NOTES OF THE WEEK.

LORD REVELSTOKE, who has a considerable name among moneylenders, has been assuring an American journalist that "so long as our military authorities require money to carry on we shall shrink from no sacrifice in order to provide it." You might think from this that the bankers who supply the State with money are doing so to their own loss, and be expected to marvel at the patriotism that is prepared to continue the sacrifice until the war is through. The fact, however, is that not only are our bankers making no loss on the war-loans, but at a time when lending elsewhere is difficult they are engaging their money in the best security in the world—that of the British Empire—at a very high rate of interest. Where is the sacrifice in that or the occasion to brag of sacrifice to American journalists? If our wealthy classes had undertaken, as they very well might, to pay for the war out of their own pockets, or to consent to a levy upon their capital, or even—to lend the State money without interest, there would have been some point in calling America to witness their devotion to their country. As it is, either American reporters must be fools or they listened to Lord Revelstoke's eulogies of himself with their tongues in their cheeks. We cannot believe that they do not know as well as he that however much the rest of the community is prepared to sacrifice, Lord Revelstoke and his moneylending friends will not find themselves at the end of the war a penny the poorer. And it is not merely to any loss that our wealthy classes object; they object to forgoing gains even when these must be made, if at all, at the expense of the nation and for no other purpose than to "carry on" the war. Look, for evidence of this, to the recent and still continuing dispute between the Government and the manufacturers upon the subject of the taxation of excess profits. It is not here, as will be seen, a question of absolute loss; nor is it even a question of loss relative to the profits made before the war. The whole dispute turns upon the disposal of the war-profits made by our manufacturers over and above the normal profits of peace. The complaints, we know, have come from both sets of manufacturers, the uncontrolled who are now subjected to an excess profits tax of sixty per cent., and the controlled who, under the Munitions Act, were limited to 20 per cent. excess profits, but who are now, it appears, to come under the Finance Act as well. The former class, as we pointed out some weeks ago, have been given the assurance that the 60 per cent. tax is the utmost under any circumstances that the State will impose upon them. Fat and satisfied, they can now roll themselves up in their profits and sleep while the nation is bleeding to death. But the latter class is still hungry and on the prowl, with the results that we have seen during the week of debates in Parliament and correspondence in the Press. What is the upshot of their complaint? It is that having been authorised under the Munitions Act to retain 20 per cent. of their excess profits they are now made liable under the Budget to the common tax of 60 per cent. imposed upon all manufacturers alike. What they find unfair in it we cannot for the life of us see. When the so-called bargain was made by the State with these controlled firms that in return for the suspension of Trade Union restrictions the controlled employers should accept a corresponding limitation of their profits, it was not surely anticipated by them that they would find themselves upon all fours with manufacturers whose labour was in no way guaranteed by the State. Something surely they expected to have to pay for the privilege of State-guaranteed servile labour! But no; it appears that not only did they expect to receive their servile labour for nothing, but to make more profit out of it than the uncontrolled manufacturers out of "free" labour. Sir Alfred Mond, indeed, has now had the face to say that the controlled employers, of whom he is one of the wealthiest, would have preferred to deal
with Labour themselves to accepting the servile Labour supplied by the State on the terms of the limitation of profits. We employers—we paraphrase his remarks—have nothing to thank the State for in respect of the supply of Labour procured, as we know, by a bargain between the State and the Trade Unions; for without any State support at all we had power enough to "discipline" Labour and to secure all the servility necessary to our profits. So, indeed, it may appear to Sir Alfred Mond and his colleagues of the plutocracy, secure as they now feel themselves in the dog-like servility of the Trade Unions; but is this double alien certain that the very servility in which he is now secure was not engendered by the very "bargain" which he now deprecates? Let us agree that, as things are at this moment, employers may well consider that Labour is incapable of resistance and offers merely one long nose to be pulled and to be led about by any employer, controlled or uncontrolled—but would this catatexy have supervened upon any action less than that taken by the State in the early days of the war? Recall the panic that spread in those days among the employers at the suggestion of strikes. Were they not then prepared to promise anything to the State if it would only discipline Labour for them and procure and guarantee its servility? But having now secured these conditions, they have straightway forgotten the fever they were in, and are now pretending that the devil was never sick.

Sick, however, he was and for good cause. As Mr. McKenna has reminded the employers, Labour in the early days of the war was by no means of the placid temper it is to-day. Not only had the war broken out at a moment when Labour unrest was reaching a crisis, but for some weeks after August 4 it was touch and go whether the Trade Unions would co-operate with the Government or defy it. More than that, the disposition engendered by the very "bargain" which he now depreciates? The panic that spread in those days among the employers at the suggestion of strikes. Were they not then prepared to promise anything to the State if it would only discipline Labour for them and procure and guarantee its servility? But having now secured these conditions, they have straightway forgotten the fever they were in, and are now pretending that the devil was never sick.

There is still a way out, however, both for the State and for Labour; or, rather, let us say, for the State and Labour in union. Since there can be no doubt that Labour has nothing to hope for from the return of peace save a decline from the conditions of war, it would seem that now or never is the moment to inflict a mortal wound upon Capital. Let us have done with tickling the employer's hide with a feather. Merely to limit war-profits has been, in some cases, rather than to hurt the beast. Capitalists laugh derisively at us, and, after each of our darts, show us their swelling balancesheets. Very differently would they behave if, instead of demanding a mere pricking of their profits, Labour were to demand and to insist upon a total exclusion of war-profits. We venture to say that the laugh would then be upon the other side of Capital's mouth. The State, too, has every reason for joining with Labour in the same demand. In the first place, such public opinion as exists in this country and supports the State is definitely in favour of the abolition of profiteering, at any rate, in the munitions of war. There is not a man of any decency in all the land whose mind is not revolted by war-profits almost as much as by the atrocities of the Germans in Belgium. The latter, indeed, have sinned less, since their atrocities were all a part of the atrocity of a war of aggression, but our manufacturers have done the work of the Lord deceitfully and for gain. The State would, therefore, be both purified and strengthened in public esteem by their punishment. In the second place, even more than that, the State has every reason to resent the ingratitude of the employers, since it was to the State that the employers crawled for favours in the early days of the war. What would better serve the employers as they deserve than now to withdraw the favours of which they think so little? Thirdly, as a means of settling once and for all the disputes of the employers concerning the division of their war-profits, the appropriation by the State of the whole of the stolen goods would be simple and perfect. Let it be provided that no man shall retain more profit during the war than he was wont to receive before the war—and what ground of quarrel would be left? The whole crew of pirates would be in the same boat, and it would be their affair to float or sink together. Lastly, but no trifle, the State must have the money. By hook or by crook, by taxation or by some other means, the war has to be paid as well as fought. We know with what short shift the discussions—few in number as they were—concerning who should fight in the war were dealt with—everybody capable of bearing arms was liable to fight, and there was an end of it. But no less urgent than fighting the war is paying for it; and by the same methods that the former was secured the latter may be. Let those pay who can, and compel them if they will not. Upon this point, justice, public opinion, ethics and the State are all at one. It is expedient that war-profits should be appropriated in their entirety to pay for the war; it is the wish of public
opinion, it is the dictate of ethics; and it is the need of the State. So four-square a demand must be met.

That, however, it is not likely to be while we live under a plutocracy goes without saying. Rather would our public men put themselves and be put to any trouble in the attempt to conciliate interests than put out at the root of an private interests by abolishing profits if only during war-time. To the foregoing occasion of mercenary dispute has been added during the past week another upon the subject of wool, in the course of which no few words have been wasted. To set out with one class of property and another. Why, it was asked, should the State commandeer wool at a fixed price—thereby, of course, limiting the profit to be made on it—while leaving other commodities free to avail themselves of the law of Supply and Demand? The question is unanswerable, though much ingenuity can be employed in attempting a reply. We can say with Mr. Montagu, for example, that the present discrimination is only in its turn, and that commodities other than wool may be commandeered into due course. Or, again, we may say, as Lord Cromer did in the House of Lords, that the commandeering is not very serious since it fixes the price at 30 per cent. above that of last year and 60 per cent. above that of the average of the last ten years. Or, once more, we can parallel wool with men and point out that if wood suffers relatively to other commodities because of the accident of its utility, men who chance to be of military age suffer relatively to other men. Equal sacrifice, in short, is impossible; at best we can demand equitable sacrifice which implies the performance of service according to need and according to ability. Without casuistry, however, the problem can be settled another way. When the Spanish grandees had in vain attempted to set an egg upon its end, Columbus, we know, smashed it, and so settled it. To all the disputes concerning the fair division of the sacrifices of property there is as simple a solution: tax all capital equally. If every man owning property were now called upon to make his will and to bequeath therein for immediate realisation one-tenth of his total estate all the disputes about paying for the war would be set at rest. The war would be paid for and we should all be as we deserve: equally the worse off.

Nothing, we may say, that Mr. Hughes did in England became him like his last act before leaving it. This was to purchase for Australia a fleet of cargo-steaming ships, a thing of which we can hardly imagine this country, under his Government’s ownership, control and management. What our shipping profiteers think of his action is, however, another matter. “British shipowners,” said the “Times,” “are naturally not enamoured of the institution of the Commonwealth Government Line of Steamers.” But why are they not, we may ask? Is it because, as they profess when national ownership is proposed in this country, they foresee in it ruin to the State, mismanagement in the shipping and the end of the prosperity of Australia? Brethren, we think not. No, their failure to feel enamoured of a State shipping service in Australia is due to their apprehension for the profits of their present private monopoly. For Mr. Hughes’ bold act, however, our shippers have only themselves to thank. They it is who have driven him to a course that not common sense in normal times would ever have led him. When our own State, considering the sacred law of Supply and Demand, commissioned ships to engage in the North American wheat trade as the only means poor Mr. Kuneiman could devise to lower freights upon one of his father’s routes, they forgot to calculate that the effect would be to cause upon the Australian route. Australian wheat was thereby, in fact, put more than ever at the mercy of the remaining shippers, who did not scruple to raise their freight to a height that threatened to ruin Australian farmers if not the country. Then, and only then, it was that the Australian Government intervened and, in defiance of Supply and Demand, bought its own ships, to the disappointment of our profiteers. But at a single stroke they have demonstrated more than one conclusion of our economics. First, the practicability of a State mercantile service has been proved. Then its necessity when profiteers have thrown discretion to the winds and exercised their undoubted power of rack-renting industry to its full length. It has shown that the radical cure for high prices is not the regulation of Supply, but the control of Supply. Our own Government has been the witness of the failure of mere regulations. Have we not seen it bustling to intervene here, to commission ships there, to draw them off from somewhere else, and all in the vain hope of regulating the law of Supply and Demand? But for the cure of the ills of Supply and Demand—in short, of the spasms of profiteering—there is only one remedy: it is to pluck up Supply by the roots and to make a national monopoly of it. To regulate price you must control Supply. And it is to this axiom that the greed of our shipping profiteers has driven Mr. Hughes.

“Among the weak spots disclosed in our national organisation by the war,” says Sir John Stirling Maxwell in the “Times,” “forestry is daily becoming more conspicuous.” We must mildly dissent from the implication that the war has been needed to reveal the “weak spot.” For as long as the I.L.P. alone has been in existence, “afforestation” has been one of the main planks of the Labour platform, and upon the crucial grounds with which it is associated implies our national dependence upon an unhusbanded and unfortified supply of home-grown wood. As a matter of fact, every argument disclosed by the war for maintaining our wood supply has been well known for twenty or thirty years; and it was about the least surprise that we, for example, saw the problem of wood becoming acute within a few weeks of the outbreak of war. To begin with, this country, with a potential woodland equal to any, actually grows less timber than any country in the world. Again, our afforestation is the laughing-stock of foresters the world over. Its management, too, is always hampered by the fancies of country squires, who control between them something like 90 per cent. of the whole of our timber. This compares with 65 per cent. in France, and with 47 per cent. in Germany, in each of which countries the State has taken care to preserve a good supply for its own use. Even of the timber found growing by chance in the mountains while the war broke out, the State has made the most extravagant, improvident and irresponsible use. No national stock-taking was made before the fellings began, no record has been kept of the fellings themselves, and no attempt has been made to provide for re-planting. The State has gathered where it did not sow, and it has not sowed where it may have one day to gather again. But if the State, being the longest-lived entity in our midst, has not the foresight to provide for the future, we may be sure that the journalist employers, here to-day, and, thank God, gone to-morrow, will make no provision. To their appetite for immediate profits, in fact, it is due that the war found the country practically without timber of its own. Between fifty and a hundred years was a necessary term for the maturing of the harder woods; and which of our profiteers can look ahead for as many weeks? The conclusion is Lord Selborne’s that the lead in forestry must be undertaken by nobody; or it will be undertaken by nobody. But no sooner had he said this than the profiteers were flooding the Press with letters protesting that the State’s action should end with the “lead”—in other words, with the provision of the initial capital. Thereafter, they say, they can be trusted to draw the profits themselves.
The story of this Declaration may be recalled. By its terms our power at sea would have been sensibly weakened, not least of all because our own Prize Courts would have been, in the last resort, subject to overruling by an international tribunal. This essential fact caused various defenders of our sea-power to take a firm stand against the Naval Prize Bill in 1911, myself included. The Naval Prize Bill was thrown out, and the Declaration of London, so far as this country was concerned, was regarded as dead. So it was until August 20, 1914, when it was "applied" by Order in Council without reference to Parliament. At once the jingo newspapers raised the cry that there could be no blockade—even as recently as a week ago, when our blockade could hardly have been tighter, the "Morning Post" was insolent enough to describe Lord Robert Cecil as "Minister of a Blockade that does not exist." Critics of this kind have overlooked, carelessly or deliberately, one fact, and that is that the Declaration of London has never been applied in its entirety. At the beginning of the war our Allies were committed to its principles; we were not. Neutrals were puzzled to know how their cargoes were likely to be affected. There was no time to draw up elaborate naval codes. It was decided, therefore, that it would be advantageous to apply certain sections of the Declaration of London, so the Declaration was applied—with modifications. As soon as the clauses of the Declaration threatened to interfere with the efficacy of our naval blockade the Declaration had to suffer; and it is amusing to notice how its sponsors of 1909 and 1911 were explicit in disavowing it. One clause (Art. 65) was broken at the very beginning; for, according to it, the Declaration had to be taken in its entirety or not at all. It was not so taken. Further, changes began to make their appearance. Articles which the Declaration said were conditional contraband were declared to be absolute contraband; articles held to be non-contraband were placed in the former category—all this in Council. The Declaration, as applied, held that the nationality of a ship was decided by its flag; a subsequent Order in Council that it was decided by the nationality of the owners; and so on and so forth. The Declaration was applied on August 20, 1914. It was modified on October 20, 1914; November 11 and December 29, 1914; on March 31, 1915. The Declaration of London is not a binding document or any nation," said Sir John Simon (speaking in his official capacity) in the Admiralty Prize Court on May 17, 1915. Before conditional and absolute contraband had been brought into one category (March 16 last) numerous questions had been asked in the House of Commons. Answering Mr. Petco on October 28, 1915, Sir Edward Grey said:—

I can assure the hon. member that the means of facilitating the effective action of His Majesty's Government and the constant attention of His Majesty's Government, and if he will point out any matter in which he thinks it improperly fettered, I will gladly consider it. I must say again that the Declaration of London possesses no force: where any provision taken from it is mentioned it is solely because it is a convenient expression of some generally accepted principle of internationals. The Navy is not limited by anything except such rules.

On November 9 Colonel Yate inquired whether the Foreign Secretary would not propose to abandon the Declaration altogether if it were not to be regarded as binding; and Sir Edward promised to consider the suggestion. I think it may now be taken that the Declaration has been abandoned, not because it "fettered the action of the Fleet"—for it never did that, with all respect to the "Morning Post"—but because it had to be so frequently modified to bring it into line with our real policy that its value as the framework of a code for the guidance of neutral nations was destroyed. Sea-law, like all law, is progressive; and when the Declaration of London was drawn up (chiefly by and in the interests of Continental nations) in 1909 certain features of the present war had not been considered—

For instance, the development of the submarine and its attacks on merchant shipping with or without warning; the importance of a blockade in cutting off the enemy's war material and food supplies, and in injuring his international exchanges; and, again, the ability of a large country, if left unchecked by a merely nominal blockade, to procure certain supplies from overseas countries through adjacent neutrals. It was to prevent the latter from happening, or, at any rate, to hinder the process as much as possible, that we did not declare a technical "blockade" of Germany at all, but confined ourselves rather to entering into agreements with institutions like the Netherlands Oversea Trust and the Danish Merchants' Guild, in consequence of which we have been able to cut off Germany's supplies while keeping within the limits of international law; and this is what we did have decided to adopt. Incidentally, these trading agreements set us right with important neutrals; and the privileges granted to Americans were fully explained to the Washington Government in Sir Edward Grey's Notes of July 21 and 31, 1915.

That is the point which I wish to make definitely clear. The Declaration of London, despite the unfounded statements of the papers I have already mentioned, had no effect whatsoever in hindering the work of the Navy. It was intended to be a useful measure, but it did not serve a useful purpose for more than a few weeks; it did not affect, but was affected by, the blockade and the stiffer the blockade became the more frequently was it found necessary to change the wording or to suppress clauses of the Declaration. We have learnt one lesson from what has happened, and that is that cut-and-dried legal codes are practically useless for sea-warfare; and it may be taken for granted that after the war the Allied Governments will hold this view and will act accordingly. No international measure ever had fairer prospects than the Declaration of London. The brains of the world went towards drawing it up; it was signed by the representatives of every important country except the United States of America, and even every State wherever, even in England; and our Government, the last to give in, was at length induced to try the measure it had long opposed. The result was a long-drawn-out legal anarchy which has only been settled by the complete and final withdrawal of the blockade, which broke down utterly after two weeks' practical experience. We are now back to our own old seas, and by them we shall adhere.
Looking over our conversations, I have come to two conclusions about them: that it is necessary to shout very loud to make people hear, and to talk very big to make them attach importance to what you are saying. I unfortunately can do neither.

I have a second conclusion—that you are about to say something of importance which you fear that nobody will attend to.

Right, you are right. Then I need say no more of this matter; for if you have divined my state of mind, my idea will be equally perceptible.

What is it?

Why, I began to speak of it last week: the idea that in the coming economic struggle with Germany England will win, if at all, by the superiority of her workmen. Unless man for man we are superior to Germany it is only a question of time how long this country will retain its present predominance. It is usually understood, is it not, that our superiority must depend upon other things than men: upon our ability to create capital, for instance.

Indeed it is; and you have seen, no doubt, that the creation of capital is everywhere being urged as the paramount duty of the workers after the war. Only create more capital than Germany and we shall be certain, they say, to surpass her in the coming struggle. To this end we must be prepared to abolish all restrictions upon labour output, to forgo holidays and increase of wages, to co-operate with capitalists in enlarging their profits out of which capital can be saved, and to allow the State with public money to encourage capitalist enterprise in all directions. It is all very plausible, and I see the mass of the population being taken in by it. But it is all hopelessly wrong, ruinously wrong, disastrously wrong. Let me never speak again upon this matter; for if you have divined my state of mind, my idea will be equally perceptible.

Next, I would inquire whether for our qualitative capital we do not need a qualitative workmanship and whether, again, we are taking steps to create it. Set a quite simple machine before a Patagonian and he could not work it. But equally it is true that you may invent machinery beyond the ability of the average workman to operate. In that case—and it occurs fairly often—I assure you—one of two things must be done: either the machine must be dropped, or workmen must be specially trained to manage it. If the former course is taken, the industry drops behind its best competitor in efficiency, if the latter—

Of course, it is; and you have seen, no doubt, that the capital values Germany and England are about equal; and that, thus equally equipped in respect of the past, they now propose to take up by mystics.

What sort of capital is it proposed to create and accumulate? Is it all, by the superiority of her workmen. Unless man for man we are superior to Germany it is only a question of time how long this country will retain its present predominance. It is usually understood, is it not, that our superiority must depend upon other things than men: upon our ability to create capital, for instance.

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You are very confident about it. May I ask for your grounds?

To begin with, the question is not unimportant what sort of capital it is proposed to create and accumulate. It is all very well to urge the creation of capital, capital, capital—but what sort? Assuming that the capital spoken of is, in the main, machinery, the question can be precisely put: what sort of machinery? You know, of course, that one “plant” differs from another, like the stars, in glory: and it is quite as important, competitively, to have the best possible plant as it is to have a plant at all. I am by no means satisfied that in calling for more and more capital our commercial men are not thinking of quantity rather than of quality. But quality, it is obvious, is concentrated quantity; and it, therefore, behooves us to inquire again and again whether the quality of the capital demanded is being taken into account.

Yes. I agree.

Next, I would inquire whether for our qualitative capital we do not need a qualitative workmanship and whether, again, we are taking steps to create it. Set a quite simple machine before a Patagonian and he could not work it. But equally it is true that you may invent machinery beyond the ability of the average workman to operate. In that case—and it occurs fairly often—I assure you—one of two things must be done: either the machine must be dropped, or workmen must
of initiative in other directions became atrophied. Freer communities easily surpassed slave communities.

Yes, I think I must agree with you. Agree now with this: that, other things being equal, the more freedom—possessed by the greatest number of the population, the more probably will inventions of all kinds arise.

That seems sound.

Let me now remind you of the three great phases through which communities have passed, or are passing: the phase of chattel-slavery, the phase of serfdom, and the phase, now prevailing, of wagedom. Serfdom superseded chattel-slavery, because it was both a liberation of the mind and a liberation, in consequence, of economic invention. Serfdom, in a word, more productive than chattel-slavery. Wagedom, again, superseded serfdom for the same reasons that serfdom superseded slavery: it liberated more mind, and, hence, liberated more economic inventiveness. Can you go on?

I think I know what is coming.

Well, let economic freedom displace wagedom, and may we not expect from it a liberation of mind and of economic inventiveness comparable to the releases of the past?

So by analogy it would appear; and so I hope. But can nothing more definite be said on the subject? You will not accept as more definite the conviction I entertain that freedom is the condition of the emergence and development of yet undeveloped faculties in man—I will not ask you to. But look at the matter more practically. Freedom I define as Responsibility. Now, is it not a fact that all inventions have come from responsible people—and to the degree of their responsibility? You will not argue it now, I state it as a fact of common experience. If this is the case, should we not certainly and inevitably catch more inventions if we cast freedom more than they have the desire of it.

entertain that freedom is the condition of the emergence of elemental human sea of mind? That is my main plea.

Nothing else but freedom has ever made any headway. Hence, if invention is to increase—now, then, do not monopolise the indifference to knowledge to which they owe their pre-eminence. That, like the other malady on which I ventured to enlarge in my previous communication, is co-extensive with the population of this land. I know that you will say to me that Germany sees itself as others see it. It is as hard to see one’s own defects as it is to see the back of one’s head. And so Englishmen, while admitting individual frailties—such as the incompetence of their administrators and ambassadors—are utterly unable to conceive how, as a nation, they have failed, in any respect, to live up to the position in which a capacious Providence has placed them. To correct this limitation of vision foreigners have been created.

My own sight, I allow, is not long enough to span the whole breadth of the ignorance that reigns in England—ignorance on the part of your public idols, ignorance on the part of their private worshippers, ignorance on the part of the nation generally—regarding the things which concern you very existence. But I will tell you as much as I do see.

No nation known to me evinces a keener zest for life or a shrewder appreciation of the things that make life worth living. I will say little about the art of living beautifully and gracefully; for your John Ruskin, your William Morris, your Walter Pater, and other indigenous luminaries of greater or lesser magnitude, consumed much ink to enlighten you on those points: with how much success your suburban villas and urban mansions amply testify. If you have the eye to native guides, you are not likely to be edified by the remarks of an alien inquisitor. Let me only observe, for my personal relief, that I have been in Delhi and Cairo during the month’s Ramadan and beheld the rigorous fast from meat and drink which the inhabitants of those cities impose upon themselves for thirty days in the year: it is, I assure you, riotous indulgence compared to the abstinence from artistic nourishment to which the average man cheerfully submits all the year round. This said, I shall quit the region of aesthetics altogether, and pass to a very different one.

Surely everybody is aware of the part which science plays in everyday life, of the alleviation it brings to the sick, of the increased capacity for happiness it plays in everyday life, of the alleviation it brings to the sick, of the increased capacity for happiness it. The tree of scientific knowledge is the tree of life—even in a literal sense. What, permit me to ask, has this country done for the diffusion of such knowledge among its shivering and sweltering millions? The value of brawn is abundantly recognised in England—nowhere more; but the most nebulous ideas still prevail as to the use of brains for the preservation of brawn. Hygiene, as it is understood by modern civilised communities, remains here in a barbarous state. In this, as in other respects, English life is still cast in a mediaval mould. It makes me sad to see how much of the energy of your people is devoted to the pursuit of physical enjoyment, and how little to the acquisition of the knowledge which ministers to that enjoyment.

Next to health comes wealth. I have heard it said that, keenly as the average Englishman resents mental exercise, he does not hesitate to take it when there is some practical and palpable gain in view. This, I fear, is an overstatement. What gain so practical and palpable as that presented by so-called technical education—the special instruction the aim of which is to train one for his trade or profession? Such instruction has direct reference to one’s money-making capacity: a more crudely utilitarian goal could not easily be conceived. "There is always a best way of
dawning upon the English mind, and the organisation about the pear of grace 1890 this elementary truth years and years after it had reached its maturity in the country. Among the English hardly one in a hundred every other modern civilised State. But to what degree foreign commercial travellers vieing for orders from their bold, cold, individual book, are, at best, fine marble figures, not warm, throbbing teachers: there is no light in their eyes; the breath of life is not in their accents. They speak to unceptive, because unconscious, pupils. This is the reason, even with the majority of your ripe scholars. The ordinary Englishman is apt to suppose that a man who can turn out a correct copy of Greek iambics incarnates in his person the genius of Hellas. That, I assure you, is a delusion. Of the most typical barbarians I have met were distinguished Hellenisits hailing from one or another of your great nursery of learning. Their attitude toward the problems of life would have made Socrates stare, as much as the pronunciation of his tongue would have made him groan.

That eminently practical and clear-headed philosopher, I quite certain, were he to visit Eton, would tell the well-to-do youths reared there that, not to make wooden verses after the fashion of poets of the twenty-five hundred years ago, but to try to grasp the broad outlines of contemporary history, to acquire the width and fairness of mind which comes along with world knowledge. You sweat over your teachers and starve your poorer compatriots' souls, while you pamper your tailors and squander millions on the gratification of your palates.

Ascending in the scale, I come next to my esteemed friend the "independent gentleman." It is as well for him to inveigh against the ignorance of Cabinet Ministers. What more does he know about the business of Government? Does he ever trouble to learn anything about domestic or foreign affairs? Are there books on both—does he read them? No! He reads his penny newspaper in the club, as his humble fellow-countryman reads his halfpenny one in the street, and like the latter he repeats parrot-fashion the latest cry of journalism and himself: "The Germans have no sense of humour;" "They are good at accumulating detailed information, but lack imaginative insight;" "Their system is mechanical: if one wheel goes wrong, the whole machinery will break down;" "Prussian militarism is the work of the Kaiser and the Junkers, whose tyranny is bitterly resented by the nation;" "Prussian militarism is not the work of the Kaiser and the Junkers—it is the expression of the whole nation's spirit: all Germans love it, for they are all brutes." As in a musical comedy, the coryphaeus sings each verse and the chorus takes it up. And these are the men to whom your masses look for guidance.

This is what you call your "governing class." I have just said that the producer of newspaper paragraphs is as ill-informed as the consumer who echoes his utterances. This was incorrect. No mortal man, strictly speaking, can be as ill-informed as the English gentleman. A journalist, closely acquainted as he often is with the economic and other living forces of the world, possesses, on the whole, a better furnished head—he can be as ill-informed as the English gentleman. A journalist, closely acquainted as he is with the economic and other living forces of the world, possesses, on the whole, a better furnished head—provided his capacity for learning has not been impaired by a public school or University education. For a man with no intellectual ambition in life is to be just like everybody else. A sportsman? In the small, superficial things—cricket, golf, cards—yes. But in the big and deep things, most Englishmen are as ill-informed as I have just explained; but I have never found an Englishman who could explain it to me. To my unaided eyes it seems to consist chiefly of a blind, dull, timid subservience to a conventional code of behaviour. Your "gentleman" is a fool, if not a decadent, if his highest ambition in life is to be just like everybody else. A sportsman? In the small, superficial things—cricket, golf, cards—yes. But in the big and deep things, most Englishmen are as ill-informed as I have just explained; but I have never found an Englishman who could explain it to me.
though, instructively enough, they are to be found in the classical authors upon whose teaching that system is supposed to be based. Read Herodotus on the Persians, then turn to any contemporary English writer on the Germans, and you will see what I mean.

For the rest, slow to feel and ashamed to show his feeling, unemotional, unimaginative, original, and unimpressionable, your "gentleman" rotts in his place, ignorant of all laws, civil, physical, moral, social, sanitary, until Dame Nature, in one of her clearing-out days, fetches at him with her besom, and he is swept aside and seen no more.

I am not sure that I understand the spring of this national antipathy to the things of the mind. I do not know whether it arises from man's natural desire for a sluggish blood. But this I do know: that, be its secret springs what they may, it is a disease—a disease of which many a nation has died.

(To be concluded.)

A Letter to the Bishops.

By the Man in the Street.

My Lord Bishop,—Will you read a letter from a man in the street? He is not the man in the churches, or he would not be the man in the street. That is to say, he is not a man of any organised church. But let me assure your Lordship that he is neither indifferent nor hostile to Christianity, as he can read it in his New Testament or in the lives of people he meets.

But, to be quite frank, there is a good deal which sticks in his gizzard in the religion of the Church of England and in the organisation of that body. I have—there are a good number of us—no opportunity of speaking to your Lordship face to face; I must, therefore, write.

In the very first words of this epistle the method of addressing an overseer of the Church of England is a cause of stumbling to many of us.

There is, of course, no reason why a bishop should not be called my Lord if it so please him. But, honestly, the title savours too much of worldly dignity; and secular honour. It puts too great a distance between them and the ordinary beliefs of man or woman. It reduces the poor curate to a most hopeless inferiority.

It at once classes the overseer of a Christian Society with those who have got on in the world, even as far as to the House of Lords, often enough by doubtful and dishonest means. It smacks of big houses, palaces, and secular honour. It puts too great a distance and makes a man or woman an intellectual outcast.

Besides all this the Founder of the Christian religion said plainly enough that Pagan people honour those who "exercise Lordship" and are themselves called "Benefactors," because they lord it over others, but the Christians were to honour, not a "Lord" and so called "Public Benefactors" but those who do service in their day and generation, and are often least accounted of.

The passage occurs in Luke's gospel, and your Lordship is probably more familiar with it than I am, but it is the application of it to which I would draw your Lordship's attention, because the adoption of high-sounding secular titles seems to go clean contrary to the express teaching of the Nazarene. My Lord Bishop, the man in the street may be a fool in many ways, but he is not such a fool as to know a good man when he sees one without calling him "Lord."

The British Public some time ago honoured the funeral of a curate in Holborn more whole-heartedly than I have ever seen them honour the funeral of a Bishop, much though he was never offered a Bishopric, nor even a living in the Established Church. My Lord, the people are not morally blind, and they can honour and recognise a Christian man or woman without a pointer in the shape of a title.

Another matter that puzzles us is that the Church considers it necessary that Bishops should have enormous incomes.

None of you can deny that Jesus of Nazareth was a poor man, and that He taught it was easier for a camel to get through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom.

I believe that alert commentators, with one eye on this text and another on their congregation, have gravely interpreted this as meaning the rich should use their riches well; but to the plain man it seems to mean what it says, and that a rich man in the Church is an anomaly.

Anyhow, the Church in the New Testament did not possess any riches, except in common. The man in the street wants to know how it is that the chief representative of the lowly Nazarene, Who had not where to lay His head, can honestly receive £15,000 every year for teaching, among other matters, that it is next to impossible for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Jesus.

You may urge that the Bishops are comparatively poor men, and even publish an account of your straightened and struggling existence on £10,000 a year, but the fact is the man in the street only smiles at such excuses. He can't reconcile the possession of large and fat incomes with the teaching and the life of Jesus and His disciples; and that is the long and short of it.

Everyone knows that the teaching of the New Testament is dead against riches; and yet you are all rich men.

Why, my Lord, the standard of life set up in your Church is simply materialism and money. The higher you get up the more you are paid. A "good" living has no moral connotation—it is "good" in exactly the same sense in which the tipster talks of a "good thing." There is money in it; and that is what makes it good—that and nothing else. The test of your success is simply the dollar test.

That may be all right for the Stock Exchange; but it is all wrong for the Church. It is simply cant to try and make out that this business of palaces, huge incomes, and titles, has anything to do with Jesus and His teaching. You get accustomed to it all; but that does not make it right, and it ought to make you uneasy.

Besides, on your own side of it, it cannot be a very pleasant thing to reflect that if you had less money people would be bound to respect you less; and that you have to be buoyed up by living as the wealthy do.

If you lived on £500 a year—and that is a great deal more than the great majority of people possess in this country—about five times as much as would be wealth to the class to which Jesus of Nazareth belonged—you think people would cease to have respect for you. From the way, whenever your income and position are attacked, you fight for them, it is quite plain that you really believe that money, entourage, status, and circumstance make you respected.

Let me tell you, my Lord, that you are wrong; and that it is a scandal that a body, which claims to represent more than any other in this country the teaching of the lowly Nazarene, should also claim that its chief ministers must be enormously rich men if they are to be respected.

You teach with your mouth the things that are spiritual, but in your lives you set up the dollar standard; and if your incomes are threatened you sink at once at your high, low, broad, and narrow Church differences, and you fight for your money bags just like any other class which makes no claim to follow Jesus of Nazareth.

That is, as it seems, the plain truth of the matter.

Why, one of your body, the other day, was offered a Bishopric in South Africa, and again in Canada. It
Islam and Progress.

I.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE HUMAN MIND.

The opinion prevalent in Christian countries with regard to El Islam is that, as compared with Christianity, it is a religion essentially unprogressive, and, to some extent, degrading to the human intellect. Nothing could be further from the truth. The sort of lethargy, comporting ignorance and superstition, which has weighed upon the Muslim masses for the last three centuries is the result of historical circumstances very similar to those which darkened Western Europe in the period before the Renaissance. It has little more than a geographical connection with the Mohammedan religion; and now, with the revival of a scientific education, it is at an end. It would be a serious mistake to suppose, in view of the relatively backward state of the Islamic world, that El Islam itself is unprogressive in the modern meaning of the word. How can it be, when one reflects that modern progress is the outcome, not of Christian doctrine, but free thought, and that Islam, unlike Christianity, prescribes free thinking as a duty for believers.

"Seek knowledge even though it be in China," said the Prophet to his followers; thereby appointing knowledge as an object in itself desirable, worthy of the greatest toil for its attainment, even though it be the knowledge of a heathen race. And, again:

"An hour's contemplation and study of God's creation is better than a year of adoration."

"He dieth not, who takes to learning."

"Whosoever reverts the learned reveres me."

"To obtain education is incumbent upon every Muslim, male or female."

"The first thing created was Reason."

"God has not created anything better than Reason. The benefits which Allah gives are on its account, and understanding is by it; and Allah's displeasure is caused by it, and by it are rewards and punishments."

"Verily a man has performed prayers, fasts, charity, pilgrimage, and all other good deeds; but he will not be rewarded in proportion to the sense which he employs."

"To listen to the words of the learned and to instil into others the lessons of science is better than religious exercises."

"The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr."

"He who leaves home in search of knowledge walks in the path of Allah."

"Acquire knowledge. It enables the possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friends fail us; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is an ornament among friends and an armour against enemies."

"Such was the personal teaching of the Apostle of God, which, for Muslims, was hardly inferior in authority to the inspired Coran. And in the Coran itself, again and again, appeal is made to the faithful as well as to the infidels to study history with an open mind; to examine the phenomena of Nature and to investigate the doctrines of their religion. Free thought and free inquiry is allowed to the Mohammedan concerning everything which man's intelligence is capable of apprehending."

"Know then," writes an ancient Muslim author when concluding his account of the cosmos, "that having thus created the world, God next called Mind or Intellect into being. And God said to Mind: 'Receive the ability to manage and be at command; by thee will I confirm and by thee punish.'"

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"Know then," writes an ancient Muslim author when concluding his account of the cosmos, "that having thus created the world, God next called Mind or Intellect into being. And God said to Mind: 'Receive the ability to manage matters,' and it was so. Then said God, 'Of all things which I have created by My glory and majesty, I love none but thee. By thee will I deprive, and by thee bestow; by thee will I confirm and by thee punish.' Therefore, also Allah has declared by the mouth of His Apostle (God bless and preserve him) that it is he who is truthful and patient in his temper; and it is mind that delivers mankind from evil. For this cause Allah allows Mind an entrance into paradise to discover all mysteries, and He will not punish the wise in the Day of Resurrection in the same manner in which He will punish the wilfully ignorant."* "Mejru 'd-din : Unsu '1 Jelil Vol. I, chap. i.
sion or imagination, and must remain the object of devout belief and holy fear. The Muslim, while he demonstrates the reality of God’s existence by the necessity of a cause for all things visible, and ascribes to Him the qualities which must belong to a benign Creator, is forbidden to attempt to define the deity in human terms, insisting only on a Unity which guards the mystery. The anthropomorphism of the polytheist is for him a blasphemy; while the Christian doctrine of the Trinity appears to him deplorable because the attempt at definition of the indefinable detracts from the splendour of the Unity, which is all the man can apprehend to intensify a mystery. Again, to say that Jesus Christ is the begotten Son of God is to ascribe to the eternal mystery the functions of a human being, therefore, blasphemous, a transgression of the proper limits of man’s thought.

"Behold, you"—i.e., the Christians—"are people who dispute concerning that of which you have some knowledge. Why, then, do you dispute concerning that whereof you have no knowledge?"

The Koran upholds the virgin birth of Christ, but as a miracle, like the creation of Adam, a simple emanation—as it were a word—of that Almighty Creative Power whose "words" are miracles. Nothing which happens in the natural world, no fresh discovery of science, can shake the faith of the true Muslim. He beholds in every new phenomenon fresh evidence of the Majesty, Benevolence, or Power of God. His mind is free in all affairs of earth, provided he complies with certain rules of conduct imposed with a view to his mental and bodily health; and it is his duty to explore the science of his day and to accept what his mind approves of it; ay, even though it dissipate beliefs or fancies long accepted among Muslims. It cannot touch his creed, for a creed is not to be saved by Him the All-Merciful and All-Majestic—"a creed which Gibbon, in treating of the life of Muhammad, cynically pronounced to be composed of 'an eternal truth and a necessary fiction'."

One must confess that the fiction—if it ever was one—has been justified in the historic sequel.

It is, of course, a fact that the majority of Mohammedans are ignorant and superstitionists, accepting a vast mass of legends and absurd beliefs. I have quoted purposely a saying in such Oriental folk-lore—the Unsu ʿI-Jelil of Mejru ʿd-din—in order to show that even in an ancient work of that description—which teaches that the world rests upon the shoulders of an angel, the angel upon a great rock of emerald, the rock upon the horns or shoulders of a bull, the bull upon the back of a great whale or dragon, which swims in a great sea, which is upborne by air, which is surrounded by darkness—even in such a work a panegyric of the human mind finds natural place among Mohammedans. And where man’s mind is thus exalted, vain beliefs are always menaced with the sword of scepticism. Indeed, a large proportion of this mass of legend and superstition merely represents the science of a bygone day. The spirit of Islam expects it to be superseded by the science of to-day. The rest consists of folk-lore and proverbial stories, and may be described in the words which Professor H. M. Leon uses of the Jewish "Haggadah":—

"It transforms the sacred writings into a thousand-and-one themes, with almost countless variations. What the Biblical narrative omitted the ‘Haggadah’ supplied. It explained the motives, it elaborated the story, it discovered connections and associations between the remotest events, people, race periods, and this often with a startling realism; but, above all, it ever drew sublime morals from the most commonplace circumstances."

I will add that this folk-lore has much literary beauty and historical interest, and that I do not think that

* Coran; ʿSthār III. "Al-Imrân."

* Prof. H. M. Leon: "The Targum," in "The Philo-

Oriental, who have the sense of fiction highly de-

veloped—a region where truth has quite another value than it has in fact—even attached the same religious value to these old legends and allegories which Western Christians have ascribed to them in their belief.

Muslims, in particular, have with them always the exhortation of the S-Cyruses to be "imbeciles" blindly, but to use their intellects in judgment. In this Islam is essentially more, not less, progressive— that, is capable of responding to the needs of a new era—that any other of the great religions of the world.

To-day this fact may not go unnoted by educated Muslims, who, be it said in parenthesss, are generally much better informed concerning the theory and practice of Christianity than are educated Christians with regard to the teaching of Islam.

There is a great and growing movement in the Muslim brotherhood tending to discriminate once for all between the living body of its teaching and the mass of folk-lore thrown about it like a garment of an antique fashion; not in a contemptuous or hostile spirit—for the folk-lore is believed and will for ever be commemorated in Mohammedan religious language, but for clearness of belief. There is the saying of the Prophet:—"Speak to people according to the level of their intellectual capacities" and many Muslims have outgrown the mental atmosphere of their remote forefathers. How little the discrimination of the robe affects the faith will astonish only those critics who, misled by the practice of Christianity, have thoroughly identified the latter with the former.

I have quoted the Koran itself, a number of the Sayings of the Prophet, and one ancient author to show that El Islam is in its essence a religion of enlightenment. A modern Muslim writer, whose orthodoxy is above suspicion, has the following words of the Holy Book (as translated it roughly):—"[Islam] rises above content in the tradition of the fathers. He who accepts a belief merely because it has attracted his imagination, without demonstration or argument, has no assurance concerning it, and is no believer... He who takes doctrines upon supposition trains his mind for the reception of mere fancies... The intellects of these followers of vain imaginings stand still in contemplation of that they are accustomed to regard. They do not advance along the path of thought, nor do they tread the road of observation. And if they so continue, gradually foolishness will overtake them, and imbecility will increase upon them until their mind becomes unable to perform its proper function and can no longer distinguish good from evil."

The author proceeds:—

"Islam stands almost alone among religions in discountenancing the reliance on tradition without argument... It demands that its votaries should undertake to take the investigation of the groundwork of their faith. In all its utterances it speaks to the intelligence; in all its judgments it judges for the intelligence. It announces in plain terms that eternal happiness is the reward of intelligence and introspection, while death and misfortune follow on neglect to use the mind."

The pious Muslim is enjoined to be, in fact, as free a thinker as the average "agnostic" of our Christian lands. Agnostics abound with us; among the Muslims they are rare and not indigenous—I mean that here and there an individual, ignorant of his own faith and much attracted by the thought of Europe, professes doubts which he would not have felt if he had studied his own religion with the same attention he bestowed on the disease of Chrestendom. Most of our agnosticism springs from the revolt of the awakened intellect against theological definitions of the indefinable, and from the opposition of the Churches to free thought.

There are no such reasons for revolt in the case of the intelligent Muslim, who here and there may see occasion to desire reforms, the sweeping-out of superstitions and absurdities.
Our Un-idea'd Press.
By Charles Brookfarmer.

III.
To every there was a paper which seemed able to plead "Not Guilty," whatever of lack of ideas, it was a "New Statesman." There is such a glibness in its leading articles—pat comes the answer on the top of the question—that no one at first sight can doubt its being as full of ideas as an egg is of meat. Whatever the problem the editor has only to open a drawer, and there lies his solution ready. But this readiness really condemns the "New Statesman" as a paper; the solutions it offers are not its solutions, the remedies not its remedies. They are all part of the old Fabian programme, and not one is original to the paper. What actually has the "New Statesman" done since its beginning? It has—

(i) Followed a few good hares of other people's starting—e.g., the Conscription of Wealth;
(ii) Discretely and insincerely exposed one or two pretentious but insignificant City scandals—e.g., "The Rating of the Capitalist";
(iii) Issued occasional blue book supplements;
(iv) Published Mr. Shaw's "Common Sense about the War";
(v) Found employment for several young Fabians in writing articles and correcting proofs, who might otherwise have been jobbed upon the public charge.

Be it said at once that the non-political portion of the "New Statesman" is conspicuously barren of ideas. In literature, Mr. Shaw is enshrined supreme, and, if his more flighty disciples do sometimes tap him over the knuckles, it is only to rouse him to new thunder-claps of ideas. As the "New Statesman" leaves the genuine religious objector with complete remedy, it is now left for the genuine conscientious objector to whom the Fabian programme has brought nothing but disappointment. He must know the Fabian programme has been done to set the penalty on a civilised footing.

No, we find no ideas in the "New Statesman," and therefore be forthcoming. I should lay the onus upon the reader, or, more correctly, the "New Statesman." There arise sometimes problems which are entirely novel, which not a cent of Fabian tracts can include. It is in relation to these problems that we can most clearly observe how the sub-editorial gloss of the "New Statesman" conceals a complete absence of ability to form ideas. One such unprecedented problem is that of the conscientious objector to military service; there has never been such a phenomenon before. We have imagined Mr. Asquith seeking the aid of the weekly papers in his various perplexities. He must know the Fabian programme by this time—the very day-journalists do—but, he will think to himself, the problem of the conscientious objectors is new; half of them are Fabians: what has the "New Statesman" to say?

"No," he replies. "There has never been such a phenomenon before. We have imagined Mr. Asquith seeking the aid of the weekly papers in his various perplexities. He must know the Fabian programme by this time—the very day-journalists do—but, he will think to himself, the problem of the conscientious objectors is new; half of them are Fabians: what has the "New Statesman" to say?"

"Well, let us join him in his search. A few issues back, and here it is: "The Conscientious Objectors and How to Treat Them." Let us begin.

We are told that two main problems must be solved: "How to ascertain the genuine conscientious objector, and how to treat him when ascertained." This seems very sound; and we continue:

The Government turned the first over to the local tribunals, who have made a ludicrous mess of it, as of most else that has been done. Their mistakes have been many, but not all, cases rectified by the appeal tribunals.

"Very well," we can imagine Mr. Asquith saying, "how would you have done it?" The "New Statesman" has its reply pat:

A wise policy must begin, we believe, by distinguishing conscientious objectors whose objection is religious from those whose objection is political.

Excellent; and how are we "to ascertain the genuine [religious] conscientious objector"? The chief thing to do with the religious objectors is to ascertain very carefully who they are, and then exempt them.

Excellent again; and how are we "to ascertain very carefully who they are"? The test of the bona-fide holder of religious tenets must in general be settled and confirmed membership of a religious society holding these tenets; and the comparatively few cases falling outside this or on the border-line could pretty easily be dealt with by any person or body of ordinary judicial capacity.

Most excellent! At this point, the "New Statesman" leaves the genuine religious objector with complete exemption and devotes itself to the conscientious objectors on political grounds. Let us follow the fate of these personages before we return to our main discussion. "They present," says the "New Statesman," "a close analogy to those who refuse to pay taxes." Now we are on firm ground; the reader opens marked "Passive Resisters, Treatment of," and offers us the following typically Fabian suggestions. The man who objects to war on grounds of political expediency should be penalised, poor devil, with "franchisement for life."

Few other penalties would be so efficacious in making the genuine political objector think twice. If it were necessary to couple with it a sentence of imprisonment or interment of some kind, we do not know that its fairness could be challenged. But the essential thing to do is to set the penalty on a civilised footing.

At this point the article ends, and Mr. Asquith and we are left the richer by suggestions for the treatment both of the religious and the political conscientious objector. If a man objects on religious grounds, i.e., is a Quaker, he is to be exempted entirely. If he objects on political grounds, he is to be disenchanted and interned.

But, Mr. Asquith will think, what about the conscientious objector who bases his objection on "moral" grounds? The "New Statesman," with its slick little solution, has ignored the existence of this, the most prevalent and difficult type of Conscientious Objector. According to its proposals, the man is to be asked:

"Is your objection based on political grounds?"

He replies, "No."

"On religious grounds, then?"

"Yes, more on religious grounds."

"Are you a Quaker or a Christadelphian?"

"No."

"Then," says the "New Statesman," "perhaps you are one of the comparatively few cases falling outside this?"

"Perhaps I am."

"Then you must go before a tribunal of 'ordinary judicial capacity.'"

But, he answers, "the tribunals, in your own words, will make a 'ludicrous mess' of it. What is to be done?"

This, as I say, is where the "New Statesman" leaves the matter unsolved. Our hypothetical Mr. Asquith can only regret having spent his time unravelling this un-idea'd article.

To recompense him, let us offer him a suggestion how really "to ascertain the genuine conscientious objector."

To discover our conscientious objector as he really is, we must, as reason can, strip him of every adventitious gloss derived from religious tenacity, and political theory; and in the depths of his soul see in him a simple, undaunted, unreasoning negative. A conscientious objector is at the bottom a conscientious objector. Evidence of its existence before August, 1914, should therefore be forthcoming. I should lay the onus upon the applicant of proof by the testimony of friends or other witnesses that before his enlisting or being affected by this war his vow to object was made—public.

But this, the reader will say, is taken from THE NEW AGE! Of course it is; did you expect to find in the "New Statesman"—ideas?
Great Books as Grotesques.

By Huntly Carter.

THE DIVINE COMEDY.

I HAVE said I was introduced to Dante at a very early period of my history, but it was not till much later that I formed a definite conception of the nature and meaning of the "Divine Comedy." I think it was the challenge in the title that first set me on the road to a meaning. Why did Dante, "the sternest of all satirists," as his critic Moore calls him, "give the title of 'Comedy' to this shadowy and awful panorama of Hell, Heaven, and Purgatory?" The poem possesses no feature of comedy, as most of us understand the word. A study of his poem made one thing very clear to me. The word was not put down carelessly. Undoubtedly, Dante, like Virgil (his chosen guide), and Milton, walked hand-in-hand with a natural genius for right expression and a cultivated habit of questioning it, which made it impossible for him to carry it off in reasonable to conclude that he was actuated in his choice spontaneously, and perhaps otherwise, by a law administered constitutionally. He used the word "Comedy" because he could not avoid doing so. I argued that the thought in his mind was that man is an infinite livingness; 2, concrete man as infinite livingness in Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" can and does continue "Comedy" because he could not avoid doing so. I believe that the poet was actuated by a perception of the hideous lies upon which civilised political and social systems are based. I found, indeed, that the rest was easy. Once in heaven, so to speak, provided with a refining agent, all he had to do was to apply the agent to the corruptions on earth, and enjoy the supreme happiness of watching mankind ascend the process of refinement. In the watching he would take more than one mouthful of a delight which I am convinced deserves the title of comedy. And in communicating his experience to his fellowmen, he would take several more mouthfuls of that of the mystical motive in Drama. First, there appeared in his mind an appreciation of the infinite spirit of Joy or the "vision" by consigning it to literary sources. But in sight of Beatrice conducting Dante to supreme heights, of what value are all the hole-and-corner statements that the poet was actuated by a perception of the misapplied free will, or that he had Homer's "Odyssey"? probably had a nodding acquaintance with Cicero's Vision of Scipio; had happened upon Wallkin's French Vision, had been led through a few literary, Purgatory and Paradise by Alberico, and had paid a visit to another accompanied by the Irish saint, Adamnan. The thing of capital importance is that Dante had a vision of Beatrice. He beheld her as an eternal truth—the truth of Divine Wisdom. This truth so operated upon him that, like Jesus and Swedenborg, under the influence of eternal heights of light. See, for instance, the "Vision." As for the interpretation, we may believe that Dante was caught up into heaven by the transfigured Beatrice, and having obtained the torch of Wisdom returned to earth to initiate mankind into the truth of what he had seen, and beyond. By this, to set the world of literature hanging in admiration over his poem, as recorded by Paget Toynbee in his two bulky volumes. I need not follow Dante's well-known footsteps, except to indicate that the path he took followed that of the mystical motive in Drama. First, there was an appreciation of the infinite spirit of Joy or Comedy. Next, Dante had seen in this eternal light his own Italy, more particularly Florence, as a seventh-century Inferno of iniquity and corruption. Then came a stage of gradual initiation into the mysteries of man's higher existence revealing the balancing and clarifying of the minds of men in a painful but promising ninefold purgatorial state for humanity. Finally, there was a period of revelation by the poet, Dante's last东西, intelligence and transfiguration in an intense light of a Paradise having ten heavens or spheres of beatitude, through which one passes to the loftiest pinnacle of Beatific Vision. So, I reached the altitude of buoyant spirits in Dante's poem, and the conclusion that we must turn to the Beatrice motive for a solution of the mystery of Dante, as we must to the Helen motive for that of "Faust"; and to the intense light beautifully crowning this motive for a clue to Dante's conception of comedy. This light I attach to my theory of Grotesques.
Readers and Writers.

About some writers it appears to be impossible for the majority of reviewers to tell the truth. If there ever was a writer discredited as a prophet it is Mr. H. G. Wells, whose pretensions to foreknowledge, in fact, I exposed only a week or two ago. Everybody knows that the charge of ignorance would probably be more offensive to any "standing," the same reviewer who will beslaver an author with lying praise in public would be offended to be credited in private with his public view. I would risk an answer to the writer of the "Daily News" notice that Mr. Wells' newspaper has never yet seen his earlier one or even the present with any care. Mr. Wells, his publisher, the "traditions" of the "Daily News" and the expectations of his stupidest readers all required that he should say exactly what he did say. As for the truth—well, it must be left to journals and journalists of no standing.

Different in character are the reviews of such a book as that just published by my colleague, Mr. C. E. Bechhofer, upon Russia. Mr. Bechhofer is a name only to the majority of reviewers; and neither his association with The New Age nor his own personality is yet well-enough advertised to ensure him ready-made, ready-made enemies. His book, "Russia at the Cross-Roads" (Kegan Paul, 5s.), may therefore expect to be reviewed upon its merits. Here, however, the question arises of what calibre reviewers are when they are intellectually honest; for to be intellectually honest at the same time incompetent is by no means a rare phenomenon. I would accuse my colleague "A. E. R." of incompetence—leagues from it; I regard him in many and marvellously varied fields as the sainted judge of a book in all England—but I venture to say that his criticism of Mr. Bechhofer's work failed on the whole to seize the "idea" of the book after the manner rather of a "Times" than of a New Age reviewer. I have read myself as many books upon Russia as most people. Only recently have I had occasion to revise a bibliography of work about Russia bearing particularly upon her economic and political problems. From not one of them can I truthfully say—that several were by writers known to me—that I have derived any "ideas," such ideas, let us say, as would enable a Russian or an English statesman to plan together the future of their respective countries. In "Russia at the Cross-Roads," on the other hand, from the striking opening to the striking close I felt myself (why should I pretend? I knew myself) to be in the company of ideas. They do not turn out to be ideas of much permanence or importance; they may prove to be what Socrates called "wind-eggs"; they are somewhat loosely expressed; but that they are ideas is indubitable. Take, for example: "We are fully conscious, " he concludes his review, "that we have done no more than scratch the surface of this short but remarkable work!"; and earlier in his notice he describes it as "a singularly thoughtful and stimulating book." That account, I think, is due to a book; it may very well be his duty only to recommend his readers to read it. One of the most impressive and honest reviews I ever saw read the book in this way, in the "Spectator" many years ago—said of a certain work (Professor Gummere's "Beginnings of Poetry") that it was beyond the reviewer's power to appraise and he could only humbly commend it to his readers. And that, in effect, is the reproduction of the first reviewer of a book of "ideas." As a contrast to the review of Mr. Bechhofer's book in the "Globe" we may turn to the review in the "Times Literary Supplement." I have no complaint to make of the seriousness of the "Times" review. It is, in a sense, well done, and expresses the honest opinion of an obviously well-informed student of Russian affairs. What, however, I affirm is that the student is no more than a student, and will never be a master. He has no care for the truth—well, it must be left to journals and journalists of no standing. I have no complaint to make of the seriousness of the "Times" review. It is, in a sense, well done, and expresses the honest opinion of an obviously well-informed student of Russian affairs. What, however, I affirm is that the student is no more than a student, and will never be a master. He has no care for the truth—well, it must be left to journals and journalists of no standing.
the “melancholy” of the Irish upon an island and the freedom from melancholy of the Swiss, who are wholly land-locked. The parallels do not meet. The Irish are not melancholy and the Swiss are virtuously on an island. On the other hand, to one who assents to the proposition that economic power precedes political power, the tracing of the political and concomitant circumstances of Russia to the economic circumstances of her conscious imprisonment ought to be acceptable. What is there too “singularly simple” in this economic interpretation of history? How much of our own history depends upon the fact that we occupy an island situated conveniently in the very centre of the temperate zone. And if it be true—as, of course, it is—that the character of the remedy is complex enough to despatch the world’s chancelleries for years to come. Here, indeed, “A. E. R.” says that if the melancholy of Russia is due to her poring over the map of the world, her simple remedy is to stop poring over it. Very simple, indeed, such a cure sounds; but it comes strangely from an exponent of psycho-analytic healing. The fact is that diseases may be simple while remedies may be complex—that, I imagine, is the justification of psycho-analysis itself. And, in the case of Russia, while the diagnosis of the disease from which she is suffering has been indicated in the “delightfully simple” explanation offered by Mr. Bechhofer, the remedy is complex enough to despatch the world’s chancelleries for years to come. Hence, indeed, “A. E. R.” is once more a good critic, for he points out that the free passage of the Dardanelles, though the present object of Russian policy, must still leave Russia “land-locked” by Gibraltar and Suez, the Mediterranean being as much a corridor as the Baltic. To this, I confess, I have no reply of my own at this moment. I am not a Russian.

R. H. C.

A Modern Document,
Edited by Herbert Lawrence.

VI—From Acton Reed.

Dear Mr. Lawrence,—If I write about men first you must not think I am taking your subjects in order of merit. I only want to get the worst over at once! For I fear the criticisms I have to make of men are unanswerable, and they are difficult. On the one hand, to chronologise my experiences of men as I have known them would be as tedious as a recurring decimal; on the other hand, it is impossible to be precise about men in the mass. I think it best, therefore, to attempt only a few major impressions such as have crystallised in my mind. And, come what may of them, remember I have never doubted that there may be exceptions. All I say is that I have not been fortunate enough to meet them.

To begin with, no one, I think, was more prepared than I was as a girl to find men pleasing and to acknowledge that theirs was intellectually, and practically the superior sex. (When I say superior, I adopt the conventional use of the word. Personally, I think the question of superiority and inferiority between the sexes is beggarly.) The prestige of men’s superiority must, in fact, have affected me early and deeply, for from childhood I was disposed to admire them, and it has only been with trouble and after long years that the illusions have vanished. I was not, of course, articulate as a child: I could not have said then what it was I expected to find in them. But, lending my words of to-day to my feelings of the early days, I should say I expected to find in men—first and foremost—a kind of exalted insight; the defect of which accounts for all the faults contingent upon man, but that they are unfair to each other. So much has been written up of men’s loyalty to men that I have discovered their injustice and unfairness to women and that they are unfair to each other. For, even after I had discovered their injustice and unfairness, I still think they are superior in certain respects; but not in nearly so many as they suppose, and in some they are anything but as advanced. Women have to learn to know men as they are, and the first step is to unlearn what men have given themselves out to be. Most wives, I fancy, must put their eyes out to continue to see their husband’s portrait of himself.

Well then, I was prepared to admire. It can scarcely, therefore, be my fault if I have ignominiously failed. For really I am not impossible to please: nor even, I think, hard. For it was not I who set men on a pedestal. I found them there by their own claim; and, even so, I had not expected it. The worst complaint, however, is that not men are unfair to each other. So much has been written up of men’s loyalty to men that I have discovered their injustice and unfairness to women and that they are unfair to each other. So much has been written up of men’s loyalty to men that I have discovered their injustice and unfairness to women and that they are unfair to each other. For, even after I had discovered their injustice and unfairness, I still think they are superior in certain respects; but not in nearly so many as they suppose, and in some they are anything but as advanced. Women have to learn to know men as they are, and the first step is to unlearn what men have given themselves out to be. Most wives, I fancy, must put their eyes out to continue to see their husband’s portrait of himself.

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they have no grasp of what is true, and cannot tell truth when they see it. Truths about externals they do often arrive at; but their knowledge of truth is not original. They deal with its correlative symptoms rather than with its real facts. Worse, however, than inability to be truthful is to have no desire to be so—to be indifferent to truth. And this state, it appears to me, is very common among clever men. It was these conclusions to which I was forced, this claim to knowledge, and I think it may truly be said that the final conclusion that men are neither as intelligent or truthful nor as wise or as just as per advertisement of themselves. And these virtues gone, what are left? Arrive at; but their knowledge of truth is not original. 'Mind, or it will be in nothing: and since it was in these judgments cannot be mere prejudices, I think, can be courageous (though I realise that for the man who has the fears and fancies of imagination to overcome courage is no animal matter). Generosity—but men's generosity is too often the outcome of vanity, the degree of generosity varying with the degree of effect to be produced: it is too seldom generosity for generosity's sake. Good nature—but 'cheerful idiots' are common. Practicality that gets the work of the world done—but beavers get the work of their world done, and little else. However, I do not deny that man social is pleasing enough: he has many excellent qualities. But man's sociability is not his distinction, for he shares it with other gregarious creatures. Nor does it distinguish him from women, who, in fact, are quite his equals in this respect, if not his superiors. No, the distinction of man must be in his mind, or it will be in nothing: and since it was in precisely this quality that I found him defective not only in my standard, but according to his advertisement of himself, his claim to knowledge; that his superiority can scarcely be allowed. Without that veridical element of intellect most of his virtues, it seems to me, are common to creatures whom he professes to despise. And these and experience which conceals rather than reveals truth. In wisdom, real knowledge, in the comprehension of life I have gained nothing. You may say of my opinions that a woman does not know men as men know each other, and, moreover, is without man's intellect to judge man's intellect. I agree in part, though actually I do think I have had rather exceptional opportunities of seeing men as they appear to one another—this, perhaps, has been one of the preoccupations of my circumstances. Also I have acknowledged a continuing admiration of men's practical mind. My criticism has been of their higher mind (if I may call it so), the judgment of which is one of intuition rather than of intellect. In further defence of my opinion I must add that I really have no reason to think that men have failed to impress me intellectually for want of trying. The men I have met, and whom I have heard of, have none of them come to radical conclusions about each other's minds. Provided he is a tolerable companion, any one man is about as good as any other. Such, indeed, it seems to me, is man's fatuity, so complacent his content with this condition of things, that should a man arise with the gift of clairvoyance for truth, I sometimes think our most intelligent and cleverest men would be foremost among those to stonish him. I was about to conclude here, but I suppose my sketch will not be complete without some reference to man sexually considered. My present letter, however, need not contain much upon this subject. Its object being to describe my disillusionment in regard to man as mind. To do men justice, their picture of themselves sexually is much nearer the truth than their picture of themselves intellectually. There, where pride is least called for, men have reason to boast: it is where pride could be justified that the reason is wanting. Man, after all, is not only a sort of conspiracy among men not to become him quite as well as he seems to think he does. In fact, again in my eyes, so little does it become him, that without the blind passion which, in this respect, is the most ridiculous, pitiful, and repellant object upon earth. Men who have made the mistake of approaching me sexually have exhibited themselves upon their worst side; and upon a side, too, that throws into relief the defects even of their better sides. Please do not think that I have thereby become alive to faults in men which otherwise I think I should not have noticed. And my disgust with the sort of man who resents woman having an idea which might conceivably put her beyond his immediate sex-purpose is inexplicable. Please do not think that I am fanatic for saying this. All I want is for sex to be put and kept in its proper place. While brothers are content to make lifelong companions of sisters—and I know many cases of this, and I am quite willing to say that woman's only use to man is sex. Sooner or later we shall discover other uses for women—or remain what they are. There now, I really think I have exhausted my main opinions of men. I repeat that I began by expecting to admire them: but I am in danger, in fact, of thinking too much of them. You must judge whether it is in my fault that my anxiety to-day is that I may not think too little of them. Meanwhile, I trust I have made no such unreasoning remarks in this letter as will indispose you to receive one, which shall be written tomorrow, on women.

Yours sincerely,

ACTON REED.
authority.

...and disgust of the doctrine which is linked in thought of the unity of the Holy Trinity? Instead of dividing it invidiously, shall we not rather look upon it as three different modes of action of God? Shall we not look upon the Redeemer as the Father engaged in redemption?

"I quite agree," said my friend; "it seems to me a most admirable doctrine."

"Does it?" said the Catholic. "Nevertheless, if you hold it you will surely be excommunicated from the Catholic Church, for it is the heresy of Sabellius, and they that hold it are damned. Shall we not rather avoid this pitfall and regard the Redeemer as a human man penetrated by the divine virtue of God, which sanctified Him and rendered Him worthy? You follow Catholic Church, for it is the heresy of Sabellius and most admirable doctrine."

"And if we do so," said the Catholic, "are we then in error?"

"We have, then," continued his instructor, "denounced the vile and degrading Sabellian heresy which regards the Father and Son as one."

"We have," said the Catholic.

"With equal horror we have expressed our scorn and disgust of the doctrine which is linked in perpetual infamy with the name of Paul of Samosota, for which he was well and deservedly deposed from his bishopric by the third Synod of Antioch, excommunicated, and damned.

"Dear me," said my friend; "how easy it is to fall into error."

"We have, then," continued his instructor, "denounced the vile and degrading Sabellian heresy which regards the Father and Son as one."

"We have," said the Catholic.

"We are agreed that the Father and Son are both divine and that they are nevertheless not one and the same."

"Yes," said the Catholic.

"You will agree with me, I think, that what is created was not before it was created."

"Indeed, it could not have been."

"Similarly, what is begotten was not before it was begotten. To look at the matter in another light, if you were a woman, could you have a son before you bore him?"

"No."

"Or could you be a father before you had a son?"

"Obviously not."

"We know from Holy Writ that the Father begat the Son. We have agreed also that if He was begotten and had a beginning of His being, there must have been a time when He was not."

"Precisely; because, as you said, you cannot have a son before you do have him, and what is created cannot have existed before it was created."

"Excellent, excellent," said my friend's instructor; "you understand me perfectly. We will carry the matter further. We may say, with one ancient author, that God has not always been Father; there was a moment when He was alone, and was not yet Father:

...later He became so. The Son is not from eternity; He came from nothing."

"What eloquence!" said my friend; "what noble language!"

"We are, of course," said his instructor, "not led astray by any vulgar anthropomorphism. We are not pretending to imagine that it is in time when the Father was prior, as it were, to the Son, but that He had a priority over His Son merely similar to a priority in time. We are bound to insist upon this, you will agree, because, as we all agree, time (as we know it) began with the creation, and thus the Son, by Whom all things are created, and Who, consequently, is before the creation, was born also before all time."

"I find absolutely no difficulty in following you," said my friend. "The argument appears conclusive."

"I hope, then," said his instructor, "you will accept my assurance that all the points I have made are amply covered by texts of the Holy Writ. May I assume, now that you are thoroughly satisfied with the doctrine I have just described to you, that Christ is a divine being created by His Father out of a state of not existing?"

"Convinced by your eloquence and the lucidity of your arguments, I am firmly persuaded of the truth of this doctrine, and I hope I may hold it with undiminished fervour until the ultimate hour of my worthless existence."

"I hope you will not," said the instructor, "for it is the beastly and filthy and unrighteous and despicable heresy of the accursed Arius, for holding which he and five others were anathematised and excommunicated by the glorious Council of Nicaea."

"God be merciful to me, a sinner," said my friend, "and deliver me from the wiles of Satan. I utterly renounce and spit out the abominable heresy, and entreat the heavens to open my ears to the true teaching."

"Listen, then. To the vile suggestion of the heretics that there was a time when the Son or Word was not, shall we not retort with John i, 1: 'In the beginning was the Word?' When they, the despicable, say that the Son was a creature created, and that He, who made all things, was Himself a thing made, shall we not destroy their low pretensions with the simple images of the brightness of the sun and the stream of the fountain?"

"We shall," said my friend.

"When these blasphemers in their blindness say that the Son, being begotten by the Father, is not co-existent with Him, shall we not utterly overwhelm them with the comparison of a river and its source?"

"Indeed we shall," said my friend.

"If these same heathen shall venture to suggest that the Son, being other than the Father but not posterior to Him, is thus a subtraction from His substance, shall we not destroy their low pretensions with the simple images of the brightness of the sun and the stream of the fountain?"

"I quite agree," said he, "I have a most ingenious and interesting theory to put before you concerning the nature and essence of the Godhead and the Redeemer. Do you not feel impressed by the doctrine I have just described to you, that Christ is a divine being created by His Father out of a state of not existing?"

"We have, then," continued his instructor, "denounced the vile and degrading Sabellian heresy which regards the Father and Son as one."

"We have," said the Catholic.

"Exactly. We are agreed that the Father and Son are both divine and that they are nevertheless not one and the same."

"Yes," said the Catholic.

"You will agree with me, I think, that what is created was not before it was created."

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"Precisely; because, as you said, you cannot have a son before you do have him, and what is created cannot have existed before it was created."

"Excellent, excellent," said my friend's instructor; "you understand me perfectly. We will carry the matter further. We may say, with one ancient author, that God has not always been Father; there was a moment when He was alone, and was not yet Father:
Views and Reviews.

THAT STRAIN AGAIN!

On the three papers that constitute this book, two are rather dreary dialogues. The first deals with "The Soul of Civilisation," which is as real as the "moral victory" of a defeated candidate. Dr. Hobhouse himself argues that German "Kultur," and Western civilisation are different in type and tendency, and Civilisation may even supply Goethe: "Two souls dwell within my bosom." The psychologist, like Ribot, will always retort: "Only two?" The fact is, of course, that Civilisation has at least as many souls as it has interpreters, and Dr. Hobhouse's something more than a group system, which has yet to be defined. By the year 2020, and a Quaker Sister falling into silence as the clock strikes twelve. It is certainly a good omen, and Dr. Hobhouse is entitled to his hope; but it is possible that the world has not suffered so much as he has forgotten the eloquence of the Quaker sisterhood, and that he is in error in assuming that his hope is shared by the rest of mankind. As a matter of fact, it is unlikely, but as a matter of interpretation, of prophecy, this conclusion is the most serious contribution made by Dr. Hobhouse to sociology, and deserves to be verified by events.

The third paper contains the substance of an address delivered to the National Liberal Club (commonly known as the International), and is entitled, "The Future of Internationalism." It is certainly a good omen, and Dr. Hobhouse is entitled to his hope; but it is possible that the world has not suffered so much as he has forgotten the eloquence of the Quaker sisterhood, and that he is in error in assuming that his hope is shared by the rest of mankind. As a matter of fact, it is unlikely, but as a matter of interpretation, of prophecy, this conclusion is the most serious contribution made by Dr. Hobhouse to sociology, and deserves to be verified by events.

The second dialogue is called "The Hope of the World," and is so long and so confused that I do not know what it proves, except that everything is open to argument. I notice, though, that it concludes with the opening of a New Year, and a Quaker Sister falling into silence as the clock strikes twelve. It is certainly a good omen, and Dr. Hobhouse is entitled to his hope; but it is possible that the world has not suffered so much as he has forgotten the eloquence of the Quaker sisterhood, and that he is in error in assuming that his hope is shared by the rest of mankind. As a matter of fact, it is unlikely, but as a matter of interpretation, of prophecy, this conclusion is the most serious contribution made by Dr. Hobhouse to sociology, and deserves to be verified by events.

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REVIEWS

Feminism in Germany and Scandinavia. By Katherine Anthony. (Constable.)

If there are any students of feminism in these islands to-day, this book may confidently be recommended to them as a convenient summary of the aims, history, and recent developments of the feminist propaganda in the countries named. Miss Anthony has no criticism to bestow: she devotes herself to her advocacy of the female's right to wear trousers, to attend boys' schools and men's universities, and to "do all that men dare." The curious inconsistencies are sometimes amusing; the right to motherhood is asserted with as much emphasis as the right to prevent conception or procure abortion; the right of the unmarried mother to shield herself from social persecution by calling herself "Frau" is as much a triumph for Feminism as is the provision of women's universities; and, more valuable still, a fairly detailed account of German Feminists of the extraordinary confusion of direction of the Feminist movement. Most of the unmarried, and more than a quarter of the married, women are wage-earners in Germany; one child of every twelve is illegitimate, and the infant mortality is among the highest in Europe. Therefore, every woman must be allowed to work, so that she may be independent of every man, every woman; with tradition ends with disaster in the one case, with the economic charges of maternity, motherhood, and intellectual superiority. But it is none the less interesting to observe that Feminism is advancing in all directions.

The Nemesis of Docility: A Study of German Character. By Edmond Holmes. (Constable.)

It is a defect of all social psychology that, to be intelligible, it must use an artificial simplicity. To take the traits of dogmatism and docility as the elements of German character is to beg the whole question, is to show us nothing that differentiates the German from any other national character. For the characteristic that Mr. Holmes calls dogmatism is simply the necessary condition of action; every action is the assertion of some ideal: the办案 party asserts that, "to love, and a time to hate, a time of war, and a time of peace." We are better than the Germans; Mr. Holmes has proved it; and for our goodness, not for our sins, it is upon us that the Nemesis of docility falls.

Broke of Covenden. By J. C. Smith.


The Dream Ship. By Cynthia Stockley.

The Westminster Library of Fiction. 2s. net each. (Constable.)

Of these additions to the Westminster Library, only "Broke of Covenden" is really noteworthy. "The Dream Ship" is one of those stupid stories of misunderstanding between a married couple which ends, of course, with a reconciliation; and the attribution of a mystical origin to the marriage, and of extraordinary mental gifts to the contracting parties, is mere feminism. Mysticism is understanding; it is a harmony of the spirit, and spirit is the substance that underlies all phenomena, the unity in which all diversity coheres. "The Laurensens" has, for its chief interest, the revelation of the disciplinary methods applied to a novice of the Society of Jesus; but the good custom should corrupt the world. We are not posed with a dilemma, we have not to choose between two ideals; we have to be prepared to take the powers of life and death upon us. We know, as the Preacher said, that "to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven . . . a time to love, and a time to hate, a time of war, and a time of peace."

No doubt we are better than the Germans; Mr. Holmes has proved it; and for our goodness, not for our sins, it is upon us that the Nemesis of docility falls.
mediocrity in the other, for we doubt the genius of the bookeller's son, in spite of his Cambridge education. Lord Salmon, the swindling company promoter, is too improvingly Breck of Covenden; while poor Mr. Breffit suffers at the hands of his own son as much for his aspiration to the rank of a gentleman as broke does for his maintenance of that rank. The character drawing is excellent, and there is a whole gallery of notable portraits. We confess to a particular affection for that of Lord Bosket; but Mrs. Broke and Aunt Emma, the five sisters all of a pattern, Delia and Alfred Porter, Billy and Alice, and Miss Sparrow—the list is endless. The story would be an intolerable tragedy if Mr. Snaith had not staged it as a play before the God of Irony; the universality of this struggle of the irresistible forces that make for change against the immovable mass that stands for permanence, democracy v. aristocracy, diversity v. unity, this unending conflict would be meaningless, insane, if we could not believe that it "pleased God," in the old phrase. Mr. Snaith shows us that the pleasure of God has more than a smack of cruelty among its constituents.

Testore: The Romance of an Italian Fiddle-Maker. By Alfred Porter, Billy and Alice, and Miss Sparrow—the bookseller's son, in spite of his Cambridge education.

As a consequence of a vision, Mr. Candler says that he was led to procure one of Testore's fiddles, 1707, for a lady; having procfred the fiddle, he had dreams of the maker which are here recounted. Whether or not the dreams were veridical, does not matter; Mr. Candler has written a quite spirited story, with mysteries all abounding. There is, for example, a mysterious miser, who exercises influence at the Vatican; and the mysteries of the maker which are here recounted. Whether or not the dreams were veridical, does not matter; Mr. Candler has written a quite spirited story, with mysteries all abounding. There is, for example, a mysterious miser, who exercises influence at the Vatican; and the possibilities of a mono-poly. He was a warning, reasoning, urgent voice—knowledge of the allowed robbery in which these accumulations are born, and of their increase—often compassed by the very steps taken to reduce them—this knowledge will not be seriously entertained. It would accuse too many idols of the People—their idols of flesh, bone, and cupidity; and what more incredibly wicked than that?


To the original collection of extracts from Mr. Wilson's speeches the English publisher has added extracts from speeches delivered in the Mississippi Valley during January and February of this year, and Chapter XX is the complete text of the Message delivered on April 19 to both Houses of Congress in joint session. The original volume was the usual sort of "trust-busting" campaign speech; and apparently Mr. Wilson contemplated a system of "big" and little businesses which should never be combined in a monopoly. He was decently vague concerning the methods by which he would ensure this result. He talked of democracy, of course (good old electioneering word !), and what he said of the United States Government was not fit for the children to hear. But, by some magic, the nature of the United States Government became changed after Mr. Wilson became President; the freedom that America had not is now prepared to fight against the world; more than that, to bestow upon the world. For this reason, America must prepare to fight (voluntary recruiting, of course, with a cadet movement), and must defend the Monroe Doctrine with a big army and navy. We may confidently look forward to another "war to end war"; and in the light of the soul.

Where is the man whose compelling prestige shall make our exploiters of the Nation's extremity and speak out ? Where is the man able to profit by forced labour and patriotic slavery, so willing to risk other people's lives, shall first be relieved of their audacious plunderers.

VIII.

And yet, only a voice with no power of wealth and place behind it. What man having the power of wealth and place—such power were irrelevant in a better age—will face the fury of our verbal patriots, our Exchequer-Bond benefactors, our exploiters of the Nation's extremity, and speak out ? Where is the man whose compelling prestige shall make this vital knowledge believed ? Who valiant enough to break through the taciturnity of guilt ? Who public-spirited enough to step out of the cabal into the open—

Pastiche.
POST-PRANDIAL RUMINATIONS OF A LITERARY BODAIRE.

Mr. the wine was good . . . a hearty wine That runs to puffs of fragrant vapour. Now Let this crisp bunch of leesage, and this brew Of russet vintages, full-pressed, meld, merge Their twin aromas, whose afflatus shall Prompt me to new devices, new alarums, New-blazoned heraldry at equipoised,

Prompt me to new devices, new alarums, New-blazoned heraldry at equipoised, Their twin aromas, whose afflatus shall Where no man pryeth.

| LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. |

| Sir,—"A. E. R." accuses me of endeavouring to transfer my controversy from "R. H. C." to himself. This is, of course, ridiculous. My answer to his article, which was a direct criticism of the proposals suggested in my book, "The Two Roads," had absolutely nothing to do with any controversy I may have had with "R. H. C." So far as my controversy with "R. H. C." is concerned, he had only one objection to make to my proposal—that it would be quite impossible ever to get the nations to agree to a scale of voting strength. When I demonstrated to him that it was possible, and pointed out how it could be accomplished, he had no answer to make, and has now, I trust, completely changed his views on the subject. However, to return to "A. E. R." the one thing I do admire about that gentleman is his colossal cheek. Who is he, that he is to have the privilege of making blatant assertions against a scheme, of which it is very evident he knows nothing, without being called upon, like other people, to substantiate them? But, of course, his case is really an exception. He tells us he is bored with the whole subject that, to a certain extent, explains things. There is a certain type of mentality which invariably expresses itself as being bored with any subject which it cannot understand—and, really, it is not a bad argument either. I may say, in answer to his fears, that I have no intention of sending him a copy of my book. I think it would be wasted on him—there are none so blind as those who will not see. He does not seem to realise that the fundamental principles underlying my proposals have gained almost universal support in all the most important countries. Even so far as our own country is concerned, Mr. Asquith has defined our purpose in this war as "the bringing about of a real European partnership based on the recognition of equal right, and established and enforced by the common will." What I am suggesting is the machinery necessary to bring about this desirable state of affairs. If it is to be a real European partnership, it is obvious it must include the Central Powers. If it does not, it will simply be another form of the old groupings and alliances. The point is, if the Central Powers are allowed to join this partnership, what restraint shall we have over them? Surely after the lessons of this war we are not going to place any reliance on the treaties of the liars and murderers who were responsible for the atrocities of Belgium, for the use of poisons, and all the other abominations which have made the very name of Germany stink throughout the civilised world? We require something a little more reliable and binding than "scrapes of paper" in dealing with nations of the moral calibre of Germany. The adoption of the scheme suggested in "The Two Roads," despite the wild assertions of "R. H. C." would supply a form of restraint.
from which Germany would find it impossible to break away. The adoption of these proposals would, moreover, bring about the wonderful results they had foretold. Possibly they are disappointed because compulsion has not brought about the wonderful results they had foretold. They should remember that, the assertions have provided our military authorities with an almost inexhaustible supply of human material. We shall now be able to support far greater military gumbles than Gallipoli without the slightest fear of the effect on recruiting.

Since our patriots have performed this great service for their country, let them not relax their efforts, but commence another campaign for the conscription of all. There is no reason to doubt that most of their prophecies with regard to conscription served their purpose by destroying any possibility of the present Army rates, or such other rates as may be determined. This important section will have an enormous effect on our financial staying power. The cost of the war will be reduced considerably, and profits at the same time will rise, a consummation that could be effected in no other way. Another great advantage will be the industrial reserve for the period of the war. It will be noticed that no age limit has been inserted. Age is not a sure guide to physical efficiency. For instance, some useful work may be done by old age pensioners. Again, child labour is essential in country districts, and some children are as strong at eleven as others are at thirteen. Moreover, there will be no privileged class sheltering behind an age limit.

(1) All British subjects of both sexes will be deemed, from the passing of the Bill, to be in the industrial reserve for the period of the war. It will be noticed that no age limit has been inserted. Age is not a sure guide to physical efficiency. For instance, some useful work may be done by old age pensioners. Again, child labour is essential in country districts, and some children are as strong at eleven as others are at thirteen. Moreover, there will be no privileged class sheltering behind an age limit.

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rally Secret Service for Ireland, and, under martial law, had an opportunity to effect a résumé upon my husband who was said to be detested.

In England Mr. Figgis was lodged in Stafford Gaol in solitary confinement as a convict. His food was inadequate, often being only a lump of gristle in a thin stew. We were told that he was not imprisoned, but "detained"; though, in fact, as some of the untried prisoners stated, they were received, the most rigorous punishment, and wished to know what this was for. After a week of rigorous protest communication between prisoners and Committee, and food was allowed to be sent in from outside. This was one of them, but many had no means with which to do so, and remained indifferently fed.

As a result of the insanitary conditions at Richmond Barracks (where 25 to 30 men slept on the floor of one room) most of the Irish prisoners were brought to Stafford in an indescribably verminous condition. To these insanitary conditions I attribute the reason for Mr. Figgis becoming ill with a virulent form of measles. On his release from hospital it was learned that orders had arrived that (though there was no charge against him) he was, with some others, to resume solitary confinement.

He is now in solitary confinement, without any cause given. Now I hear that my husband is to be interned during the period of the war. I enclose copy of the Home Secretary's order to that effect. According to the records of the Richmond camp, it appeared only when the person in respect of whom it is made can reasonably be supposed to be of hostile association or origin. According to this present order Mr. Figgis is to be interned, because he is "reasonably suspected of having harboured . . . an armed insurrection against his Majesty." I ask, what may this not cover, and how is it determined that he is "reasonably suspected of having harboured" the Richmond insurrection, when the charge is so vague? I ask also is not such a indefinite extension ?

I learn, moreover, that my husband and a selected few are not to be interned near the Richmond camp, but that they are to have solitary confinement extended to those conditions. That is to say, that they are to be kept in solitary confinement for the period of the war, although there is no charge other than this deliberately vague and comprehensive formula—and this, although, in this case the facts are, as I assert, publicly in his favour and although there was no disturbance at all in the County of Mayo.

I need not point out to you, sir, the financial embarrassments which will result in crushing the revolt, practically all Ireland may now be interned according to this. Is it of any avail to appoint a Tribunal to judge appeals against internment when the charge is so vague? I ask also is not such an act of persecution? What is it? Is it not an act of terroristic and barbarous injustice? To teach more than reading, writing, and simple arithmetic is tyranny. No teacher knows further what may be acceptable to any mind. To think of educating a day is as far as tyranny ought to dare to go if the age of adolescence is passed, and well passed. Wherefrom, let youth choose what it will to study. A great many people would try successively several "vocations," using a lot of time, no doubt, but not wasting a second in fishing about in a disastrously wrong hole. All the vocations for which people are not "reasonably suspected of having harboured the Richmond insurrection," would be better abolished—like the Army and the Navy, etc., dependent on a discipline which stupifies the will; or are silly vanities, like toe-dancing and other worse conceptions, taught by terror; or the musical art, from which no true genius could be kept away but which, from the possibility of tormenting the young into its exercise, has become one of the horrors of life.

What would happen would be that the majority of folk would take to manual labour, not necessarily sewer-work, but every form of manual labour. One of my Utopian dreams is to have men who do sewer-work, coal-work, and all dangerous and dirty jobs recognised as a kind of Legion of Honour—as they are!—most highly paid, lightly worked, and provided with every hygienic luxury, including a valed, who should also be an honourable and as highly paid as any man of the Bedchamber. Lese sewer-man should be punished, not, of course, by ducking in a sewer, which, by accident, is often the fate of those men who enable us to live in comparative freedom from disease. Ah, if I could only arrange affairs!

Mrs. Townsend’s reference to the rights of parents seems to promise them more power to their own under National Guilds. There is your Servile Stater. Parents have no rights. They have only responsibilities. Women exercise this clearest of all responsibilities, as men, as a result of the unwillingness on the part of the State to assume the responsibility to live as not to impose their chosen State upon those who come into a new relation with the Time-Spirit. Every generation finds itself obliged to waste half its energy in escaping from the misfitting past—if no worse! We are seeing the youth of to-day paying the price for having been born of our parents, the war-makers? A wonderful spectacle—fathers and mothers of all the fighting countries egging on their sons to disembowel one another, and saying “God’s will be done” when this happens. Is this the time for the State to try successively several “vocations,” using a lot of time, no doubt, but not wasting a second in fishing about in a disastrously wrong hole? Yes, if I could only arrange affairs!

Well, let us have someone other than Mrs. Townsend to plan education under National Guilds, or the youth of the future will be just as enslaved as ever. Time—time to themselves, and the public—time to use and mix with its young kind—that is what adolescence needs. Gardens, fields, sea-beaches, boats, tools, spades,
horses, books when it likes! I am becoming lyrical, whereas I merely meant to express my aversion for Mrs. Townsend's plays. No management of Guilds—not even me!

P.S.—I apprehend a shower of Service State abuse, suavely and technically crushing. I know the jargon well enough. I'll puncture by coming clearly to be an individualist first and a Socialist second, as in practice, of course, everyone else is, and especially the models of mankind and crushing of the state of life disapproved by society. Admitted that the release of youth and the recognition of the individual would involve disorganisation apparently dangerous and shocking—could anything be more so than what youth is doing now in the name of society—"This cruel organisation of our days"?

PIAT JUSTITIA

Skrums. A VERY NEW THEOLOGY.

Skrums. —In that academy of the arts, the "Daily Express," a correspondent, "S. D.," whom I suspect to be Mr. Sidney Dark, calls attention to the fact that Mr. Darrell Figgis is now interned without trial on suspicion of, and so far I have no comment to make:

But it is this in the letter which amuses me: "I have no personal knowledge of Mr. Darrell Figgis. I only know him as a great writer—perhaps, indeed, the most gifted master of our language now living." It is, I believe, common knowledge that Mr. Figgis cannot put three words together in English without perpetrating pretentious nonsense. In the name of criticism, let "S. D." be interned too!

PATRICK SKUMAS ABRAHAMS.

SHAKESPEARE AS GROTESQUE

Skrums. —Mr. J. Bulvar Schwartz does me the honour to suggest that I have "wrought confusion" among the "real leaders of England"—Messrs. Maeztu, Shaw, Norman, Wells, etc. This, he says, is "not a definition. We judge words by their etymological meanings and their associations with other words, because we have nothing else to judge them by.

Mr. J. Bulvar Schwartz regards Mr. Shaw as not only a genius but a super-genius; he has said so, and, I dare say, if he were pressed, he would grant him the rank of Super-super-genius. Mr. Maeztu must be Satan's, and my alleged attempt to "dim his light" ought to put me in Mr. Schwartz's eyes on the side of the angels. C. E. H.

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All communications relative to The New Age should be addressed to The New Age, 38, Curzon Street, E.C.
A writer in *The New Age*, in a recent issue, drew a distinction between what he called the real and the apparent pacifist, and he classed among the latter those whose conscientious objection to war is based on religious principles. A correspondent writing subsequently in the columns of our contemporary supports this view and produces the case of the Rev. John Harris as confirmation. Mr. P. Haynes says this correspondent ought to treat pacifism (although the rev. gentleman's sincerity is not in doubt) because it is quite conceivable that a man, by the sole dictate of his conscience, may believe all war to be wrong and conscientiously object to the taking of human life; but it is inconceivable that he should be able to interpret the ethics of any religion to be pro- or anti-militaristic.

There is great force in this contention. We ourselves have all along maintained that there is no direction in Judaism upon the question of right or wrong of war except so far as it fixes Universal Peace as an ideal. But this conception would be applauded by many a confirmed militarist who would quite sincerely declare that preparation for war is the surest guarantee of Peace, and that the more terrible—they would call it efficient—war is made, the less likelihood is there of nations receding to its fall entails. Otherwise, their plan is contrived in its teachings to encourage fighting as to discourage strife between man and man. But the writer in *The New Age* decides to take up the case of the real pacifist when he says that any pacifism to be real must rely upon itself and not upon precedent and teaching. Men do not refrain from (privately) killing one another, or from thieving or perjury because those practices are forbidden by the Ten Commandments. It is because they conceive them to be wrong in themselves, and because in turn they have come to regard, such practices as inimical to the common welfare. Whenever war comes to be so regarded—and that for practical purposes at least will make its being right or wrong—will cease.

Hence the true pacifist is he that sees war wrong in itself, just as murder, lying, and stealing are wrong, altogether independently of what was taught about it in the prophets and seers, by rabbis and teachers whose doctrine is always subject to conditions and circumstances in their application. Whether it should be another question; the point is that it is so.—"Jewish World."

So far as German commerce has been built upon the methods and German business men, so far it may be said to be German by natural right. We neither can nor ought to try to imitate the manifestations of their national character in other respects. As a rule, what holds there is a commercial class that, at a supreme crisis in its career, finds no better plan than to adopt the methods of its rivals? Genius is displayed, not in the imitation of others, but in the surprising and masterly differences it suddenly creates. It is not, in short, by copying or even by improving German methods that England will capture German trade; but, if at all and the end is desirable, by discovering and perfecting the methods naturally consonant with its own national character.—*The New Age* (October 15, 1914).

An engineer's turner applied at Southwark Tribunal yesterday for exemption. He said he had been for two and a half years employed by the Amalgamated Press, and that he had applied, conditional exemption having been granted to the Amalgamated Press in respect of the twenty men employed by them. The consequence was that these young men had now got to join up.—"Daily Telegraph."

There is reason to think that the relations of the medical profession to the State and public must soon undergo a change. As the demands of the Army become more insistent, there will be a demand of doctors, the more insistent, the dearth of doctors becomes more serious. The result has been a very ill-informed attempt to show that the Army is getting more than its share. This state of things is an undesirable one, and untrue. The Army needs all the doctors it has got.

The real waste of doctors is going on in civil life—a fact not usually noticed by the carpeting critics of the best medical service. The medical profession to the State and public must soon undergo a change. As the demands of the Army become more insistent, there will be a demand of doctors, the more insistent, the dearth of doctors becomes more serious. The result has been a very ill-informed attempt to show that the Army is getting more than its share. This state of things is an undesirable one, and untrue. The Army needs all the doctors it has got.

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Applicant replied that he could get work in three days.

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