instead to live their lives in their own way, as savages or wild animals do, that is their affair; let them do it. They are clearly savages, and in the attempt to tame them the philanthropists are, as Ferrand says, throwing "all the cage doors open to catch and make tame the wild birds that will surely die within, Très gentil," as he remarks in his school-boy French. "Believe me, monsieur, you have there the greatest comedy of life! How anxious are the tame birds to do the wild birds good. For the wild birds it is not funny. There is in some human souls, monsieur, what cannot be made tame." So if D, E, F and G are not made for work, if they would "rather walk a whole month of nights, hungry, with the stars, than sit one single day making round business on an office stool!" what right have A, B, and C to expect them to work?

* * *

Why, A, B, and C, though respectively a professor, J.P., and a parson, do not work themselves, any more than Mr. Galsworthy works. They are no better than the vagrants in this respect. "These sirs," as Ferrand says, "with their theories, they can clean our skins and chain our 'abits—that soothes for them the æsthetic sense; it gives them too their good little importance." Socialistically considered, they are as much parasites as D, E, F, G, and are wrong in adopting a pontifical attitude and saying to them *you* are parasites; *we* are men. If anything it should be the reverse, seeing that whereas A, B and C are chained to narrow conventionalisms, D, E, F and G have no delusions of the sort, but are perfectly free—to develop "chronic unemployment with vagrant tendency."

* * *

From all this we may infer that Mr. Galsworthy is demanding the truth, and as he has shown no love for society he is demanding it on behalf of those persons that society despises. Either, then, he is in sympathy with the vagrant or he is not. If he is in sympathy with the vagrant and does want to rescue him from the prison of philanthropy to which society would consign him, then he is simply placing himself in the position of the three men whom he condemns—A, B, and C. He seeks to rescue D, E, F, and G from the hands of the philanthropist parasite in arguing that such persons ought to stop interfering with the vagrant, and to mind their own business. In this event, then Mr. Galsworthy, who is also a very benevolent-minded and wealthy person, loving the poor and hating the rich, ought to mind his own business and cease from working on behalf of those who 'ate work like p'ison. Instead of employing his colossal brain to produce a three-act illustrated Fabian tract, exhibiting an asinine stupidity and ignorance of sociological law and thought, he might devote it to more useful purposes in other directions.

* * *

If he is not in sympathy with the vagrant he still has no right to produce his plays. For it means that the play itself contains no sympathy, and ought not to be permitted to grope its way on to the stage. To judge by the characters themselves, as they appear on the stage, clearly Mr. Galsworthy has no sympathy with them. Whatever sympathy he may have had has been carefully eliminated. In "The Pigeon," as in "Strife," he allows them to take sides and to argue out the main contention without intruding himself. In this respect he shows himself to be a far better playwright than Mr. Bernard Shaw, who has yet to learn the Ibsen secret of self-assertion in self-subjection. There is not a word in an Ibsen play that makes one conscious of Ibsen, and there is only one thing in the Galsworthy play that recalls the author—namely, that the characters are soulless; they have no vital spark. They are carved in solid blocks, are the product of a mind that belongs to the "steel age," of a playwright that works his figures like so many chessmen. Even the flower-seller, Mrs. Megan, a common or garden specimen of bovine dullness, is conceived as a "Sphinx-like figure" who "withdraws into tragic abysses." And the whisky-sodden Timson answers to the same description. It is the same with Wellwyn, the central character—the Pigeon. He is the human interest; "'Uman being, I call 'im," says one of the "Humble Men."

* * *

Rightly treated, Wellwyn would be an eternal symbol of the spring of human conduct. He would express feelings and memories that never reach consciousness but are lived in the recesses of the soul. But as Mr. Galsworthy treats him, this broad human interest is never felt, simply because—like the other characters—he has been brought to the level of consciousness—that is, the author's consciousness—whereas he should have been kept in the sub-conscious region. He has been designed to draw the attention of the spectators towards the consideration of certain realistically described events. If the spectators refuse or are not in the mood to be drawn, the events are of no more importance than the florid rhetoric one can hear in Hyde Park. He should have been designed instead to flow rhythmically out through the souls of the audience to the fundamental processes of life which the events symbolise. Each event should open the door of a larger world of memory. Drama is contained in the unchecked life-stream *flowing out* through all men, not in stagnant backwaters. Mr. Galsworthy's "drama" is a stagnant backwater.

LA VECCHIA.

A Third Tale for Men Only.

By R. H. Congreve.

III.

ON my way to Forester's flat I occupied myself by speculating on what the coming interview would prove. My only foreknowledge of the personality of his sister was derived from a guess—a slight premiss, it might seem, on which to construct a plan of campaign. I was certain, however, that in Forester's opinions I had detected an alien element. They were obviously not congruous either with themselves or with Forester's own essential nature. A genius for rhythm could not himself have introduced the discords of sentimentality we had detected in him. They had been placed there by someone; and since, from other sources, we were convinced that there was no other person in the case, the suspicion rested on his sister.

Nevertheless, I was disinclined on intuition alone to risk a faux pas on the threshold of my exploration. I determined, therefore, to make the visit one of reconnaissance only, and to leave the conclusion in the hands of circumstances.

Arriving at the flat, Forester himself let me in and ushered me into the library, where he straightway introduced me to his sister. It was immediately apparent to me that I had been well advised in leaving events to chance, for the appearance of Miss Forester was utterly unlike what I certainly should have imagined had I attempted beforehand to visualise the field of battle. To be brief, she was uncommonly prepossessing: charming in appearance, gay in manner, and with intelligence of a certain kind written all over her. There was no wonder, I thought, that Forester had fallen under her influence in some degree; the tie of blood had coincided for once with an affinity which, if it did not prove spiritual in the highest sense, was nevertheless not merely sentimental. It would take some time, I reflected, to discover and demonstrate to Forester the danger to which his sister exposed him.

Yet danger it was, as my instant qualification of her intelligence conclusively proved to me. Intelligence, yes; but only of a certain kind, and that not the highest. Where exactly did it lie, and beyond what limits did it fail to extend? The subsequent conversation was to throw light on these little problems.

Being in the library, the talk turned naturally on the subject of books. Forester had an admirable collection, and as I walked round his shelves, recognising old friends and making acquaintance with possible new friends, his sister accompanied us and took a lively interest in our comments, occasionally adding remarks of her own. To these in particular I listened with my inward ears acock for an indication of her native point of view.

One side of the room was entirely given over to the Greek and Latin classics, of which, it appeared, that Forester had an almost complete collection. Ah, Petronius, I said, taking down the vellum-bound text and translation so perfectly edited by Stewart. Is he a favourite of yours? I asked Forester. My first favourite, he replied, after Heraclitus. Both were so thoroughly superhuman. Inhuman, you mean, said his sister. I'm afraid Harry, she added, turning to me, has caught the tone of your group and is growing contemptuous of poor humanity. *I* call that inhuman, but *he* calls it superhuman. What is the difference? I replied. Inhuman if you do not like it, superhuman if you do. The fact remains the same. You do not like Petronius and Heraclitus, then? Oh, I like them, Miss Forester responded, but neither of them appears to me to be all-embracing. With all their greatness, they are really very narrow in their sympathy.

Forester, who had taken Petronius from my hands and had been turning over the leaves while his sister and I were talking, now interrupted. Listen to this, he said, and he read the famous passage on Nero. That style is not narrow in its range, he commented. True, it produces no thrill, no glow, no emotion you can name. To read Petronius is to bathe not in sunlight, but in starlight. You might almost imagine it was an artist from another planet writing. Inhuman, non-human, superhuman—what does it matter? The planets already communicate by means of art, perhaps. The vibrations of ether are accompanied by the vibrations of mind.

Miss Forester sighed cheerfully. Moonshine, you know, all moonshine! And you agree with it, of course, Mr. Congreve? Certainly, I said, the aim of art is to make this planet obsolete. Just like Henry, she judged.

I had in this conversation ample material for an illuminating discussion—illuminating, I mean, as much to Forester as to the subject itself. What had already passed had outlined the respective positions of Forester and his sister as clearly as if these had been mapped out in colour. Miss Forester belonged to the earth; Forester walked by a light that never was on sea or land. The question was: Would that light become ever extinguished for him? Could he as clearly see that his sister was earth-born as she had clearly realised that he was heaven-bound? A discussion with her in his presence might bring the truth home to him.

Continuing our tour of the library, I remarked a section given over to the moderns—the very moderns, I mean. There were Shaw and Chesterton, Yeats and Synge, Wells, Kipling, Bennett, Galsworthy, Masefield et hoc genus omne. Yours? I questioned, looking at Forester. No, mine, replied his sister. I congratulate you, madam, I said, on a consistent taste. You dislike Petronius and Heraclitus. You like Shaw and Kipling. What is it that charms you in them? Oh, charm! she replied; they have no charm in the strict sense. But I like them because they do honestly try to deal with life; they do not run away from life and build an ivory tower of fancy and pretend that it is real. Forester's expression while his sister was saying this disclosed at least one secret to me. A kind of amused, indulgent bafflement was depicted in his face. It was as if he had said to me: There you are, Congreve, my friend, that is the point of view that I and you have to meet. And, further than this, I instinctively felt that he would be mightily glad if I would meet it fairly then and there. Intellectual honesty, I surmised, had forbidden him to assume that the human objection, as expressed by his sister, to pure art had as yet been completely met; and for this reason he had in his judgments on Milton and Wordsworth deliberately paid homage to its continued existence as a problem. His silence at this moment convinced me that he was awaiting my reply to Miss Forester with interest.

But charm, I said to her, comes precisely from running away. It is the perpetually elusive that alone perpetually attracts. To deal with life directly is not to deal with life at all. Why, life itself is always running away! That is its charm.

How like Oscar Wilde, she said. I do believe your attitude is only a pose—forgive me for being so rude! Isn't that in Oscar Wilde, Henry? Forester, thus addressed, was enjoying himself too much to be drawn into the discussion. Indeed, he mischievously encouraged her with these words: I don't think Congreve has any right yet to consider you fairly convinced.

Oh, you don't, don't you, thought I. Then that means that you yourself are not yet completely convinced. So I turned again to Miss Forester. Suppose, I said, that charm and art be assumed as mutually interchangeable terms, you would then agree that these moderns, being without charm, have no right to the name of artists? Quite true, she said, but I refuse the assumption. There *can* be art without charm. Then what, I said, distinguishes the art without charm from the art with charm? That is too difficult for me to answer off-hand, she replied, but I certainly can distinguish between the art, let us say, of Galsworthy and Shaw, and the art of Petronius and Heraclitus. Well, may I name, I ventured, some English writers of charm and you will tell me if you agree. Herrick in his lyrics, Chaucer very often, Malory, Shakespeare in the "Tempest," "Midsummer Night's Dream," the songs, Shelley occasionally, Sterne almost always, Lamb . . . you agree? Miss Forester nodded. Would you, I continued, include in this list Shaw or Wells, or any of the moderns? I

have already said, she replied, that they have no charm. But they have something of much greater value; they actually move real people to do real things. They influence people's opinion. They guide and control and create thought. Like magicians, they sway people any way they choose. If that is not art, I do not know what is.

It must be remembered that throughout this discussion my object was not to convince Miss Forester, but to clarify the mind of her brother. It was, therefore, of no importance to me that Miss Forester should appear to herself to be unanswerable. On the contrary, it was merely politeness to leave her the appearance of victory on condition that Forester himself had realised her defeat. I, therefore, continued to reply: I agree that charm is useless; it inspires nobody to anything directly. Its sole distinction, indeed, lies precisely in the fact that it exercises no constraint. If you want anything done under compulsion, it is no use applying to charm. Had Tyrtaeus written charming songs his soldiers might have lain down and listened to him for ever, instead of marching and fighting like heroes possest.

That is it, Miss Forester cried, we need an art that will make heroes of men, transforming them from selfish little mortals into creatures that one can admire. I am sure that our moderns will leave the world better than they found it.

But art, I sighed, cares nothing about leaving the world better or worse. If the world cares to profit by it, so much the wiser the world. If not, let it spin as of old—the artist recks nothing of it.

Your charm in art appears to be a very selfish quality, Mr. Congreve. It is, I replied, as severe towards the world as severe towards itself. Art's very existence depends upon maintaining charm. Its utility is the world's inutility.

I felt that Forester, whatever his sister's comprehension, was drawing nearer to a realisation of her actual point of view. I thought it well, however, at this point to have the issues put still more plainly. Miss Forester, I said, we have reached a point in this casual discussion at which we must either define our relative positions or continue yes and no-ing each other. Your brother over there is secretly laughing at our fencing. Shall we silence him by settling our respective definitions. Yes, it would serve him right, she said.

Well, will you begin, I asked, when we had seated ourselves in an easy fashion, and tell me what in your view art is for, what is its purpose, mission or (horrid word!) function?

I had rather hear yours first, she said. Oh, mine, I replied, is familiar to you through Forester. But I will express it in an image when you have given me your view.

You must not laugh at me, she said, if I blunder. You and Henry are so clever; and I am only a woman. But I do think that I *feel* much more than either of you. For instance, to me the profoundest words in all literature are these: only infinite passion and the pain of finite hearts that yearn. It is, in my opinion, the mission of art to express, and thereby to sweeten and make endurable that passion and that sorrow. Whoever can do that is an artist.

But how melancholy, I said! Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought,—you believe that?

Yes, only I should prefer hope to be conveyed. I mean that complete pessimism is not the mood of the highest art.

The realisation of the sadness of life, together with hope and courage to endure and to overcome it—that, you say, is your conception of the condition of art?

Perfectly expressed, she said, I want no better definition of my view. Thank you, Mr. Congreve, for understanding me so well. I'm sure Henry never understood me.

He will understand henceforth, I said. But now may I ask you, or shall I ask him, what art remains for those who have overcome—either by the fortune of nature or by meditation—the sadness of the world? Are the victors to wear no laurels, sing no songs, enjoy no art? Yours, it appears to me, is an art for the sick. What is the art for the well?

We are all sick from that point of view, she replied.

All equally sick and all always sick? Some of us are not healthy some of the time?

Well, I will leave the answer to you. Probably your art is for the healthy. Is it not?

I told you, I said, that you were already familiar with my view; and I promised you an image. Here it is. The artist is the arrow, humanity is the bow. It is his aim and humanity's hope that he may be shot beyond this world. There, I have shot my bolt.

Beyond me, said Forester's sister gaily. It is away up in the clouds.

There may it always remain, I concluded. Then turning to Forester I said: Can you see it, Forester, or has it gone beyond you, too? I can just discern it, he said, beaming.

The End.

Three Stars.

A Sentimenty Esperant.

By C. E, Bechhoefer.

[With profuse apologies to the authors of "Three Weeks," and "The Grand Babylon Hotel."]

Do you know Felixstowe in September; ye who read, you old dull *peuple* of the world? Of its pier, long and lengthy, pushing, out, unrelentlessly in to the divinest blue sea! Its promenade: full of life and youth and love and *vigueur?* Ah—it is good! Not *pour vous,* withered grey heads, bound hand and foot by the conventions of Regent Street, but for they who are young—and can love! who can wear a frock-coat and smoke a pipe, and have no shame.

When this very unpleasant story opens, Nijni Novgorod was a young curly-haired giant of twenty and one years, *charmant* and proud. Honest, noble, gentlemanly, strong, was he—the true bulldog breed of old England—and was not Nijni naturalised? But how came it to pass that he was whiling the time in the Great Volauvent Hotel at Felixstowe away? That is easily answered, as Aristottle said. He was the agent *de* the great Baedeker!

Ah! you old crusted, grey-haired moralities who are probably reading this, who know not that life is love and lips, ruby, ruby, ruby!—you little think how these guide-books are put together; how men, great noble workers in a snivelling army, devote their nights and days and palates to research. Truly no *jeu d'esprit!*

Nor is it likely that you would have found the Great Volauvent Hotel. Outside the staff and habitual visitors, there was only one man in Felixstowe who knew the exact position of the main entrance—a small, innocent-looking deal door, masked by a weighing-machine. And if you did not happen to pick upon just this one cabdriver and ask him where the Great Volauvent was, you might wander about for months without finding it, or knowing that it even existed. For everything that was noble and great in the nature of Don von Volauvent, the proprietor, warned him that it was all to the *bon* of his numerous royal clientèle and their minions that his famous caravanserai should not be free to everyone with a million or two to spend. The *marque* of the Great Volauvent was *discrètion.* At the time it was accommodating most of the crowned heads of the East, who were resting after attendance at a Race Meeting. For instance, on the second storey of the *rez-de-la-chaussée* was the Delhi Llama, the Emu of Beluchistan, with his grand visiaks, besides the Great Clam of Tartarus and the Khan of Jerusalem, yet it had been only open for one moon, and thus it was that it stood not yet in Baedeker. And why else was Nijni there? To what good other! As follows was the question, the answer of which he had to solve:—Was the Great Volauvent worth the asterisk of merit—the patron star of *maître d'hôtels?*

He had been there four days already, and was beginning to vote it "rotten." But then there came into his life what was to stir his fine, lazy, curly-haired soul to its depths. And it came as he sat drinking his after-

dinner *café* in the lounge, on the evening of the thirty-first day of June, when the full moon was gibbous and adipose.

He had had a very poor dinner, very poor dinner indeed. The *menu* had been Spartan, though, of course, magnificently cooked. Only *hors d'œuvres, Consomme à l'Angel Kiss, Saumon bleu* with *Sauce Bass,* pearls in vinegar *à la Cleopatre,* roast phœnix with the springiest of spring onions, a few joints, *Bombe russe,* and *desert.* Some of the *plats* he would just taste of, and some send away without finishing up the parsley. His soup he had not even put knife and fork to. He had only drunk three bottles of ginger-beer, 1900 vintage. So thus in suchlike wise it was that his temper was vile. But suddenly his heart began to swell with some almost physical thrill. He turned swiftly to behold a strange woman bending towards him. In the soft candle-glow of the lounge, her clinging purple gown displayed the sinuous supple lines of her shapely sensuous body, and above, right in the middle of her pale, swarthy face, were two eyes, a pair of eyes, of all colours under the sun. An incandescent bubble seemed to burst in his throat. . He could only see eyes, eyes, eyes, chameleon ones, and half-closed lids hung with black, passionate lashes sweeping peony cheeks. "My Crown Princess, my Queen!" he cried, darting impulsively forward. But the strange lady *ne* waited *pas* on his approach. Her eyes changed colour twice. She writhed with the movements of a scorpion onto the mantelpiece, where she reposed for a brief moment, smiling rapturatously at him. Then she wriggled with feline grace round and all over the table and passed out of a broken pane in the window, reappearing the next instant quivering like a serpent at the lounge door. She undulated under a chair with a gliding movement, and then, rising to her full height, her innocent grey eyes gleaming pink, she flung her arms round his neck, biting the lobes of his ears, and slowly, slowly, their two red lips melted into a long, sweet, wet kiss. A divine, rapturous, intoxicating kiss, kiss, such as Cupid and his mother Orthodoxe might enjoy. He clasped her in a passionate wild embrace, planting lightning kisses on her half-closed lids with their heavy passionate lashes. A soft blush mantled her cheeks, making her look like a timid maid almost. And then she spake. "Nijni," she murmured. All the caresses of two worlds were dissolved in that word. "My big beautiful baby boyish one!" He clasped her once more to his bosom, this passing strange goddess—his Lady Tiger—his Queen!

"Come, darling one," she cooed at last, when their after-kisses were done and Nijni could *voir* nothing but red—red lips and red eyes, for her ever-changing chameleon orbs were purple now. He was intoxicated with the sweets of passion, with the knowledge of life at its greatest and best, life and love, love and life. Ah! blissy love! *et* oh! more blissy youth!

"Come, beautifulous one," she went on with. "Come with me, and I will read poetry to you, and sing to you, and we will talk together. Waste me no more time here in the public lounge. Come, beloved, to my *chambre.*"

All of which advice he followed, and they undulated slowly, locked in a passionate embrace, through the long, thickly-carpeted staircases and passages that led to his Queen's suite. It was on the third floor. Just as the lovers climbed the last flight of stairs, the muffled beat of a clock reached their ears. It struck ten. "Midnight!" gasped Nijni hoarsely. Suddenly a clash rang down the corridor. No wonder his head swam. Was this the end. His *Dieu!* He drew his darling one to him on to a window-sill, as to be quite invisible to all prying ears. Only the moon was there in the heavens, like a tremulous shilling. "Dear love," he gurgled, in delicate nuances of expression as fine as her own, "fear not anything. For I will protect Thee as becomes a gentleman and a Englishman—a *cavalière!*" With again rising emotion and a movement like a cat, she kissed his nose and his necktie. Then she changed her position, and, tying her long black tresses to a convenient nail, swung off under the sill and hung pendulous. He glanced along the corridor, but nought was to be seen. But the marks of strangers' activity were not absent. All that remained of their victims was shoes, the sole of each marked with some mystic symbol in chalk *blanc.* He pulled up his *doux coeur* and the two writhed on—their fear vanished by the warm *feu sacrebleu* of their love. As she prepared to turn the handle of her bedroom she wailed plaintively, "Shining one, oh that none have here intruded, but I fear yea." And in truth, the first sight that met them was her faithful Coalmuck servant locked in deadly struggle on the hearthrug, beside the bed, with an unknown person. Each had his teeth fixed deep in the other's throat. The air was filled with guttural curses. The Lady flashed upon them, quivering with suppressed rage. "Defile not my hearthrug with this foolery, Smutti!" she hissed between her clenched fists. "Leave my presence." Smutti rose and left the room humbly in fear, sheathing his *dents.*

"Stay!" she cried imperiously. "Is my bridal couch of tulips prepared?" He answered in Russian. "Jawohl, gnädige Frau," he said. "Begone!" She turned fiercely to the adversary. "Shall I *tuer* thee, miserable spy?" she sighed. "But to what use? Tomorrow will but more come, so I spare thee, villain." The murderer looked at her, as were he without understand. Then, a luminous radiance in his eyes, he fell prostrate at her *pattes,* kissing the hem of her garment. Weeping distractedly, he rose up and threw himself into her arms. She staggered a little, but upheld the shock, and, advancing to the open window, dropped him gently without. Then she turned to Nijni, gazing passionately into his love-shot eyes. So they stood for a moment, swaying, bending, staggering, gasping, one, two, three, four—and they were crushed in each other's arms, mouth against mouth, soul against soul.

And now, seizing a garter, she struck up a passionate melody upon it and warbled richly but not fastly:

> "To-night, sweet one, thy eyes,
> Shine bright as stars in sunny skies. . . ."

And then, for the first time, Nijni began to thoroughly *comprener,* to properly realise the might of art and of poetry. A day, nay, an hour before, he had surely thought this "silly," but *now, now* as he lay on the tulip couch with his sweetheart in his strong white arms, he began to see the soul, the passionate blue soul of the poet. He gazed pensively at the flames of the electric fire, as they strove now here now there now somewhere else, and saw in them Man seeking for "higher things," ignorant of Love and its warm swan-song. Suddenly he saw a face watching him intently beneath a burning coal. It was the *visage* of the Coalmuck, obedient and guardful of his mistress, even in the very fires of Purgatory. His darling whimpered, *nestléant* closer to him.

"Didst like that *chanson,* Nijni?" *dit-elle.*

"Needst thou ask, darling? It was *joli.* Sing more."

"Not so, my own one. Let us rather think of the nights when we are dead, wrapped in eternal sleep, and our souls climb together up to Paradise, arm in arm. But, nay, let us think of the present, of the *now,* of these butterfly days. Love, sweet duck, love is the coming together of souls, it is kisses, it is central . . . one . . . one . . . one . . .

"Central . . . one . . . one . . . one . . . , even as is my telephone number in marshy Ammonia, whence I am. I, Madame Zâ, the forsoothsayer, am thy teacher. I, a weak woman, and the woman always says."

"You are no woman!" he thundered dispassionately. "You are a lady."

"Ah . . . !—Nijni, do you love me?"

A great cry burst from his nostrils (he was of American extraction). He pressed her to his blanketed bosom. "Darling," he cried, "I am intoxicated."

"Nijni, sweet one," she murmured, "this is our bedding night."

* * *

The Merciful Widow.

An Essay in Transpontine Poetry.

By Jack Collings Squire.

Inside a cottage by a common
There lived an aged widow woman,
She had twelve children (quite a lot),
And often wished that she had not.
" S'welp me," she often sighed, " I'd rather
You'd had a less prolific father;
Better than raise this surging mob
That God had bowled me for a blob."

Amongst her seven strapping sons
There were some interesting ones.
Even the baby James, for instance,
Had killed a man without assistance;
And several more in divers ways
Had striven to sing their Maker's praise.
Henry, quite small, had tried to smother
His somnolent recumbent mother;
Which failing, when she hollered fearful,
He looked upon her quite untearful,
With something of Don Juan's calm,
Proceeding thus without a qualm:—
" O mother in our hours of ease,
As irritating as ten fleas,
When pain and anguish wring the brow
A fatuously lethargic sow,
This time I haven't put you through it,
But if you wait a day or two, it
Will be quite clear I mean to do it."
Whereat the mother murmured " Law!
I'll gi'e yer a wipe acrost the jaw!

Another son, Ezekiel,
Was well upon the road to hell,
Once every fortnight he betrayed
An unsuspecting village maid,
And now and then he went much furder
By rounding off the job with murder.
Sometimes they took him to the 'sizes,
But there he told outrageous lieses,
His loving family, unblushing,
Always unanimously rushing
To help him with false alibises.
Richard was just another such,
But William, Sam and John were much
More evil and debauched than these.
The account of their atrocities
Might make a smelting furnace freeze.
Without a scintilla of shame
They bragged of things I cannot name.
I represent them here by blanks.
— — — — — — — — — —
(READER: " For this relief much thanks!")

Hedda Lucrezia Esther Waters,
The eldest of the widow's daughters,
In early infancy absorbed
A dreadful liking for the morbid.
She much preferred the works of Ibsen
To those of Mr. Dana Gibson,
And when she went to bed at night
She prayed by yellow-candle light:
" Six angels for my bed,
Three at foot and three at head,
Beardsley, Strauss, Augustus John,
Bless the bed that I lie on.
Nietzsche, Maeterlinck, Matisse,
Fold my sleep in holy peace."
The vices to which she inclined
Were peccadilloes of the mind.
Her sisters were much less refined,
And often when they sallied out,
With knife and pistol, kriss and knout,
And other weapons of the sort
Adapted to bucolic sport
And rural raptures in the dark,
They took occasion to remark:
" Why, wot the 'ell's the —— use
O' 'Edda, she ain't got no juice,
She'll gas and jabber till all's blue,
She'll talk but she will never do.
Upon my oath, it is fair sickenin'."

And so at last they gave her strychnine,
A thing efficient though not gory.
And Hedda drops from out the story.

Four daughters, seven sons were left,
But still the widow felt bereft,
She was distressed at Hedda's loss,
And found it hard to bear her cross.
She tried to find a salve for it
By studying in Holy Writ.
She read the exciting episode
Of how good Moses made a road
Across the rubicundish ocean,
But could not stifle her emotion.
She read of Jews and Jebusites,
And Hittites and Amalekites,
And Joash, Job and Jeroboam,
And Rachel, Ruth and Rehoboam,
And Moloch, Moab and Megiddo,
But still no respite had the widow.
Nothing could charm her grief away,
It grew more bitter every day.
Often she'd sit when evening fell,
And moan: " Ah, Lawkamussy, well,
'Edda was better than the rest,
My 'Edda allus was the best.
Many's the time she's washed the crocks,
And scrubbed the floors and darned the socks.
When all them selfish gals an' blokes
Was out, the selfish things they are,
A-murderin' and a-rapin' folks,
'Edda would stay 'ome with 'er ma.
Yes 'Edda was a lovely chile,
I do remember 'er sweet smile,
'Er little 'ands wot lammed and lugged me,
An' scratched an' tore an' pinched an' tugged me.
I mind me 'ow so long ago,
I set 'er little cheeks aglow,
When I 'ad bin to Ledbury fair
An' bought a ribbon for 'er 'air,
A ribbon for 'er pritty 'ead;
But now my little 'Edda's dead!
Now while spring pulses through the blood
And jonquils carpet every wood,
And God's small fowls sing in the dawn,
I wish to Gawd I'd naver bin born!"

And so at last the widow thought
Things were not going as they ought.
She'd never grumbled in the past:
She'd let them all do things at which
Most parents would have stood aghast—
She'd seen it all without a twitch.
Indeed, religiously she'd tried
To share the joy and fun they'd had;
But really, this sororicide
Was coming it a bit too bad.
She made her mind up: " It's high time
They stopped their silly vice and crime!"

She mustered the domestic throng
And gave it to them hot and strong.
" Look here," she said, " this —— flux
'Ad best come to a —— crux!
I long regarded as diversions
Your profligacies and perversions;
I helped you while you swam in sin,
And backed you up through thick and thin;
But now you've gone a step too far;
I mean to show you I'm your ma.
Yes, it's you I'm talkin' to, Kate and John:
You'll have to stop these goings-on.
Murders must stop from this day on!"

Sons and daughters stood amazed,
Bunkered, flummuxed, moonstruck, dazed,
Grunted with appropriate swear,
"What's come over the old mare?"
"Stop the murders, stop the drink,
Stop the lechery? I don't fink!"
"If she's had enough of sin,
I guess we'd better do 'er in!"
Thus said Henry, savagely
Whetting his knife upon his knee.
"No," said James, "go easy, brother;
After all, she is our mother.
Just you wait for 'arf a mo'—
Give me 'arf a mo' to show
'Er the thing in a new light,
And mother'll come round all right!"

Love is and was our king and lord,
The tongue is mightier than the sword,
Words may shine with benison
As the clouds around the sun,
Words may shine at break of day
Like a palace of Cathay,
Words may shine when evening falls
Like the sign of three brass balls.
All the crowd cried, "Righto Jim!
Jim's a plucked 'un, 'ark to 'im!"
Chewing half a pound of twist,
Smiting the table with his fist,
Jim went on: "Just 'ark to me,
Mother, jest you 'ark to me!
(He spat with vigour on his hands)
This is 'ow the matter stands."

"I'll agree we've done enough
Stabbin's, drunks and such-like stuff,
We, unlike our fellow men,
Have fractured the commandments ten
With others of our own invention
That the scripture doesn't mention.
We have done to hearts' content
Things that blanks must represent.
— — — — — — — — —
— — — — — — — — —
And speaking for myself, I've had
Quite enough of being bad;
And to cut the matter short,
Should find uprightness quite good sport.
But, mother, mother, strike me blind,
This must aye be borne in mind,
Mother, mother, strike me rotten,
This must never be forgotten,
We must not think of self alone.
If no one's interests but our own
Were here involved we'd all turn pi,
And put our past transgressions by.
We'd gladly cease our evil-doings,
Promiscuous assaults and wooings,
And end the two-familiar scenes
Which you indignantly have eyed;
Only, alas, our hands are tied,
Another factor intervenes.
For there's a poet up in London
Who, if we stop, will be quite undone,
We do evil for his good,
He inks his paper with our blood;
Every crime that we commit
He makes a poem out of it,
And were we so unkind's to stop, he
Would famish for congenial copy.
My life begins to give my guts hell,
But there's the matter in a nutshell."

"Ay, ay," said Dick in accents cold,
"Brother Jim the truth has told."
"Ay, ay," the girls said, "do not doubt it,
That's the truth, that's all about it."
"Well," said the mother, "I am human,
Though only a poor widow woman.
Jim's remarks have cleared my sight,
I understand your motives quite,
And when you shed pore 'Edda's blood
Your purpose was distinctly good.
I still must make it understood
I do not like your goings-on,
Espeshly yours, Bill, Sam and John.
But contraventions of the laws
Committed in such worthy cause,
Habits, however atavistic
Prompted by feelings altruistic,
I can't view with disapprobation
Entirely without qualification.
Thought of your evil deeds must pain me,
Thought of your motives must restrain me,
I'm proud to find such virtue in you,
As far as I'm concerned, continue."

Notes on Bergson.

By T. E. Hulme.

V.

A CORRESPONDENT in a number of this review some weeks ago pointed out that my parable of the barber and the fish-bone was only correct when properly interpreted. It was necessary to notice that what happened was not that the barber's soul re-awoke on a new plane of existence, but that his *body* came to life again. This was precisely what I intended to convey; but as I may not have made my meaning sufficiently clear, I had better emphasise the point in more detail here. I can at the same time use this as a pretext for an examination of the general characteristics which any refutation of mechanism must possess if we are to find it completely satisfactory. I use the word "satisfactory" with a definite intention. I carefully refrain from saying "true." I do not pretend to be discussing abstract philosophy here; I am only estimating things from a personal point of view. I want to find out what must be the characteristics of that refutation of mechanism which would, as a matter of actual fact, succeed in shifting the hold of mechanism over the emotions of a certain type of intelligence. If I am asked what kind of intelligence, I simply reply: the type of intelligence that *does* find mechanism a nightmare.

That answers, I think, the second point in the same correspondent's letter. He is surprised that anyone, even admitting the truth of mechanism, should find it a nightmare. I understand his point of view; I know that it is possible to look at the matter in that way. It is a possible position even for the man who at one time has felt mechanism to be a great difficulty. For some people, by a kind of slow and gradual change, and not by any definite and conscious process, the difficulty vanishes. Mechanism is never definitely dealt with and routed; it simply seems to lose its importance. In ten years' time you may find you have changed from a belief in materialism to the belief that ultimate reality is a republic of eternal souls, without knowing exactly how it has happened. There has been no definite rational act. It is like the dissolving pictures that one used to see in the pre-cinema age, where one scene melts away into the next and is not shifted to make room for its successor. In your view of the cosmos the things which at one time seemed the solid things melt away, and the flimsy, cloud-like entities gradually harden down till they become the solid bases on which the rest of our beliefs are supported. Whereas at one time you felt sure that matter was the only permanent thing; you now find that you are equally convinced, without any necessity for proof, of the permanent existence of individuals. In any argument you always rest on some base which is taken for granted, and you now find yourself in the position of taking the reality of

individuality as such a base. It does not seem necessary to rest it on anything else In this change mechanism has never actually been refuted; it has just gradually faded away into insignificance, and other things have come into the high lights. But it has not faded away altogether; it remains on the fringe of the mind. It is, however, no longer a difficulty, because all the emphasis and the accent are elsewhere. The best way to put it is to say that all the "values" of the world landscape are altered. Mechanism is still in the picture, but it is no longer the high light, it no longer dominates everything else.

But here a curious situation arises. Pressed on the point, a man in this state would still have to admit that mechanism was a true account of things, yet it no longer seems to him to "matter"; he is no longer disconcerted by the discrepancies between that and the rest of his beliefs. He has never refuted mechanism; time has simply packed the skeleton away. You bring it out of the cupboard and you find that it no longer has the power to startle. It is still the same skeleton, yet it no longer disconcerts. Why?

The process by which the mind manages not to be disconcerted forms a complicated and interesting piece of psychology. The mind executes a set of manœuvres which, on a different plane, is quite as complicated as the elaborate balancing of personal motives which took place on the lawn at Patterne Hall. I am myself incapable of giving anything more than a very crude outline of these manœuvres. To commence by a restatement of the preliminary position: the mechanistic theory, while never having been refuted, has gradually come to occupy a very subordinate place in the outlook of a certain type of intelligence. Occasionally, it may be under pressure from outside, or of its own inner buoyancy, it floats up to the surface of their minds; it no longer seems to be a nightmare? Why? The first step towards the solution of the problem is to recognise that the expression "floats up to the surface of the mind" is not an accurate description of what does happen to these people. The idea "the world may be a mere mechanism" does not, as a rule, float to the top, but only to a depth where it can just be vaguely perceived under the surface—a depth at which is not a clearly-outlined idea, but rather a confused sentiment. In the kind of unconscious reasoning appropriate to this depth the man probably accommodates himself to the momentary chill produced fairly easily in the manner I am about to describe. It does not take the shape of a formulated argument; if it was, he would probably perceive its absurdity himself. It is rather an unformulated reaction to an unformulated doubt. The whole thing takes place on the plane of quality and feeling, rather than that of clear representation. I used the word "chill" a minute ago. That is a more accurate description of the beginning of the process than the words "perception of the consequences of mechanism" would be. Just below the surface of the stream of conscious life you have a vague apprehension of a quality, a sensation which has a disagreeable feeling tone and which contains within it the potency and the capacity for developing into an awkward and unpleasant idea—that of the truth of mechanism. At the depth in the stream of consciousness at which you first become aware of it, it is merely a closed-up parcel; but if you allowed it to come to the top it would pass from the state of feeling to that of representation, and would unpack itself into a clearly-perceived contradiction and fissure in your weltanschaung. But you do not generally allow it to do that. When its presence becomes felt merely as a chilling shadow thrown on the level of your clearly-focussed conscious life, you deal with it at once on the level at which you perceive it; you meet one sentiment by another. For that reason the arguments which I give here as those by which a man in this state deals with a revival of the mechanistic view in his own mind may seem too like caricature. It must be remembered that they do not represent the actual thoughts which pass through the mind. In fact, the thought-level is not involved at all. But the manœuvres I give here do represent what the closed parcel of sentiment would develop into were you so foolish as to actually unpack it into definite argument on the level of clear ideas.

The attitude of mind by which the revival of the mechanism nightmare is generally met consists mainly of the vague kind of idea that the matter has been dealt with and finished long ago. How or by whom is not clearly known. To persist in wanting it done in detail before our eyes is asking too much. There are some questions to which every person of intelligence is expected to know the answer because they are still live questions; but there are others to which no one need know the answer because they are finished with. It might reasonably be expected, for example, of every person interested in the matter, in the time of Copernicus, that they should know in detail the arguments by which the Ptolemaic astronomy was refuted. It is no longer necessary at the present moment to know the arguments in detail, for there is unanimous agreement that the refutation has been made. The people whose mental attitude I am describing are probably of the opinion that this is the case also with mechanism. Forty years ago, in that curiously remote barbaric Huxleyan period, it would have been necessary, if one disbelieved in mechanism, to be able to state definitely why one did so; but that is no longer necessary. Mechanism has been refuted years ago, and it is very démodé and provincial to be ignorant of the fact, to want to see it done again. A persistence in the demand for details would be out of place in the atmosphere in which you find yourself; you feel like a boor in a drawing-room, and you finally stop wanting even to ask questions. I am speaking here of myself as the outside questioner, though, of course, what I really am trying to get at is the state of doubt inside the other man himself. What does fortify these people in dealing with the doubt is really in the end nothing but just a kind of "atmosphere" of this kind—an atmosphere which automatically overpowers certain objections and makes them seem silly. It seems to say: "We don't do these things; we are past that stage." In a certain famous play the nouveau riche tells everybody that he cleans his teeth every day now, the "real gentleman" being supposed to clean his teeth three times a day without mentioning it. Something of the same kind is conveyed to you by the mental atmosphere of this type of people. It is not necessary to refute mechanism "in public" or to talk about it. I must state here that I am not speaking of this state of mind with contempt; I have been perilously near it myself a good many times.

There is also a second type who, like the correspondent I am answering, find it difficult to believe that mechanism can be a nightmare, and who are impatient with the excessive importance attached to the problem. I heard Mr. Yeats lecturing on "Psychical Research" in a drawing-room the other day. He started by stating that, in his opinion, the whole subject had been distorted by the extraordinary anxiety of most of the people who wrote about it to meet the scepticism of the kind of man they met at dinner. He seemed to imply that, if you put this pusillanimous belief in materialism on one side, you would advance much quicker. Your theories then, freed from the necessity of meeting certain objections, would be much simpler and much more likely to be true. This seems to me to be an exactly similar state of mind to that of the people who dream of the glorious new kind of poetry that would arise if inspiration could only be emancipated from the hampering restrictions of rhyme, metre, and form generally. Everybody can see the absurdity of sentiments of this kind applied to the arts. It is a platitude to say that form here is a liberating and not a restricting thing. But precisely the same statement can be made of theories about the soul. It is not by ignoring mechanism that you will arrive at anything worth having, but by struggling with it. I know this sentence has an uncomfortably ethical flavour, but I hasten to add that it is not intended; it is merely a plain statement of a universal law. The bird attained whatever grace its shape possesses not as a result of the mere desire for flight, but because it had to fly *in air against gravita-*

tion. There are some happy people who can believe any theory they find interesting; others, as soon as they want to believe any theory, feel the full force of certain objections. They are in the position of a man who by jumping may leave the ground, but is at once dragged down again by his own weight. To all kinds of idealistic interpretations of the world there are certain objections of this kind. And just as the whole group of phenomena connected with falling bodies are summed up in the law of gravitation, so all the objections that have in the course of history been urged against the various idealisms seem to me to be summed up and focussed in the mechanistic theory. In it all the ragged doubts and objections seem suddenly to dovetail together and to close up, like certain kinds of box-lids, with a click. It is for that reason that I regard the problem of mechanism with a certain amount of actual enthusiasm. It is not merely an annoying obstacle, but it is the characteristic convention and form which the masters of the philosophic art have to conquer. It is only by dealing with it that any spiritual interpretation of the world can acquire validity, and what is quite as important, a decent shape. Anyone who ignores it will not only have attained his position illegitimately, but, what is infinitely worse, he may be accused of being the "Walt Whitman of the soul."

So much for the people who, like the correspondent I have referred to, do not find mechanism a nightmare. I am concerned now with the tougher people who have realised the problem and have attempted to deal with it. For Bergson, of course, is not the only philosopher who has refuted mechanism. It is one of the favourite occupations of the tribe. You could if you liked write the whole history of philosophy, for the last two hundred years, at any rate, from that point of view. The question has been an obsession. One cannot read Coleridge, for example, without seeing what a very real worry it was to him. It seems necessary to mention some of these refutations, if only to be able to define the state of mind which finds them unsatisfactory. The account I give of them must be necessarily so short that it will resemble caricature.

The first and the simplest way of dealing with mechanism is to frankly accept it as a true account of the nature of the universe, but at the same time to hold that this fact makes no difference to ethical values. This is the view generally associated with Huxley's famous Romanes lecture. It has been stated quite recently by Mr. Bertrand Russell in an article which is called "The Religion of a Plain Man," or something of that kind. [It is some time since I read this, and I am rather vague about it. It has since been republished, but the book is always out of the London Library, and I have always felt sure that no new exposition of this ancient view could be worth six shillings. As far as I remember, however, it was very like Lange's phrase: "A noble man is not the least disturbed in his zeal for his ideals, though he be told, and tells himself, that his ideal world, with all its settings of a God, immortal hopes and eternal truths, is a mere imagination and no reality. These are all real for life just because they are psychic ideals."]

Consciousness generally, and ethical principles in particular, are supposed to be mere by-products of a world-process which produces them accidentally and which will in time inevitably destroy them. Yet we are to act as though these ethical principles had an absolute value. The world has no purpose; our ethical values do not, as a matter of fact, correspond to anything in the nature of ultimate reality, and yet we are to act as though they did. The fact that it all leads to nothing is supposed to give an added dignity to man's ethical endeavours. People who take this view can be called stoics in the literal meaning of the word. In my last "note" I called mechanism the "porch" through which you had to pass to arrive at any legitimate spiritual interpretation of the world. These stoics really are "porch" philosophers, for they sit contendedly on the steps and, pointing over their shoulders at the door, say: "This is permanently closed; no one can ever get to the garden inside; but, bless you, we don't mind that—we *like* being outside—we keep on paying the entrance-money as a hobby." I suppose I ought to qualify this a little and point out that I am expressing surprise, not at the fact that ethical conduct can be compatible with materialism, but at the absolute importance that such a view manages to give to such ethical values.

It is an attitude which has a long history, and which at every period has always satisfied a minority. There has always been a certain glamour attached to this form of "resignation." Owing, I suppose, to a certain coarseness in my nature, I have never been able to appreciate it. There has always seemed to me to be something ridiculous in the position, just for this reason: that it is a little "too much"; it is a little pretentious; one instinctively feels that there is something wrong—something a little shoddy about it. One can understand that a man may feel himself compelled by facts to believe that mechanism is a true account of the universe—there is nothing objectionable in that. But it is mere perverse and inhuman romanticism to pretend that this gives added sanction and dignity to our ethical ideals. It violates common experience; it is a little inhuman, and has a certain element of posturing in it.

To assume this position—to believe that the purposelessness of the world gives an added and melancholy dignity to the position of man—may be an "interesting" position to take up at a tea-party—you may then maintain it with vehemence and sincerity as a thesis; but it goes against all honest human instincts. I cannot admire it myself any more than I can ever admire the pale and unearthly high-mindedness of the agnostic who objects to people being good because they want to go to heaven. Shutting himself up in a corner he is condemning universal and legitimate instincts. The universal instinct has got hold of the truth. I cannot for the life of me see any particular reason for taking life seriously unless it is serious. I cannot see why mankind should be too big for its boots.

This way of dealing with mechanism can be legitimately called sentimentalism, for it clouds over the real outlines of its own position. It shrinks from consistency and refuses to go "to the end" of its belief. Its faith is anæmic. Real belief in the existence of a physical object means that one *acts* in accordance with its perceived shape. If I am convinced that the table is square, I do not try to cut off corners when I am walking past it as I should do if it were circular. So with materialism. To be a materialist should mean to act as a materialist. Consistent materialism is to a certain extent an attractive position. But this other thing—this combination of belief in mechanism and a belief in absolute values—is just irritating sloppiness. The sloppiness is betrayed by the rhetoric in which the position is stated. In the people who take this view you find that heightening of phraseology which always accompanies unconscious untruthfulness. Rhetoric is, I suppose, always unattractive, but it is never more loathsome than when it accomplishes this glazing over of materialism. I say "loathsome" because I think the epithet accurate. I find myself extremely surprised at the adjectives that jump into my mind when I read this kind of stuff. It must be that Nature takes her revenge on those perverted people amongst us, to whom the phraseology of the robustious theatre seems unreal, by turning philosophy itself into a melodrama. At any rate, as I read these modern stoics I gain by an effort of sympathetic intuition an understanding of all those Adelphi phrases which before seen merely from the outside seemed so artificial. I understand now that occasions may arise when the natural expression of one's emotions can only be accomplished by the incoherent use of the words "filth," "sewerage," and the rest of it. My annoyance demands physical expression. I want to do something dramatic with the printed page. I find myself muttering: "You think that, do you? You ——!"

The second method of dealing with mechanism is a little more human.

Pastiche.

MARSHALL AND THE "MAIL."

He was one of those young men who believe, tentatively, in Social Reform, yet who would immediately turn pale and stammer if the word "Socialism" was mentioned.

With him, as with millions of others, a "Daily Mail" education had done its deadly work. He didn't altogether believe in the "Mail," he was a Socialist at heart, yet he would purchase it daily in order to learn how utterly vile and impossible Socialism was. Fluctuating like an English barometer, his spirits were alternately raised and lowered by the enthusiasm of Socialists, and the deathly Conservatism of the "Mail"—the curse of Northcliffe was upon him.

He approached me the other morning and with a pathetic smile handed me the "Mail." "It's all up," he said; "they've knocked the bottom out of us clean; see here, State ownership exposed, telephone inefficiency, whole system disorganised, money lost, time lost, temper lost, subscribers up in arms." His voice trembled: "I always had faith in State ownership," he said; "and now they've shown us what a farce it all is."

I took the "Mail" and glanced down the columns. "What's all this got to do with Socialism?" I asked. Marshall played foolishly with his watch chain. "Don't you see," he replied, "they've knocked the bottom out of collective ownership?"

"Look here, Marshall," I said, "don't be a jackass; the alleged inefficiency of the telephone service under State control is no argument against collective ownership. I am inclined to think, Marshall, that one of the first instruments of commercial torture that Socialism would make almost unnecessary is the telephone. Like all misapplied inventions, the telephone has not made life easier, but has increased the speed of it. A few more inventions like the telephone would "speed up" commercial life to such a pitch that every sane office man would go out quietly and drop himself into the Thames; we've got too much telephone, too many unnecessary things to bawl into it, too many girls wasting their womanhood in its soul-stunting service. Have you ever seen them?—strapped up to it in long rows.

"No, Marshall, a sane state of society would immediately smash up two-thirds of its telephones and thereby reduce the pace of life by two thirds. Yet people are wailing because one man out of every half-million has to wait a few minutes longer to get connected. Quick, quick, the telephone is working a trifle slower, the speed of life is diminishing; what will become of us—of the world? Give us a lightning service, so that we can do five times as much joyless and unnecessary work in the same time; that is what we are born for, that is our meaning, that is our destiny. Quick, quick! And don't you see, Marshall, that although the telephone is under State control it is being *used* in the war of competition; that is what makes so much of it necessary; the instrument itself is Socialised, but it is not being used in a Socialistic State, besides"—I picked up the "Mail"—"this paper didn't publish complaints when the telephone was under private control." Marshall's eyes brightened; he grasped my hand. "You Socialists are marvellous," he said.

Arthur F. Thorn.

RAIN IN MOONLIGHT.

There fell a shower when the Corybantes
Came dancing down the moon's wet fingers.
Cybele's wild hierophants,
Delirious, leaped the pale moon-fingers. . .
Alack! my fire's gone cold.
But I wonder whether Ovid of old,
Who said Corybantes in rain were born,
Or I, who added a moon forlorn,
Would have proved the greater liar
Had my frenzy mounted higher?

V. N.

'Tis late my lady sleeps!
Can any tell
Why her sweet eyes ope not at matin bell?
Say, that the shadow creeps
From east to west on the dewy floor.
This message take her
And awake her!

Thy lady's alone in an inner cell,
And a seal is set across the door.

George Winter.

THE IMPOLITICAL CRISIS.

Vice-President of State-Club (to President): Yah! Kerrupshun!
President: Yah! Beer!
Vice-President: Garn! Wot abart Smif-Wittiker?
President: Oho! Wot abart Gerald Balfour?
Vice-President: Wot abart . . . .
President: Wot abart . . . .
Member of State-Club: Oh, this is interesting, this is; but I do hope they won't be unkind to each other.

C. E. B.

DIANA GOES A WALK WITH G. M.

She drinks the sun through her eyes and gulps up throatfuls of the scented wind. Ah! the earth has an horizon . . . . her mind is horizoned too . . . . it must be explored . . . . to resolve signs her body regaining elemental balance . . . . the being rests. She says: "This is I."

Along the road, pacing like a blood-horse; slower, smoother—a swan! The hedges flow by. Slower . . . . she could step a minuet in these paces . . . . no, a gavotte, less of art there . . . . that filling of the fourth beat . . . . heart beat . . . . beat of Hebe—step your minuet on a bees-waxed floor—trip, out here! Slower . . . too slow now for gavotte . . . . why, then it must be minuet. Artfully, now. Indoors! Into the temple! Apollo waits to give form to the sensations. Ink! Ink! And a quill!

A. M.

! ?

"The mystery of creation was never so vividly yet so delicately told as in Dr. Hugo Salus's little book, ... entitled, 'Children: A Märchen.' It is intended to appeal specially to mothers, and to enable them to impart true information to the inquiring little ones by means of an exquisite fairy tale."

"He deliberately set out to explore the forbidden fields of pleasure. He read a pamphlet by Charles Bradlaugh, heard the author lecture in Plymouth, and for years 'studied to become an Atheist.' His parents insisting on his attending religious services, he surreptitiously read a novel or an 'infidel' tract during the sermon."—"The Christian Commonwealth."

"The representative elected on the strength of the party ticket which carries measures laid on from outside, so numerous and dissimilar in character that it is impossible to say what measures he was elected on account of, and what in spite of, the representative votes as he is bid by those directing the game. He becomes a 'nithing' . . . ."

"We greatly regret that Miss Winifred Hindshaw's article on 'Modesty' was published last week, owing to an oversight, without any signature.—Eds."

"At the same time we publish this, that we, women, unmarried and under thirty, from half a life's experience, affirm that the practice of complete chastity has had an incontrovertibly untoward influence on both mental and physical health. Which is another affirmation."—"The Freewoman."

"The Bishop of Wakefield moved: 'That this House . . . calls upon all Christian people to pray that the present deplorable methods of industrial warfare may be superseded by a better system of settling disputes, etc., etc.'

"The Bishop of Newcastle suggested that a special form of prayer should be drawn up for use in the churches.

"The resolution was carried unanimously."—At the Convocation.

"I can truly say that 'Public Opinion' is a weekly joy to me. It gives me just what I want to read."—Lord Rosebery.

T.

SITUATIONS.

"I am a gentleman, Sir; do you doubt my word, Sir?"

"I may not doubt your word, Sir, if you are a gentleman, Sir; but if you imagine, Sir, that you are perceptible to a plain man like me, Sir, you are a gentleman mistaken."

"I judge that lynch committee by its talk. The fellow who said it was robbery I was after—he was a born thief. He who said I was looking for revenge, would kill his own wife. And the other one who said he wasn't convinced and wouldn't vote anyway—he might have been both a thief and a murderer, but, Lord! I couldn't risk a dime on it."—F. Lord.

Paddy, ruined, gets him hence,
Soon his spade in earth has sunk:
Paddy, left a thousand pence,
Drops his spade, and then gets drunk.

T. W.

The Practical Journalist.

Continued by C. E. Bechhoefer.

No. XIV.

THE MODEL WEATHER NOTES.

OWING to the collision of a Persian trawler with a water-spout at the Bavarian herring-fisheries in July last, there were unsettled conditions yesterday all over England. At Blackpool a house was washed away by the rain, and snow fell heavily, especially on the south coast. Under the influence of a cyclonic depression in the Dead Sea, much rain may be expected to-day.

DISTRICT FORECASTS.

England, E.—Probably fair to rainy. Perhaps windy.
Midlands.—Ditto.
England, S.E.—Ditto.
England, S.W., and Wales, S.E.—Ditto.
Wales, S.W.—Ditto.

CHANNEL PASSAGES.

If fine, moderate; if very windy, rough.

LIGHTING-UP TIME.—1 hour after sunset.

	Y'sty. Sun. hrs.	Y'sty. Rain. ins.	T'dy Fc'st
Aberdeen	19.3	Nil	Fine
Blackpool	19.3	Nil	Fine
Brighton	19.3	Nil	Fine
Felixstowe	19.3	Nil	Fine
Rhyl	25.0	0.1	Fine
Singapore	19.3	Nil	Fine
Yarmouth	19.3	Nil	Fine

BY THE SLITHERY SEA.

Liverpool.—Slight rain fell yesterday, much to the satisfaction of visitors. Yesterday was also the close of the season, which re-opens the day after to-morrow. Hotel-keepers are inundated with applications for accommodation.

Red Lion Hotel: Ovlkg.frt.6oofd&unfdapmts.frscp. bhrm. h. & c. pcs. mod. & inc.

Everybody here uses Gottim, the new disinfectant.

No. XV.

THE MODEL NONCONFORMIST-RUB-NOSA STABLE-TALK.

Oh, dear! A very terrible thing has happened. All is not well with the empire! Mr. Boo has said so, and Mr. Boo is the reverend editor of the *Great Yess Parish Church Magazine.* "Great Yess is a little village, In the Shropshire wolds it lies," sings the poet, but makes no mention of Mr. Boo. Perhaps he was before his time, or, awful thought, perhaps he did not think him important enough. This is what is agitating the breast of every Englishman:

"I do not like Mr. Lloyd George. His face is not nice."

There's a thing to say, now, with all of us waiting to hear what Mr. Boo opines after his daily round of meditation. Surely if Mr. Boo will take himself aside and reason with himself he will perceive that his senseless breach of politeness invites retort much too obvious and unpleasing to mention.

For instance, he will realise that Mr. B. Law's face is one mass of infantile stupidity, that Mr. A. Chamberlain's is like a banjo with a saucer stuck in it, and that Mr. Chaplin runs to chin like a squirrel to nuts, or, shall we say to avoid all vulgarness, like a mangy, broken-down old Tory to his whisky-bottle. It is a pity, too, that Mr. Boo's party, besides being so very ugly, has not asked him to represent them on the Opposition front-bench. Surely such a practised politician would not have sat dumb and sheepish under the blinding lash of Mr. Asquith's rhetoric. No; Mr. Boo is the Napoleon of Great Yess. He himself has said it.

No. XVI.

THE MODEL ALL-MEN-ARE-LIARS-BUT-WE-HAVE-THE-LARGEST-CIRCULATION CANARDS.

IS IT A FACT

That Mr. Horatio Bottomley, M.P., was the man he is?

That a certain prince of a certain foreign country was once seen taking afternoon-tea with a certain young Englishwoman in a certain Paris café?

That Mr. William Archer, of the Revolting Spelling Society, always signs himself "Wilyum"?

That Mr. Justice Ridley is as mad as he looks?

That Mr. Winston Churchill cannot write his own reading?

That the universally acknowledged excellence of the modern British theatre is entirely due to the Censorshipwrecks?

That Mr. John Masefield is now writing his rhymin-essences?

That a certain admiral cannot abide parsnips?

MELANCHOLY SERENADE.

(Translated from the Bohemian of Jaroslov Vrchlicky by P. Selver.)

NAUGHT brings such grievous pain
As a flute with passionate strain,
When in the rosy glow of eve
The light of day doth wane.

'Mid trees the sound doth flow
In darkness lying low,
Saying, "O, ye dreams of youth,
Ye fill my soul with woe!"

And it laments and sighs
In tender, moving wise,
As my belovèd, softly breathing
O'er my brow and eyes.

Hark, the rushes render
Accents dreamy, tender,
And they quiver as 'neath kisses
Thy bosom in its splendour.

They flow in sorrow blent.
Night is a flower; there went
From out its bosom, spreading languor,
A music-laden scent!

Naught brings such grievous pain
As a flute with passionate strain,
When in the rosy glow of eve
The light of day doth wane.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

THE MINING INDUSTRY.

Sir,—As a miner, and a reader of THE NEW AGE, I have often thought that THE NEW AGE is read chiefly by a class of people outside the mining world, many of whom may be labouring under a misapprehension as to the working conditions of the miner.

It must be understood that all miners are not contractors, but only those are contractors who take the coal-getting by the ton, there being three contractors in each stall, a stall meaning a certain length of the coal face. Contractors, or as they are commonly called, "butties," have men working for them, varying in numbers according to length of wall. These men are paid by the butties, at the union rate of wages, which varies a little in each county, the rates of pay in the Notts coalfield being 7s. per day, but in some counties the rate is as low as 5s. 6d. per shift. Of course contractors have many risks to run; for instance, bad roofs, inrushes of water, the stripping of faults, which means that the coal is running out. Then some coal takes much more getting than others; where the seam is only about three feet thick much of the stone or dirt has to be taken from either top or bottom, or both, to make height enough for hauling the coal. Providing we have a wall five or six feet, with a good roof and only ordinary timber to set we can make a decent living wage, but where the butties have such obstacles as mentioned above to contend with, they are worse off than their day wage men, and this is one of the causes of the present dispute.

At some of the largest collieries there are about 100 men employed known as datallers, their work being to go all

over each particular district repairing bad roofs and protecting the airways; this is the most dangerous work about a mine, the men being often exposed to falling roofs. These men go in sets of three with a boy pony-driver. The wages of the leading man run from 7s. to 8s. per shift; his assistant gets from 5s. to 6s. 6d. per shift, the third man from 4s. 6d. to 5s. 6d. per shift. Then there are odd men who do all kinds of odd work, such as oilers, drift-runners, lamp-cleaners, horse-keepers, and for this kind of work they are paid entirely by favouritism, many of these jobs being done by compensation men who have had more or less serious accidents at the coal face or as datallers. Those who had accidents previous to the Compensation Act coming into force are tossed from pillar to post from time to time to make room for those who come under the Act. I have in mind, while writing, the case of a married man with a family, who had a serious accident just previous to the Act, which necessitated his leaving the coal face to do lighter work; this man is what may be termed a handy-man. He sometimes is assistant timberer, another time he is horse-keeping when another is away ill or on holiday; another time he is lamp-cleaner. The very day that this particular man left the coal face his manager reduced his wages from 8s. per day to 4s. per day. I give this particular case as it is typical of many I could give if space would allow. Often when these men put their grievances before a delegate of the old school they are told: "Well, we can't do anything, seeing yours is an isolated case, for if we fought it out they would punish you worse." So the man goes on paying his 6d. a week union money to be unrepresented by his leaders.

Then, again, generally when a deputation of workers is chosen to meet the managers (and I am writing from personal experience), they meet us with the reply that what they pay weekly out of the offices averages every man 12s. per day—but they don't tell us that a specialised few get the picking. For a head manager gets something like £2,000 a year, an under manager £200 or £300 a year; then come a large batch of deputies with a regular wage for all times ranging from 40s. to 50s. per week (and there are three deputies now to every one a few years ago).

The public will begin to see why so many men are working for a starving wage. Only the other week a deputy told me privately that the manager was regularly at them to cut expenses down. "Can't you," said the manager, "make some of the men holiday in their turns?" meaning the lowest paid men. "Of course we must," he said, "cut expenses down."

This particular deputy happens to be a Socialist like myself. More than once this deputy has said to me he didn't know how these night workers lived in such Cradley Heath conditions.

Now a word about our leaders. They have become known as the old or the new school. The old school of leaders fought the 1893 battle for the miners brilliantly, but since then they have seemed to think that they have done all that was required of them, and that we should do nothing but praise them for ever and ever, amen. Since then we have paid many of them due respect by sending them to Parliament, but by doing so they have become close friends of the coalowners, the latter making them believe that none of their collieries are paying their way, till the Harvey and the Hancock type of leaders have swallowed all, and have degenerated into peace-at-any-price leaders.

A few years ago I heard Mr. Harvey, M.P., say at Notts Forest that he should never rest satisfied until the miners had their bread buttered on both sides and jam on the top, but there are thousands of miners who are only getting bare bread and butter—and very thinly spread at that; and if we put our trust only in this class of leader we must fare even worse, for they seem ignorant of the methods adopted by the owners to crush the miners. Our salvation lies in the new school of leaders whose cry is a living wage for all men irrespective of the work they do. The younger leaders maintain that every kind of work in and about the mine is important and necessary; therefore it is just as important and necessary that every man should have a living wage. Although some may be less physically efficient than others, they have the same responsibilities as fathers and citizens as the best paid workers.

In conclusion, I make bold to say that we miners would pay off all the old school of leaders and grant them a pension from our union, and engage those as leaders who are educated up to the modern tactics adopted by coal-owners for defeating the men and sowing dissension among them. We should then advance stage by stage to the time when the coal mines of the land fall under their rightful owner—the State.

I add a selection, by no means of the worst, of wages as earned in a single colliery. I have not included any old men or jobbing workers:—

1. Married, 3 children. Rent 5s. 4d. Wages 5s. per shift. Average 4 shifts per week.
2. Married, 4 children. Rent 5s. 4d. Wages 5s. 9d. per shift. Average 4 shifts.
3. Married, no children. Rent 4s. Wages 4s. 11d. per shift. Average 4 shifts.
4. Lives with sister. Rent 3s. 4d. Wages 6s. per shift. Average 4 shifts.
5. Married, 5 children. Rent 4s. Wages 5s. per shift. Average 4 shifts.
6. Married, 2 children. Rent 5s. 6d. Wages 5s. 6d. per shift. Average 5 shifts.
7. Married, 2 children. Rent 4s. Wages 5s. 9d. per shift. Average 4 shifts.
8. Widower. Rent 3s. 6d. Wages 4s. 11d. per shift. Average 4 shifts.
9. Married, family grown up. Rent 6s. Wages 4s. 8d. per shift. Average 4 shifts.
10. Married, 1 child. Rent 3s. 9d. Wages 4s. 6d. per shift. Average 4 shifts.
11. Married, grown-up family. Rent 3s. 6d. Wages 5s. 6d. per shift. Average 4 shifts.
12. Single. Age 24. 4s. per shift. Average 5 shifts.
13. Single. Aged 26. 5s. 6d. per shift. Average 5 shifts.
14. Single. Aged 27. 5s. 6d. per shift. Average 4 shifts.

A NOTTS MINER.

* * *

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

Sir,—Why does Mr. Meville, in your issue of the 8th inst., conclude that "it does not appear to be known" to your humble correspondent that "Proportional Representation as an instrument of democracy has been tried, not merely in Belgium and Tasmania, but in England, and not politically, but industrially"?

Confessing to the not very relevant fact that it was so known, the reason for not using it as an illustration is obligingly conveyed by himself in the last four words quoted. The conditions to be met with in the case under discussion are not industrial, but political. It pains one to reflect that citizens of a country claiming to be fit for self-government should have been "tyrannical" to minorities, but it is encouraging to learn that "they finally became a little ashamed of it," and it is to be hoped they would do better in the House, where, N.B., members do not vote by the card. (I am under the impression that that method was used in the Trade Union Parliamentary Committee before the Representation was equalised, but am open to correction.) There is a difference between one, or even two, men invested with controlling power over their colleagues and the same power distributed among a number of individuals.

Mr. Meville points out that Coal and Iron, shame-stricken, "allowed the down-trodden minorities an equal voice with themselves, adding, "What does Mr. Topley think of that?" Presumably, as an argument against the adoption of P.R. for Parliamentary elections. Frankly, sir, since I am honoured with the question I am constrained to admit that, as an argument, I think very sadly of it indeed. The weaker Unions, when represented in proportion to their voting strength, did not get fair treatment. Are we really asked to conclude from this that a system such as P.R., which, as Mr. Meville points out, gives representation to minorities in proportion to their strength, is not, even from the merely arithmetical point of view he adopts, to be preferred to the existing system, which demonstrably tends to under-represent them? Unless Mr. Meville thinks it feasible and desirable to introduce the methods of the Trade Union Parliamentary Committee into politics, and ensure all parties equal representation regardless of the amount of support accorded them, it would seem that "down-trodden minorities" have little to thank him for.

The example, if it were relevant, would clearly favour P.R. as compared with the present system; but as it can hardly be considered so I refrain from pressing the point. For do not let us fail to see the wood for the trees. As you, sir, have so eloquently pointed out, a new spirit is required in Parliamentary elections. The proposition is that the adoption of proportional representation provides not merely the best, but the only practicable means in sight for giving that spirit now cribbed, cab—— (no, no, too hackneyed), a freer outlet.

The fact that that conclusion is by no means obvious at first sight to anyone who has not happened to investigate the wide-spreading implications of an apparently merely mechanical idea, encourages one to hope that even those who at first glance have not been attracted by the idea and have passed it by, will, on fully considering the case, be more than ready to put their Q.E.D. against it—and proceed accordingly.

J. W. M. TOPLEY.

* * *

THE LAW AND THE WORKERS.

Sir,—Now that I have leisure to attend to Mr. C. H. Norman again I hasten to reply to his letter in your issue of January 4, which has only just come to my hands.

I fear we shall never agree as to fireguards, but, en

passant, may I remind Mr. Norman of the good old maxim, "Ignorantia legis nemini excusat."

I still think a parent ought to be made responsible for the preservation of his children's lives, however poor and ignorant he may be, and venture to think most sane people will agree with me.

The allusion to Judge Grantham's cottages was based on Mr. Norman's former letter (q.v.), which mentioned the Judge (as I thought) in this connection.

As for what your correspondent says of Sir William Grantham's death, the less comment from me the better. I am old-fashioned enough to believe in "De mortuis nil nisi bonum." Mr. Norman's remarks on the deceased Judge are both unnecessary and in execrable taste.

I differ from Mr. Norman in toto as to the Ball case and the Incest Act; and believe I have public opinion on my side.

As to employers and the State, etc., I can only say I should be sorry to have to live in a community run on Normanic lines. Despotism of an Oriental type would be far preferable.

My "conscience" does not condemn me in the least—nor does my sense of humour! M. R. R.-L.

* * *

THE MYSTERY OF HAMLET.

Sir,—I was very much interested in Mr. Randall's article on "The Heart of Hamlet's Mystery." But don't you think that the reason why Hamlet did not kill the king could be explained without a lengthy or intricate inquiry into his psychological state? Would not the key of the mystery—if there is any—be that Shakespeare was not so much preoccupied by the psychology of the situation as he was about the construction of his play. Although reason bids us feel that Hamlet, to square with his other hasty actions, ought to have removed the king in an early act, it is obvious that, from the playwriter's point of view, if he had done so the tragedy would have come to an abrupt conclusion. "Hamlet," without the Prince, is used, as a rule, as an illustration of the impossible. "Hamlet," with the king killed in the first two or three scenes, would have been perhaps as impossible from a constructive point of view. It is extremely doubtful whether Shakespeare approached his task self-consciously in the manner of the modern student of psychology. That he was, however, conscious of the strong dramatic line is proved by the dialogue Hamlet carried on with the ghost speaking from below the terrace. There is but little meaning in the dialogue, which begins with the ghost's word, "Swear," other than a trick of whirling words to heighten the dramatic effect.

To explain, then, would justify a longer article on psychological cogency, but it would not be so satisfactory as the realisation of the simple truth that Shakespeare was concerned with the dramatic necessities of his play as part of the traffic of the theatre. GEO. EDGAR.

* * *

PRESENT DAY CRITICISM.

Sir,—May I advise readers interested in the technique of poetry that having rather hastily "cut" my remarks on rhyme-royal and the balade I have left the join showing, at least to particular eyes. King James should have disappeared with the rest.

THE WRITER OF "PRESENT-DAY CRITICISM."

* * *

PICARTERBIN.

Sir,—I wish you would tell Master Carter not to give way to those nasty tantrums of his, but be brave and have it out like a little man. It won't hurt him much and he will feel a lot better after. M. B. OXON.

* * *

THE VICTORIANS.

Sir,—As there seems to be some misconception abroad as to who and what the Victorians were, I, who once lived long among that strange people, would be glad, with your permission, to offer a little information on the subject. It is a vast one, of course, and merits a treatise such as a man might write on the Asuntas of Australia or the Yorubas of Nigeria; but I think that it may be possible to present a pretty fair estimate of the period in a short examination.

When we speak of the Pacific Ocean we allude to an expanse of water, without thinking of the lovely coral islands, the blue lagoons, the fairy atolls, the brown-skinned flower-crowned nymphs, and the gin-crawling beach-combers. We imagine water, water everywhere! So when we speak of the Victorian period—we do not think of Turner, the Pre-Raphaelites, or Swinburne; but we are affected by a feeling of general stodginess, stuffiness, and materialism—that it would daunt the heart of a Siegfried or a Launcelot to penetrate. Launcelot? Yes, you may have Tennyson, the rector is always quoting him. And Browning? The Victorians were under the necessity to form societies to help each other to understand him. Let us proceed.

In the earliest Victorian epoch the Middle Ages, according to the late Sir Walter Besant, still lingered on. The last private combat was fought in England early in the reign. Negro slavery had just been abolished in the West Indies, and holy men and women rejoiced with exceeding great joy over the emancipation of the Blacks, as they were called, unwitting of the hideous ergastala in mines and manufactories that flourished at their very doors.

Speaking generally, the Victorians may be described as a brave, brutal, and enterprising people, well seen in prize-fights, dog-fights, cock-fights, horse-racing, railways, tubular bridges, mining operations and manufactures, but of μουσική they were utterly destitute.

The males wore side-whiskers—most inartistic appendages—like chimpanzees. Hence the line in the old folk-song:—

"The captain with his whiskers took a sly glance at me."

Their women were beautiful and fecund, families from nine to thirteen being common. No race suicide for them. These ladies decorated their lower legs with white cotton stockings and shod their feet in elastic-sided boots—the invention of Mario, covering the whole with crinolines. They inhabited houses with defective sanitary arrangements, containing "parlours," the floors of which were covered with "floral carpets," wherein they sat on chairs of awesome and amorphous shapes, and "ottomans" decorated with "antimacassars"—Nomen inomen—and "worsted work." The "antimacassars," like all things else, had been evolved by a natural process, for the Victorians anointed their hair with bear's grease—and also deluged themselves with scent—after the manner of the noble Romans. If the abandonment of these practices be a sign of degeneracy we are certainly degenerate enough—to fulfil the forebodings of the Gloomy Dean. At nightfall, *circa* 10 p.m., the married couples clambered up into four-post mahogany bedsteads with curtains attached—bad enough from a hygienic point of view; but not quite so bad perhaps as the original bedsteads of their remote ancestors, which were veritable wooden huts with doors and bolts on the inside—and from which the four-poster is the legitimate descendant.

The Brahmins among them had their foreheads painted with the letters "V. R.," which means "Very Respectable." They worshipped a goddess called Mrs. Grundy; and on Sundays, when they were prevented from going to Church, they sat at home reading aloud the Psalms, lessons, gospels, and epistles "appointed for the day."

Outside their houses they breathed an atmosphere of croquet and clergymen. This was the middle period.

With the publication of the "Origin of Species" in the early 'fifties the birds began to sing at the approach of light. From that date onwards commenced a period of storm and stress. Pious and learned theologians were to be found gumming together Science and Religion in the pages of half-crown serials—and the god-like Gladstone himself rushed into the fight and struck a swashing blow on behalf of the Gadarene swine. Oleographic Lives of Christ and Lights of Asia poured from the Press, selling like hot cakes amidst the plaudits of the people. Evol—evol—Evolution. "So nigh is grandeur to our dust." "The Ascent of Man" and "Up she went like a Rocket." Time would fail to tell of Swinburne and the Neo-Hellenic boom. Does anybody at present living know what the Fleshly School was? I trow not, any more than they know or care what the Satanic School was. Schools break up. Poets remain. Ruskin and Kate Greenaway shared the throne of the Poets between them—until we arrive at the Pot of Paint Period, and the commencement of the mission of St. Bernard to the lands of Heathenesse.

Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites were not Victorians, nay, rather, they were the prophets whom the Victorians stoned. Any of the "raspberry jam," "soap-suds," and "lime-wash" left over by the earlier critics from the besmearing of Turner was used up by the later ones to cover Whistler with.

Every happy English child can now lisp the story of the Pre-Raphaelites, and tell of the life-long neglect meted out to Madox Brown by the pontiffs of the art world; the early death through misery and hardship of Walter Deveril, and how there were to be found in the England of that day those who would have willingly haled Millais and Holman Hunt to the stake.

It is easy to claim them as Victorians now; yet the production of such a picture as Rossetti's "Ancilla Domini," in the midst of the Hungry 'Forties, was, I dare be known to say, well nigh as great a miracle as the one it celebrates. Think of it! a picture such as that painted in the era of Dr. Cumming. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Yea, verily, for whenever with bared head I stand before it I am almost persuaded to become a Catholic.

"Ave mater Jesu Christi!
Qui per aurem concepisti
Gabriele nuncio."

HAROLD B. HARRISON.

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