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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
NOTES OF THE WEEK	33
FOREIGN AFFAIRS. By S. Verdad	36
THE INFLUENCE OF THE WAR UPON LABOUR—II. By S. G. H.	37
A GUILDSMAN'S INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY. By A. J. Penty. II—From Rome to the Guilds	38
RECENT VERSE. By Stephen Maguire	41
READERS AND WRITERS. By R. H. C.	42
OFFICIAL. By H. M. T.	43
ART NOTES. By B. H. Dias	44
VIEWS AND REVIEWS: Lecturing on Life. By A. E. R.	45
REVIEWS: George Meredith. Foe-Farrell	46
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR from R. B. Kerr, F. Walter Thrupp, L. W.	47
PASTICHE. By J. D. Gleeson, Frederic L. Mitchell, Triboulet	48

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

As in Russia the outbreak of the Revolution quickly subordinated the war to itself, so the dominant fact in Europe to-day is no longer the war or even the coming peace conference, but the fact of Revolution in Germany itself. The German Revolution may already be said to have had the effect of completely transforming the whole situation. In consequence of it, we are no longer primarily concerned with "making Germany pay" or with securing guarantees against the possible military recrudescence of Prussia; but the Allies must needs be anxious to discover in the first place what is likely to emerge from the German melting-pot, and, in the second place, what consequences for the world the new mould will have. Is Germany to become a fresh and powerful centre of Bolshevist agitation—to the immense peril of the rest of Western Europe? Or to fall again under a militarist dictatorship? Or to become the first orderly Socialist Republic on a large scale in history? Any one of these things is theoretically possible, though we hold that the last alone is probable; but in the event of any one of them, it is obvious that the calculations and deductions to be made must be different. Under these circumstances it is inevitable that the policy of the Allies should appear to be in a state of suspended animation. Suspense of judgment is, indeed, dictated by the facts of the case. How do we know that a false move on our part may not precipitate the worst conceivable of the three present potentialities? On the other hand, who can pronounce in advance of events the right move to make? All that can be safely done for the time being is to wait and see.

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The Allies, it must be allowed even by their enemies, have behaved in the circumstances with discretion. If they had been the ogres of the pacifist imagination, they would undoubtedly have taken advantage of the Revolution in Germany to divide her piecemeal among themselves and to inflict upon her the last ignominies of revenge. Far from this expected conduct, however, which Mr. Shaw called "skinning Germany alive," the Allies have found themselves constrained to adopt the Christian policy of feeding their enemy when he is an hungred. No doubt it is the case for some people, as the pagan "Times" loudly asserts, that "it is no question of showing sympathy with the Huns and their accomplices." It is only "a duty we owe to ourselves and our own plain interests." But the fact remains that of all the astonishing sequels of victory that might have been imagined, the sequel of being obliged to feed Germany and of being willing to feed Germany had occurred to nobody, and least of all to the official advisers of the Allies. Moreover, apart from the "Times," there has been little opposition even of a grumbling character to the Christian policy which the Allies have adopted. President Wilson continues to command the enthusiastic support of America equally when he calls for practical sympathy and patience with Germany as when he called for force, force to the uttermost. M. Clemenceau has temporarily silenced even Socialist criticism of the Government in France by declaring that France was not waging war against humanity, but for humanity. And finally, with the exception already pointed out, we have no doubt that in our own country opinion is universally in favour of doing what we can for a defeated and, perhaps, broken enemy. It is all in such singular contrast, as we say, to what was expected to be the attitude of the Allies that some explanation of the phenomenon is necessary. And we find it, for ourselves, in the fact of a Revolution, a constitutional and a radical Revolution, in Germany. The relief of the world on discovering that, after all, Germany is not the Prussia she had been painted, but a nation and a people capable, like all the rest of mankind, of democracy and self-determination, has, we believe, overwhelmed the fear which otherwise would have remained even after victory. Revenge disguised as guarantees implies a continuance of fear. But from a Germany now up to its head in revolution it is impossible to anticipate the same menace as from a Germany beaten but still militarist. There is the new hope, in short, that the world, after all, may be made safe for democracy.

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The "Times" correspondent at The Hague appears to have been instructed to look for signs of disorder in the conduct of the German Revolution; and he is certainly doing his best to magnify what he discovers. Under the heading of "Revolutionary Frenzy" he

describes how photographs of the ex-Kaiser and the ex-Crown Prince were actually torn down publicly from the walls of Berlin. In other instances, the frenzy proceeded to such revolting lengths that military uniforms were placed on poles and burned in the streets. These incidents of "red ruin and the breaking up of laws" are presumed, no doubt, to be impressive; and they are designed in all probability to represent the German Revolution as tottering on the edge of Bolshevism. In fact, however, there appears to us to be little reason at present to anticipate the outbreak of a second or Bolshevist insurrection in Germany; for Bolshevism and Prussianism, strange as it may seem, arise from similar fallacies, and with the end of the one the fear of the other may be said to be eliminated. Prussianism, it is obvious, has as its intellectual principle the false absolute implied in the proposition that Might is the *only* creator of Right. Because Might is one of the invariable factors of Right--perhaps the only invariable factor—our Prussian philosophers concluded that it was the sole factor; it became their one and only, their unique, their dogma. But similarly it is no less obvious what the Bolshevist fallacy is or its consanguinity with Prussianism. Because Labour (manual Labour we should say) is an invariable factor in production—and, perhaps, the only invariable factor—the Bolshevist mind concludes that it is the one and only factor, the unique, the sole. And from this proposition it would follow that manual Labour is entitled to everything as from the Prussian proposition it followed that Might was entitled to everything. The very fact, however, that the Prussian fallacy has been exposed in Germany makes it improbable that the Bolshevist fallacy will now take root in that country. Disorder to the point of frenzy à la "Times" Hague correspondent there may be. Disorders of a more serious character are also possible. But Lord Milner's fears of a Bolshevist regime in Germany are founded upon no better ground than disbelief either in the effectiveness of the downfall of Prussianism, or in the good sense of the Allies.

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Only time will show what the total effect of the war upon Germany has been; but, whatever the dispositions made at the peace conference may be, it is probable that the future of Germany is assured. She will emerge different from the war, unrecognisably different in many respects, but wiser. To begin with, the exorcism of the Prussian militarist incubus will alone prove to have given release to the latent and hitherto suppressed or distorted powers of the German mind. Having undergone a terrible course of psycho-analysis, she will in all probability find herself proportionately both cured and renewed. Next to that spiritual fact we place in order of importance such facts as these—the removal of the Russian "menace," the probable re-union of German Austria with Germany proper, the re-establishment, this time on a popular basis, of German national unity, the creation of a new order and a new personnel of government, and the fresh democratic and perhaps Socialist impetus. It is true that for some years to come the new Germany will be burdened with debt and with obligations involved in the legacy of the past; but relatively we are of opinion that these will be no greater than a renewed nation can easily bear, above all, when she is inspired with a fresh hope. Moreover, there are other circumstances to be taken into account which will hardly bear examination at this moment, but which we may be sure that time will exploit to the full. Let us suppose, for instance, that an ordered Revolution is accomplished in Germany; in a nation, that is to say, of considerably more than seventy millions in population and of an education and educability equal to any in the world. Conceive such a nation, democratic, pacific and disciplined, planted in the middle of the Continent and surrounded for the most part by Russia and a series of young and possibly ill-disciplined states. Is the prospect altogether gloomy for the future of such a Germany so placed? Is the position of such a considerable democratic Power in Europe one to be despised either by Germany herself or by the rest of the world? We purposely leave the subject with an interrogation; but it is plain that the matter will bear thinking about.

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The comparison of the prospective situations of our own and the defeated and neutral nations of Europe is not so flattering to ourselves as might have been expected. Something of a portentous paradox, in fact, appears in it, the significance of which is not yet clear. For whereas before the war England was politically the most advanced of the European nations, it may well prove to be the case that after the war her role will appear to be reversed. The troops recently returned to Russia, the troops now returning to Germany, and the troops in course of demobilisation in the bordering neutral States, will all find on arriving home that a revolution of opinion, if not of fact, has taken place in their absence. The spirit of change will have been at work; and in all the countries involved the changes will be found to have been in the direction both of Socialism and of Democracy. In our own country, on the other hand, no radical changes will be found by our returning troops to have been made. To the same regime from which they went they will return; nay, in many respects it bears the promise of being the same regime, but appreciably worse in that part of its character that will most closely affect them as working men. Not only the chances of unemployment have been multiplied by the addition of millions of fresh hands to the pre-existing Labour supply, not only has capitalist industry learned to economise labour by enormous additions to automatic machinery, not only is intensified production everywhere called for by the ruling classes, but nowhere on the horizon does there appear a cloud of hope the size of a man's hand. The capitalist system, with its profiteering at the expense of the body and soul of Labour, appears to have rooted itself more firmly than ever during the four years of the war. The contrast between such a reactionary State and the potentially progressive States of Central Europe will be brought home to the world in time, when will be seen the paradox to which we have referred of a victorious nation declining into reaction and of the nations defeated by her moving forward into political and economic progress. But from that contrast and paradox more may be expected than this curious observation. It will have effect in action. Sooner or later the mere fact of the contrast will arouse in this country the spirit of emulation; and we, in our turn, shall be faced by the alternatives of forcible or constitutional economic transformation.

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It is characteristic of Mr. Lloyd George that he should ask the country for support, not for measures, but for himself; and it was likewise characteristic that in respect of policy he should declare in favour of "such a policy as would retain to the greatest extent possible the support of Mr. Bonar Law's followers and mine." But it is utterly illogical and something worse to pretend that such a policy is either a non-party policy, or, still less, a policy for the national occasion. If there is any cogency in reasoning at all, it is obvious that the conditions laid down by Mr. Lloyd George for his present policy have no relation with the conditions in which we find ourselves, and, moreover, that Mr. Lloyd George himself is aware of the fact. The question of what policy is proper to our present circumstances, what the nation has need of, what is actually demanded of statesmen in the immediate future, is altogether set aside by Mr. Lloyd George, or, at best, treated as subordinate to the question of what policy will

hold together the existing Coalition and retain Mr. Lloyd George in power. But the two questions, it will be seen, are not necessarily identical by any means; nor is the former of necessity involved in the latter. It may, of course, be the case that the return of Mr. Lloyd George to power is in itself so important that any policy that effects it is the best that the nation can choose; but much more probably, in view of the circumstances, the policy that is required to return Mr. Lloyd George will prove to be reactionary and disastrous. How should it not be the case, in fact, when a Coalition such as he proposes is frankly based, not upon common principles freely applied to a national problem, but upon a common desire of two opposing parties to share power again? Between a Coalition in peace-time of Unionists and Liberals, even allowing for their economic resemblance, a programme of reform is likely to be a minimum rather than a maximum; and, in any event, it is unlikely to have more than a nodding acquaintance with the real needs of the time. In insisting upon a Coalition, Mr. Lloyd George has not only raised the flag of party once again, and in its blackest colour, but he has condemned himself and the nation to a period of inevitable reaction.

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The decision of Mr. Asquith's group of the Liberal Party is still to be finally made; but it cannot alter now the decision of the Labour Party to resume its political independence. Made earlier, and made in favour of Mr. Lloyd George's leadership, it is probable that the association of Mr. Asquith's group with the Government Liberals would have caused the Unionists to retire and the Labour Party to remain in coalition, in which event we should have had a Liberal-Labour Government with the Unionists in opposition. As things now are, however, it is probable that the Opposition will be composed of Mr. Asquith's group and certainly of the Labour Party. With this latter event it is safe to say that politics in England has the chance of once more becoming real, for it is obvious that between all the political parties and the Labour Party, and between these alone, is there any radical economic difference likely to result in real political differences. What will the Labour Party do with its new-found freedom? Its role is now that of political opposition, open and avowed; and its object should be to maintain itself during the period of demobilisation as the nucleus of an alternative Government, and to make a bid for power at some future General Election. For it is a mistake to suppose that during the next two or three years the work of reconstruction will be undertaken, and least of all by a Coalition built upon a party compromise. On the contrary, we are no prophets if the next few years are not taken up wholly with the necessary work of simple demobilisation, with only reaction to guide the path towards a subsequent period of reconstruction. And it is when demobilisation has ceased, and all the mistakes possible to Mr. Lloyd George's mixed Cabinet have been made, that reconstruction designed to maintain England's liberal leadership of the world will need to be begun. We have predicted for the Labour Party the reversion of the Government if they will only keep their hands clean of compromise during the coming re-settlement, and their minds open to the new constructive ideals; and events will fulfil our forecast for us. It will go hard, indeed, with the Socialist and Labour movement of this country if, after experience of Mr. Lloyd George's coming anti-climax, the nation is not prepared for a Labour Government.

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Regarding the situation in which the present Labour Ministers will be left if they decide to follow the example of Mr. Barnes, few words are necessary. They are deceiving themselves if they imagine either that the circumstances are new or their own action unprecedented. A quarter of a century ago almost exactly, the battle for the political independence of Labour was fought and won; and the substitution of the present Coalition Government for the Liberal Party of twenty-five years ago adds nothing essentially novel to the original question. The pro-Coalition Labour members of to-day are the successors of the Lib-Labs of yesterday. They have learned nothing and they have forgotten everything. Nor can they escape censure on the plea that their party authorised them to enter the Coalition and to remain in it "for the period of the war." The war is over and it cannot be resumed. Moreover, it is the party that must be the judge of the meaning of its own mandate. To accept its decision when it was a question of entering the Coalition, and to reject it when the party decides in favour of withdrawal is anything but democratic or disciplined. It is, in fact, the exercise of private judgment in a matter foresworn to be common judgment. Which of all the Labour Ministers now in office would have climbed there without the ladder supplied by his party? Which of them can claim to be representative of any public opinion outside of the opinion of the movement that placed him in office? If their plea for the Coalition is the old plea of twenty-five years ago, their decision to ignore their party is a still older error, the error of treachery. It was in them, however, to fall into this sin; and we cannot profess to be surprised by it. They scrambled into the Cabinet too eagerly to come out of it willingly.

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It is natural that Mr. Lloyd George should agree with the Labour Ministers that Labour is committing a blunder in declining to support him and his Unionist colleagues any longer. Everybody is wrong in Mr. Lloyd George's opinion who does not support Mr. Lloyd George. Nevertheless, the reasons offered by Mr. Barnes and the rest of the Labour placemen appear to us to be insufficient to establish their claim to thirty thousand a year between them. It is alleged, in the first place, that the period immediately before us is one of reconstruction in which gloriously Utopian process the Labour Party can share only if it forms a part of the Government. In reply, however, we have first to repeat our diagnosis of the situation and to assert, on the contrary, that the coming period is one of demobilisation only. No reconstruction will be possible until the country is reasonably settled again. And, thereafter, we may reply that even if any reconstructive work be possible in the circumstances and under a Coalition of Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Edward Carson, the Labour Party in opposition will share in it more fully than a Labour Party in the bondage of hostages to such a Government. But then, in the second place, it is alleged that what the Labour Ministers have been able to do during the war and in consequence of being in office, as much and more can be done by the same Ministers in office in the coming Coalition. Less than they have done, indeed, they could not very well do: for the truth is that upon the conduct, policy and administration of affairs the Labour Ministers, including the most successful of them, have had no specifically Labour influence whatever. The proof of the assertion lies in the simple fact that after four years of national war the rich are richer than ever in actuality as well as in prospects. If this be not a sufficient reply to the claim of the Labour Ministers, we can point to more sinister evidences still of the advance of Capitalism while they were supposed to be on guard. Thanks to their "loyal" co-operation, various international trusts have now obtained control of the British market. Meat, steel, money and other trifles are now a private capitalistic and profiteering monopoly. Under these circumstances, the less the Labour Ministers refer us to their past services, the more secure their reputation as men either of sense or of honesty.

Foreign Affairs.

LORD ROBERT CECIL's inaugural address as Chancellor of the Birmingham University is an important utterance on the subject of the League of Nations. Before continuing the discussion, doomed to be futile, of the further details of a full-blown League of Nations, our reformers would do well to negotiate the hurdle which Lord Robert Cecil has indicated. Against the League in the form first conceived by the Fabian Society, and consisting of a super-sovereign super-national authority, enough has been said in these columns to dispose of it. I doubt whether even Mr. Sidney Webb would now contend that that egg is not addled. But scarcely less dubious was Lord Robert Cecil of much less formal mechanisms than were involved in an International "Leviathan." The crux of the matter, he rightly observed, is the sanction for the rulings laid down by the League. If the sanction should be that of military force—and, clearly, nothing less would be effective—we may be practically certain that no or very few nations would consent to the employment of its nationals in war save for some purely national object. The force, in other words, would be international only in name; in actual fact, it would consist of the national troops composing it. And which of the nations would permit its troops to be employed for the purpose of carrying out an international decree?

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Failing the probable, or, let us say, possible, establishment of a League of Nations in any of the accepted senses, Lord Robert Cecil falls back upon two more modest proposals. The first is that of a union of the existing Allies perpetuated into the future and self-bound to maintain the peace of the world. This scheme, however, he finds both impracticable and undesirable, for reasons which, in one respect, are convincing, but in another are insufficient. It is convincing to be reminded that the existing Entente represents only a part of the world, and, hence, that it cannot claim world domination. But it is a little contradictory to add that at this moment "the Allies have in their hands the political future of the whole world." For if they have in their hands the political future of the whole world, then, in effect, they are in a position to exercise world-domination. What is wrong with the argument is the statement of the second clause; for it is not true, in the sense implied, that the Allies now have world-control. All they have is the power of making a decision at this moment: a decision of world-importance, it is true; but not a decision which is likely to be permanently binding. I agree myself with Lord Robert Cecil's view that the perpetuation of the existing Alliance is undesirable. But I dispute his assumption that it is possible. Nothing is likely, I think, to provide a sufficient centripetal motive amongst the present Allies to counteract the centrifugal forces latent in the nationalism of each of them.

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The second proposal upon which Lord Robert Cecil finally rests is that of discussion before war. We cannot, he says, *make* people refrain from going to war, since the only means is a League of Nations in one or other of two impracticable forms. That is to say, no means exist. But if we cannot *make* nations refrain from war, we can, at any rate, he thinks, oblige them by international public opinion to have the dispute discussed internationally first. "I am convinced," he says, "that the most important step we can now take is to devise machinery which in case of international dispute will, at the least, delay the outbreak of war, and secure full and open discussion of the causes of quarrel." And he goes on to propose that before leaving the coming Peace Conference the signatory Powers should mutually engage "never to wage war themselves, or to permit others to wage war till a formal conference of nations had been held to inquire into, and, if possible, decide on the dispute." Even this modest proposal, representing all that remains conceivably practicable in the current talk of a League of Nations, is, however, to my mind—impracticable! Though small enough in all conscience, it is still a piece of machinery, and I confess I distrust machinery when introduced into the relations of nations. It is true, of course, as Lord Cecil claims, that the machinery in this instance is not very complicated; nor does he expect that, at most, anything more than an economic boycott of the offending party would be likely to be put in motion. In other words, the proposal, even if carried into effect, would neither prevent the sudden outbreak of war, nor would it even prevent war after the dispute had been publicly discussed. All, in fact, it would do, even upon Lord Robert Cecil's own showing, is to weight the scales somewhat in favour of an ante-bellum discussion, and, thereafter, to bring about only possibly the economic boycott of the condemned belligerent. But even this, I contend, presumes too much in the way of confidence in machinery, for the fact is that a powerful nation—such a one, in short, as could really imperil the world's peace—would easily escape the control of international opinion for the simple reason that it might think itself either strong enough to defy it or to control it.

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This, however, does not leave me as pessimistic as Lord Robert Cecil declares he will be left if his most modest proposal proves impracticable. "The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner"; and in the Socialist International coupled with the spread of political democracy—phenomena which Lord Robert Cecil mentions without attaching much importance to them—I, for my part, see not only the only hope of the future, but good hope for an immediate future. The last of the great autocracies is gone; and from dynastic and political motives there need never again be any war. It is certainly improbable that one democracy will fight another. On the other hand, we must admit that most modern democracies are capitalist; and, hence, it follows that if there are wars between democracies in the future they will be between capitalist democracies, or between Socialist and Capitalist democracies. They will not, that is, be between Socialist democracies. It is, therefore, upon the growth within modern democracies of the *Socialist* forces that the future peace of the world depends; and since this growth is now very rapid, I cannot pretend to despair with Lord Robert Cecil when his last proposal comes to grief. Give us a Socialist democracy in every nation; nay, give us a strong Socialist minority in every nation—and we will undertake to maintain the peace of the world. Even as things are, I doubt whether it will be possible to inaugurate another world-war. But assuming the spread of Socialist Republics in Europe, the movement will certainly affect the Allies and strengthen in them the international Socialist sentiment sufficiently to make their Governments hesitate before going to war with a Socialist, or even a semi-Socialist State. One of the strongest reasons for our support of the war against Prussia was the weakness of the German Socialist Party. But which of us, if the German Socialists had had in 1914 the courage they are now displaying, would have been whole-heartedly in the war? Against what resistance would the war have been continued against Germany after her revolution? Resistance, I mean, not in Germany so much as in the Allied countries. The conclusion is clear. Only Socialists do not make war upon Socialists; and, hence, the establishment of Socialist democracies everywhere—or, at the least, of strong Labour and Socialist parties everywhere—is the only safeguard against war. S. VERDAD.

The Influence of the War upon Labour.

Being the Second Chapter on Transition.

II.—AN ECONOMIC SURVEY.

It is the antinomy of capitalist logic that national prosperity by no means connotes Labour prosperity. A simple instance proves this. Judged statistically, India abounds in prosperity. We hear of vast irrigation schemes, of railway projects, of large dividends, and only occasionally and casually of Indian discontent. Yet the Indian ryot is very much where he was before we sent out our engineers and capitalists. Recently there were riots in Japan, directed against speculators in rice, who had won vast fortunes out of the hunger and oppression of the Japanese proletariat, the immediate victims of the world's shortage of food-stuffs. Are we to gauge the prosperity of Japan by the dividends of the rice speculators or the miseries of its peasants and mill-operatives? Or shall we appraise the economic position of the British mercantile marine by the dividends of the shipping companies or the 15,000 seamen, who have "paid the price of admiralty" in the two years of the war? Strange, too, if we ponder it well, that these 15,000 men at the bottom of the sea have by their deaths actually enhanced the wages of the survivors. Jonathan Swift, who so accurately calculated the value of infants as butchers' meat, might now enquire at what stage of this wholesale drowning would the shipping trades suffer economic loss? To-day, as during the whole period of the great industry, the sum total of material wealth is no criterion of its diffusion. It is, indeed, the capitalist assumption that, had the wealth been distributed amongst the wage-earners, it would not have been available as capital for new and ambitious enterprises. The essence of the capitalist system is that, to win success, concentration of capital is imperative. Since this wealth is the basis of credit, it follows that, so long as capitalism persists, Labour must be content both to accept a commodity valuation of its labour and to entrust the capitalist with the only available source of credit. The class-struggle, therefore, assumes two vital forms: (a) the rejection of the commodity valuation of labour; and (b) the organisation of credit based upon a monopoly or control of the productive processes and no longer upon "securities," defined by the cambists of Lombard Street and the monopolists of the currency.

The Minister of Labour would resolve this antinomy by continuing the capitalist system whilst, at the same time, recognising the right of Labour to a larger share in the distribution of wealth. He thinks these ends can be attained in greatly increased quantitative production. Apart from the doubtful wisdom of concessions to quantitative production, there is no escape from the dilemma that the wage-system definitely establishes a collision of interests between Labour and Capital, or, alternatively, the extent to which Labour absorbs surplus value *pro tanto* deprives the entrepreneur of his credit facilities in obtaining further capital. If, however, I am told that increased wages can be paid out of increased production, without impairing credit, the reply is decisive: the credit obtainable out of increased production comes out of intensified Labour, and is therefore the property of Labour and not of the employer. It would seem a difficult task to reconcile Labour and Capital by robbing Labour of the one thing it can turn to account over and beyond the cost of its sustenance. The truth of it is that the Labour monopoly, bringing in its train wage-abolition, constitutes *ipso facto* a new system of credit, based upon productive capacity, and no longer upon bank paper, backed by transferable property, expressed in gold or other commodity currency. The basic fact of national wealth is the power and pledge of Labour to produce wealth. And I repeat what I have often before written: by wealth I do not mean illth; Ruskin's admonition remains the kernel of sound economy. The Minister of Labour, like lesser mortals, must learn that the capitalist method of obtaining credit is fundamentally dishonest, in that it is negotiated by a forged promissory note signed without Labour's *per procuration*.

These considerations are pertinent to our inquiry into the economic influence of the war upon Labour. The text is whether the power of Labour to supplant capitalism has increased or diminished. The answer hinges upon the progress made towards the Labour monopoly and the capacity to evolve a new form of credit.

A superficial reading of the previous section, dealing with the formal position of Labour in war-time, might lead to the conclusion that the Labour garden is blooming. But are there no weeds? What of dilution? What does it mean in terms of organised Labour that, whereas two million women have gone into industry, only 350,000 of them have joined the trade unions? Does this mean a million potential blacklegs? Moreover, what is the position of $4\frac{1}{2}$ million trade unionists when $5\frac{1}{2}$ million men return from the colours? When these factors come into the picture, it would seem that any roseate conclusions are premature.

Before I examine in detail the effects of dilution, a new development may be noted. It is one of the most significant incidents in the history of trade unionism, for it marks the beginning of the trade union absorption of the salariat, the first step towards the Guild conception of Labour organised to include management. No apology, therefore, is needed if I tell the story at some length.

The Iron and Steel Trades Confederation is a powerful trade union, which, with its affiliations, comes very near to a monopoly of Labour in iron and steel plants. It is by no means revolutionary in its methods; in the concourse of Labour ideas, it is probably on the right rather than the left. It is fully recognised by the employers who constantly meet it in conference. Whatever steps the Confederation takes are more likely to be dictated by practical affairs than by abstract principles. In an award, number 2299, of the Committee on Production, we find this conservative and cautiously managed trade union acting for a body of men known as "sample passers." This small group is either recruited from first hand steel smelters or they graduate through the laboratory. An exact knowledge of their *status* is essential if we are to understand all that is implied in this unique arbitration. Although paid weekly, they undoubtedly belong to the salariat. The Committee in their award state that "they act as foremen and supervisors in connection with the working of the furnaces. They work out the details of the furnace operations as decided upon by the steel works manager. They are responsible for the proportioning of the materials which make up the charge, for the taking of samples for analysis and for seeing that the furnaces are kept in good order and worked in accordance with instructions. Their duties are solely those of supervision and maintaining discipline, and they act under the direct orders of the steel works manager." The Committee offers conclusive proof that they are not wage-earners in the accepted sense of the term, for they are paid during holidays and sickness. That is to say, their labour is not on the commodity valuation; they are paid on a managerial basis. The Committee on Production state definitely that "they are dealt with as a part of, and on the same lines as the general management staff." Nor do they appear to be starving. At the time of the award, their average earnings were £13 5s. a week, having obtained an average increase during the war of £4 11s.

In October, 1917, the sample passers in the majority of plants applied for an advance. Certain of them met

representatives of the employers but failed to obtain any addition to their pay. In the first instance, let us observe, they behaved like gentlemen and not wage-earners; no trade union interference; they went direct to the management and doubtless, in simple and heartfelt language, told their doleful tale of difficulties to make ends meet on a beggarly £13 a week. Not dismayed when judgment went against them, they requested the Confederation to intervene on their behalf. A claim was accordingly submitted for the full sliding scale percentage, to be retrospective as from June, 1917. I do not know, but I suspect, that this would have meant £250 to each oppressed sample passer. The Employers' Association point blank declined to recognise the Confederation in this claim. I can indeed understand their pained surprise. However, the Confederation went to arbitration; evidence and arguments were heard with all decorum, and the award lies before me. "After careful consideration of the evidence placed before them," the Committee decided that the claim had not been established. I invite attention to the reason: "In the opinion of the Committee, the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the men concerned are such as to make it undesirable that any change should be made in the practice that has uniformly prevailed hitherto, under which the remuneration [note *passim*, remuneration, not wages] and conditions of service of the sample passers are regarded as a matter for direct discussion and adjustment between the management of the firms concerned and the men themselves." The Confederation, as a common trade union, was thus politely bowed out. We may infer that the case was not decided on its commercial merits because "the Committee think that it would be of advantage if the firms affected were to take an early opportunity of conferring with a view to adjustments being made in those cases in which the earnings of the sample passers under the existing rates of payment are below the average obtaining through the several works as a whole."

In plain terms, these minor members of the management are told that they must play cricket: must not keep low company: can rely upon it that, as "hawks do not peck out hawks' een," they can get what they want, if they go about it with softer tread and less threatening mien. The award, however, does not end the episode. The Confederation protest on several points, but notably this: "The observations of the Committee with regard to the method of negotiation to be adopted by the sample passers are entirely gratuitous. Whether the men should adopt either individual or collective bargaining was no part of the terms of reference, and in the interests of good relations as between employers and workmen, the Committee would have been well advised to have left that question for settlement between the parties concerned. The interference of a Government Committee in such a matter is unfortunate, since it cannot fail to create in the minds of the men a lack of confidence in the Committee's impartiality. The Committee would have served the interests of all concerned with much better effect if it had exercised its legitimate functions by making those adjustments which, in the concluding sentence of its award, it indicates are necessary."

The papers do not disclose whether these sample passers are members of the trade union which took up their case. Possibly the promoted first hand steel smelters had retained their connection; probably those who had been appointed from the laboratory had no thought of joining. I do not know; nor does it matter. The striking fact is that here is a trade union invading a province hitherto sacred to management: demanding a considerable increase in pay on behalf of men already earning anything from £500 to £700 a year. It is a portent, marking a new sphere of activity for trade unions. We know that the Railway Clerks' Union draws closer to the National Union of Railwaymen; we know that there is a Clerks' Union that showed considerable activity and some strength prior to the war; but what are we to make of a trade union demand to increase the pay of supervision from £600 to £1,000?

Although I know of no other case comparable to this, we can hardly refrain from connecting it with the new workshop activities described in my last chapter, particularly the question of foremanship. We can be tolerably certain that these sample passers, having invoked the aid of a trade union, are for the future suspect. The Confederation will doubtless have to watch closely whether the future sample passers are recruited from the laboratory or from the operative steel smelters; whether the function of sample passing is recovered by the management and re-established in status, or whether the management will gradually relinquish it and retire to other defences. I am not here concerned with the concrete case of this particular group—in eleven large firms there are only thirty of them; what does concern my argument is the fact that here is a trade union intellectually willing to extend its boundaries to include the salariat. Nor must we forget that the phenomenon has occurred in a blackleg-proof union.

I have recited this case at some length since it is an interesting and important precedent bearing upon the economic status of Labour in war conditions. Much, however, remains to be considered before we can reach any conclusion upon the economic influence of war upon Labour.

S. G. H.

A Guildsman's Interpretation of History.

By Arthur J. Penty.

II.

FROM ROME TO THE GUILDS.

The underlying cause of the failure of Greece and Rome to grapple with the economic problems which followed the introduction of currency is to be found in the Pagan philosophy of life. That philosophy was one of self-sufficiency and self-assertiveness on a basis of sensuous enjoyment, and as such was incapable of bringing a restraining influence to bear upon men when and where foreign trade and successful warfare brought great wealth within their reach. If, therefore, society was ever again to recover its old-time solidarity, and to be lifted out of the slough of despondency into which it had fallen, it was essential that life and its problems should be faced in a spirit fundamentally different from that of Paganism. The worship of materialism had ended in leaving society at the mercy of economic problems which eluded alike the efforts of statesmen and reformers. This new spirit the world found in Christianity: with the spread of its teachings the tide begins to turn and a new chapter opened in the history of mankind.

We are in these days so accustomed to regard religious faith as something essentially divorced from the ordinary routine of life that it is difficult to realise that Christianity in the Early Church was as much a gospel of social salvation in this world as of happiness in a life to come. The two went hand in hand, and it was this that gave Christianity its wonderful power, which made it such a driving force. The Early Church continued the communistic tradition of the Apostles. Thus we read in Acts ii:—

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day they were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things

common, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

And again at the end of Acts iv there is to be found another description of their life :—

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul : neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus : and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet : and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation), a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Looking at Christianity in the light of these texts we find a creed whose aim was to promote communal relations in life. In the eyes of the Early Christians the Fatherhood of God involved the Brotherhood of Man and *vice versâ*. If men and women were to live together as equals, if they were to hold goods in common and be subjected to discipline, they must hold ideas in common as well as goods, or they could never agree among themselves; and some authority was needed to decide differences among them or they would get to quarrelling. Above all they must be fortified in spirit against any temptation to private gain. They must cultivate an indifference towards wealth, if it is not to get a hold on them. This was the gospel of Christ in its social aspect. It did not teach men to despise the world but to renounce it, in order that they might acquire the strength to conquer it. It is true that many converts got no further than the idea of renunciation, but such an attitude towards life appertains to Buddhism rather than to Christianity. For Christianity introduced the world to a new moral principle which sought not to renounce life but to counteract the natural centrifugal tendencies of man by a strong appeal to what was centripedal in his nature. And it was through this new moral principle that Christianity triumphed, for it proved itself to be a principle of great dynamic power, capable of bracing up the moral fibre, producing heroism and a great awakening of human forces. The founders of Christianity conclude by an incessant invocation of the end of the world—i.e., the existing social order, not of the earth, as is generally supposed—and strange to say they really do change it. The lowly quiet man not desirous of riches comes to his own. He begins to be respected, and is no longer treated with scorn as he was under Paganism by scientists and philosophers alike. From this point of view the triumph of Christianity may justly be regarded as a triumph of democracy. The Council of Constantinople in the fourth century was composed of bishops who were ploughmen, weavers, tanners, blacksmiths, and the like.*

Though pure communism survives to-day in the monastic orders of the Roman Church, the Communism of laymen did not last very long. Exactly how long we are not quite sure, but it is generally assumed that it did not long survive apostolic days. The reason is perhaps not far to seek. Experience proves that pure communism is incompatible with family life, and it is to be assumed that the Early Christians were not long in finding it out. Accordingly we find that before long Christians become reconciled to the idea of private property; but with a difference. Henceforth possession is no longer regarded as absolute. It is private property and common use. A man may not hold more property than that for which he has personal need. While men may hold certain forms of private property they must administer it after the necessities of their own position. Their superfluity is common, and is the right and property of the poor. In certain cases of necessity "all things become common"*

It was the necessity of reconciling the communal idea with the institution of the family that led to the idea of the Guilds. For, however diverse their aims, the Guilds take over from the family the spirit which held it together and guided it towards communal ends; they are its faithful image though only for special and definite objects. As might be expected the earliest Guilds were religious Guilds; and were voluntary associations. Their purposes are what we should call social, as well as religious, their funds being expended on feasts, masses for the dead, the church burial fees, charitable aid, etc. Brentano tells us that the Guilds had a dual origin and resulted from the amalgamation of the sacrificial societies of the barbarians with the religious societies of Christendom : he tells us that the word Guild originally meant a festival or sacrificial feast and is afterwards applied to the company who thus feast together.† The Guilds probably had historical continuity with the Roman Collegia which were primarily burial societies. The reason why the instinct of association should have taken this form is that from the time of Cæsar and Augustus all other forms of voluntary organisations were forbidden because during the disorders which had accompanied the civil wars they had been used as bases for conspiracy. Incidentally it may be mentioned that it was because only societies for burial purposes were allowed in Rome that the Early Christians were accustomed to gather in the Catacombs.

With the dissolution of the Roman Empire it was natural that associations should be formed for the purposes of defence. Such were the Frith Guilds, which were compulsory associations each with a corporate responsibility for the conduct of its members. They provided also for mutual aid in legal matters, such as defence against false accusation. But these Guilds need not detain us any more than the great number of Guilds which existed for particular purposes, such as hunting and fishing, for the repairing of the highways and bridges, etc. We must pass on to the Middle Ages when the Guilds definitely became economic organisations under the protection of patron saints, for it is with economic Guilds that we are specially concerned.

There can be little doubt that it was because the Guilds of the Middle Ages were pervaded by religious sentiment that they were so successful as economic organisations; for we must not forget that the sense of brotherhood and human solidarity was restored to the world by Christianity after it had been broken up by the growth of capitalism under the Roman Empire. This sense of the brotherhood of mankind made possible the Just Price which was the central economic idea of the Middle Ages. It was an idea unthinkable in Rome where conquest and exploitation seemed but the natural order of the universe. But the Just Price leaves no room for the growth of capitalism by the manipulation of exchange, for it demands that currency shall be restricted to its primary and proper use as a medium of exchange.

It was this mediæval conception of the Just Price that for the first time in history made the regulation of currency possible, and it is only by relating all the Guild regulations to this central idea that so many of them become intelligible. The Just Price is necessarily a fixed price, and in order to maintain it the Guilds had to be privileged bodies having an entire monopoly

* "The Church and Democracy." Pamphlet by Charles Marson, quoted in "Socialism in Church History," by Conrad Noel.

* "Socialism in Church History," by Conrad Noel.

† "History and Development of Guilds," by L. Brentano.

of their respective trades over the area of a particular town or city; for it was only by monopoly that a fixed price could be maintained as society found to its cost when the Guilds were suppressed. Only through the exercise of authority over its individual members could the Guilds prevent profiteering in its forms of forestalling, regrating, engrossing, and adulteration. Trade abuses of this kind were ruthlessly suppressed in the Middle Ages. For the first offence a member was fined; the most severe penalty was expulsion from the Guild when a man lost the privilege of practising his craft.

But a Just and fixed price is not to be maintained entirely by moral action. If prices are to be fixed throughout production it can only be on the assumption that a standard of quality can be upheld. As a standard of quality cannot finally be defined in the terms of law it is necessary, for the maintenance of a standard, to place authority in the hands of craft masters—a consensus of opinion that constitutes the final court of appeal. In order to ensure a supply of masters it is necessary to train apprentices, to regulate the size of the workshop, hours of labour, the volume of production, and the like, for only when attention is given to such things are workshop conditions created which are favourable to the production of masters. It is thus that we see all the regulations, as indeed the whole hierarchy of the Guild, arising out of the primary necessity of maintaining the Just Price.

The elaborate organisations of the Guilds did not spring full grown, but were gradually evolved as a result of experience in the light of this central idea of the Just Price. Support is given to the thesis that the Guilds as economic organisations grew up around the idea of the Just Price by the fact that when Guilds first made their appearance they were not differentiated into separate trades. The first Guilds which assumed economic functions were the Guilds Merchant, which the various charters acknowledge as the ruling power within cities and upon which they confer not only the right of regulating trade, but the right of municipal self-government. Being mixed organisations they would naturally be concerned primarily with the maintenance of a standard of morality in commercial transactions. In the eleventh century, when the first of these charters was granted by the Sovereign, the towns were small, the largest not containing more than seven or eight thousand inhabitants. Agriculture was still one of the main occupations of the burgesses, and its produce one of the principal elements of their trade. It was perhaps the smallness of the towns that accounts for the fact that at that date craftsmen did not organise themselves separately, but became members of the Guilds Merchant, or, in other words, of the municipality, for in those days the two things were identical. All concerned in industry in whatsoever capacity joined the same organisation. A comparatively small town would contain merchants enough, each one trading in several commodities to form a Guild Merchant, and in those days anybody who bought and sold anything beyond provisions for daily use ranked as a merchant. But the population would need to be much larger before separate trades could support organisations of their own. And this point of development was reached about a hundred years later, when the Craft Guilds, after making their separate appearance, finally substitute their collective power for that of the Guild Merchant which had survived as the municipality controlling the separate Craft Guilds.

The immediate grievance that precipitated the struggle which ended in the establishment of the Craft Guilds was the fact that membership of the Guilds Merchant was confined to such as owned land in the towns. At first there was no objection to this, because in those early days every burgess held land. But gradually a class of craftsmen appeared who did not own land, and as these were excluded from the Guilds Merchant they rebelled. No doubt the craftsmen inside the Guilds Merchant had their own grievances, for in a mixed organisation it invariably happens that those things which concern the majority or dominant party receive attention, while the interests of the minorities are neglected. Something similar overtook the Guilds Merchant, for a century after their formation the craftsmen are everywhere in rebellion against the domination of the merchants. It is interesting to observe that the trades which first rebelled, the weavers and fullers, were those who were not confined to producing for a local market, and felt the tyranny of the middlemen as craftsmen feel it to-day. On the Continent this struggle developed into fierce civil wars, but in England the struggle was not so violent. The end, however, was the same in each case. Political equality was secured, and political power in the municipality passed out of the hands of the merchants into those of the craftsmen who henceforth dispensed with the services of the merchants. For the Craft Guilds bought their raw materials and marketed their goods in distant markets. At a later date monopolies begin to grow up inside the Craft Guilds, and are followed by struggles between the journeymen and the masters.

Critics of the Guilds point to these struggles as testifying to a tyrannical spirit in the Guilds. But I should interpret them as testifying to the spirit of freedom. In the first place the experience of history teaches us that all organisations need readjustment from time to time: the growth of population alone is a sufficient cause to necessitate this; and, in the next, because every kind of social organisation tends to develop within itself little oligarchies. Mr. Chesterton has well said, "there happen to be some sins that go with power and prosperity, while it is certain that whoever holds power will have some motive for abusing it." From this point of view the test of righteousness in social constitutions is not that they do not develop oligarchies and tyrannies, for all institutions tend to do this. Rather let us ask whether resistance may be successfully organised against any such encroachments on popular liberty; and it is the eternal glory of the Guild system that such rebellion was always possible. "The motto of the old Liberals," says Mr. de Maeztu—" 'the price of liberty is eternal vigilance'—is no more than the organisation of this jealousy of the Guilds."* I would respectfully recommend this idea to the consideration of Fabians and Marxians alike, for it is the failure to perceive this central truth of the Guilds that leads one of them to place their faith in a soul-destroying bureaucracy and the other in the class-war. Both of these ideas are different aspects of the same error—a complete inability to understand what is the norm in social relationships. The Fabian shrinking from the very thought of rebellion seeks the creation of a Leviathan against which rebellion would be in vain, while the Marxian with an outlook equally perverted imagines that the social struggle which is inherent in any healthy society, and necessary to effect periodic readjustments, can by a great supreme effort be abolished once and for ever.

Let me put the issue another way. The journeyman when he struggled against the tyrannies of the masters did not challenge the principle of mastership as such but the weakness and selfishness of masters. He rebelled against the abuse of power, but he never for a moment thought that no man ever should hold power. It is this denial of what one feels to be the nature of things that makes the propaganda of the Neo-Marxians a war not only against injustices, but against the very order of the universe.

The Neo-Marxian does not rebel against injustice because it is injustice, which is the test of sanity, but he exploits the feeling of resentment against injustice

* "Authority, Liberty, and Function," by Ramiro de Maeztu, p. 198.

in the interests of an altogether impossible ideal. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the Neo-Marxians are content to devote all their time and energies towards the exposure of what is wrong with the existing system of society, while they are utterly destitute of any substitute. It is the Nemesis of an attitude of mind based upon a denial of the realities of the past.

Recent Verse.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON. Counter-Attack and other Poems. (Heinemann. 2s. 6d. net.)

Satire and poetry are almost contradictory moods; the emotions associated with the one are usually destructive of the emotions associated with the other. Then, again, it cannot be said that poetry has any object save the creation of beauty, whereas satire without an object is meaningless. Mr. Sassoon rules himself out from the realm of poetry on two grounds: first, he is quite indifferent to the creation of beauty; and, second, he is a prey to the emotions which tend to satire. Hatred is the predominant impulse of Mr. Sassoon's expression, and without hatred it is probable that not more than one of these poems would have been written. Strangely enough, they are most of them about the war and the horrors of war. Strangely, because in the world of poetry Mr. Sassoon's verses are themselves acts of war; seeking to parallel in words, as it were, the acts of cruelty inseparable from military war. Their only justification, from this point of view, is the justification Mr. Sassoon would, of course, deny to military war, namely, that the creation of horror may be less evil than the continuance of injustice. In any event, we can regard his verses as bombs thrown at society for the purpose—the conscious purpose, at least—of bringing home to civilians the horrors of war. Well, does he do it? It cannot be altogether said that he does. In the first place, Mr. Sassoon is himself so moved that our attention is taken up more with him than with his subject. While he is talking of war, we are thinking of the state of mind of Mr. Sassoon and pitying him. In the second place, this abandonment of himself to his personal emotions results in an attempt to visualise war; he tries to make us share his feelings, not by some alchemy of imagination, but by rehearsing the actual things he has seen. Alas, they are real to him, as personally experienced events must needs be; but they cannot be communicated by merely cataloguing them. We confess ourselves unmoved by hearing that decayed legs and trunks of corpses litter the trenches after a battle. To those who have seen such sights, the memory may revivify the description: but to the civilian world the description is merely repulsive. Mr. Sassoon does not know how to touch the only faculty in us which would serve his purpose, the faculty, namely, of imagination. A different method from his would be necessary. Finally, the medium of verse subtracts from rather than adds to the effect of Mr. Sassoon's descriptions. Such moods as prevail in him are unfitted for verse altogether. They are moods not of contemplation of past passion, but of experience of present passion. They need to be written, if written at all, in prose vignettes, or in free rhythm, or in Whitmanese. The careful forms of regular verse suggest the very contrary of the feeling attempted to be conveyed in them; it is as if Mr. Sassoon wrote verses in a delirium. That there is something suspect in this inconsistency may be taken for granted; and, indeed, we have the suspicion that before and after these personal experiences Mr. Sassoon is a very ordinary sort of person. He writes to-day of the politicians

> And with my trusty bombers turned and went
> To clear those Junkers out of Parliament.

But how will it be with him after the war? How was it with him before the war? "Break of Day" is a poem that answers the second question. It is a description of the rich man's fox-hunting, written without the least suspicion of the causal relation between such pleasures and war.

Hark! there's the horn; they're drawing the Big Wood.

Yes, and the world, too! "October" also reveals Mr. Sassoon as naturally violent:—

> October's bellowing anger breaks and cleaves
> The bronzed battalions of the stricken wood.

Such violence is necessarily brief; and we can expect Mr. Sassoon's next volume to revert to the pleasures of the English country gentleman, Tory and mild.

A. P. HERBERT. The Bomber Gipsy and other Poems. (Methuen. 3s. 6d. net.)

More war-poems but in a less violent mood than Mr. Sassoon's. When we are told that most of these poems have already appeared in "Punch," little remains to be said of them. "Punch" is usually as far from imagination upon one side as Mr. Sassoon is upon the other; and both Mr. Herbert and Mr. Sassoon are strangers to poetry, though, of the two, Mr. Herbert dwells nearer. The following verses, for example, show the beginnings of a poetic feeling:—

> And men who find it easier to forget
> In England here, among the daffodils,
> That Eastward there are fields unflowered yet,
> And murderous May-days on the unlovely hills—
>
> Let him go walking when the land is fair,
> And watch the breaking of a morn in May,
> And think, "It may be Zero over there,
> And here is Peace"—and kneel awhile, and pray.

Usually, however, Mr. Herbert is in a much lighter mood, more befitting the capering "Punch." Note the euphemism in the third line of a dedicatory verse to wives at home:—

> Not only death the soldier's wages,
> But there are farms and laughing friends,
> And wine and wonders and delicious leisure,
> And dreaming villages where children dwell.

The "Bomber Gipsy," the titular poem, is unredeemed by even a bad line, unless it be this:—

> No hungry discipline shall starve thy soul.

The "Ballades" are not above the commonplace. "A Lost Leader" is mildly amusing.

> The men are marching like the best;
> The waggons wind across the lea;
> At ten to two we have a rest;
> We have a rest at ten to three.
> I ride ahead upon my gee,
> And try to look serene and gay;
> The whole battalion follows me,
> *And I believe I've lost the way.*

Turning over the pages it is little that brings us to a halt.

> And flat as possible for men so round—
> The Quartermasters may be seen in heaps,

is rather quaint. Here is a bit of Kipling:—

> The shell-holes hold our history, and half of them our blood.

and here a mélange of Longfellow and the moderns:—

> When some reluctant sniper forsakes his matted lair
> To fire across the open, incredulous farewells.

If Mr. Sassoon has let himself go too much for poetry, Mr. Herbert has not let himself go enough. The one has reverted to the barbaric; the other still cherishes the ideal of vers de société.

STEPHEN MAGUIRE.

Readers and Writers.

The "Quest" (quarterly, 2s. 6d.) begins a new volume with an excellent issue. What the circulation of this magazine is I have no idea; but at a venture I think it should be ten times greater. Is there, however, a sufficiently large class of cultured persons in England—in the Empire—in the world? Assuming that the spread of culture can be reckoned as readily numerically as qualitatively, can we pride ourselves on the extension of culture while the number of free intelligences is relatively decreasing? But how does one know that this class is really on the decrease? Only by the same means that we judge the number of the curious lepidoptera in any area—by holding up a light in the dark and counting the hosts attracted by it. In the case of the "Quest" there is no doubt whatever that a light is being held up in our darkness. Its articles are upon the most exalted topics; they are, for the most part, luminously written; and their purity of motive may be taken for granted. The "Quest," in fact, is the literary Platonic Academy of our day. Yet, apart from one or two friends, I do not know a reader of the "Quest," nor have I heard it spoken of in literary circles. We "good" are very apathetic; and it is lucky for the devil that his disciples are unlike us in this respect. They see to it that everything evil shall flourish like the bay-tree, while the bays of the intelligent are allowed by us to fade into the sere.

* * *

The Editor's contribution to the current issue of the "Quest" is an extraordinarily interesting article on a topic which "A. E. R." has not exhausted—"Man's Survival of Bodily Death." "A. E. R." is not the first to deny "immortality" while affirming an absolute morality, nor even the first to attempt to explain religion without recourse to a dogma of survival. The Sadducees did it before him; and the Confucians managed somehow or other to combine ancestor-worship with a lively denial of the continued existence of their forbears. Moreover, as Mr. Clutton Brock sympathetically observed, there is an ethical value in the denial which almost makes the denial of survival an act of moral heroism. For if a man can pursue the highest moral aims without the smallest hope of personal reward, hereafter, and, still less, here, his disinterestedness is obvious; he pursues virtue as the pupil is enjoined in the "Bhagavad Gita" to act, namely, without hope or fear of fruit. I am not, however, of the heroic breed myself; and, besides, the problem is one of fact as well as of moral discipline. It may be heroic to put the telescope of truth to a deliberately blinded eye; but unless you suspect yourself of being unable to master the fact, I see no indispensable virtue in its wilful denial. In other words, I should prefer, at all risks to my morality, to keep my weather-eye open for such evidences of survival as may loom up behind the fog.

* * *

Mr. G. R. S. Mead, the editor of the "Quest," is a man after, or, rather, before, my mind in this matter. Premising that "no high religion can exist"—and I agree with him—"which is not based on faith in survival," he proceeds to examine the two forms of research, study—whatever you like to call it—which conceivably promise conclusions: the comparative study of the mystic philosophers and their recorded religious experiences in all ages, and the more material examination of the so-called spiritualistic phenomena of modern psychical research. For himself, Mr. Mead has chosen the former method; and I am interested to observe his testimony, in a rare personal statement, to the satisfaction, more or less, that is possible from following this road. At the same time, though without any experience in the second method, Mr. Mead is explicitly of the opinion that it is one that should be employed by science with increasing earnestness. The difficulties are tremendous, and as subtle as they are considerable. Before survival can be scientifically demonstrated, a host of working hypotheses must be invented and discredited, and the utmost veracity will be necessary in the students. With such facts before us as telepathy, dissociated personality, sub-conscious complexes, auto-suggestion and suggestion, the phenomena that superficially point to survival may plainly be nothing of the kind. Survival, in short, must be expected to be about the last rather than the first psychic fact to be scientifically established. The student must therefore be exigent as well as hopeful.

* * *

There is a third method from which I personally hope to hear one day something to our advantage—assuming, of course, that the certain knowledge of survival would be to mankind's advantage—the method of psycho-analysis. If psycho-analysis of the first degree can make us acquainted with the sub-conscious, I do not see why a psycho-analysis of the second degree may not make us acquainted with the super-conscious; and as the language of the sub-conscious may be sleeping dreams, the language of the super-conscious may be waking visions. But that is for another occasion, and, I hope, another pen. To return to Mr. Mead's article, an interesting account is contained in it of a recent census taken in America by Professor Leuba of the creeds of more or less eminent men. The returns for the article of faith in survival and immortality are curious, not to say surprising. Of the eminent physicists canvassed, 40 per cent. confessed their belief in man's survival of bodily death. Thereafter the percentage falls through the stages of historians 35 per cent., and sociologists 27 per cent., to psychologists with the degraded percentage of 9. It is a strange reversal of the procession that might have been anticipated; and it symbolises, I am afraid, the condition of real culture in America. That the physicists should be the most hopeful class of scientists in America and the psychologists the most hopeless is an indication, I think, that the best brains in America are still engaged in physical problems. The poor psychologists are scarcely even hopeful of discovering anything new.

* * *

Both to the "Quest" and to the most recent issue of the "Anglo-Italian Review" (edited by Mr. Edward Hutton and published monthly at 1s. 3d.), Mr. Douglas Ainslie, the excellent translator into English of the chief works of the Italian philosopher, contributes an article on the personality and philosophic system of Benedetto Croce, a name not without honour in these pages. Mr. Ainslie began life, I believe, as a lyric poet; and the habit early acquired has unfortunately persisted into his prose. Thus we have in these articles an account of Croce the man which should make the philosopher a little embarrassed for his elevation. Mr. Ainslie's account of the philosophy of Croce is in much the same Lydian style, so different from the classically humorous style of Croce himself. "Croce is the philosopher who has awakened the sleeping beauty . . . disentangled her from the thorny briars . . . which had overgrown her bower . . . etc., etc." As one of the "transfigured disciples" of the new Italian master, Mr. Ainslie should remember that Bottom the Weaver was translated.

* * *

I am not competent to pass a judgment upon the philosophy of Croce as a whole. If a man must be over forty to enunciate a complete philosophy, he must be under forty to judge a philosophy hastily; and I have read Croce now for only some six or seven years and am not an enunciator. The merit of Croce for us mere readers and writers lies in his establishment of

the precedence of the æsthetic over all the other activities of the spirit. The spirit of man, he says, is first of all that of an artist; it is only consequentially that of a thinker, a doer and a moralist. This challenge to Puritanism, which notoriously places the values in the reverse order, is of such strength that I confidently commend Croce to the attention of Mr. Mencken and Mr. Pound, those apostles of anti-Puritanism in Noo York. Let them bray the shades (if it can be done) of Comstock in Croce's mortar. Puritanism as a philosophy can scarcely survive a reading of the "Æsthetic" of Croce. R. H. C.

Official.

Promptly at seven o'clock that evening Mr. Manley began to nurse his grievance. Being a married man his grievance was his wife. Please do not interrupt. It is only a way of saying that the two terms had a single meaning. Mr. Manley was nearly as old in grievance as the war was long. From the day his wife took to war-work he had not known what it was to be the man he used to be. He had no grievance, you must understand, against women-workers in general: in his own office he employed a plump dozen of them at the minimum cost to himself. But there are things which though it is allowed that they must be done, and done by women, no real man likes to see his own wife doing. If the need of the time requires women to wear the breeches, a man's own life must at least be as good as Cæsar's. Everywoman is never a man's wife. It makes a man's heart bleed with pity to find his wife so engaged in her work that she has no time to watch him eat his breakfast, no time to manœuvre his dinner into action, no time, indeed, to be in time for it. Even strong men tremble at such moving pictures.

This evening was the third evening in three evenings that Mrs. Manley had been late for dinner. It was the third week in three weeks that she had been unavoidably detained by stress of business at the office. It was the third month in three months. . . . Mr. Manley had superstitiously nothing to hope from the triad.

Mr. Manley kept looking at the clock for the same psychological reason that some of us keep looking at a taximeter, on the rare occasions that we get the chance, not in love but in hate. The time came when he began to pace the room, putting his thoughts, as it were, into action. Women, he told himself, kicking his words before him syllable by syllable, women were all the same—inconsiderate, selfish, heartless. Once at their offices or clubs, or wherever the devil they went to nowadays, they ceased to think of their responsibilities all alone at home. So long as they were themselves having a good time, they never thought of their husbands waiting hungrily for dinner. . . . The dinner would certainly be spoilt. And that would annoy the cook; and that would mean she would give notice, which, again, would mean, he supposed, that *he* would have to cook the dinner in future or misspend his own office hours in registry offices. He liked that—keeping a wife and barking himself. A dog's life. But, of course, women never thought of men. All they thought about was their ridiculous work; and even when they did come home they talked of nothing but their office.

A latchkey opened the front door and Mrs. Manley put her smart little hat into the dining-room. "You can ring for dinner, dear. I shan't be a second," she said. "Sorry to be late."

The second had become ten minutes and had added the lines of years to Mr. Manley's face before his wife put in a remarkably fresh appearance. "Forgive me for being late, dear," she said, as she sat down at the table. "Couldn't get away a moment earlier. Been an awful rush all day—one thing after another."

Manley made no reply. Silence, of course, is the better-half of argument.

"Don't be sulky, dear," said Mrs. Manley.

Manley wondered if women would ever learn that men do not sulk. She or it sulks, but never he; and to illustrate his lesson he repeated the word defiantly. "Sulky! What would you think if *I* were late for dinner every night, and then called *you* sulky. . . But, of course, you never think of me and the dinner spoiling and the cook's temper going—and if she goes who's to do the work? Me, I suppose."

"Don't get hysterical, dear," said Mrs. Manley. "If cook goes we must get another."

"Get another!" cried Manley. "How just like a woman! And who's to get her, and where's she to come from I should like to know?" he asked, in a tone that would have resented an answer.

"Oh, well, there's always the club to dine at," said Mrs. Manley.

A maid marched in, put down the dinner like a strike—and went out like a lamp. Working with men had taught Mrs. Manley to look trouble in the face.

Mr. Manley helped his wife to fish, but refused to take any himself. He had a headache, he said. "Poor dear!" said Mrs. Manley. "But I don't wonder; you let the servants worry you too much. If I let the office spoil my appetite, I should starve. To-day the rush has been simply awful. I'm dead tired. We had scarcely got through the post by lunch." Mr. Manley refused to nibble; and Mrs. Manley tried another line. "It's awfully nice to come back to a quiet little dinner with you, dear," she said. "What a woman would do without her home, I don't know. A man can't guess what it is to a woman to have a husband and home waiting for her. Do have a glass of wine or something, dear. Be cheerful."

Mr. Manley shook his head; he just shook it as one who is too weary and languid for words. He would famish rather than take the edge off his grievance, rather than rob his wife of one crumb of the humble pie he was heaping on her plate. It requires faith of some sort to enable a hungry man to resist wine and women. Mr. Manley's was a mixed sort. Turning his eyes from the world and his wife, Mr. Manley fixed them in prospect on a tin of biscuits which he kept in his study to sweeten the apples of discord, and to comfort and stay him till the cook had gone to bed. Mrs. Manley, on the other hand, seemed happily unaware of the origin of the war. Her behaviour was naïvely disarming. "I'm sorry to be so long, dear," she said, as from a full and contrite heart. "But work makes me hungry. I've had nothing but a biscuit since lunch."

Mr. Manley glowed like a rusk. Why drag in biscuits?

"I wonder," went on Mrs. Manley, "if men know how impossible they are to work with. Of course, I don't include you, dear; I'm sure you'd be as sweet as a sugar biscuit—I mean the average man, the men in our office. Take Mr. Short, for instance; he really is maddening—of course, as I say, he ought to have gone long ago. What they keep him for I can't think. I suppose they're too mean to pay him a pension, and,

as I say, they'd certainly have to pay a new man more. He's not a bad sort, you know—at least, I get on all right with him—if he says anything to me I simply go to the club for an hour—but the way he treats the others—shouts at them—really, of course, they oughtn't to keep him. Of course, he doesn't mean anything—as I say, he's not really a bad sort, but—well, you know what I mean to say—he's simply a bundle of nerves, and they oughtn't to keep him. He had a frightful row this morning with Mr. Locke—you know who I mean—at least, I rather like him—he's not a bad sort, you know—I mean to say, well, at least, he's awfully nice to me—you know—but, of course, he really is a slacker. And slow! Violet says she could do his day's work in an hour. Of course, Violet is awfully good; she's not exactly clever, but—well, you know what I mean—she's quick at those sort of things, even the men say that, and there's really something awfully nice about her. Perhaps she's rather, well, you know—rather fond of theatres and things—but, somehow, I like her—there's something awfully nice about her somehow—I mean to say, well, you know what I mean. . . ."

Manley had his head in his hands. The burden was more than his shoulders could bear. "Know," he groaned, "know! I should think I do know. I know them all—Violet and Short and Locke, and Locke and Short and Violet, and all the rest of them—Short ought to have gone long ago—he and Locke hate each other—Somehow you mean to say you rather like Violet—Know! From A to Z—backwards and forwards—inside and out—from head to foot I know—I know them all—all."

"Really, dear!" said Mrs. Manley.

But Manley was past minding appearances. "You're like a mouse in a cage," he continued. "Always going round in a circle and never getting any farther. It's the same record night after night. I'm sick of it. I hate your work; I can't stand it. First, you keep me waiting for dinner, and then you come and turn out all that office rubbish before me. If it were interesting I shouldn't mind. But people like Short and Locke—they're not worth a word."

Mrs. Manley flushed furiously. If she had spoken at once there would have been silence for the rest of the evening, perhaps for life. But Mrs. Manley was not really a stupid woman, though you may have thought she was. She had unwittingly hurt herself; and she was more annoyed with herself than with her husband. Presently she had the sense and the good-will to say so. "I'm most awfully sorry, dear," she said after a minute's heroism; "I really am. I'm ashamed of myself, talking like that—'I mean to say, and well, you know'—it's horrible. It's a shocking habit I've caught from the office. Some girls do talk rather like that, I'm afraid. But really dear," Mrs. Manley asked, "how was I to know that you didn't like hearing about the office?"

Manley's sub-conscious purpled under exposure, but for the moment his consciousness remained in the dark. "How were you to know?" he repeated, groping towards the light. "Well, put it to yourself: office news isn't particularly interesting—not as a world-subject—is it? I'm sure mine isn't."

"I never found it so," said Mrs. Manley. "But I confess I rather thought you did from the way you used to bring it home with you night after night—late for dinner, too!"

Manley turned to read his wife's face. There was a crooked smile on his, the smile of a man on the rack. Suddenly the room filled with laughter, first Manley's, then his wife's.

"Well," said Manley, at last, "how many evenings—how many years do I owe you?"

H. M. T.

Art Notes.

By B. H. Dias.

LEICESTER GALLERY, ETCHINGS.

The Leicester Gallery show is extremely interesting and the modern masters of etching are nearly all represented by at least one piece of their best work. It is not a show to be missed by anyone interested in "the not very interesting medium." No medium is of much interest in itself, and if etching has suffered more than any other from the work of cheap-jacks, other mediums have suffered and suffer.

Manet's dark-blotted "Olympia" is one of the gems of the collection; of the fifty Whistlers there are all sorts and conditions, the earliest of merely biographical interest, the last Amsterdam pair showing his final mastery.

There is the bare and definite in "Black Lion Wharf" (182) with its properly "Whistlerian" economy of line; the distinct, "Soupe à trois sous" (184a); the well-known dry-point portrait of himself, and the portrait of Becquet of about the same period. The Tanagra period, exquisite in his pastels, is indicated in 191, "Model Resting." "Tatting" (192) epitomises the Victorian hell, the Mrs. Meynell period with a touch of almost Balzacian fustiness.

"The Adam and Eve" (195) is well known. "Upright Venice" serves to remind one of the glory of all Whistler's Venice. It is a perfect etching, and one would perhaps be able to value it as such, but the memory of pastels and Whistler's Venetian colour comes upon one, and one is, perhaps too soon, discontented. The thing wants extension into colour. "Mairie, Loches" (200) deserves attention. But the utter mastery comes in "Long House" (202). One does not think about its being an etching; one takes it directly as a picture. It is last phase of Whistler, the important phase, or, rather, an important phase, more important than even the enthusiasts have agreed.

The Whistlers are well arranged. Roughly, one groups them as early and Victorian work, unimportant; then the clear, hard, definite, one might almost say, Meryon manner, save that J. McN. is dead and should not be deprived of an answer.

These give great pleasure as etchings.

Then the dry-points, a progress, but not, perhaps, so satisfactory; then several periods where the etchings are rather a reference to his other work, as in "Model Resting," and even in the excellent "Venice." Then the "Balcony" (201), and more especially "Long House," where one does not think of the medium at all. It excels in suavity, by tone, and the ease in originality which is, in Whistler, the ultimate reward of a lifetime's uncontented continuous respect for all the details of his art.

No Whistlerian will, and no art student should, miss inspecting the West wall. The show in its entirety gives ample chance to study the whole matter of modern etching. It would be of interest even without the Whistlers.

7. O. Hall, technically good. 11. Glyn. W. Philpot, Condering with a dash of Ricketts. 15. C. W. Cope, R.A., trial proof and finished state, excellent chance to see how the Victorian rot rotted. 22. Rops. No. There is, however, a good Rops of a satyr holding an image.

Mary Cassatt holds her distinction and originality, a little Hindoo in mode, both the strength and weakness of her talent are in 25. 50 is one of the few successful colour etchings, and the colour is superb. On the wall opposite the Whistlers her two prints hold attention; suavity in "Le Sein." "Maternite," 163, maintains the impression.

"Noctes Ambrosianæ" (26), the blurry deep bit, and 132, "Old Hotel Royal," come as a much-needed re-

minder that Walter Sickert was an artist. "Legrand" (35) bad Degas. 47. M. Bauer, merit.

Berthe Morisot series of dry-points, worth looking at, and of charm—both 60 and 53. Besnard has mood in "La Femme." 78. The series "Vie d'une Femme" has a narrative interest, a vigour in imagination, or recording of life, less interest as actual workmanship. Latouche, 81, excellent. Manet's "Les Chats" is interesting, but, as noted, the "Olympia" is the masterwork.

Meryon's architectural fidelity and charm show in 98, and the clear lining comes, I think, better in this than in the connoisseurshipist's preferred print on green paper; which loses much that is characteristic of this master.

Legros's 102 is clearly executed. Cameron's "Berwick" is charming. E. A. Cole, 109, swank. Degas shows levity in 110, but the "Au Louvre" is very important, both for the comedy of the female in the chair and for the Etruscan figures in the case. The drawing of these gives one a wink at certain more modern "innovations." Cassatt's distinct style I have mentioned.

James McBey has something to him. "In Moroccan Market" we find an interesting arrangement of triangles more or less isosceles. I found my eye coming to rest on other of his works, as "Gunsmiths, Tetuan." M. Bauer, "Kremlin," has an air—somewhat deceptive. Pissarro, in the main, a very much over-estimated artist, is quite good in 137.

The Forains are uneven in interest; his drawing can scarcely be without some attraction. He is excellent in "Maison Close." Besnard, again, has Iberian charm in "Pensive." Steinlen, from whom one must now and again demur, is good in "Bourg-Breton," 205. Meryon, à la Durer, 208. C. R. W. Nevinson does very poorly in this august gathering; "The Estuary" is a composition which recalls the puppy and the damp umbrella, "O ndira encore que c'est moi" picture, once so familiar in Paris.

Piccasso is represented by two prints, the simple "Roi d'Yvetot" and "Femme au Miroir" representing an early period of his work too little known here in London; the inception of his cubism is indicated in the distinctive right-angle elbow of the male figure, to be found in his "Man at the Table," and other work of this period. This is, with the final Whistlers, the Manet and the Degas, among the most interesting prints in the show.

I think the æsthetic of etching must make some sort of division, not merely a higher and lower, but a separation in mental approach, between "the Meryon sort of thing" which is delightful because it is good etching; and the late Whistler, Manet, and, even here, the Piccasso, sorts of things which are delightful *irrespective* of their being etching at all. One wants to recognise a difference in kind.

LONDON GROUP, AT HEAL'S.

Very much the same thing and same group as last year, all a year older, some a year wiser. Roman pavement by Anrep (once van). Bevan and Ginner, commendable. Wolfe, No. Portraiture by Hamnett and Allinson. Gaudier-Brzeskeque and Paris approximation of animal and vegetable forms shows up in Fry's caterpillar tree and in somebody else's duck-eye. Lessore, fading cubism. Allinson, "L. Gamallt," *mit seele*. Gertler, visible.

C. Billing is studying Matisse to advantage. Water-colours, in general, perhaps better than the oils, etc. Refer to our last year's notice for general tonality and personnel of the group.

Gertrude and Harold Harvey (exhibition at Leicester Gallery) should have no difficulty in getting their work reproduced in "Colour."

Views and Reviews.

LECTURING ON LIFE.

It was my pleasure some time ago to review Mr. Ludovici's "Defence of Aristocracy," and it falls to my lot to notice this,* his first novel; but the indulgence that was given to a pamphlet that was remarkable for its subject-matter cannot be granted to a novel. For a novel, being a work of art, differs from a tract, not necessarily by its subject-matter, but by the manner of presenting it; an artist with a mission is a contradiction in terms, for the only compulsion of the artist is an inspiration to create. All diversions are, of course, artificial, because life in all its aspects is a complex; and the novelist needs the virtues of style quite as much as the tractarian needs the graces—but the emphasis falls differently because the purpose differs. It is the business of a tractarian to prove a proposition, to convey information, to demonstrate truth; and clarity, brevity, continence, all these virtues and some more have to be exercised not only to tell the truth but to produce the effect of truth—which is a change of mind. It is of truth rather than of beauty that we should say that, unadorned, it is adorned the most; there is a Baresark quality of reality in truth that is best expressed by the last triumph of style, simplicity. If the method is definition, the manner is serious; the tractarian with his non-human purpose cannot dally with human modes of expression, can permit himself to express or to imply none but technical meanings if he is to provoke the intellectual reaction he requires.

But the purpose of the artist is creation, not definition; his story may illustrate such and such propositions (because all orders of reality are related and can be translated into terms of one another), but his creation has a life of its own apart from its relations; it is a reality and not a derivative. And the purpose of art is not a change of mind, not even the change of heart that the moralist desires; I doubt even whether it is the creation of beauty (although it often takes that form); it is simply the expression of power that can find no other vent. Art is born of life unexpressed; it is a product of leisure, not of labour; and the ploughman who homeward plods his weary way does not create, can scarcely even enjoy, beauty. Art is really the play-way of life; in it, the will finds practically unobstructed expression, plays with circumstance, and is beautiful with all the graces of freedom. The didactic purpose of the tractarian can only deform this freedom into a forensic exercise; the creation is not self-existant, but ad hoc, as though a god had created men without free will. In such a case, the novel need not have been a novel, and is not a nouvelle; there is no beauty that we should desire it, and the fine art of literary creation sinks to the service of moral exhortation.

Mr. Ludovici has not avoided this pitfall. He has something to say that he wants us to believe, and that something is only partially true, and is imperfectly rendered even in this novel. Mr. Ludovici's defect both in propaganda and in art is that he adopts a defensive method of advocacy of vital power. His heart bleeds for the superman condemned, like Gulliver, to suffer at the hands of the Lilliputians; and he implores us, as Dr. Wrench implored us, in a letter to this journal some years ago, to pity the strong man, to succour him in his extremity, not to oppress him with our slave morality, but to rejoice that a great one is dwelling in our midst. The exhortation of Maria to Malvolio, "Be not afraid of greatness," had at least this justification, that it inspired Malvolio to show himself as the pompous fool he was; but this solicitude

* "Mansel Fellowes." By Anthony M. Ludovici. (Grant Richards. 6s. net.)

for our superiors, for those more highly endowed even with vitality than ourselves, has an air of futility. "They that are whole need not a physician," or a nurse-maid; and we know enough of psycho-analysis to know that strong passions, however strongly suppressed, find some expression. Viola was fighting her own battle when she told the Duke the sad story of her imaginary sister who "never told her love, but let concealment, like a worm i' the bud, feed on her damask cheek." Somehow or other, love, like murder, its antithesis, will out; and the more powerful the passion, the more vigorously will it strive to be satisfied. The great lovers may die of joy or of grief, but never of concealed love; the desire that does not strive with all its might to realise itself is only velleity.

Mr. Ludovici offers us two women, the one, Mansel Fellowes, whom he loads with every physical perfection, and the other, who is the "botched" product of a corrupt civilisation. Both are in love with an insufferable prig, who is also a contradiction of Mr. Ludovici's thesis that a perfect body is the vehicle of a perfect soul. Richard Latimer, who had been the chela of Dr. Melhado (why give him a name like that of a non-intoxicating beverage?), and was presumed to be as well-equipped spiritually as he was perfectly developed physically, fails utterly to determine his own choice of a woman. The one thing that Richard Latimer never achieves is freedom of choice, a power that the merest clerk flirting with flappers round a bandstand asserts; Richard Latimer, even with the assistance of a solicitor, a priest, and a physician, cannot make up his mind, demands a "sign," and gets it in his dismissal by the botched product of a corrupt civilisation.

Mr. Ludovici confuses his values. His thesis that good taste is passionate preference fails to find an exemplar; all his superior people are beaten. Dr. Melhado cultivates the serenity of the spectator, while he preaches the passion of the performer; and at the last, when life itself depends upon his physical fitness, he is outrun by a girl whose passion for life has turned to self-destruction. Mansel Fellowes, who is supposed to represent the superior type of woman, to whom love is so vital that she cannot live without it, does nothing to arouse it in her chosen, would have died like a dog in a corner when he left her, and did die by the only lover's leap she ever took—into White Horse Hollow. The desire for death is, we know, the effect of a passion suppressed, and a passion suppressed is, we also know, not the sign of a single heart or a superior vitality, but of a divided mind and a rationalised instinct. Mansel Fellowes cared more for the proprieties than for the passions, and was willing to die rather than to give herself away. She would not lift a finger to satisfy herself; the only one whose action was commensurate with her desires was the botched product of a corrupt civilisation. It was she who exercised mastery while these poor philosophers preached it; she chose Richard Latimer, she pursued him, she forced him to a proposal, and she rejected him when his superhumanity did not know how to make up its mind. Mr. Ludovici wanted to reach the pessimistic conclusion that life is declining to a dead level of debility, that only the dead are great; and he has to falsify the vital facts to do it. His admiration for the ordered existence of the Catholic Church, of ancient Egypt, and so forth, belies the very essence of his creed; for all systems, all disciplines, that become ends instead of means are, as Nietzsche noted, conservative and indicative and sometimes productive of declining life. It is sound physiology, as well as sound Christianity, that "he that saveth his life shall lose it"; and the only value of any discipline, any order, is that it will enable us to spend our lives to the best advantage. Passion, like that of Mansel Fellowes, that does not develop, does not compel, intelligent adaptation, that can be forbidden expression by a mere convention, is the very producer of that corruption of disease and deformity that Mr. Ludovici denounces; it is velleity that Mr. Ludovici proffers in the name of vitality, and sterile stupidity that, in the person of Richard Latimer, he offers us as the mastery of life.

A. E. R.

Reviews.

George Meredith: A Study of His Works and Personality. By J. H. E. Crees, M.A., D.Litt., (Blackwell. 6s. net.)

That a man with all the gifts that Meredith had (and Mr. Crees says no more of him than he merits) should have so little effect on English literature and life serves to show us how utterly alien to the English is the Comic Spirit. Meredith, we may say, is the least representative of our classics; he differs from our sentimental genius precisely by the quality that marks the comedian, his consciousness. He certainly put "brains" into the novel, an easier feat than putting brains into the publishers or the public; he was not only accessible to the thought of his time, he played with it like an Olympian. He had an urgency of wit comparable only with Shakespeare's urgency of humour; he dandled ideas as vigorously as Shakespeare did jokes, and made conversation a fine art, the parlour-game of sophists. His chief defect of genius was that he was incapable of expressing the obvious (to be obvious is a Meredithian term of reproach); the game was to make the obvious obscure, and the obscure obvious, by refusing to say what everybody was thinking and by saying what nobody would ever be likely to think. He had that twist in himself; his gifts were never expressed through their appropriate medium. He was a poet who could only write in prose, a philosopher who could be systematic only in fantasy, an epigrammatist with a filigree style, a wit who could not jest about women, not even the new women. He contributed to English literature its most logical fantasy, "The Shaving of Shagpat," its most searching psychological analysis of character, "The Egoist," and some of its most scientific poetry (almost as bad as Erasmus Darwin's). But he remains a singular, not a representative, figure, as lonely as Beethoven and as surely without successors. He ranks as a classic for the usual reasons, his vast range, his extraordinary skill, his peculiar genius; but most of all, he put a finish to his age. He refined it into history; and we face an inchoate future with none of the assumptions that underlay Meredith's faith. Dr. Crees has made a faithful and enthusiastic study of the man and his works; but the spirit of this age is creative, experimental, improvisatory, and Meredith will be read again when the age hardens into formulæ and established institutions, and our need is for the refining processes of analysis.

Foe-Farrell. By "Q" (Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch). (Collins. 6s. net.)

There are in the Book of Proverbs two following texts which show that the real proof of wisdom in living is the choice of the most appropriate method of dealing with emergencies. They are: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him," and, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." "Q's" story deals with a man who chose the second method of dealing with a fool, and achieved the result against which the first is the warning. Farrell was nothing but a purse-proud fool, even if he was a Progressive candidate for the L.C.C.; and it is difficult to believe that he had within him the incarnate devil of hatred that "Q" alleges of him at his first appearance. Nothing that he does subsequently justifies the assertion; and it is stretching probability too far, particularly in a tale of such psychological subtlety

as this, to suppose that the devil of hatred left Farrell untenanted when he possessed Foe. There is no shortage of devils, and if Farrell had been the habitation of the big one that became Foe's, he could at least have accommodated a little one who would not have been tainted with the Christian heresy. As "Q" represents it, there was only one devil between the two of them, engaged in the pastime of practising long jumps from one to the other. Foe certainly had the devil the longer in possession, and educated him in the "science of behaviour," which was Foe's speciality; but as Farrell benefited when the devil returned to him on the completion of his studies in Macdougall, the function of this devil approximates, at least, to that of an University Extension lecturer.

The most unsatisfactory part of the book is the beginning. Powerful as it undoubtedly is in its development, it does not satisfy the modern demand for diagnosis. We may never be able to answer the question "Why?" that such a study inevitably provokes, but we need much more acquaintance with the preliminary condition of these characters than is afforded by the narrator's casual "I knew him, Horatio" reminiscences before we can even understand how Foe's absorbing interest in the behaviour of animals became transmuted into an absorbing interest in Farrell. The jibe that he was simply extending the range of his observations came readily to his lips, but did not explain the fundamental change of character implied by the change of purpose. He pursued Farrell with the deliberate intention of making his life a misery to him, a purpose contrary to that with which he studied the behaviour of animals. There, where the problem really lies, we are jobbed off with the assumption of demoniacal possession; and the transmission of character is accompanied by the transmission of acquired characteristics. Foe, who was ascetically lean, becomes puffily fat; Farrell, who was puffily fat, becomes purified by suffering into an ascetically lean purveyor of copra. Foe, of course, murdered him at the end, and then saw that "it was not Farrell's face but my own that I stared into." "Q" draws the moral, and applies it to the present war, that "the more you beat Fritz by becoming like him, the more he has won"; but the story will also support the conclusion that the hatred of scientific men is necessary to the higher education of millionaires.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

ECONOMICS AND POPULATION.

Sir,—In your issue of September 26 the writer of "Notes of the Week" tries to confute my view—which, of course, is also the view of Plato, Aristotle, Malthus, and Darwin—that pressure of population is the great cause of war. He thinks the peacefulness of China an argument against my theory, but I cannot admit that. A hungry wolf is always aggressive, but that does not prove that a hungry sheep must be. China has not the power to be aggressive. She is an ill-organised country, devoid of coal and steel industries, and all the other means of modern warfare. For ages her population has pressed upon the means of subsistence, but it has been held down simply by famine, pestilence, and infanticide, with very little aid from warfare. A strong nation, however, will fight rather than starve. During the last half-century Japan has passed from the starving to the fighting class.

Your writer also quotes against me "the German importation before the war of two million foreign labourers annually." In the first place such importation is imaginary, for there never was a time when the whole population of Germany increased by more than six hundred thousand a year. Some cheap foreign labour was no doubt imported, and it is an admitted fact that there was hardly any emigration from Germany for some years before the war. These facts are quite consistent with the view that pressure of population was severely felt. The Germans were able to get their food from abroad only by working longer hours for lower wages than the rival nations. The death-rate was very great, which conclusively proves that the conditions of life were hard. The position was felt by all classes to be intolerable, as we learn from that admirable book, "When Blood Is Their Argument," by Mr. F. M. Hueffer.

Your writer admits that nations that cannot produce their own food must get food either "by force or exchange." But he says exchange is possible, so why use force? Unfortunately the manufacturing nations cannot get their food without selling more goods than the agricultural nations are able to buy, or want to buy. Thus the manufacturing nations are driven to fight for their markets, and wars result. It is sheer hypocrisy to say that this is a special peculiarity of Germany. How many wars has Britain waged in the last half-century? What were these wars waged for, if not for trade?

Your writer thinks that my theory is rather a sad one, for, he says, "Who imagines that the population of the world can be reduced by voluntary means?" Your writer is difficult to please if he is not impressed by the reduction of the birth-rate already accomplished by voluntary means. Britain has in forty years cut down her birth-rate more than one-third by voluntary means. In the ten years between 1900 and 1910 Germany reduced her birth-rate one-fifth by voluntary means. France has long had a stationary, and therefore a peaceful, population. Voluntary means did it. In view of such achievements, accomplished in so short a time, it appears to me that your writer is indeed a man of little faith if he cannot imagine the population of the world being reduced by voluntary means. R. B. Kerr.

[The writer of the "Notes" replies: Mr. Kerr's special pleading on behalf of the population theory leads him to make a special case of each of the opposing facts, even when these were originally cited by himself. I am prepared to agree that population is *one* of the factors in the problem; but not that it is the only or even the predominant factor. Malthus may have thought so, but Plato had other ideas.]

* * *

FREE INTELLIGENCE.

Sir,—The aim of Mr. Mytton's mites of Majorca was obviously the meal—put upon the pole by parents intelligent enough. Pure intelligence, defined as "the disinterested interest in things of no personal advantage," as the revelation of truth for its own sake, finds one of its most fertile fields of activity in science—a field never so widely cultivated as now; and if the nineteenth century "reached its climax in a vast disappointment with science and the intellect," was this not primarily because it could not view these things with eyes sufficiently disinterested? It is reserved for the new age to look upon the renewed and more splendid fluttering of the Phœnix.

While it is true that the pressure of industrial competition forces the individual into set channels of specialisation, and that any further adventuring can be attempted in "leisure" moments only, is not the chief restriction due rather to the increasing complexity and breadth of the domain of thought itself? Pure intelligence, whether it is concerned with the multiplication of metaphors or with the mathematical exploration of the possibilities of the Lorentz electron, must perforce browse in one field. Like the universe, it is free, but only in the perfect servitude of its parts, and so long as omniscience is not ours—although Mr. Kenneth Richmond lends us hope—and the complete mastery of more than one garden apparently beyond the limits of the single mind, so long must we continue to be disappointed with cursory and superficial surveys.

Is not the loss of belief in the perfectibility of the human spirit but the outcome of a new inkling of our limitations, and a phase that will be survived?

F. Walter Thrupp.

* * *

WHAT IS AN OATH?

Sir,—The other day a judge put back a case in order that a youth should be instructed in the meaning of an oath. I am glad it did not fall to my lot to give the instruction, and I feel that many others would say the same, for I do not think I am an unusually godless person, nor exceptionally ignorant. It is a question which probes deeply into a good many things, and I feel that if you could spare the space to publish some representative views on the matter it would not be wasted.

L. W.

Pastiche.

THE PERMANENT TEMPORARY.

—— was talking to a temporary in one of the Ministries and surmised that, if the war continued to go so well, he would soon be out of a job. "Not a bit of it," he replied cheerfully. "You should just see the mess we've got things into. It'll take years to wind up the business."—Paragraph from a Weekly Paper.

Each armed with a new pen, we came,
With sturdy heart and hand,
To win the war—but in a way
You'd never understand.

What did we do? Oh, quite a lot!
We said, "Now here's a war;
We'll never get the like again;
We knew it not before.

"So we'll do deeds (with pen and ink)—
Deeds that will dim the sun;
We'll turn our talents to account
Before the battle's done."

And we did deeds, such subtle deeds,
We reckless toiling crew,
Till the world wondered "What on earth?"
And later no man knew.

And now the war is over,
You'd think that we were done.
Bless your simplicity (Pickwick),
We've only just begun!

And if we're only starting,
How faithfully it shows
That when we mean to finish,
The good God only knows!

J. D. Gleeson.

MY MOTHER'S SON OR THINE.

("There but for the grace of God. . . .")

To-day I chanced to pass
A huddled heap
Of rags upon the grass,
Where lay asleep
My mother's son or thine,
Your brother still or mine.

Each link an evil chance—
Fate forged the chain
Of callous circumstance,
He shakes in vain.

. . . .

The chain of circumstance
Clanks in my ears;
I fear the evil chance
Of his lost years;
My mother's son or thine
May live to cringe and whine.

I see Time's hissing lash
Tear at his side,
And this and that deep gash
Whence oozed his pride;

I shudder that his wrongs
Must bleed afresh;
I feel Time's cruel thongs
Flick at my flesh;
My mother's son or thine
May feed on husks of swine.

. . . .

I looked at him askance,
And passed him by;
I feared th' accusing glance
Of his red eye;

To-day I chanced to pass
A huddled heap
Of rags upon the grass,
Where lay asleep
My mother's son or thine,
Your other self or mine!

Frederic L. Mitchell.

IN MYRTLE GROVE.

In Myrtle Grove the folk
Were fastened in a yoke,
Condemned as clerks and brokers' men
To live like saints and gentlemen.
And I was but a joke.

On Sabbath eves they sat
In parlours dull and flat,
And used to wink and sneer at me
When I would sit to have my tea
Upon the front-door mat.

Like Omar in his bowers
I'd pass the evening hours
Weaving sonnet, song or madrigal,
While round me bloomed the scentless wall-
Paper trees and flowers.

My neighbours had no wit,
And when I used to sit
Upon my roof with a bassoon
To welcome in the yellow moon,
They'd only gape and skit.

When I passed Wilson's cow
I used to smile and bow
(She was the wife of Wilson's bull),
And every gentlemanly fool
Would gravely tap his brow.

They'd laugh and smirk and nod,
And as they giggled prod
Each other, but one day I cried
Aloud for hearing, far and wide:
"Oh, listen, there's a God!"

"He loves and hates your lives,
Your little homes and wives.
He loves the beast in you and hates
All human hearts where virtue waits
Inert while dullness thrives."

I waited for a shower
Of cruel wrath to pour
Upon my head. But, by my soul,
Each neighbour crept into his hole
And gently shut the door!

Triboulet.

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