

# THE NEW AGE

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, AND ART.

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

A GOOD deal of sense has for once been published in the Press on the occasion of a strike, the strike, namely, of the 'bus and tram-workers last week. Perhaps it is the case that at last our journalists are beginning to learn; or, more likely, it illustrates the old bad habit of the English of talking sense only in face of a practical situation of which there is no alternative solution but the right one. Two or three misunderstandings are, however, left for us to deal with, the first of which is the impropriety of importing a sentimental sex-consideration into an affair of commercial economics. The cry of equal pay for equal work is all very well as a moral claim, and it happens to have been raised at a moment when the prospect of the political influence of the women-voters is still a matter of speculation. It was supported, moreover, by sentimental considerations drawn from the prospective plight of the returning troops. But, at bottom, it is as unreal as any other moral demand of the wage-system, as, for instance, the demand that the worker shall be paid according to his need. Wages, we may affirm, are not regulated either by sentiment or by justice, or by the social need of the workers; they are settled in the vast majority of cases by the Law of Supply and Demand, tempered only by costly strikes. Should the same cry of equal pay for equal work be raised, therefore, under different circumstances, we may be sure that the response will also be different. For the second misunderstanding is this: that the strike has been successful on the merits of its claim. In fact, however, its moral justification has had considerably less to do with its success than the existence of a still-rising labour-market. There happens to be, as everybody knows, no margin or reserve of Labour upon which employers can draw at the present moment. They are thus in the position of having to take Labour on its own terms, or to go out of business. But this virtual Labour-monopoly will certainly cease to be automatically produced when the war is over, by which time, indeed, the pre-war margin or reserve will be found to have increased enormously. And a strike under these circumstances, however moral its object, will have difficulty in arriving at success.

"John Citizen" must now be beginning to realise what he has had to pay for permitting profiteering to continue throughout the war; and the whole bill has by no means yet been sent in. Having allowed the capitalist classes to claim their war-profits in the early days of the war, he has found himself obliged, much against the grain, to allow the consequential claims of the wage-earners to war-wages. It was plainly impossible that the one should be licensed and the other forbidden. If the profiteers were to be commissioned to make what they could out of the war by the exercise of their economic monopolies, it was obligatory on John Citizen to commission the wage-earner to use his accidental monopoly of Labour for the same purpose; with the inevitable and foreseen consequence that poor John Citizen has been paying for the war out of both pockets; he has paid in war-profits and he has paid in war-wages. No blame, moreover, can attach to the wage-earners for following a course that was rigidly marked out for them by the tramping of the profiteers. At the outset of the war, it cannot too often be repeated, the workmen's Unions offered to forgo all advances in wages on the understanding that the employers would forgo their profits; and the offer, as we all know, was rejected. Then was the time when John Citizen should have made his voice heard, and his influence, if he has any, felt. Had he supported the Unions in their demand for the suspension of profiteering during the war, not only would various strikes have been avoided and hundreds of millions of war-debt saved, but all the disabilities incurred by the absence of industrial mobilisation would never have been created. National industrial service would have been as easy to institute universally as the military service of selected classes. John Citizen, however, was as indisposed to take the war seriously as any of his now criticised political leaders.

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The "Employer," the new official organ of the Employers' Federation, has invited Labour to a discussion of after-war industrial problems of which it affirms, however, that the test-question or shibboleth is the question of increased production. With any Labour spokesman who is ready to answer in the affirmative the question whether increased production is the first essential after the war, the "Employer,"

we are told, is ready to discuss contingent problems on a friendly footing. To the dissentients it will have nothing to say. We are a little uncertain in which category we shall find ourselves in consequence of the reply which we are about to make; for we are compelled to reply by raising a number of questions concerning the test-question itself. In the first place, we ask, what is the *nature* of the production the "Employer" has in mind? Is it any kind of production, good, bad, or indifferent? Is the proposed increase a quantitative or a qualitative increase? Next we may ask with what object this increased production is desired—is it simply for the purpose of paying off the war-debt owing, in the main, to a few thousands of our own citizens? Is it for the purpose of capturing German and other enemy (and friendly) markets? Is it for any good national, as distinct from commercial, object? Finally, we will raise the question that for us goes to the root of the matter. It is presumed, we suppose, in the fact that the "Employer's" question is addressed to Labour, that nobody but an impossibilist can deny that increased production is an indispensable precedent condition of the maintenance and increase of wages. Nothing, indeed, seems to be more self-evident to a certain type of mind than the proposition that since wages are paid out of production, an increase of production is necessary to an increase of wages. We shall, therefore, in all certainty be put out of court when we challenge, as we do, this very proposition. Our impossibilism, in short, will be no less self-evident than the proposition itself. At the risk, however, of exclusion from the discussion, we will say again that we challenge the proposition; and we challenge it on the following grounds. Wages, we say, keep time to a different drummer altogether from that of Production; and do not by any means move up and down with the ups and downs of Production. Since Labour, while it remains a commodity, is economically indistinguishable from any of the raw materials used in production, it follows that its price or wage is fixed, not by the amount of production resulting from its use, but by the supply in relation to the demand for Labour itself. Given these two sets of circumstances: (a) great production and an excess of the supply of Labour over the demand; and (b) small production and an excess of the demand for Labour over the supply—and wages in the first case will tend to be low and in the second case high. In other words, conditions may be imagined in which the very reverse of the assumption of the "Employer" occurs, when, in fact, increased production is accompanied by low wages. That the circumstances, moreover, are not merely imaginary but sometimes actual may be seen out of the window. Wages, we are always being told, were never so high in England as they are to-day. The reason is not at all that Production is so much increased; it is that the supply of Labour is short of the demand. For similar reasons we anticipate that after the war, when the Labour market is glutted with labourers for sale, wages will go down, be Production what it may. The appeal of the "Employer" to Labour thus contains, in our opinion, a *suggestio falsi*. It suggests what is not necessarily true, namely, that high wages not only depend upon high production, but are a consequence of it.

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Setting human and proper feelings aside, a monster might very well wish the war to be continued for its effects upon the Labour market alone. Hundreds of thousands of people are now being employed at comparatively high wages who will never, after the war, earn a penny if the pre-war conditions are restored. And setting the same human feelings aside, a similar monster might as easily declare himself to be indifferent to the problem of production after the war, since he can

foresee that the increased production will be without much effect upon wages. We are ourselves, however, citizens as well as Labour economists; and if we are sceptical, as the latter, of the advantages of increased production, we are not disposed, as citizens, to shirk the problem. The problem, however, will never, in our opinion, be solved until that distinction we have had to make between the citizen and the wage-earner is obsolete. So long as the two classes exist, of the owner of capital, on the one hand, and of the merely hireable propertyless labourer, on the other hand, so long will every question of production be examined from two conflicting points of interest—the interest of Capital, and the interest of Labour. There is no escape from the antinomy while, in fact, the two classes have so different an economic status; for, being only partially identified in their interests, their divergencies of interest are greater than their coincidence. Moreover, it is not the case that the existence of this antagonism can much longer pass without practical question. A hundred or fifty, or even ten years ago, Labour might have been persuaded to continue in the belief that only what is good for Capital can be good for Labour, and that the good of Labour is proportioned to the good of Capital. But to reproduce such a conviction is no longer possible. Too much water has flowed under the bridge, and particularly during the years of the war. Consider the special circumstances and experiences of which the war has been the creator. Such Socialistic adaptations have been made in society as scarcely the most Utopian propagandist ventured to deliver from his soap-box in the days before the war. Labour knows now what can be done. Again, experiences of a community of interest have been enjoyed by millions of the population now engaged in national and non-profiteering services of one kind and another. The reaction of army and navy and public life on the future of industrial life is incalculable. Side by side with these circumstances, both making clearly for increased hopefulness on the part of the wage-earning classes, and for increased dislike of individualist employment, other circumstances are arising in the growth of a gigantic war-debt and in the consequent demand for increased production, both of which will tend to increase the strain on Labour at the very moment that Labour will be least disposed to submit to it. Add these and similar factors together, and the sum is not far short of the doom of the wage-system as unequal to the demand made by the times.

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Production for profit is only incidentally, and not then always, production for use. This has been admitted to be the case by the "Times" Agricultural Correspondent. The farmers, he says, are not interested in the relative nutritive values of their crops—that is to say, in their productivity in use; nor are they concerned in the economic dispute between the claims of arable and pasture. "For the farmer the prime question is profit . . . he cannot afford to be a philanthropist." It is not, however, a question of being a philanthropist; it is a question of being a farmer, a producer of utilities; and it seems to be the case that a farmer of land is not concerned to be a farmer, save incidentally, but only to be a farmer of prices. The maximum of use production which is what ought to be meant by efficient production is obviously not necessarily implied in the "increased production" now in demand. And this is not the only instance in which production for profit is the declared enemy of production for use, or commercial production seen to be at war with economic production. The "Times" is again our witness that the rights of private property are incompatible with economic or maximum production of use-values. The rights of piscary and the rights of turbarry, it says, stand in the way of the national use of thousands of tons of fish and turf. Which things

are trifles. Examine the effects of the dead hand of private property upon our forests, our canals, our moors, our water-power, our foreshores, our minerals, our thousand and one gifts of Nature open to human exploitation; and then deny that production for profit is the enemy of real production. It is late in this present note to add a further consideration and one so disproportionate to the rest. But we may observe for future reference that the war is an interregnum between production for profit and production for use. The economic dictatorship of which, in the economic world, the war is the consequence, is the dictatorship of production for profit. At this moment its throne is disputed, it is even toppling; but tremendous are the forces that are striving to restore its monarchy. Is an Amurath to succeed an Amurath? Or is the world to be made safe for the economic democracy of Production for use?

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Production for profit is naturally disposed to adopt the means best suited to maximum profits. In some instances, therefore, it may be in favour of competition; in others it is on the side of protection. Usually it is free-trade when buying, and protectionist when selling. This is clearly seen to be the case in the comparison of the present attitude of our fiscal reformers to imports and Labour respectively. While Labour is to be "free" to sell itself in the open market, the goods of the manufacturer are to be artificially maintained in price by means of a tariff-wall. This, however, will never do. If our manufacturers are entitled to protect their prices from the competition of cheaper countries, our wage-earners are no less entitled to protect their wages against cheap foreign labour. The two forms of Protection, in short, must go together: the Protection of prices and the Protection of wages; and if our commercial classes are not prepared to concede the latter, we ought on no account to allow them to enjoy the former.

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Mr. C. F. Spencer, the Halifax genius who started the first National kitchen, is to be congratulated on his success. There are now over six hundred National kitchens in London and the country and some two hundred more are in course of being opened. The food served in them is excellent, well-cooked, and cheap; and the service is not inferior to that of the ordinary commercial restaurant. That these institutions supply a long-felt want which the majority of caterers have exploited for profit rather than attempted to satisfy is now realised by thousands to whom before the war and the advent of Mr. Spencer communal cooking would have seemed a reversion to barbarism. It is probable that if the classes who must take their meals abroad were canvassed, at least ninety-nine per cent of them would vote in favour of the retention of the National Kitchens and Restaurants after the war and their extension to every part of the country. The opposition of the vested interests, however, will be considerable; and only a determined public demand will be able to overcome it. We appeal to Mr. Clynes to save the National kitchens from the wreck, whatever else of his present organisation is washed away in the tide of reaction.

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The "Times" Tokyo correspondent is doubtless no Bolshevik; but one of his latest communications may be cited in support of the charge. Discussing the recent rice riots in Japan, provoked by the profiteering of the large monopolists, he writes as follows: "The common belief that a change of Government is the remedy for the present disorders of the State is a fallacy. It is true that there is much public indignation with the Government . . . but only drastic measures against the propertied classes will bring down the price of rice, and this policy no Government in recent years has been bold enough to adopt." It

would seem from this extract that the "Times" correspondent is inclined, like many people in England, to doubt the efficiency of the representative system, and hence to look for an alternative. The alternative, however, should be clearly defined and realised if we are not to jump from the frying-pan into the fire. What are they? They are a restored monarchy on the one hand—a solution often played with by the writers in the "New Witness"; and Bolshevism or delegate-government, on the other hand—a solution prescribed by our English Marxians of the "Call" and similar journals. To neither of these solutions do we hear wisdom calling us; at the same time it cannot be denied that to one or other of them the disappointment everywhere felt at the failure of the representative system is driving numbers of intelligent people. The only safeguard against both is the better working of the representative system.

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We are told that the delay in the carrying out of the recent agreement between this country and Germany for an exchange of prisoners of war is due to "special circumstances." No such delay has occurred in the similar arrangements between Germany and France or Germany and Italy; but it is peculiar to ourselves. No doubt we should all like to believe that the reasons for the delay are flattering to our national vanity. The bargain we would make with the German Government is more severe than the bargain offered by the sentimental nations of France and Italy! In fact, however, we believe it is nothing of the kind, the delay, on the contrary, being due to the natural solicitude of the German Government for the welfare not only of its prisoners here, but of its citizens whom we are in danger of treating as enemy aliens worse than actual belligerents. If this is the case—and we have authority for thinking so—our anti-alien obsession is costing British prisoners dear. They are paying in the prolongation of their sufferings for the campaigns of the Northcliffe Press and for the delight of our meanest and least English citizens.

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The opposition to a General Election in the late autumn or the early spring seems now to have been broken; and there is no longer any doubt that, given a continuation of the present circumstances, Mr. Lloyd George will appeal to the country within a few months. The electoral results, we should say, are almost a foregone conclusion, in spite of the supposedly incalculable element of the women's vote. Mr. Lloyd George will be returned to power by a considerable majority. The consequences of his probable victory upon the fortunes of the various parties, upon our own party-system and upon the House of Commons are, however, less certain. They are, indeed, highly speculative. We venture the opinion that the historic parties of Conservatism and Liberalism will find themselves broken up irremediably and their fragments, after the bulk has been absorbed in the Government party, left to dissolve in personal groups; that the Labour party will be returned in increased numerical but in reduced cohesive strength; that a regular Opposition will be formed of incompatible elements over which Mr. Lloyd George will be able to rule by simple arithmetic; and, finally, that the House of Commons, as a whole, will be more spirited and adventurous than we have known it to be for many years. And that it will need to be so, if we are to survive the remaining period of the war and the opening phases of the reconstructive period, every consideration that we can bring to bear on the situation is evidence. The electors have the future in their hands, the future of a century. The absence of party alignments makes it possible for them to elect whom they will, regardless of everything but the character and intelligence of their candidates. If a fool or a scoundrel is returned to Parliament in the coming election, his constituency will deserve to be branded with his name as a disgrace.

## Foreign Affairs.

By S. Verdad.

IN the course of the last few weeks the newspapers have given an unusual amount of space to extracts from the Italian Press on the policy of Baron Sonnino, the Foreign Minister, and to comments on Italy's foreign policy. Incidentally, the "New Witness" is perturbed over a series of articles in the "New Europe" lest the latter's severe criticism of Baron Sonnino should be misconstrued in Italy. As well-informed public men, both in Rome and in London, expect to hear of Baron Sonnino's resignation at any moment, it is desirable that some comment be made on the circumstances which are likely to bring it about. It is undisputed that there is a difference of opinion between the Prime Minister, Signor Orlando, and the Foreign Minister; and this is a fact that no honeyed sentences in the official papers have been able to conceal. The dispute has arisen almost entirely over Italy's policy with regard to the Jugoslavs, and, though to much smaller extent, Italy's policy with regard to the Czecho-Slovaks. The complaint from which Italy's Foreign Minister is suffering is not unknown in this country; and it can be summed up in a few words. Baron Sonnino, like many another man, has not yet recognised the essential features of the situation brought about by more than four years of war. He does not realise that a policy which might have answered in the autumn of 1915 was no longer suitable in 1916 and is still less suitable in 1918. In 1915 there were many political experts among the Allies who would have thought Austria justified enough in trying to put down the whole Jugoslav agitation as an unnecessary irritant, who thought likewise that the Czechs had sufficient local powers to keep them going, and that Poland was as good as dead. Even in 1916 there were people in the Allied countries who hoped that some attempt might be made to solve the Balkan question by turning Austria into a series of Federated States, the Jugoslavs, the Czecho-Slovaks, and the Poles having equal powers with the Hungarians and with the German elements. These people have now changed their views, with the exception of a few Gladstonian Liberals who happen to be represented at odd moments in the "Manchester Guardian."

It has become abundantly clear that an Austrian Federation is out of the question. The Magyars and the Germans have time and again explicitly refused even to consider it. Further, an Austrian Federation would inevitably become as much an ally of Germany as Austria herself now is. On the other hand, as the war has progressed it has become equally clear that German domination of Central Europe (which means, in the long run, German domination of everywhere else) can be effectively checked only by the restoration of nations whose independence was taken from them by German or Germanised families. The Prussian Frederick did not hesitate to partition Poland, nor were the Hapsburgs backward in their ruthless attempts to exterminate the Czechs and the Southern Slavs. The restoration of these peoples is, therefore, as much an act of justice as of political expediency; and the political effect of three new States, each with no love for the Central Empires and with every desire to cooperate with the Allies, is bound to be considerable. An "arrangement with Austria," such as some people wanted in 1916, and as a few want even now, would have no effect at all. Militarism would continue as before.

It happens that Baron Sonnino has not been able to get rid of the notion that some kind of "arrangement with Austria" is still possible. It appears to be the case that even among the Jugoslav population there are elements which agree with him, but they

are not elements which are entitled to respect. Jugoslav feeling cannot be judged from the ill-advised actions of a Montenegrin princeling, or by the equally ill-advised agitation, of a purely personal character, against the Serbian Premier. These things simply do not count. What does count is the awakened consciousness of the Jugoslavs, the Czecho-Slovaks, and the Poles; and this is a factor in the war which has become recognised in Italy—not, let us readily acknowledge, by Baron Sonnino as yet, but undoubtedly by Signor Orlando and by the Italian people. The slogan of the former Premier, Signor Salandra, namely, "Sacred egoism," has been forgotten, or is remembered only with regret. It has served its turn. Possibly some such principle was inevitable at the time Italy entered the war; for the Latin is not mystical and demands something definite before he fights. But by now the purpose of the war is realised in Italy as it has never been realised before; and both statesmen and people are aware how essential it is that the three new nations I have mentioned should be established with complete political and economic independence.

It would seem as if this conception must be grasped in its entirety or not at all. The "Nation," for instance, follows the "Manchester Guardian" in suggesting that the Allies have not committed themselves definitely to a wholly independent Czecho-Slovakia, but (in case of diplomatic need) to some kind of amorphous federation. This is precisely the cardinal point of the recent attacks on Baron Sonnino. An Austrian Federation means, in practice, a Federation of States dominated by Germany, or, at any rate, favourable to Germany, while their ultimate dominion is under way. Nothing short of complete independence will solve the problem we have to consider, that is to say, a just settlement of the definite national claims put forward by the Poles, the Czecho-Slovaks, and the Jugoslavs. That the Jugoslav problem, in particular, has been solved is especially gratifying; for it was perhaps the most difficult. The policy of the Italian Foreign Ministry at one time was such that serious difficulties arose with the Serbian Government, as we have been guardedly informed from year to year. But the Italian feeling of 1916 was an improvement on that of 1915; and it cannot be maintained now that any difficulties of a grave character exist at all. Though it is not long, historically speaking, since Italy became a compact nation by unifying her provinces, putting the Pope in his place, and recovering Lombardy and Venetia from Austria, the fact remains that Italy is a powerful State compared with the potential Jugoslavia.

For this reason it seems a pity that the "New Europe" should suggest (August 22) that, after the formation of Jugoslavia Italy should "undertake to keep no warships inside the Straits of Otranto," and should "dismantle all naval arsenals in the Adriatic." It is agreed, of course, that Italy and Jugoslavia will not seek to overawe one another—there is no conceivable reason why they should attempt to do so. That is, nevertheless, no reason why Italy should be asked to dismantle her naval arsenals, or to take her fleet round the corner. A State in Italy's position cannot remain, in the present state of the world, without means of defence by sea; and ships and arsenals must be kept somewhere. The French Mediterranean squadron, one presumes, will continue to show itself as before. So also, no doubt, will the British; and I have a recollection that the Greek Navy did fairly considerable damage when several Jugoslav groups were arrayed against the Turks. Perhaps we may treat this as a detail. The main point is the independence of the three new nations, and the fading into negligibility of statesmen and journalists who refuse to recognise this necessity.

## What America Has to Live Down.

By Ezra Pound.

### II.

AMERICA'S affairs are now very much England's affairs. America cannot expect to be taken at her own estimate, by other nations, so long as that estimate is expressed in a pseudo-professional journalese language full of altitudinous generalities and unpunctured by hard, concise statement; independent of a pre-acceptance of certain ideas current, or rather not current but static, in America and already demodé elsewhere. Neither, of course, can Americans expect to be understood if they will insist on ignoring the existence of certain European superstitions.

I use the term "superstitions" in its original meaning of *left-overs*.

To present the American case the American must first accustom himself a little to European speech. I do not mean merely to French, Italian and English nouns, verbs, and adjectives. He must have his little glossary containing such words as "Papacy," intrigue, finance.

The double word "German atrocity" has sunk in, but there are still other terms to be learnt.

America has not listened to Europe. She has tolerated a "better magazine" language, and a system of publishing which has advised her NOT to listen to Europe. The ten cent magazines have also had their amorphous generality, their breeziness, their *grandes gestes*, to the general obfuscation.

The European intellectuals, and the English readers, have been so deaved and bored with these things, that only after definite acts of some magnitude are they likely to take up again their curiosity about the American mind.

The American mind doesn't really matter a dime. What matters is a sort of diffused American decency.

This decency is at last mobilised. It has not yet shed all of its ridiculous trappings, but it is mobilised.

The mobilisation is, for the moment, all that Europe has taken in; all that England, or a part of England, has in any way taken in. I am not sure but that the Cocoa Press has stolen a march on the rest of the country in perceiving that American good-will is too large a thing to be wholly neglected; to be wholly relegated to the realm of unimportant, the dull, the undiscussable.

American "literature" is and will probably remain ridiculous, and aesthetically null. Many American publications (not excluding the "New Republic") will remain unreadable, and the worst sort of mental poison for young men intending to write. In this latter respect America will not differ from England.

But for all that, the more alert English reader should not wholly neglect the study of American mentality, of American character as discernible even beneath this haze of bad writing. Admitted that some of the writing is as bad as, or even, yes, even worse than much of the bad writing in England. Nothing that America says will be of the slightest interest, for the simple reason that America has tolerated and developed this system of vapulous writing which has no relation to fact.

It has been pointed out by more than one historian that Rome tolerated the rhetoricians, the makers of panegyrics, the orators who banked upon "copia" or abundance of speech and reference. Then the Empire went to pieces.

America has tolerated and sipped and guzzled the pink-tea style of the "Century" and the wide and wallowing whoop.

France has held firm, has held as no other nation. Stendhal, Flaubert, De Maupassant, the De Goncourt had schooled France in a speech and a style where word and fact cling together.

France has and has had her gushers, but there has been this solid core in her intellectual life; and in the preceding century Voltaire has committed prodigies in cleaning out humbug.

But America now finds herself *without* an idiom, without form of *written* expression which will convey her meaning across the Atlantic.

The guns and men and smoked pigs and tinned beef convey their part of the meaning all right enough, and to their speech the Allies are duly attentive. But if the business man now complain that the European intellectual (who in the end does govern, even though it be by mortmain) will not attend to his "philosophy" or psychology or whatever else it is that moves him, the answer is again quite clear. You would throw out any clerk who wrote an invoice in the style of the literati whom you have tolerated. And the affairs of the intellect cannot be run in a language looser and less efficient than that needed for the affairs of the Chewing Gum Trust, the Cuspidor, Ltd., or the Amalgamated Pants-Button Co.

I don't ask anyone to take English Publications as a model. In "Studies in Contemporary Mentality" I dealt with them at greater length than any of their own writers have ever troubled to do, and this is not the place to rehash the matter.

Germany with her pack of trained scoundrels has preached lying, has preached the breaking of treaties. The Hun is a dirty swine, and Hindenburg a diseased rhinoceros, the "Daily Mail" is a spotless paladin—I grant all the popular contentions you like.

The Anglo-Saxon, with an intention of truth-telling as pure as you like, but with a reprehensible laziness, has by his neglect of literature, by his carelessness in regard to the written speech, got himself into the mess of being very nearly unable to say what he means. The trouble is not incurable. But the disease may as well be recognised, diagnosed, and campaigned against.

Who in Europe, for example, could be expected to peruse the following paragraph:—

"When the war broke out in 1914 everyone in America was astonished and almost everyone was quite unable to understand the fundamental causes of it. Many of us were more than astonished; we were thoroughly out of patience and without immediate and deep sympathies for either side in the struggle. America had lived in isolation. Though our Government had been to some extent drawn into the swirl of world politics, we had no deep-laid scheme for exploitation of inferior races, no colonial ambitions, no determination to force our products on other nations and no fear of neighbouring governments. We did not know that we were being jealously watched and that spies recorded our temper and our frailties. We did not see that we had anything to do with a European war. Of the ever-vexed Balkans we knew little or nothing, though we had heard of the 'sick man of Europe,' who seemed to be an unconscionable time in shuffling off this mortal coil. We had read of Hague conferences and peace societies and peace palaces, and believed that war was too absurd to be really possible between the nations of western Europe."

How, after three years of palaver, is the European or English intellectual to know that this paragraph means something?

It means, gentle and benevolent reader, that the guileless inhabitant of Michigan and the lake shore adjoining is beginning to forget Bunker's Hill. It was written in or before August, 1917.

Phrased succinctly, it means that the scattered denizen of the uncorrelated continent is beginning to recognise that Bunker's Hill was fought nearly a hundred and fifty years ago. (The school histories are being re-written, and will point out that "a century and more has elapsed since" . . .)

During the interim, various things have happened. There have been revolutions and several republics in France. Bismarck has talked about blood and iron,

Kultur has been propagated, and even in England there have been Reform Bills, Increases of Franchise, Trimming of Lords, and more recently a huge, peaceful, almost unperceived, revolution, greatly enlarging the voting list (of the future).

## The Idea of Function.

In discussions of the basis of National Guilds, we have heard a great deal of the idea of function. It has been suggested that it is the most important idea in political thought, and that only by reference to it can societies be established so that they endure. Others, again, who have not been so impressed with the power and novelty of the idea, have welcomed it as at least of some service, though signs have not been wanting of a tendency to limit its sphere considerably. I propose to try to carry forward the discussion by showing that the term is not free from ambiguity. I do not suggest that this ambiguity infects the position of, for example, Mr. Ramiro de Maeztu. His use of the term seems consistent, because he constantly interprets it in a rigid sense. Should this sense prove to be narrow, it may account for the paradoxical character of some of his results. Mere paradox, of course, never proves falsity, or even confusion. But an unexpected tendency to accept it may be accounted for by the presence of the ambiguity in ordinary speech.

Ordinary philosophical terminology seems to contain two senses for the word "function," derived one from its use in mathematics and the other from its use in biology. Some relation between the two, both in respect of origin and of meaning, may be expected, and can, no doubt, be traced. Yet the two are quite distinct, and not a little confusion has been caused by the failure of writers to make clear to themselves, let alone to their readers, which sense of the term they really desire to use.

On the whole, the mathematical sense seems to be the more technical and less familiar. In this sense  $x$  is a function of  $y$  if  $x$  varies with  $y$  and depends for its value on the value of  $y$ . We are dealing, that is to say, with a relation of logical dependence; we are not making an assertion about any thing which exists. Mr. de Maeztu's political philosophy seems to depend entirely on the use of the term "function," which he maintains with perfect consistency. Social activities, he holds, are functions of the values to which they refer, which they create, or which they bring into being. By the organisation of society on the functional principle he means that no institution or other social unit has any right to exist for its own sake, but only as a function of the things or values which it intends; that laws should be framed, rights recognised, privileges granted, and rewards distributed on the basis furnished by this principle alone. Neither because any individual would like it, nor because any group thinks it good, but only because of the values to which it leads is any change to have the shadow of a claim to recognition. Human beings, therefore, have only a derived importance. They are "functionaries," the bearers of values, and by the values they bear ye shall know them. Only thus can you limit their wills, which, in their own nature, are infinite; or curb their desires, which have in themselves no unity. Things are supreme over persons. Regard for personality as such is a superstition. Singly or collectively, it is nothing but a function of values which lie outside it.

When we turn to the biological sense of the term, we appear at first to be in a different region, separate and utterly disconnected. If we take the term quite strictly, its significance is purely descriptive. No idea of purpose is involved. That breathing is a function of the lungs means little more than that the organ used in

breathing is the lungs. Anything the organism does may be called a function. It is even doubtful, perhaps, whether it is necessary that a function should be "normally" performed by the organism. And this sense regularly appears in psychology also. The act of judging, for example, is in the biological sense a function of the mind which makes the assertion. So in the case of desire and will. What the end may be, whether I ought to will the thing or not, what the consequences are, how it affects other people—all these things are quite irrelevant. They do not make the act of will any the less a function of my mind. The fact remains, however, that we commonly use the term "function" to describe an activity with the distinct implication that in doing so we estimate it. It may be asked, e.g., What function, permanent or temporary, does the employing class perform? To do this, plainly, is to depart from the purely descriptive sense of the term which ought to be normal in biology, and to introduce the idea of value. The mathematical sense of the term may be discerned through a glass, very darkly. Why, we may ask, does a term which we might expect to be purely descriptive take on a critical meaning in such a determined fashion that only by an effort can we dissociate ourselves from it?

By two distinct types of writers do we find the idea of evaluation constantly attached to that of function. One is the idealist and the other the evolutionist philosopher. In the first case the ethical use of the term is so old that one could almost treat the descriptive sense as due to abstraction from it. It received classical statement in some of the most celebrated passages of Plato and Aristotle; it implied then, and, indeed, hardly less now, a whole philosophy. The good of anything lies in its distinctive function, its purpose, or final end. "The function of anything," said Plato, "is that for which it is either the sole or the best instrument." If you wish, continued Aristotle, to discover what is happiness, or the good for man, you must consider his function. It is the exercise of the rational capacities of the soul, and to do this excellently is to live well. And for both writers the principle upon which the State (or for that matter the soul) must be organised is that everyone should mind his own business, should find his work and do it. Thus he will attain the best that is possible for him.

A view like this is connected by Plato and Aristotle with important philosophical ideas about the order and purpose of the universe, and some of these, at least, are shared by their modern successors. To discuss them would take us much too far afield. But it is what has most usually been meant by the functional principle in relation to societies, and it differs acutely from a position like that of Mr. de Maeztu. If by "function" we mean "distinctive achievement" we unite in a peculiar way the biological and the mathematical senses of the term. We suggest that any activity, or indeed any thing and living being, has a nature of its own, by which it is defined and towards which it tends if it develops. Its purpose, that which gives it what value it has, is its own completed form, not something outside of it. This, and this alone, expresses its function. Society appears as a system of different but co-operating activities, conspiring together to bring about an end which can only be defined as their own full development. For Mr. de Maeztu, on the other hand, psychical and social activities are not functions in this sense. Man has no business of his own, no peculiar task or value. Possessed by pride, he only imagines that he has, on which disaster follows. In reality, "no consideration is due to him except as a possible instrument of the eternal values." The function is only "the relation between the organ and the end." Men cannot be good. They can only do good.

M. W. ROBESON.

## The Workshop.

### III.—COLLECTIVE CONTRACT.

A TYRO in social economics would see at a glance that these workshop committees are the first and not the last word in workshop organisation. Where the real business is production, it is evident that a workshop committee concerned only with amenity and discipline has but a short course to run. It may and does show some myopic gropings for a new status; as yet it has not realised that higher status comes from control of production and not from responsibility for discipline. It is, therefore, inevitable that the more alert and aggressive minds should look beyond discipline to production, beyond form to substance. They may say, in effect, "Give us control of production and discipline will follow. Without control of production, discipline must be imposed from above, and, therefore, be artificial." Yet another consideration weighs with these minds. A committee is, after all, a mechanism. It must be constructed for a purpose. The object must first be formulated; the organisation is next formed to achieve it. It is clearly of first importance that we should know what purpose is taking shape before we can appreciate the value and significance of the workshop committee. If, for example, the formative elements in the Labour army were willing to continue wavery indefinitely, were content to leave the profiteers in control, we need look no further than to the present orthodox workshop committee, which would remain an emollient to soothe industrial irritation. If, however, it became evident that workshop profiteering (we may, for the moment, disregard the commercial aspect) was doomed, if the organised workers were aiming at industrial democracy in the workshop, then it would follow that the structure of these committees would be adapted to the end in view. At the present moment, any movement, however restricted, aiming at control over production, must be clothed with significance: must be regarded as an initiatory effort, as a sure sign that our deduction is sound. Nor would it be surprising if the movement came from the Clyde, a district where they are not afraid of fundamental principles: where, more than elsewhere, efficient capitalism is confronted with Labour, organised and studious.

In a pamphlet issued by the Paisley Trades and Labour Council\* comes a call to pass beyond discipline to the productive processes and an organisation outlined to realise it. "Only the apathy or disloyalty of the workers themselves," write Messrs. Gallacher and Paton, "can prevent the works committees having in a very short time the experience and the authority to enable them to undertake in one large contract, or in two or three contracts at most, the entire business of production throughout the establishment. Granted an alliance with the organised office-workers—a development which is assured so soon as the Shop Committees are worthy of confidence and influential enough to give adequate protection—these contracts might include the work of design and the purchase of raw material, as well as the operations of manufacture and construction. The contract price or wages—for it is still wages—will be remitted by the firm to the Works Committee in a lump sum, and distributed to the workers by their own representatives or officials, and by whatever system or scale of remuneration they may choose to adopt. If, as is likely, a great Industrial Union has by this time taken the place of the sectional unions, these financial intrusions may be carried out by its District Executive instead of by the Works Committee. A specially enlightened union of this sort would no doubt elect to pool the earnings of its members and pay to each a regular salary, weekly, monthly or quarterly, exacting,

\* "Towards Industrial Democracy." A Memorandum on Workshop Control. By W. Gallacher and J. Paton.

of course, from the recipient a fixed minimum record of work for the period."

The writers' conception of works organisation must be coloured by the end in view, and we may, therefore, expect from them proposals that go beyond discipline and amenity. They suggest:—

- i. A Works Committee, elected by and from all the trade unionists, skilled and unskilled, in the various departments, one representative to every fifty workers.
- ii. Departmental Committees, to work under the direction of the Workshop Committee. Amongst other duties, such as ensuring trade union standards and agreements, negotiating with the departmental management, recording changes in shop customs, the root of the matter is found in its proposed function as the sole medium of contract between the firm and the workers, and to exercise full bargaining powers on behalf of the men and women in the department in fixing time allowance where the premium bonus operates, and rates where piece-work obtains. Individual bargaining disappears; collective contract supplants it.

From the department as the centre, Messrs. Gallacher and Paton argue outwards. The Departmental Committee reports weekly to the Works Committee, which naturally preserves a balance as between the several departments, and deals with the firm precisely as the Departmental Committee deals with the departmental management. The Works Committee, in its turn, is to report to the Allied Trades Committee, which is to co-ordinate methods generally in its own district, and be the sole intermediary between the Workshop Committees, and all and any joint bodies of employers, State Committees, Government Departments. This Allied Trades Committee, in short, must not only co-ordinate methods, but shape policy.

It will be observed that the Allied Trades Committee is really the pendant of existing Trade Union organisation. With the formation of Industrial Unions, its function would be absorbed by the larger and stronger body.

The workshop organisation here figured by these two Labour leaders is evidently, both in form and purpose, a very different thing from the official workshop committees, described in Section 1; about which some employers and social writers have grown lyrical. The reason is simple: discipline is transcended in the real economic function: is implicit in that function: springs naturally out of fruitful soil, and need no longer be artificially imposed. As the greater includes the less, so the principle of collective contract carries discipline and amenity in its stride.

As its name implies, collective contract is frankly the halfway stage between existing workshop conditions and Guild organisation. It is obviously a contract between employers and employees to consolidate wages into one, or two contracts instead of five or ten thousand contracts, as is the case to-day. It remains the wage system of payment, inasmuch as labour is still valued as a commodity, and, as such, goes into the cost of the finished product: remains a commodity of fluctuating value, subject to changing market conditions, instead of a human value, unchangeable, in the financial sense, through the vicissitudes of local, national or international barter. Messrs. Gallacher and Paton recognise this:—"Now, it is true, that even when we have got so far, we shall not yet have destroyed the wage system. But we shall have undermined it. Capitalism will still flourish, but for the first time in its sordid history it will be in real jeopardy. With such a grip on the industrial machine as we have postulated, and backed by the resources of a great Industrial Union, or it might even be a Federation of Industrial Unions, the Committees could soon force up contract prices to a point that would approximate to the full exchange value of the product, and put the profiteer out of business." On this last point, the

authors are on difficult if not disputable ground. Exchange value is what the entrepreneur can make it, and so long as he has contract prices to work on, he can indefinitely plunder the consumer. In the ultimate, Guild organisation, or whatever approximates closest to it, must control distribution, which is a process of production. Any recognition of the commercial control of distribution would carry in its train disastrous results. But the collective contract here adumbrated makes no pretence to being in itself an economic system; it is what it claims to be—a development of the wage system, a stage in workshop control, incidentally of discipline, mainly of production.

Whilst the orthodox workshop committees are static in conception, based on the permanent hypothesis, the principle of collective contract possesses within itself the magic of its own metamorphosis. It breaks into the sacred ark of the capitalist covenant, setting in motion forces hitherto deemed to be strictly within the control of the employer. Take, for example, the proposal that an Industrial Union should receive the total labour earnings and return them to the workers in weekly, monthly, or quarterly payments. At the first blush that looks like a simple cash transaction. But it might and ought to mean much more. How do the employers obtain the credits necessary to them in the conduct of their business? They obtain credit, either in the form of new capital or bank accommodation, strictly upon the understanding that they can control the demand and supply of the labour commodity. It is only by maintaining this control that they can pay interest and repay loans. There is literally no other way. But the banks, in their turn, co-ordinate credits mainly on estimates of future production and partly by controlling the gold reserves—gold being the basis of the banking system. Now suppose that collective contract established itself throughout the industrial system. It would represent an annual payment *in gold* of about £1,000,000,000 per annum. This does not inconvenience the Banks, because the gold values quickly trickle back into their coffers, through the accounts of retailers and wholesalers. If the Industrial Unions kept an ordinary bank account and paid cheques in the usual way, it would remain a cash transaction, and nothing more. But is it likely that an organisation capable, not only of influencing credits but of accumulating gold, would be content to let such stupendous advantages remain with the capitalist organisation? An Industrial Union that knew its business would—indeed, must—constitute itself a Bank, and pay its members by honouring their cheques. I have elsewhere written:—“The object of measuring the wage-slave’s labour by gold is that the dividends paid out of labour shall be paid in gold. The valuation of labour and the products of labour by a gold standard are obviously the perquisites of the present banking system, and are a fruitful cause of tyranny. The system puts a heavy premium upon gold, and a tyrannous discount upon labour.”\* No change in the present system of currency is possible until Labour consciously controls the productive processes. If Labour travelled as far as the point indicated by Messrs. Gallacher and Paton, it is at least possible that it would utilise the co-ordinated credit that automatically falls under its control in a way very disconcerting to currency monopolists.

Nor must we omit to note carefully that the authors take into their purview the purchase of raw material. There is no reason why they should leave this to the employers, because the employers obtain credit for the raw material upon their guaranteed control of the labour commodity, a control that, by hypothesis, has passed to the Industrial Union. Thus, the Industrial Union Bank, either on the balance of savings left in its care, or by pledging the continued labour credits of its

members, all of them actual producers, could itself purchase the raw material, and cut loose from capitalist control in this respect as in the simpler process of labour supply and organisation.

Although Messrs. Gallacher and Paton are, I think, intent upon a more modest programme, it would be more prudent if they faced the inevitable results of their proposal. They would seize two functions hitherto assigned to the capitalist—the control of labour and the purchase of raw material. It is essential that they should accept the implications of their principle. These implications, if grasped by the workers, accentuate the motive of collective contract, and rendering its achievement vastly more attractive.

S. G. H.

## Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

To those who know no more of the work of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, than the London stage has produced, Mr. Boyd’s history\* will be welcome. The sense of grievance that pervades the book does not detract from its merits as a history; on the contrary, it indicates some of the reasons for the failure of the Abbey Theatre to establish itself as a National Theatre. There is the economic grievance that the Abbey Theatre was not sufficiently well endowed to be able to produce plays that the public would not pay to see; there is the grievance that Yeats, whose dramatic work is characterised by what Mr. Boyd calls “that vague nervelessness” which was only overcome in his “Deirdre” by the inherent drama of the situation, is not admired as Mr. Boyd thinks he ought to be; there is also the grievance that Mr. St. John Ervine, a Garden Suburb “realist,” should have become manager of the Abbey Theatre with a programme of his own that did not maintain the ideals and traditions that had already ceased to be operative at the Abbey Theatre. That Mr. St. John Ervine has since resigned is a fact that does not afford Mr. Boyd as much gratification as it ought to do; and he prophesies most lugubriously a revival of the national drama of Ireland after the war.

But in spite of his grievances, Mr. Boyd’s book seems to me to have missed its chance. He shows clearly that the rise of the national drama of Ireland was simply part of a well-nigh universal rupture with the old theatrical traditions, that it began not with Ireland but with Irishmen in London, and that it has run a parallel course with the rise and fall of the repertory theatre movement in this country. The original intention was to do for Ireland what the Continental dramatists had done for England—that is, to teach us not to “look within ourselves and write,” but to look abroad, preferably to Norway, “for an example and an inspiration.” How much nationalism there was in the original project may be seen from the sop thrown to Cerberus at the end of the manifesto, which promised that if the Irish were very good, and gave the Irish Literary Theatre “even a small welcome, it would produce, somewhere about the old festival of Beltaine, at the beginning of every spring, a play founded upon an Irish subject.” That the Irish Literary Theatre was superseded by the “Irish National Dramatic Society” is the only thing that can be said in its favour.

The Irish National Theatre discovered the Irish peasantry about the same time that they were discovered by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

\* “National Guilds,” p. 182, “The Finance of the Guilds.”

\* “The Contemporary Drama of Ireland.” By Ernest A. Boyd. (T. Fisher Unwin. 5s. net.)



It was a race against time to determine which was the more characteristic expression of national life in Ireland. Synge recognised this when he wrote, in the preface to the "Playboy": "In Ireland, for a few years more, we have a popular imagination that is fiery, and magnificent, and tender; so that those of us who wish to write start with a chance that is not given to writers in places where the spring-time of the local life has been forgotten, and the harvest is a memory only, and the straw has been turned into bricks." The work that was done resembled very closely the collection of folk-songs in England; it was an attempt to preserve an historical record of the art of the people, vainly disguised as an attempt to revive it. Yeats' argument that "if you would uplift the man of the roads, you must write about the roads [why not about the man?], or about the people of romance, or about great historical people," just misses the truth of the matter; you must interpret the man to himself, and show him a future that he can live in. "Realism" fails because it only reproduces the present; romance fails because it either does not tell the truth, or sees it only in the past; the only art that can uplift anyone is prophetic art. "We know what we are, but we know not what we may be"; and if art cannot tell us that, with conviction, we may call it "National" or what we please, but it must come down to amusing us, as the Abbey Theatre has done, or suffer eclipse.

The real problem is how we are to become human amid an ever-increasing mechanisation of life; and the difficulty in solving the problem is that our artists do not seem to understand it. Either, like the Futurists, they describe us as geometrical figures, and offer us machine-made music, or they try to abstract the spirit from its phenomena, and lapse into mysticism. In either case, they are as didactic as Mr. Arnold Bennett was when he called a play, "What the Public Wants"; and anyone who has suffered, as I have suffered, from Yeats' incurable habit of making speeches before the performance of his plays, will see even in the extracts from his manifestos published in this book one of the chief reasons for the failure of his enterprise. A national drama ought to tell us what a people really is; but Yeats always told people that they ought to be what he said they were, and no nation can tolerate for long being told that it had a magnificent past in which everyone was either a ghost, or acquainted with ghosts, or about to become a ghost. Barrie has his own streak of "Peter-Pantheism," but he uses it in the service of civilisation by touching humanity to tenderness. Yeats' fairies may be more authentic, but I imagine that the truest symbol of Ireland is a Ford tractor painted green.

A national drama can only be created by men imbued with the national spirit: Yeats and his companions were antiquarians with artistic gifts, who have perhaps enriched literature with some otiose studies, but have not interpreted Ireland either to herself or the world. It was Synge who lived among the people, and recognised that the possibility of making literature of their lives was rapidly diminishing to extinction; and it did not occur to him to make literature of their possibilities. The proof that it never was a national drama, but only a coterie drama, is provided by Mr. Boyd himself; the company has dispersed, the plays which Mr. Boyd admires have disappeared from the repertory, the audience demands its farces and melodramas just like the vulgar English, and such of the Irish players as can be seen on the London stage do not exhibit any astounding genius. The Irish National Theatre has suffered the penalty of looking backwards; it may revive and become national when it recognises that Ireland has a future, and interprets it.

## A Reformer's Note-Book.

EDUCATION.—The fundamental fact about working-class education is that so long as it remains under the control of the governing plutocracy, it will be controlled in the interests of Capitalism. This is so axiomatic that if the plutocracy were to deny it sincerely and the working-classes themselves were to confirm the denial, the affirmation would still stand; for much more reliable than men's opinions of what is are the facts on which opinions float; and of these facts none is more certain than that a ruling class, of whatever character, will aim at making its subjects pleasing and useful to itself. A ruling class whose dearest possession is military power will aim at inculcating the military virtues of discipline and obedience in its subjects; a ruling class whose motive is honour or glory will aim at developing an appreciation of these qualities in the people it governs; and with the same certainty that these assertions have been proved in history we may affirm that a ruling class of Capitalists whose master-passion is Money will aim by means of education at making its subjects profitable. It follows from this that if the working-classes are to be truly educated and not merely rendered profitable to their Capitalist rulers, other means of education must be found than the State-schools controlled by the ruling classes. To enter a State-school, the control of which is in the hands of the State-rulers (to wit, in our own case, the Capitalist classes), is infallibly to surrender oneself to a process called by the fine name of education, but more exactly describable as adaptation to the ends of Capitalism. On the other hand, to refuse to enter any such school (though nobody can refuse nowadays since the said adaptation to capitalism has been made compulsory) is to be debarred, as things are, from even the crumbs of knowledge. What is a working-class to do? There are two means of escape, one complete but difficult, the other partial but easy. The first is to demand that national education shall be controlled *not* by the State, but by the teachers themselves, banded together as a liberal profession in the form of a responsible Guild. Such a Guild chartered by the State to bring its best efforts to bear in education would in all probability speedily become spiritually autonomous, and even critical of the State itself. Its function being education and not merely the pleasing of the State-rulers, its criterion of education would tend to become the increase of intelligence rather than the adaptability of its charges to Capitalism. In a word, a Guild of Educationists would tend to education rather than to adaptation. The difficulty, of course, is in procuring the assent of the State to the autonomy of a Teaching Guild. The second and alternative means (in some ways notably inferior) is the provision by Trade Unions and other working-class organisations of schools, classes, reading and study-circles, and lectures of their own. Already, the Labour College and the Workers' Educational Association have engaged themselves in this task; but their activities need to be multiplied and much more generally supported by Labour. Labour, in order to emancipate itself economically, must emancipate itself educationally. It must unlearn much that is taught it in the State-schools and learn much that is never taught there. Here is an opportunity for Brains to make themselves of service in their new partnership with Labour. But they must be prepared to overcome first the prejudice of Labour against Brains.

EUGENICS.—It is a healthy instinct that finds something indecent in the subject of Eugenics. The reason, however, is not that eugenics mainly concerns

sex, but that eugenics mainly concerns the sex-relations of the working-classes. It is obvious from the literature and conversation, as well as from the constitution of the propagandist eugenic societies, that eugenics is for the poor. The application of such a phrase as the sterilisation of the unfit is never made to the rich, who are, in fact, tacitly excluded from the purview of the whole subject. Let us repeat that eugenics is mainly concerned with the sex-relations of the poor. It is natural that this should be the case since the subject first arose in connection with the poor-law. Investigation proved that many of the human objects of charity housed in workhouses, asylums and prisons at the double expense of society—their cost of maintenance and the loss of their labour-power—owed their unfitness for earning a living to their parents. They had been, in fact, ill brought-up. To admit, however, that this ill bringing-up is a remediable social defect to which the abolition of the wage-system would put an end, would be, at the same time, to admit the need of an industrial revolution. And this would never do. Hence, the theory was invented that it was not the *nurture* of the children or the circumstances of the family that should be held responsible, but the *nature* of the children and the nature of the parents. This step taken, the course was clear for eugenics. Since the State (that is, the Capitalist classes) had an interest in saving the rates and in securing labour-power; since, again, the working-classes could be treated in consequence of their inferior status in much the same way as cattle and horses; since, still further, it was now evident that the race was liable to decline if left to itself under the conditions imposed on it by modern industry; and, finally, since the Capitalist classes knew perfectly well that they had no intention of changing these conditions for the much better—there was only one plan open, namely, to introduce as far as possible the practices of the stock-yard into the relations of the working-classes. The instinctive realisation of all this upon each side in the game accounts for the phenomena of the movement. On the one side there is the phenomenon of superiority due to the semi-consciousness of the wealthy classes that they are really sex-legislating for their specific inferiors; and, on the other side, there is the sense of indecency and distrust already mentioned. Between these two feelings there is nothing much likely to be done. But this is not to allow, nevertheless, that a problem of good breeding does not exist. As a matter of fact, the problem is ever-present in every race and nation. What must be maintained, however, is that for the most part the problem of human good breeding must be approached, not directly but indirectly. Like all problems of sex it is usually best to discuss every other subject connected with it save the problem of breeding itself. Thus, before discussing eugenics, it is proper that every circumvallation should be considered and dealt with in the hope that by the time they had been reduced the problem itself would have disappeared. Have we, for example, secured healthy surroundings and conditions for every child born into our society? Are its parents engaged in healthy and well-paid occupations? Have we placed within the reach of every child the best that society can provide in the way of schools, teachers, playgrounds, holidays? Have we, in fine, done everything else *save* legislate for actual breeding? If we have not—and it goes without saying that we have not—then the discussion of eugenics is premature, out of place, and, in the strictest sense, socially indecent. Only when all has been done for nurture that society can devise ought nature to be interfered with; by which time, as the example of the wealthy classes whose nurture is carefully considered shows, nature either needs none of our interference or can be safely left to the individuals concerned. This is to say that while nurture is a social duty, eugenics is an individual duty.

## Recent Verse.

- (1) "Ballades of François Villon." Interpreted into English verse by Paul Hookham.
  - (2) "Songs and Sayings of Walther von der Vogelweide, Minnesænger." Englished by Frank Betts.
- (The Sheldonian Series of Reprints and Renderings of Masterpieces in all Languages. Blackwell, Oxford. 2s. 6d. net each.)

In a recent review I made the suggestion that some of the younger poets, whose technical accomplishments are greater than their stock of ideas, would do well to apply themselves to verse-translation. Mr. Blackwell seems to have arrived at much the same conclusion, for his new Sheldonian series will furnish just the medium for publishing work of this nature. Although, as I will demonstrate, the two volumes under consideration are not above criticism, they are sufficiently well done to earn the title of book—using this word in a sense beyond the formal dictionary definition.

Mr. Paul Hookham has set himself a difficult task. To translate poetry is hard; to translate poetry in the narrow restrictions of the ballade is immensely so; to do all this with Rossetti, Swinburne, W. E. Henley, and John Payne (not to mention Mr. De Vere Stacpoole) as your predecessors, is either heroism or impertinence, according to the results.

Mr. Paul Hookham is not guilty of impertinence.

This he avoids by a wider margin than I should have judged possible from his original verses, upon which I commented with gentle harshness in an earlier review. He does well enough, in fact, to stand, and sometimes to pass, the test of comparison with previous translators. Let us take the famous rondeau beginning "Mort, j'appelle . . ." (I will quote no more of the original, since if you can read it, you will certainly not be without it). Here is one version:—

Death, of thee do I make my moan,  
Who hadst my lady away from me,  
Nor wilt assuage thine enmity  
Till with her life thou hast mine own;  
For since that hour my strength has flown.  
Lo! what wrong was her life to thee,  
Death?

Two we were, and the heart was one;  
Which now being dead, dead I must be,  
Or seem alive as lifelessly  
As in the choir the painted stone,  
Death!

Without being told, you will probably recognise this as Rossetti's. Now look at this one:—

Death! of thy rigour I complain,  
That hast my Lady torn from me,  
And yet wilt not contented be,  
Till from me too all strength be ta'en,  
For languishment of heart and brain.  
What harm did she in life to thee?  
Death!

One heart we had betwixt us twain;  
Which, being dead, I too must dree  
Death, or, like carven saints we see  
In choir, sans life to live be fain,  
Death!

That is by John Payne. Mr. Hookham translates thus:—

Death, who hast my dear mistress ta'en,  
I plead against thy harsh decree,  
That, cruel yet, thou leavest me  
To linger on where grief had slain.  
Life is to me a bitter pain;  
But how did her sweet life hurt thee,  
Death?

One heart we had, though we were twain;  
If that is dead, my life must be  
Henceforth the mockery that we see  
In statues heartless and inane,  
Death!

A tiresome critic would find a good deal to say against all these versions, but Mr. Hookham, I think, does not come off badly in spite of his "statues heartless and inane." There is also no need to make Villon sentimental (which he was not) by inserting such epithets as "dear" and "sweet" where the original uses plain nouns. But I will leave you to compare these three renderings in greater detail, and offer you another instance which you may find interesting. Do you remember this?

Suppose you screeve? or go cheap-jack?  
Or fake the broads? or fig a nag?  
Or thimble-rig? or knap a yack?  
Or pitch a snide? or smash a rag?  
Suppose you daff? or nose and lag?  
Or get the straight and land your pot?  
How do you melt the multy swag?  
Booze and the blowens cop the lot.

That is the first stanza of Villon's "Straight Tip To All Cross Coves," as adapted by W. E. Henley. Isn't it fine? Mr. Hookham's version, although closer to the original, and quite creditable in itself, sounds faint by comparison:—

Whether a hawker of bulls you be,  
With cards, dice, coins, whate'er your tricks,  
You'll get your fingers burnt, I see,  
As bodies are of heretics;  
Be you a rogue who steals and picks,  
Or robber bold; do you ruffle or slink?  
Where goes the booty? None of it sticks—  
All to waste on doxies and drink.

No, here Mr. Hookham is a bad second best, as well he might be to Henley's marvellous tour de force, which even preserves in full the rhyme-scheme of the original.

But, to quote Villon himself in one of Mr. Hookham's less happy efforts,

From citing further I desist;  
And vain is all comparison.

He generally does better than this, sometimes much better. "The Complaint of the Beautiful Armouress in Old Age" reads very well, for instance. I say it reads well, for I cannot always follow it as a translation. There is one stanza which Mr. Hookham obscures in the decency of misty paraphrases, and certainly, where Swinburne fled into asterisks, who shall reveal the naked truth? After all, the word "sadinet" can only be rendered in medical terms. And, of course, all through his translations, Mr. Hookham inserts epithets and even whole ideas for the sake of a rhyme. I know that the ballade is a very exacting form, but then, except in two cases, the full rhyme-scheme has not been kept. Having usurped this degree of freedom, Mr. Hookham might have added fewer patches of his own. Still, I know I am too fussy over these trifles, and it is certainly good to have this selection from Villon in so convenient a form.

Now as to Walther von der Vogelweide. You may know me as one of those obstinate fellows who think that poetry can be translated adequately only in a poetical form. I am well aware that many competent critics have proved the matter to be otherwise, but still I persist in my fallacy. Hence, I am at a loss to deal with these translations by Mr. Frank Betts. They are in prose and they read very nicely; but—they are in prose. Walther von der Vogelweide is not in prose—far from it. He wrote poetry, and poetry, too, of a strength, daintiness and charm (according to the subject) which would astonish those who imagine that German is incapable of such qualities. And so I wonder what readers will be attracted by this prose anthology from his works. Those who are studying Middle High German will find it useful as a crib. That mysterious band of readers known as "lovers of poetry" (hateful phrase) will not, I think, find much here to their liking, although this does not mean that

there is nothing to like. It is a pity that Mr. Betts did not attempt to versify his translations. Walther is worth the trouble. Still, even in prose (very good prose, by the way) he is not to be despised.

P. SELVER.

## Art Notes.

By B. H. Dias.

### BUILDINGS—I.

OUTSIDE a few technical journals, architecture has no modern critics. There are antiquarians who bring out two-volume studies of Palladio; there are professors of the Beaux Arts who have presumably taught Parisian builders to make their exteriors as much like interiors as possible. There are practical architects, Government architects, and arty architects; but the society which flocks to the Royal Academy, Institute, International, Futurist, Water-Colour, and Etchers' shows does not discuss the æsthetics of building. They restore old places in the country, or with infinite labour they preserve the grey-blue-green painted paneling of old London boudoirs, withdrawing-rooms, and powder-closets. "Rooms" are transported and reconstructed; old ceilings look down new walls.

London has been called the most modest city in the world, because of her concealment of treasure. She is said to have the worst architecture of any city of magnitude. This is, however, a gross and exaggerated attack. The worst houses in the world are on Campden Hill; they are brick of an undistinguished red, with whitish stone ornaments and borders and stripes and gew-gaws and scroll-saw effects favoured in the late middle of the last century.

But these deformations are neither typical of nor peculiar to London. You will find the same type of thing in any French jerry-built suburb. London is much too large and her building much too various to be criticised, or praised, or attacked all together. Reform is impossible; at least, mechanical and legislated reform is out of the question; but a discussion is not impossible, and an intolerance of certain faults might be developed.

Apart from beautiful curiosities like the old houses in Holborn, which are impractical for contemporary use, London has riches and models. There is the old eighteenth century brick, and there are the beautiful Regency houses, both preferable to the work of 1850 and after, the work of the Prince Consort period and the modern apeing of America. (Americans, by the way, tell me that London gets only second and third rate American designs; but I will come to that later.)

The horror of London is its grey-yellow brick. It is the horror of Islington; it is the horror of the districts south of the Thames through which one passes on train coming from Dover. In the more pretentious houses there is added to this the horror of machine-cut stone trimmings. I do not know whether these borders, copings, cornices, and so on are stone or a composition moulded into horrible forms and indented with "ornaments." The borders are common both to yellow and bad-red brick houses.

They are also found dividing the brickwork in the imitations of the Hampton Court period. My general impression is that there is no good work done in this mixture of brick and whitish stone, although I know I have seen houses in Mayfair done more carefully than elsewhere. The style is dangerous and almost never successful. The earlier (presumably the 1875 to 1895) middle-grade house adds the horror of bad machine designs in stained glass, ascending toward Walter Craneism.

Some of the best Georgian brick is in Sloane Street, and here at least one finds, in some cases, one hallmark of the good façade, the graduation of windows. As the beauty of a Greek temple depends on the irregu-

larity of the spacing of its pillars, so the simple composition of the oblong house front, punctuated by the four, six, or more smaller oblongs, depends almost wholly upon the careful proportion of the smaller oblongs. When one thinks of house after house, often called palazzi, in Italy, made beautiful by ever so little ornament, but by ever so fine a proportion of windows, one is inclined to curse modern builders. Grant a ground floor of rough stone, the doorway need not be, but is often, arched, the single window covered with a heavy hand-wrought iron grill, the two or three great windows of the *piano nobile*, perhaps a balcony or several balconies, the narrower lower windows above it, and the still smaller windows at the top if the house has a fourth floor, one has the beginning of a beautiful city, and a model practical for the town living-house of to-day. Grant even the early Georgian restraint, the difference between the fine old and the cheap hideous modern, in this *genre* where there is a complete absence of ornament, is solely in the proportion of the ascending rows of windows, and, perhaps, a few pounds more expenditure for the doorway. But the graduation of windows is not a matter of building cost, it is a matter of architectural taste and knowledge and care.

Like all the properties of good art it is of an utter simplicity. It is the veriest beginning of things. I walk down Dean Street finding a house with half of its ground floor devoted to groceries and the other to dingy furniture; there is a beautiful grill over the door; there is a glimpse of a spacious and beautiful stairway. All through Dean Street and the streets adjoining are beautiful doorways and well-cut frames for the doors. I do not believe that these houses were more expensive than the bad houses built us to-day, but granting that short-lease tenants will not pay for carved door-posts, the question of windows remains.

Is anything but the indifference of owners and stupidity of architects responsible for this fundamental perversity?

A basement-house has certain difficulties to overcome which the Italian palazzo has not; to keep the basement from being hideous one has to use either priceless city space or be very careful. Let us not run mad with theory or go building garden suburbs too rashly. But there are sound principles of architecture, and architecture can be an art, though it must be a very accommodating art. Its technique is the art of fitting a building to a use, and the evils of architecture are all, or nearly all, due to non-utilitarian excrescence. The worst architecture is architecture that tries to be "artistic." It should aim at being architectural. The æsthetic of the architectural is the least explored æsthetic of our time. There are fine examples of it in London, and in buildings constructed within the last ten or twenty years, but their qualities are very often concealed from us by a wash of bad "ornament" stultifying the whole. Yet the architect is, or can be, quite as much, or more, of an artist than the adolescent who pays a guinea for the privilege of exhibiting a few sketches; he may have as much right to individual recognition, outside his purely business relations. He might even send private-view cards to "representatives of the Press."

#### OUT OF PLACE.

(Thoughts of an armed civilian in an artillery observation post.)

Why don't those golden trees try to forget

That Autumn's gone, and to wear green were wise?  
The war, no doubt, has held them all enthralled,

The wanton, Spring, has ta'en them by surprise.  
But more astonished I to find myself

Sitting up here, the hand of death to wield,  
I think I am about as out of place

As those black shell-holes on that bright green field.

B.E.F.

R. P. CASTLE.

## Views and Reviews.

### THE COMMONWEALTH SPIRIT.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Alfred E. Zimmern's book of essays\* has already received the tribute of a leading article in the literary supplement of the "Times" (under the inevitable heading, "Nationality True and False"), I find the last essay in the book, "Three Doctrines in Conflict," much the most interesting. It may be true, although the "Times" says it, that "the political future, we are assured on high authority, belongs to" the principle of nationality; and policy may, therefore, dictate that of nationality, as of the dead, nothing but good shall be spoken. The fact is, of course, that there is no principle which is not susceptible of the same pro and contra treatment which Mr. Zimmern here applies to the principle of nationality; the advocates of any principle always assume that it will be interpreted beneficially, the opponents always assume that it will be interpreted prejudicially to the interests of mankind. In both cases they rely not on the principle itself, but on their judgment of the psychological re-actions it may provoke; and the historically trained theorist, who sees both the admirable Czecho-Slovaks and the abominable Sinn Feiners, to say nothing of the detestable Germans, as examples of nationality in politics, is apt to be an annoyance to both sides. But as no one expects final settlements in practical politics, and the practical politician labours always under the necessity of getting something done, we may leave him to his task of applying the principle of nationality to the political future undisturbed by any theoretical criticism, certain that he will speedily discover in practice the limitations of the principle which he now regards as being capable of universal application.

The three doctrines in conflict are, of course, Prussianism (which corresponds to Señor de Maeztu's "Authority"), Bolshevism (which corresponds to Señor de Maeztu's "Liberty"), and the principle of the Commonwealth (which does not correspond to Señor de Maeztu's "Function"). Personally, I think it inaccurate to speak of the principle of the Commonwealth; it seems to me to be a practice of government expressing an attitude towards humanity that has been determined by experience, a practice that has no theoretical origin or justification but is derived and justified empirically. Like the word "gentleman," it is incapable of exact definition; it expresses a "tone," a direction, an example, rather than a method. It is essentially human and complex, not theoretical and simple; it implies a type of man who is capable of using both authority and liberty, and is, therefore, open to criticism by both sets of fanatics who cannot understand the complexity of the ideal. It is a mistake to call the Commonwealth democratic; it depends so entirely on, and is so limited to, a certain type of man, that it is aristocratic—to paraphrase Lincoln, it is government of the best, by the best, for the best.

It is curious only to those who have not yet accepted the modern scientific demonstration of the universality of types of minds and mental symbols that the clearest demonstration of what the Commonwealth implies comes from another empirical art, the art of therapeutic psychology. In Dr. Brock's pamphlet, to which I referred some weeks ago, there is a tabulated trinity of medical prescription in nervous cases; the "authoritarian" doctor says: "You are ill. Take this and it will cure you"; the "libertarian" doctor says: "There is nothing wrong with you—and you have only got to realise it"; but the modern type of "ergo-therapist" says: "You are ill, and can make yourself better by your own exertions": and defines the doctor's duty as that of helping the patient to help himself. It is no exaggeration to describe politics as social neuroses and psychoses: Gib-

\* "Nationality and Government." By Alfred E. Zimmern. (Chatto & Windus. 10s. 6d. net.)

bon noticed long ago that "happy nations have no history," and the German who said: "Man does not desire happiness; only the Englishman does that": died in a madhouse. But he had demonstrated, at least, that the idea of the Commonwealth was operative in England, even if it were limited only to the world of desire, or the astral world, as the Theosophists call it.

The Commonwealth practice is determined by the desire to help people to help themselves. It makes necessary at times the exercise of authority, and is promptly denounced for "Prussianism"; but Prussianism regards the exercise of authority as a good in itself, while the Commonwealth uses it only as a necessary means to the end of helping people to help themselves. At other times, it uses the principle of liberty, grants the right of self-determination to the Boers within the Union of South Africa, for example, or for nearly a century in the home country makes a political creed of *laissez-faire*—and is promptly denounced for its Bolshevism. At present, it usually swings from one extreme to the other, from doing nothing for people to doing everything for them; but as everything in Nature tends towards a mean, so our experience of self-government tends to educate us in self-control, and practical politicians themselves have to justify their office by the profession of public service.

The ideal which it strives to realise is that of levelling up the condition of mankind to the autonomy that proffers willing service, or willingly accepts responsibility for its own welfare. The work of the Rockefeller Foundation in matters of public health is a typical expression of the Commonwealth spirit; they establish, with or without the assistance of the Governments, their centres of research and experiment, they organise the campaign against the disease, and, finally, induce the Governments to take over the perfected system. In that case, the Commonwealth spirit aims at the elimination of physical disease from the world, and it brings to that task all the resources of science; it confers a benefit at the same time that it extends autonomy, and levels up the physical condition of the people to the best that is possible. In the more restricted sense of the word "politics" with which we are familiar, that is the spirit which, however blindly and with whatever blunders, the English people have attempted to express in their experiments in government; it is that spirit which Mr. Zimmern, in the last essay in this book, shows is the synthesis of the antitheses of Prussianism and Bolshevism, and which, by the very excesses of its opponents, is being demonstrated as the only means of making the world as whole as a healthy man. A. E. R.

#### THE CONSUMMATION.

Looks royal, songs for heaven meet,  
Thou wishest, thinking on his worth  
Whose faintest image is more sweet  
Than all thy dearest loves on earth.

The royal look is marred with years;  
The song celestial is made  
Into a litany of tears,  
Into a blossom of the shade.

Thou art fordone, thine heart is rent  
To praise who hath not fear nor shame,  
Yet when thine utmost life is spent  
Thou hast not even said his name:

But peace, the triumph is not ripe.  
Canst thou not sleep a little space,  
Or dream upon the oaten pipe  
Till there appear the wished face?

Then well sufficing shall arise  
From thy quiet heart that was so wrung,  
A look in those translated eyes,  
A word in that diviner tongue.

RUTH PITTER.

## Reviews.

**The Wise Urchin.** By Margaret Marr. (Daniel. 2s. net.)

If, as the astrologers tell us, the Uranian age will begin in 1935, we may look forward to an increase of this mystical-evangelical literature. Unfortunately, Uranus is so concerned with the ideas of "the higher mind" that he has not, so far, endowed his children with any regard for appropriate expression of those ideas. Mr. Algernon Blackwood has misinterpreted the Aquarian age in the terms of Gemini, with an unpardonable prolixity of ridiculous instances; Miss Margaret Marr writes in the style of a tract-writer recording instant conversions. We say nothing of the apparent degradation of Mercury to the level of a London street-arab; but we do protest that even in this guise he is capable of literary treatment. There is not the slightest reason (except the astrological one of an afflicted Venus) why this wise urchin should not be as engrossing character as, say, *The Artful Dodger*. But Miss Marr will not allow him to exist in his own right; he is a purely functional Mercury or, more truly, calomel, whose only prank is the confounding of a bishop at a public meeting. Bishops are as good game as any other to the writer, and they lend themselves to comic treatment by their consciousness of their own absurdity; but the writer is not thereby absolved from the task of presenting a bishop in his habit as he lives with some verisimilitude. A bishop who sits in the front row of a public meeting, and can be checked after a hundred words in his justification of this as a righteous war, is not an English bishop; for nothing can stop a bishop, not even the end of the war.

The association of pawnbroking with piety is not new; the French have their *Mont de Piété*, and the Lombards were always Trinitarian. But the idea of Christ as a pawnbroker does not accord with the symbology; a fisher of men, a shepherd of souls, a lamb of sacrifice, all these ideas are implicit in the Christ, but this idea of giving new souls for old in this way, this idea of exchange instead of inspiration, really derives from Aladdin. Besides, it does not accord with the reputed action of Uranus, which is catastrophic, frequently continuously catastrophic, as in the case of Job. He is a breaker, not a broker, a deliverer and not an exchanger; and his paths are not the paths of pleasantness and peace and conscientious objections as Miss Marr pretends, but the *Via Dolorosa* of revolution, disruption, and reconstruction. This is as much a Uranian war as the Russian revolution was a Uranian revolution; we have already "pledged our valuables" to its prosecution, and Miss Marr is guilty of obvious inversion when she asks us to pawn our worthlessness with Christ the Pawnbroker. Besides, as we have said, she makes nothing of the idea but a string of tracts; she touches on psycho-therapeutics in connection with the insanity of a conscientious objector, but in a manner that is Uranian only in its generality. She is not detached enough to explain, nor immersed deeply enough in pity to express, the sad mental state of the conscientious objector; the probability that his insanity is a proof that he does not respond properly to the influence of Uranus does not occur to her—in short, she makes the usual error of putting forward a Neptunian as a Uranian.

**Oriental Encounters.** By Marmaduke Pickthall. (Collins. 6s. net.)

Many of these sketches have already appeared in *THE NEW AGE*, and to read them again is to renew a pleasure. Mr. Pickthall is not, of course, a typical Englishman; he has too much gum Arabic in his composition to be able to remain aloof from the native life of the Levant, or to regard it, as most Englishmen do, as a compound of fraud, filth, and fanaticism. But he is enough of an Englishman to appreciate the

contrast between English and Oriental customs, and it would not be difficult for him, we feel sure, to tabulate his preferences. Thus he might prefer, say, Oriental land-conveyancing but English farming, Oriental hospitality but English firearms, Oriental clothes but the English system of credit-tailoring, and so on. He had the advantage, in these sketches, of prestige, which enabled him to "go native" without forfeiture of his rights as an Englishman; he knows native life, therefore, under the most favourable conditions, and can interpret it sympathetically as it appears to an inspired tourist. He never lost caste with the natives nor with the English, although the latter disapproved of his attraction to the natives as something derogatory; and his sketches therefore present a picture that is idyllic. The ordinary Englishman never knows how much virtue there is in other people, and the reaction from this almost necessarily results in finding nothing but virtue in them. It is so characteristically English to believe that the happy land is "over the hills and far away" that Mr. Pickthall's book will probably appeal more to English than to Oriental readers; and if the English occupation is really compatible with these delightful conditions of life, it is not so incongruous as at first sight it seems. Quite half of Mr. Pickthall's delight in his adventures was due to the fact that they were an escapade, a tasting of forbidden fruit; and these sketches therefore have the schoolboy touch of delight in derelictions for which there is no real penalty once they are committed. He could satisfy his soul and "save his face" without much difficulty; and the result is a series of sketches that charm us with their novelty and exhilarate us with a sense of gentle dare-devilry.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

### A LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Sir,—I am glad to see that you look upon the proposed League of Nations with great suspicion. The inevitable tendency of every organisation like that is to standardise the world and make all men alike. The great aim of every wise man is to make the world as varied as possible, variety being the foundation of happiness. Thus a League of Nations, in trying to make life secure, would make all men less alive than before.

If anyone doubts that a League of Nations would promote uniformity among nations, let him observe what a Federal Government does for the States which compose it. Individuality among the States is considered intolerable. For instance, there are some American States which absolutely refuse to pass prohibition. Wyoming has had woman suffrage for forty-nine years, but during all that time the men and women of Wyoming have resolutely resisted the efforts of their neighbours to cram prohibition down their throats. California, another woman suffrage State, is equally obstinate. Hope being abandoned of getting prohibition through in such places by the old remedy of woman suffrage, it is now proposed to force it through by a change in the federal constitution, which will compel all States to be teetotal, whether they wish it or not. The same thing applies to woman suffrage itself, which it is now proposed to force through in the Southern States by federal action. There is no exception to this tendency. The original aim of federal government was to allow the constituent parts to manage their own affairs, but such individuality is tolerated only in matters of no importance.

Apart from legislation, the mere association of peoples destroys individuality. As lately as ten years ago, the most picturesque figures on the Pacific coast of America were the Chinese. They went about without hats, but with long, black, glossy pigtailed hanging down their backs; their jackets and trousers of black silk or blue serge were very neat; their little white slippers were most elegant. But a sad disaster has overtaken China in the past ten years; she has become "advanced." The Chinese in British Columbia and the United States now wish to be the equals of Europeans; so they wear bowler hats, cheap woollen suits, and close-cropped hair, and

look like mean little cockneys. It is the same with the Hindoos: a few have still their white turbans and long beards, but the "progressive" ones are ashamed of such things, and may be seen in automobiles with shaven faces and felt hats, and even knickerbockers and gaiters. I need not speak of the Japanese, for it is their pride and glory that they are now "Western" and not Asiatic.

A League of Nations simply means all this on a gigantic scale: it means the world Yankeeified. Only the International State will have an army and navy, and it will have as complete power over each nation as the United States has over Wisconsin, or Germany over Bavaria. It will be the latest thing in philanthropic capitalism. Wages will be high, and there will likely be a six hours' day; but the labourer will be watched every hour of the twenty-four to see that he does not smoke, and associates only with desirable companions. The undesirable will be sent to industrial schools and other places of detention, and will, of course, be sterilised in the interest of eugenics. The workers will be kept up to the scratch by millionaire evangelists with splendid automobiles and fur coats. There will be no wine or beer, and I need not say that there will be no poetry, music, or art, for these have already vanished from the most advanced countries. Membership of the Y.M.C.A. will be compulsory, either by law or by force of public opinion. Everything will be very democratic.

On the whole, I think it would be better to choose other methods of keeping the world at peace.

R. B. KERR.

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### WORK AND WAGES.

Sir,—The revival of the demand for equal pay for equal work raises questions which, though their answer is apparently evident, are not, I think, sufficiently recognised by many. The formula depends for a meaning on the meaning which we give to the word work (or service). This may be taken to mean hours worked on similar jobs—the workers' point of view; or result accomplished—the masters' point of view.

If we accept the first meaning, the standard wage must, in fairness, be fixed rather low, since the majority of workers are of average capacity or under. This will hardly be acceptable to the real workers. If we accept the second meaning, no standard wage is possible, except for piece-work. This must, I think, be a serious matter for the unions.

The solution would appear to be along lines which seem fairly obvious to onlookers. The vast majority of men who work are not really workmen, let alone craftsmen; in fact, they are little better than labourers. I, in company, I fancy, with very many others, reverence no man more than a real workman, and consequently detest no man more than one who masquerades as such. Hence the solution is in the hand of the unions—namely, that they shall discriminate, as did the guilds, between workmen and labourers, placing in the latter class fully 50 per cent. of the present "workmen."

If this were done, and the direction of the unions were placed in the hands of *workmen*, as opposed to "working men" and "leaders," I feel sure that the whole country would accept their demands, almost unquestioned. Now, on the contrary, many of the demands of Labour are "downed," unexamined, on the ground that most of the present working men should be asking pardon for their inefficiency instead of posing as the salt of the earth.

LEWIS RICHARDSON.

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### PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

Sir,—Your "Reformer's Note Book" is seriously out of touch with reality in its reference to Proportional Representation. P.R. simply recognises the common-sense fact that electors, although they may reside in the same geographical area, hold different views with regard to social, political, and economic policy, and that no one is entitled to lay down which, if any, of these views is the only right or even "national" one. It therefore provides a simple means by which such views may be crystallised in representatives and be expressed in the National House of Representatives in such volume as they are actually held by the electors. The reference to "sectional" interests and opinions is beside the point, because all interests and opinions may be called

sectional until they are adopted by the community as a whole. "Reformer" seems to have at the back of his mind the idea of a Parliament elected ad hoc all over the country, but even if this academic proposal were practicable it would make P.R. more necessary than ever.

Your contributor also brings out the group "stunt" which is part of the stock-in-trade of those critics of P.R. who are too lazy to search for facts. Let "Reformer" compare the relative frequency of groups in a P.R. Parliament like that of Belgium and in a non-P.R. Parliament like that of France. Groups are likely to exist in practically every Parliament, with or without P.R., and I must say they do not alarm me very greatly. "Reformer's" over-ingenious reasoning as to the probable relative strength of the groups and of the executive depends so much upon his unproven assumption that politics will be governed by groups rather than national parties that it is hardly worth comment.

I do not know whether "Reformer" is expressing the views of THE NEW AGE staff with regard to this question, and I should be surprised to learn that he was. Surely the real question at issue in P.R. is government by domination versus government by consent, and is a faint echo in our political institutions of the principle at stake in the great world war? The possible significance of P.R. in the industrial democracy of the future is another reason why THE NEW AGE should give it sympathetic consideration. The larger trade unions of to-day find that the complexity of interests among their members renders the mere majority vote an inadequate method of election. Will the guilds of the future find it any easier to secure a really democratic government by consent unless they discard these crude methods and adopt real representation? J. HENRY LLOYD.

["Reformer" writes: Mr. Lloyd has fallen into the error common to his school of confusing Representation with Reproduction. A National House composed of views "in such volume as they are actually held by the electors" is not a National House of Representatives, but a miniature reproduction of the map of the nation's opinions. Proportional Representation is thus once more seen to be a misnomer. Its real aim is something entirely different from its nominal intention.]

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#### IBSEN'S "GHOSTS."

Sir,—I have heard that at his death Ibsen left a sequel to his puzzling play, "Ghosts." Do you, Sir, or any of your readers, know of such? All my informant could tell me was that he understood some manuscript had been submitted to Mr. Archer—among others, I presume—and condemned by him as spurious.

I do not ask out of mere idle curiosity, but because, having lately made a fairly exhaustive analysis of "Ghosts," it is naturally a matter of interest to me to know whether the alleged sequel confirms one or two developments which I suggest, quite incidentally, as plausible continuations of Ibsen's story. Of course, such confirmation would not settle any doubt—if there is any doubt—about the genuineness or reverse of the sequel. It might only prove that its writer's reading of the story told in "Ghosts" coincides with mine, which would certainly not surprise me—for I can hardly flatter myself that I am the only person in the forty years (nearly) since "Ghosts" was first published to have discovered that the generally accepted reading of the notorious play is strangely—indeed, ludicrously—erroneous. Consistency with its predecessor alone would be no proof of genuineness, although inconsistency would be strong proof against it.

Now I do not know on what grounds Mr. Archer condemned the alleged sequel—if he did condemn it, or if there is any foundation for the rumour at all. But if inconsistency were that ground, it would prove nothing to me; for Mr. Archer, absorbed possibly in the duty of being faithful to the words of Ibsen, has himself failed to grasp the truth of the story he has himself translated! The main errors in the generally accepted reading are that Regina is the illegitimate daughter of the late Captain Alving, and that Oswald is his legitimate son. From these misapprehensions springs a series of absurd and disgraceful complications, the chief exponent of which is Mr. Bernard Shaw, who glorifies incest in consequence, swears at marriage laws, and

panders to a morbid taste for the improper by hastening to concoct a play of his own—as if plagiarism redeemed his "Mrs. Warren"!—putting the feather in his fool's cap by making out that Mrs. Alving performs her first *real* duty to her son by poisoning him under the idea that he is a victim to disease inherited from her husband, although the disease alleged is, as a "hard fact," not heritable at all!

It would exceed the bounds of a letter to give even a mere outline of the true story Ibsen tells; but the plain facts that Captain Alving had nothing whatever to do with the parentage of either Regina or Oswald, that, consequently, there is no kinship between that idyllic pair, and, also consequently, that Oswald could not inherit, from him at any rate, any disease possible or impossible from whose effects to be saved by his mother poisoning him—which, I need hardly say, she does *not* do—will enable any unbiased person of average intelligence, if he will devote the necessary time and care to the task, to discover for himself the more obscure facts implied with unflinching logic and unerring insight into human nature in that true story.

Hoping, Sir, that you may be able to enlighten me on the matter of the alleged "sequel"—about which, I confess, I am rather sceptical. P. P.

#### \* \* \* A CASE FOR FREUD.

Sir,—Enclosed I am sending you a poem which appeared in the "Spectator" of August 17, and a letter which I wrote to the "Spectator" about it. I do not require to point out to you the objectionable features of the poem in question, and should be glad, in the event of your approving of my action in the matter, if you would give the correspondence publicity in your columns. It is by no means the first time that the "Spectator" has been guilty of execrably bad taste during this war, and after having, without success, given that journal an opportunity of publishing my protest, I feel I am justified in sending the correspondence to you. ANTHONY M. LUDOVICI,  
Lieut., R.F.A.

To the Editor of the "Spectator."

Sir,—The spreading of a false and tasteless sentiment even among a class notoriously false and tasteless is surely an act to be deprecated by all to whom "the care of the heart of a people" is a very sacred thing. The Press, like the clergy, is a privileged purveyor of appeals to the nation's heart. It can exhort and it can inspire. Surely, then, it ought to exercise the utmost scrupulosity of taste in this most important of all its functions. Admitted that your paper only appeals to a small section of the nation, and by no means the most vital section; even so, your responsibility is immense, for on the lowest estimate of all, if you cannot correct or elevate, you might at least avoid confirming bad taste.

In your issue of August 17 there appeared a poem which I can only suppose entered your columns by an editorial slip. The substance of it is this: Mothers you may cease from bewailing the loss of your dear boys in this war, for are you not spared the burning pangs of that fierce inter-female jealousy which is provoked when youth, in your own sex, enters your household, engages the affections of your sons, and lures them to matrimony.

This regrettable sentiment is elaborated through four verses which conclude as follows:—

"He's hers [meaning the mother's] being dead, as when he lay

Small in her arms one heavenly day."

As one who has fought in this tragic war, and who, moreover, knows what a good mother's love can be, allow me to point out to Katharine Tynan, through your columns, that even if she manages to get such inhuman ravings into a London newspaper, under your very nose, she cannot hope to escape the censure of a more vigilant taste.

She calls the monstrosity "Comfort." Let us hope that no young soldier at the front will seek comfort in it. Indeed, out of solicitude for him I have written to the Home Office, asking them to prevent, if possible, the circulation of this number of the "Spectator" among the troops at the seat of war.—Yours faithfully,

(Signed) ANTHONY M. LUDOVICI,  
Lieut., R.F.A.

## PRESS CUTTINGS.

To the Editor of the "Times."

"Let there be no mistake," said Lord Inchcape, "if any attempt were made by any Government to interfere with the liberties of the people, or to dragoon them after the German fashion, that Government would be ignominiously hurled from power." Are we to gather from this statement of this distinguished representative of the shipping interest that the "liberties of the people" are based on the blessed law of "every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost"? I can assure Lord Inchcape that such is not the view of British Labour—be that Labour scheduled as patriotic or pacifist to-day under the stress of war. "British citizens will not be dragooned after the German fashion"; but we are learning that organisation, national control, commercial and industrial discipline are essential factors in the progress of the Empire. Lord Inchcape seems to beckon us back to the bad old days which nearly landed us in national disaster. Let me tell Lord Inchcape and all those whom it may concern that British Labour has no intention whatever of going back to those bad old days. We have no wish to decry, as his lordship seems to suggest, "individual effort," but we are convinced that individual effort must be organised and co-ordinated. If our faith in Socialism has waned, our trust in individualism has not waxed. We have found, and we are still finding, a *via media*. That Germany was stronger industrially and nationally than Britain when the war burst upon us can be traced to the fact that Germany was a more highly organised community. That higher organisation we must seek as free men, or the war will have been fought in vain.—Yours faithfully,

VICTOR FISHER, Hon. Sec.

The National Democratic and Labour Party (The British Workers' League), 28 and 36, Sicilian House, Sicilian Avenue, W.C.1.

Is there no better way of treating these vital industrial questions than the one pursued since the war began and pursued still? The story is always the same in its general features. The men make some demand; it is refused; negotiations are carried on and haggling ensues; some Government Department is called in or intervenes, though by that time matters are generally rather far advanced and strike notices have been sent out or other threats made; nothing is done, and the strike occurs; the strikers are abused by everybody but the pro-Germans, and implored to go back to work; they eventually do on their demand being granted or a promise given more or less to that effect. It is an extraordinarily foolish and wasteful way of proceeding. It would obviously pay infinitely better to give the concession, whatever it may be, without the strike. We have sometimes wondered whether a totally different way of treating the war workers might not be more successful. Strikes always occur when some demand is obstinately resisted, in the first place by employers and secondly by the Government. But though the dispute goes to a fight, it is never fought out. Would it not be better to have no fight and let the concession that is eventually and grudgingly given be made earlier in the proceedings and with a good grace? Would it not be possible really to trust the workmen and put them on their honour? Politicians are always applying soft soap and telling workmen what fine fellows they are, and how they are trusted, and so on. But they are not trusted. A dogged resistance to their demands is not trusting them, and in the end it has to be given up. The truth is that this is a people's war, though many who use that expression do not see what it implies. The people must be trusted, and they can be. If not, we could not have carried on at all. Then, would it not be possible in these industrial matters to trust them in fact, and instead of vainly resisting demands leave it to them to be reasonable and to give an honest return?—"The Times."

In Italy the highly organised societies of agricultural labour undertook the reclamation of waste lands and settled members of their unions upon the land reclaimed. In some districts the unions owned, and indeed were the pioneers of the introduction of agricultural machinery. No doubt the conditions in one country make possible enterprises which would be impractical in others. In Ireland, it seems to me that the conditions favour such a development. It is doubtful whether the State will burden itself with more public debt for the benefit of Irish farmers, and land purchase, in all probability, will be at a standstill. Yet the State will require the land to be cultivated much more intensively, and if groups of skilled agricultural labourers were organised into co-operative societies it is probable that Labour could bring political influence to bear to facilitate the renting of land to groups of such men. Few labourers would have capital other than their skill. In this respect their knowledge is at least as great and much more practical than that of many of their present employers. Their unions should, at the start, use some of their funds to finance an experiment, and the co-operative stores in the towns could guarantee purchase of vegetables, potatoes, milk, pork, or other produce. I have no doubt the Department would readily give technical advice, and the services of a competent instructor would at all times be procurable. If Labour in Ireland is really in earnest about bettering its conditions, it would be possible, I have no doubt, to try at least a single experiment, and if that was successful, if the agricultural labourers so united improved their lot, and the results were published, it would encourage other landowners to rent land to co-operative societies and the State to give aid.—"A. E." in "The Voice of Labour."

In England the disease of spy-mania seems to be running a specially malignant course. That is partly due, no doubt, to the Englishman's conception of the "foreigner," whom he imagines to be craftier, cleverer, and bolder than himself, but bound in the end to come to grief when confronted with British composure and trustworthiness. It makes no difference if an Englishman of German origin has sons serving in the British Army or Navy; he and his family are suspects and must be prevented from doing harm. Even the First Lord of the Admiralty, Prince Louis of Battenberg, whose sons are fighting in the English ranks and whose nephew died for England, was attacked by the English Press because of his German descent and compelled to resign his office. The helpless German proletariat that filled the London back streets and now fills the concentration camps is suspected of secret relations with the German Emperor and his military forces. Poor miserable little German shopkeepers are hounded into the gutter because they conduct bureaux for spreading news prejudicial to England. Waiters and clerks, formerly happy to have escaped from Germany and her military service, are supposed to be a disguised army of invasion or special couriers of His Majesty the Kaiser. If German ships reach the English coast, it must have been the treachery of German spies that showed them the way. If English soldiers are surprised, the German spy has been seen, disguised as a peasant, who reconnoitred and betrayed their position. German spies appear in the uniform of English officers to the Indian troops and command them to come out of their trenches. They present themselves, dressed as Belgian Army doctors, to act as guides to English troops, and guide them into ambush. Wherever the English go, wherever they meet, eat and drink, work or sleep, abroad or at home, they are shadowed by a German spy. But England need have no anxiety; the sons of Albion will discover him; no disguise or make-up, no linguistic skill or alertness—in short, nothing can save him from the steady English eye and the steady English hand.

One could almost laugh, if one did not pity the poor victims in England—those timid, clumsy, industrious fugitives who had hoped to exchange their native Germany for a better land.—"Dr. Muehlon's Diary." (Cassells. 5s. net.)