

THE NEW AGE

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
NOTES OF THE WEEK	349	GROTESQUES. I--Ruskin's Theory. By Huntly Carter	358
TOWARDS NATIONAL GUILDS IN ITALY.--V. By Odon Por	352	MUSIC. By William Atheling	359
THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE. By Marmaduke Pickthall	353	MR. PENTY'S IDIOSYCRASIES. By T. N. G.	360
THE CIVIL GUILDS.--III. By S. G. H.	354	RECENT VERSE. By Stephen Maguire	362
A REFORMER'S NOTE-BOOK. The Birth Rate. Marriage.	356	REVIEWS: Youth Went Riding. Mothers and Children	363
READERS AND WRITERS. By R. H. C.	457	PASTICHE. By Frederic L. Mitchell	364
		PRESS CUTTINGS	364

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

ASSUMING that the result of the miners' ballot will be in favour of the resumption of the Coal Commission, it is advisable to remember how the inquiry was left. The questions of hours and wages have been compromised for the time being, but only upon the assumption that the much more important question of industrial control was in prospect of immediate settlement. The ground has been cleared for the discussion with commendable thoroughness. The existing system of both ownership and control has been condemned; and all that the Commission has now to do is to determine its successor from among the three rival claimants to the throne: Bureaucracy, Trust, and Guild. There is not the least doubt about the nature and strength of the parties behind these claimants respectively. Behind the proposal to transfer the mines (and the miners with them) to the bureaucracy stand the allied forces represented by Fabianism and the political conservatism of the "Spectator." Mr. Sidney Webb and Mr. Strachey are to be seen hand in hand. Behind the National Trust are the somewhat sinister figures of the British Federation of Industries, representing Capital, and all the equivocal and dubious elements in favour of the Whitley schemes. Behind the Guild idea, on the other hand, stands no society or section of the public of any notorious consequence; but only the Miners' Federation and all the hopes of Labour. The Miners' Executive, we are glad to discover, are quite emphatic on this subject, even in their Manifesto issued with the ballot-papers. Their adhesion to the principle of industrial democracy is not confined, as in so many other cases, to the rhetorical passages of their public speeches, but it is affirmed as the specific promise which alone can justify the postponement of the strike. The Commission having been empowered, in the words of Mr. Bonar Law, to act as "a really executive body"—that is to say, as practically the legislature in this matter—the Miners' Executive have announced to their members that they intend to claim of it "the national-

isation with joint control by the State and the workmen" of the whole of the mining industry. And they add, moreover, that it is "the only system that can be adopted for the industry." We are surely not misinterpreting this pronouncement if we see in it a pledge that nationalisation with Guild control will now be considered at the Commission at the instance of the representatives of the Miners? Nor shall we be considered unduly optimistic, perhaps, if we indulge the belief that in an open debate on the contending principles, the Guild idea when suggested by the Miners' Federation will prove to be successful.

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It it were not for this belief, indeed, we should see little reason to offer the men to induce them to postpone their present material demands. That their demands as to hours and wages may be incompatible with the simultaneous demands of other workers in other industries is true enough; and, no doubt, it is likewise true that the material demands of the wage-earners as a class are incompatible with the restoration, maintenance and development of the pre-war system of competitive industry. But who is to blame for that? If the pre-war system was not, and its restoration is not, capable of satisfying demands that in themselves are admitted to be both desirable and just, the onus of its failure ought not to be laid at the door of the wage-earners, who have never been regarded as responsible partners in it; and, still less, ought they to be expected to withhold their demands in pity for a system that is confessedly unable to satisfy them. Something, it is clear, has got to give way. Either the system must eat its words and satisfy demands which it asserts (not without reason) to be fatal to itself; or—what is not to be thought of—the just demands of Labour must be withdrawn. One or other of these two conclusions is inevitable; and sooner or later they must be brought into open conflict. The argument from the managerial inexperience of the Miners' Federation likewise appears to us to be an excuse for gaining time rather than a substantial objection to the alternative system proposed by the men themselves. If the existing system—the men's case runs—is admittedly not able to accede to demands which are admittedly desirable and just, then the alternative is to create a system, such as we suggest, which is able. Whereupon the reply comes (and

sometimes from the most unexpected quarters) that the inexperience in management of the Miners' Federation is fatal to their alternative, and that only a compromise with the existing system is practicable. But what is the meaning of "practicable" in this connection? We do not deny, of course, that the undertaking of the mining industry by the Miners' Federation alone, against the good-will of the Government, against the hostility of the capitalist classes, and without the co-operation of the existing managerial staffs, would result in some of the consequences of the Russian "dictatorship of the proletariat"; and that under these assumed circumstances the proposal of the miners would be "impracticable." But are these, in fact, necessary circumstances? Would the Government emulate the example of the Tsarist régime and deny to the miners the goodwill of, at least, an experiment under the most favourable circumstances? Is the existing mining managerial staff so enamoured of its capitalist proprietors that it would decline to co-operate with the Mining Federation? We doubt it exceedingly. We believe, indeed, that if "the worst came to the worst," and the Miners were to insist upon Guild control, some of the classes now hesitant or hostile would instantly join them in their attempt to "muddle through." After all, why should the policy of muddling through be reserved as the prerogative of the capitalist and governing classes? If no member of the privileged classes saw his way through the tremendous venture of the war, and yet undertook it in the certainty that the rest of the classes would see it through, why should not the wage-earners undertake the adventure of the abolition of the wage-system and expect the co-operation of the other classes? The fact is patent in the manifesto of the Miners' Executive that an adventure of this kind is in prospect. The Guild idea is the English antidote of Bolshevism. And by May 20 or thereabouts, when the next interim Report of the Coal Commission is due, we shall know whether the adventure is to be undertaken, and whether with the Government's goodwill or without.

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The elephantine Report of the elephantine Industrial Commission is naturally a white elephant; and we doubt whether one wage-earner in ten thousand will take the trouble to read it. The summary of it, however, is simple: it proposes the amelioration with, of course, the retention of the wage-system; it is the grand scheme for the benevolent servilisation of Labour; and if it is carried out, Mr. Belloc at his dimmest will have been proved a true prophet. Wages are to be universally measured off from a statutory minimum; the eight hours' day is to be the prevailing rule in industry; and, most notable of all the provisions, unemployment is to be either generally provided against by State works or, in the alternative, to be generously maintained. With this provision, it will be seen, we arrive at the fly in the ointment; in fact, at the fly that is much more than the ointment. For what is the supposition against which the provision is directed if it is not the perennial contingency of unemployment? But involuntary unemployment, we must repeat, is the very symptom of the industrial disease from which civilisation under capitalist control suffers. Long hours of labour, low wages, insanitary workshops and dwellings—these are only the accompanying circumstances of capitalism; but the fact and the fear of unemployment are the very condition and, so to say, the life-blood of the wage-system. What would be said of a Medical Commission charged with the discovery of the cure for some disease if it should announce as a complete cure a régime that implied the continuance of the disease mitigated by the provision of many additional hospitals? Yet in calmly making provision for unemployment the Industrial Commission has done nothing else than this. There is no doubt that among the recommendations of the Commission many are to be found that in them-

selves are proper and sensible; but their association with the obvious intention of the Report to perpetuate the wage-system robs them for us of all their value. It is too late in the day to gild the chains of capitalism in the hope that Labour will be dazzled by the glitter. Twenty years ago the recommendations of the present Industrial Commission might have been received as the apocalypse of the gospel of Labour. To-day they are already discredited before they have been so much as read.

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The "New Statesman" and similar journals endeavour to make light of the absence from the signatories of the Report—and, indeed, from the personnel of the Industrial Commission itself—of any representative either of the Triple Alliance or of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. Their refusal to be a party to the Commission or its Report must be interpreted, however, as an emphatic condemnation both of the Commission and of its plain intention. Moreover, much as we can allow for the weight of the actual signatories, the absence of these two great groups of organised Labour is really as fatal to the Commission and its Report as the abstention of America and England from the Versailles Conference would have been to the proposals for a League of Nations. The Triple Alliance and the A.S.E. between them constitute in weight and intelligence the most considerable Power in the world of Labour; and no Report of any Commission that does not include them is worth much more than its value in paper. The question, however, arises whether the abstaining Unions are capable of anything better than imposing a veto on the recommendations of the Industrial Commission; for a purely negative policy of this kind, while it may betoken power, does not necessarily carry things forward. We are entitled to ask, in other words, for the alternative recommendations of the abstaining Labour group and to be allowed to choose between them and the Report of the present Commission. For the moment, it must be admitted, the public is in the dark. The railwaymen, the transport workers, and the engineers, unlike the Miners, have not so far vouchsafed to us any clear indication of their constructive policy. We know that they want their wages increased, their hours of labour reduced, and their general circumstances improved: we see also that the Commission they have declined to attend is prepared to meet them on these grounds. But we do not know for certain either what demands the railwaymen have defined which the Commission would not satisfy; or what alternative constructive proposals these Unions are hatching. Publicity in these matters cannot always be demanded from one side only. The Industrial Commission has put its cards for the Servile State openly on the table. We know precisely where the cleverer sort of capitalist stands. It is time we knew where the Triple Alliance (and not only the Miners) and the A.S.E. stand. If they are not for the Servile State of the Industrial Commission, then what are they for? The alternative to an answer to this question, we may say, is submission to the course of events making by devious ways to the capitalist goal.

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Mr. Thomas is understood to have returned from his interview with Mr. Lloyd George in Paris considerably impressed by the gravity of the world-situation and with the responsibility of the Labour movement in general and of Mr. Thomas in particular. Mr. Clynes, for his part, needed no special visit to Paris to arrive at much the same conclusion, for he has been tintinnabulating the responsibility of Labour for the past few months. Without attempting to underrate the gravity of the international situation, we shall in a moment establish the fact that our wealthy and spending classes, at any rate, are not so much impressed by it as some of our Labour leaders; and in the meantime we may point

out to Labour that the gravity of the situation is not in the least diminished by the absence from the Labour Party of any defined and comprehensible policy. It is difficult, we are well aware, to discover or create a policy in the chaos of whirling events now everywhere visible; but that is all the more reason, as Mr. Bonar Law was frank enough to confess, for the exercise of intuition under its aspect of common sense. We may not know, we cannot tell, for instance, what will be the condition of Europe after the rising tide of Bolshevism has reached its high-water mark. Whether Europe as we have hitherto known it will be submerged and suffer a sea-change into something new and strange is a matter more for divination than calculation. No amount of "responsibility"—in other words, passivity—on the part of Labour is likely to affect the issue very much. Again, the League of Nations is an experiment upon a colossal scale, and as necessarily fraught with peril as with hope. What can Mr. Thomas or Mr. Clynes do, any more than the rest of us, than pray? There is, however, one course of action open to us and still more open to them. It is to follow the best light we have and to trust to daily common sense to carry us through. In any event, we shall not be wrong in securing a more responsible status for the proletariat; come what may, in the form of Bolshevism or any other shape, the betterment in every practicable respect of the situation, conditions and prospects of the working classes of this country is bound to be an advantage to England; and though all Europe should be submerged and Republican America desert us, the final and our best investment is in the material and spiritual qualities of the common people. Far, therefore, from the menacing world-situation requiring Labour to abate its claims for responsibility, its claims for responsibility of an active kind are thereby transformed into duties. It is not by a policy of "ca' canny" in social and industrial matters that Labour at home will strengthen England's hands abroad; but by ensuring that when and if a greater strain should come, Labour will be happy and prepared to meet it.

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The evidence we referred to of the easy assurance of our spending classes concerning the world-situation is to be found in the facts, visible on all sides, of their resumption of their old extravagant habits with even greater than pre-war recklessness. At a moment when volcanoes are active in Europe and the whole world is threatened with extinction under barbarism or militarism; at a moment, too, when our own Government is secretly prepared, at the instigation of the spending classes, to wage a Prussian war upon workers who demand a few more pounds of purchasing power—the capitalist, employing and governing classes, as everything testifies, are looking for and finding ever fresh ways of spending their money. Every pre-war sport for the wealthy has been resumed, even though the cost of it, as of everything else, has more than doubled. And in addition to the old expensive sports and pursuits, there are now the new pastimes of aviation and triumphal display. The class of extravagant spenders, moreover, has not only increased by intensification, but in numbers; so that at this moment for every wealthy spendthrift who burned his money before the war, there are now, at least, two. We are sufficiently acquainted with both the nature of credit and the psychological reaction of war to realise that neither the actual damage of the spending nor the implied obliquity of the spending class is as great as it seems. But the example remains to prove that in an unparalleled period of national and world distress and difficulty, a considerable fringe of the governing classes of this country is less "responsible," in the sense of Mr. Thomas or Mr. Clynes, than any Trade Union leader is expected to be. The facts are undeniable, though naturally there are no statistics. We make a guess, however, that the pur-

chasing power now being dispersed by our wealthy classes on amusement alone is not far short of the amount spent by a whole Trade Union on necessities.

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This private effusion of purchasing power, moreover, is taking place simultaneously not only with the grudging concession to Labour of an increased share in production, but with the alternate frantic appeals of the State for fresh loans and of capitalist protests against further public expenditure. Never was there such a spectacle of private lavishness side by side with State beggary and appeals for State economy. We have not heard the last, scarcely the beginning, of the tumult that surrounds the question of the war debt; but it is obvious already that the thinking and serious members of the governing classes are at their wits' end to know how to meet the charges of the debt without curtailing the expenditure of their relatives. The scheme they have in mind for the present is our old friend super-production with its inevitable accompaniment of increased exports; and it will be found set out by a late Treasury official or adviser, Mr. Edgar Crammond, in his paper on "The Economic Outlook," recently read before the Institute of Bankers. Mr. Crammond, as we have observed on another occasion, is optimistic in the interests of the classes he represents; and the situation in which he finds us, that of owing, every man, woman, and child among us, £160 apiece to a comparative handful of moneylenders, in no way disturbs him. Super-production is the remedy for it; and we are to aim, he says, at the "bold policy" of investing abroad (that is, of exporting more than we consume or import) 500 millions' worth of goods every year for ten years. At the end of that time, Mr. Crammond calculates, the world will be returning to us in dividends on our capital something like 250 millions per annum. The prospect for "us" and "our" capital is as inviting as the grapes which Gideon dangled before the Israelites. But apart from the delicate question who "us" may be—for it is certainly nobody we on THE NEW AGE know or have any concern for—the still more delicate question of the foreign markets for this gigantic surplus arises. Is there no end to the voracity of these foreigners; and are they all so helpless that they need the loan of five hundred millions of our output for ten years? Even if the power of absorption of foreign countries is that of a sponge, their capacity for producing for themselves is not growing less with time. Given time, and not long, it is barely possible, indeed, that the productivity coupled with the tariffs of foreign countries may be equal to the task of confuting Mr. Crammond's forecasts utterly! Lancashire, for instance, has hitherto exported four-fifths of the cotton goods our working classes have manufactured. One-third of it has gone to India alone. But India, as the Delhi correspondent of the "Times" has lately informed the ignorant, is now not only under a cotton tariff, but is setting up the "best automatic machinery that money can buy." What Lancashire may think about India to-day, Lancashire will not think, perhaps, about India to-morrow. The case is the same, Mr. Crammond will discover before he is younger, with the rest of his super-production on a quantitative basis. On quantitative production we are as good as lost muttons; the wheel of the world is against us. Our readers must turn for a word of sense to the letter by Mr. Charles Fielding in the issue of the "Times" which reported Mr. Crammond's megalomania. The contrast is striking. Whereas Mr. Crammond would have us export, export, and export—starve ourselves (really us, this time) in order to lend to foreign countries, Mr. Fielding propounds the startling notion that we should produce all we can and need—and export only our genuine surplus. We may not be able, it is true, to tax the foreigner by this means and make him pay off our war debt; but our own population at home might conceivably, under these circumstances, be well enough off to pay it themselves if they chose.

Towards National Guilds in Italy.—V.

By Odon Por.

IN the province of Ravenna, where the agricultural labourers have determined to put an end to the wage-system by assuming all the functions of responsible production, the co-operative farming societies have naturally made great headway. They are both numerous and strong; and they form together one of the most powerful sections of the Socialist Provincial Co-operative Federation. The group comprises 17 farms of a total acreage of 10,000, part of which is the property of the Federation. The members number about 7,000. The Republican organisations of farm workers in the same province have followed the example of the Socialist Federation; and they have now under their control 13 co-operative farms of an acreage of 5,000 and a membership of 3,000. The productive value of the province was estimated at 3½ million lire in 1917.

The Federation has demonstrated its public spirit during the war by reclaiming in record time considerable areas of waste land on which a highly productive intensive agriculture was immediately begun. The Army has benefited in particular by the rice thus grown. So prominent did this province become that the King desired to express his personal approval, and for this purpose undertook a few months ago a tour in the district. He inspected the estates of the Federation and expressed his gratification at the transformation that had been effected. He likewise inspected in the commune of Massafombarda the fruit-farms under co-operative management, where he had the pleasure of thanking in person the President of the Agrarian Co-operative Society—a farm-labourer and the Socialist mayor of the commune. This society, by the way, is connected with a considerable fruit-exporting concern, which owns the estates but leases their management to co-operative societies.

This sharing system on a co-operative basis has begun to displace everywhere the older system of individual tenancy. The latter system was undoubtedly outgrown, and particularly in view of the developments of technique. Nowadays, co-operative societies form the tenants, and, leasing their lands collectively, cultivate them under united management, paying a share of the proceeds to the proprietors. Thus has been opened the way for a technical progress impossible to the small individual holder, while, at the same time, individual initiative is to a large extent retained. I can speak of their success, for, in company with a Californian fruit-farmer, I visited the farms myself. My friend's comment on what he saw was that he had never seen such perfect cultivation even in California, the Mecca of fruit-farming. The other lands in this province held by co-operative societies are under varied cultivation. On some they grow beet for sugar; on others wheat, oats, and rice; on still others tomatoes and garden vegetables. There are pasture-lands, and cattle are reared. Mechanical appliances of a modern type and scientific manuring are the general rule.

The Federation of Co-operative Farms in the province of Parma has only recently been formed, but it already comprises seven affiliated societies of 2,000 members and farms about 1,500 acres. The farms have been uniformly successful. One of the farms, taken over in 1913, and consisting of about 250 acres run by about 280 members, has published its Report for 1917, from which we learn that the yield under co-operative management is three times that under its former tenant-holders. Much of the work during the war, moreover, has been left to the women and children here, as elsewhere, so that even the comparison of production is under the normal mark. While only five families managed to scrape a living from these farms under the previous system, to-day 28 families flourish

at the union rate of pay for the whole district. No better proof is required that co-operative farming is economically and in every other sense superior to the old bad system. A military member of the Army Commissariat, writing his report on the requisitioning of cattle and fodder in this province, states that "we can always be sure that the co-operative societies will supply us with goods of a sound quality, and that they will not attempt to over-reach us in price. The fodder is always of an excellent quality, and control in the special sense is unnecessary. The cattle supplied are likewise of the best from every point of view, and compare very favourably with the cattle imposed on us by private enterprise." A similar judgment may be made concerning all the Italian co-operative farms without exception. A co-operative store has founded in the same province a few years ago a special co-operative farm for the production of foodstuffs to sell to its members. The output was trebled, and the number of families living on the estate was also considerably increased. At the renewal of the lease the rent was doubled, the increase going to the Public Charity Foundation, whose property the land was. On the occasion of the lease of a second estate to the same society, and in the face of a keen competition, the Board of Directors of the Charity passed the following resolution: "In view of the facts that the management of the Co-operative Society has always resulted in an increase in the rentable value of the land; that the Society has always proved that it has no speculative profiteering in view, but devotes its attention to the betterment of the housing and general conditions of its working members; that the smaller rent offered by the Society as against other competitors will be amply compensated in the improvement of the estate, this Board unanimously resolves to lease the estate to the Co-operative Society without proceeding to the formality of a public tender." I may add that it is the intention of the Board to lease the whole of its farms in future for co-operative management.

The Federation of Co-operative Farms in the province of Bologna numbers 12 affiliated societies of 2,800 members with an acreage under their control of 5,000. Rice is mainly cultivated, and in one instance a co-operative farm in this province beat all records by producing 90 quintals of rice per hectare. The city and province of Bologna—both under Socialist administration—have, in alliance with the co-operative stores of the province, contributed largely to the solution of the difficult problem of food-control in time of war. It is the intention of the authorities to maintain a considerable part of the organisation in peace-time, and by a union of the urban stores with the local farms to eliminate the middlemen to the advantage of consumer and producer alike.

In the province of Modena, 13 co-operative farms cultivate 2,000 acres with 700 members. In the province of Mantua, 1,000 acres are managed by four co-operative farms. A feature of the latter province is the important co-operative store, patronised by all the members of the farming unions. In return, the store guarantees the rent of the farms.

Summing up, we find that in the six provinces of the Emilian Region there are altogether 80 co-operative farms of a membership of 19,000 and of an acreage of 30,000. Here, too, as elsewhere, their number is constantly increasing, for as farms or leases come into the market the co-operative societies eagerly seize upon them. At the same time, the actual influence and power of the societies is inadequately represented even by these figures; for it must not be forgotten that the societies are only the advance guard of the great party of workers and that their operations are designed to prepare the way for an advance in force.

It is their success, however, that secures for them the support of organised Labour in Italy, and that ensures for them at the same time an important place in national

economy. They have demonstrated by practical example all the advantages claimed by theoretical guildsmen. They have shown that they have nothing to fear from a comparison with private enterprise either as regards quantity or quality of production, for their production is both greater and better than that of the privately-managed estates. At the same time they have contributed towards the solution of the problem of unemployment by employing, in some cases, ten times as many men or families as were formerly employed by the same estates under speculative profiteering management. Finally, they have proved their right to the extension of the system of which they have made so great a success.

Much sympathy has been won by them from economists and statesmen by their public-spirited boldness in taking risks in the public and general interest. When, for instance, the Government called during the war for a maximum output of essential production, the Co-operative Societies cheerfully risked the whole of their capital and future in an endeavour to respond to the best of their ability. While only too many private landowners and farmers were attempting to wriggle out of their quotas, the co-operative farms actually supplied to the State more than was demanded of them.

The example thus set encouraged the Government in measures designed to intensify production and to force hitherto uncultivated lands into productive cultivation. In many instances it was the co-operative society that led the way in these respects by undertaking work of which the nation stood in need. The Federation of the province of Emilia, for instance, definitely undertook to cultivate all the still uncultivated lands in its district; and in some instances was allowed to do so. In face of such results, it is scarcely to be wondered at if the old spirit of opposition has begun to show signs of dying away for lack of nutriment. The State and the local authorities are everywhere beginning to smile on the co-operative societies; charitable foundations have begun to show a distinct preference for them; enlightened landlords are beginning to choose them as tenants in place of the profiteering farmer, and even the Banks are showing signs of opening their credit to them.

The League of Nations and the British Empire.

By Marmaduke Pickthall.

It is the fashion among our politicians nowadays to scoff at the Oriental policy of Disraeli, and to speak of the period which was dominated by his personality as one of aberration in our country's history. Comparatively few people seem to realise that Disraeli's Eastern policy was merely the historic Eastern policy of England systematised and directed to a creditable end. That end was the contentment, education, and eventual emancipation of the subject races in the British Empire in such manner that England could command their loyalty for centuries to come. It was a scheme which would have been approved by Palmerston or Peel, by Canning, Pitt, and even earlier statesmen, who saw that England's greatness depended not on these islands on the edge of Europe, nor on the annexation of new regions on the outskirts of the inhabited world, but on the possession of rich countries in the East, which many nations coveted. It was Britain against Europe in those days, and any project tending to secure a future to the British Empire in the East was certain of a favourable hearing. But when Disraeli, at a moment of great personal triumph, made the old, unreasoned policy complete and gave it an ideal, there had already grown up unofficially a school of thought in opposition to such

purely British leanings—people who thought that the chief aim of England ought to be a better understanding with those European countries which still preserved an ecclesiastical structure, people who esteemed the fate of subjects of the British Empire of trivial account compared with the apocalyptic vision of a reunited Christendom. Mr. Gladstone epitomised the views of this new anti-British party neatly upon one occasion, in a public gesture. When on a mission to the Ionian Islands, at an official reception he, to some extent the representative of England, stooped to kiss the hand of an obscure Greek bishop. Terrific was the outcry in official circles, delirious the triumph and amusement of Ionian Greeks, over an act which everyone regarded as un-English. The ecclesiastical school was not popular in England then. It is not popular in England now, under its true colours. Yet furtively, and unsuspected by the English people, it has won the day.

According to Disraeli, who took up the policy of older statesmen, England should have held aloof from European squabbles, relying on the peoples of her empire—rendered loyal and contented by progressive measures of self-government and considered on a par with England in our foreign policy—to defend her against all assailants. She should have had upon her side popular opinion in every country because of the good fortune of the peoples subject to her sway, and because her empire was the home of liberty. Within a period of from fifty to a hundred years the British Empire should have been a perfect league of nations, evolved naturally, exempt from barriers of creed and even colour, an example to the world.

According to Gladstone, Europe—i.e., Christendom—should have united to impose the will and eventually, of course, the creed of Christians on the world. There should have been a league of nations, but of Christian nations only. But that, I say again, is anti-British, being dead against the spirit and tradition of the British Empire. This, from the moment it became an empire, has had more in common with the Muslim Empire than with Byzantium or Spain or Portugal or any technically Christian empire of the past. It is true that we do not forbid by law, under the death penalty, attempts by any member of the dominant religion to turn the subject peoples from their faith, as was done in the Muslim Empire. It is true that the British Government does, even to this day, allow, and apparently in some cases encourage, the activities of Christian missionaries to the annoyance of non-Christian British subjects. Yet, speaking in a general way, it may be said that every subject has full liberty of conscience, and that religious communities other than Christian are tolerated in the British realm. But the British Empire is still far behind the Turkish Empire in the measure of political liberty it allows to subject peoples of another faith. And this defect Disraeli's policy was well designed to remedy, while warding off all fear of disaffection and revolt. That British domination does encourage a spirit of political liberty and a love of independence in the subject races is, to the thoughtful mind, a proof that it is beneficial. But, alas! the rulers of the Empire see things in a different light. When any of the subject peoples dare to claim what English statesmen have repeatedly declared to be their birthright within the British realm, they are repressed with anger. What, then, becomes of the proclaimed ideal of British government? Where, then, is the logic of our whole proceeding? Was not Disraeli's vision of a league of independent nations united by enthusiasm for the British flag a better goal of policy for British statesmen than the reunion of Christendom, which has brought our empire to this pass: that the most important of the subject peoples, both in numbers and intelligence, are furiously discontented with the empire as it is, while loyal to the old tradition of that empire as embodied in Disraeli's Oriental policy?

The present order—or disorder—is a triumph for

Gladstonianism, one may say, but I doubt if Mr. Gladstone would rejoice if he could see it. We have indeed a league of certain Christian nations, and the project of a league of all the Christian nations. The object of the first would seem to be to enforce the motive of national independence in some countries, and even introduce it in some countries of which most of the inhabitants regard it as a false ideal, while discountenancing and repressing sternly the same motive when it happens to occur within the boundaries of the British Empire or the French or the Italian. The object of the second is alleged to be to secure lasting peace to the world by applying the same standard of justice, tolerance, and liberty to every country (if I understand aright); and the League will have the power to enforce its judgments. How will the British Empire fare under the scrutiny of such an impartial tribunal? And supposing human nature should remain the same, and the tribunal be not quite impartial, how would the British Empire fare at the hands of a remodelled and democratised Europe, when our war-time propaganda and our war-time tyranny, which no doubt gave some pleasure to the governments and ruling classes, have lost for us the sympathy of peoples, which was once our greatest political asset and a legitimate source of pride to Englishmen? Instead of a league of happy nations, an example to the world, we present an empire of which many of the nations are exasperated to the last degree, an empire which complains of tyranny, an empire which will seem to nations which we have ourselves been eager to emancipate an ugly blot upon the twentieth century. Will the League of Nations have no word to say about it, or shall we dominate it so completely that it dare not say a word? We have ourselves to thank for the position. We turned our back upon a man of genius, who was an artist in politics, and listened to the whispering of some fanatics who knew nothing of the world. We declined to do our duty by the British Empire whole-heartedly and with enthusiasm, as Disraeli planned, because that course involved support of a non-Christian Power. Asia could have done much for us. We preferred Europe. It remains to be seen what Europe—and America, the new arrival on the scene—can and will do for us in the next few years.

Mediæval Christendom, whether we admire or execrate it, has gone for ever. It can never be restored. And to Britain belongs a large share of the honour of destroying it. The ideal of a league of all the so-called Christian nations may be realised; but that league will pretty certainly be animated not by the antique Christian but the modern spirit, the growth of which our country fostered for three centuries. And we who have of late belied our history, denied our faith, repudiated our ideals, have cause to fear the judgment of the modern spirit when we find ourselves the most reactionary empire left on earth. You can see it coming at this moment, when our friends and foes alike are laughing in their sleeves and sneering at us because, while we are nobly championing the inborn right to independence of the Yugo-Slavs and Tcheko-Slovaks, and receiving deputations from tribes hitherto unknown, a voice from Egypt is refused a hearing, and the Egyptians, in consequence of that refusal, are demonstrating their objection to the British yoke. The Egyptians, the easiest people in the world to make contented, given tact and understanding and a little sympathy! And we are putting down the "rising" with a strong hand; and we are sending General Allenby to settle Egypt, and detaining Sir Reginald Wingate—trusted and respected and to some extent beloved of the Egyptians—here in England; and we congratulate ourselves that martial law still runs in Egypt; as if we had no inkling that we are belying our most loudly vaunted principles and making ourselves appear ridiculous alike to friend and foe; as if we had no inkling that by our behaviour in this matter we are sealing Egypt's charter as a nation in the eyes of the whole world.

The Civil Guilds.

III.—THE STATUS OF THE CIVIL SERVANT.

THE fact that the civil servant is a State employee sometimes conveys the idea that its discipline must be military in character; that unquestioning obedience is its *mot d'ordre*. A moment's consideration demonstrates that a Civil Service with a military régime is a contradiction in terms. Historically, and in fact, not the least of its functions is to curb military pretensions: to stand foursquare for the predominance of the civil power. But hitherto the status of the civil servant has remained vague and indeterminate. He is classed as a "clerk"—and "clerk" may mean anything. Entrance to the Service is based merely on an average attainment of conventional education; there are no professional tests. Yet to administer efficiently calls for considerable technical knowledge and training; economic and social problems must be studied and, in some degree, mastered. The degree of mastery is, of course, conditioned by the imagination fused with the study. Alternatively stated, to know social problems thoroughly predicates a fairly high standard of culture. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the Civil Service, whilst in daily contact with factors vital to social health, has no professional standing, retaining its economic power by its labour monopoly, artificially contrived by its master, the State. It is not, therefore, surprising that its more far-sighted members, alive to its anomalous and none-too-popular position, are deeply concerned to gain for it a definitely professional status. Even as I write, the Society of Civil Servants, in conference, is considering *inter alia* proposals (a) to codify and maintain at a high standard rules of professional conduct for the Civil Service; (b) to promote the study of subjects bearing upon the work of civil servants—e.g., Sociology, Economics, Statistical Science, Administrative Technique; (c) to found courses of lectures and debates and generally to encourage the extension of education in subjects affecting, and dealt with by, the Civil Service.

Significant and germane is the record of action of the Association of Staff Clerks, now known as the Society of Civil Servants, which has led up to this effort to secure professional status. The story is told in an interesting and amusing pamphlet issued by the Society.* The Second Division Clerks "were brought to a sense of grade unity by a general conviction that a common improvement in salary and opportunity was worth more than the occasional promotions to be obtained by unsocial rivalry." When war broke out, "all the world obtained war bonuses, but for a time the Staff Clerks sacrificed their wives to their dignity and refused to ask for an adjustment of salary. In the end, however, their wives were too strong for them and the Staff Clerks' Association was formed in order that a claim for a war bonus might be placed before the Conciliation and Arbitration Board." This was successful, and, in consequence, "the Staff Clerks widened their constitution and became representative of the middle body of the public service, with the lower ranks of clerical workers organised in the Clerical Alliance and the upper ranks still at loose ends." And now civil servants with more than £500 a year, they too not unmindful of war bonus, began to join and the Society of Civil Servants was born.

So far it is a simple instance of economic reaction; but what follows is yet another proof, if proof were required, that men when materially satisfied do not slack but rather bend their energies to greater effort. The Society immediately "extended its aims beyond questions of the market and the larder, and set itself to the task of defining and confirming the Civil Service as a profession, with its own technique, its distinctive

* "The Society of Civil Servants." Pamphlet Series No. 1. E. E. Beare, 2, Old Queen Street, Storey's Gate, Westminster.

qualifications, and its special tradition." Not forgetting the market and the larder, making full provision for the discussion of that tiresome topic and action thereon, the Society of Civil Servants aims at "corporate action similar to that which is furnished for their members by the British Medical Association and other professional bodies." This conclusion was not reached without a struggle:—"The issue narrowed itself to the difference between the old-fashioned trade union aim of another penny an hour and the wider claims for responsibility, status, and control, in which payment is only one element." This accomplished, the Society can now look in upon its own internal working and consider how best to achieve its professional aims. "The Society of Civil Servants now proposes to think out its own problem and to mould its experience into a technique. Its members are no longer to be a promiscuous horde of clerks with pension privileges, but a profession with expert training and technical knowledge, as clearly qualified for the special task of public administration as chartered accountants are for accountancy."

The critic may remark that the civil servants in this Society are the most favourably placed. Omitting the controlling elements, this is true; but the lower grades evince the same determination to become efficient; to justify themselves by function and not by State protection. The Civil Service Clerical Alliance takes up the organisation where the Society of Civil Servants leaves off. The two organisations do not compete for membership. This is what the Alliance has to say of its objects:—"This union of forces was created and is being maintained with the twofold object of improving the efficiency of the Civil Service and of protecting civil servants and promoting their interests. The Alliance takes pride in elevating the ideal of the public service and standing for its efficiency and integrity, an imperative duty in face of the ignorant criticism which has been levelled against it by the more irresponsible section of the Press. To secure a more efficient Civil Service, however, it is necessary, as has been implied above in reference to industry, to reorganise it in such a manner as will create a community of interest in making it more competent." The Alliance's sense of unity in the Civil Service expresses itself in a practical way. It is opposed to patronage in all forms, whether by limitation of candidature that depends on personal selection, or of definite appointments of individuals by Ministers or officials. Secondly, it holds that no artificial barrier should restrict the promotion of civil servants of whatever class or department.

A Guild spirit breathes through the pronouncements of both these organisations; as they see it, theirs is no perfunctory task to be performed with pedestrian comfort; they have difficult and subtle work to do, so difficult and subtle that it constitutes a definite profession, in which they must become proficient; a profession so important to the community that personal considerations are of secondary importance. They recognise, too, that they are not immune from the criticisms of their master the State, and through the State of the general body of citizens. Again I quote from the pamphlet of the Society of Civil Servants:—"Public administration is only justified in its efficiency in carrying out the designs of the community, and it cannot be finally accepted on the standards of its own professionals. It must satisfy a wider test and show that it is adapted to meet the needs of the community." In economic affairs, like good Guildsmen, they are not afraid to apply their labour monopoly; like good Guildsmen, they defer to the prior rights of the citizen, recognising that the spiritual forces are sovereign over the material. It is not the Treasury they set out to obey; they pay obeisance to the community organised as a State.

We perceive in all this a new conception of official life: a vivifying contact with the social and industrial spirit now so rapidly transforming the ancient land-

marks in politics and the workshop: an affirmation of that functional principle, which rightly applied establishes definite status and destroys the wage-system, the sinister bar to status. What puzzles me is that a Report on the Machinery of Government, signed by responsible officials, thinkers, and politicians, should be issued in 1919, which ignores the existence of these organisations, which betrays unconsciousness of this spirit, so clearly expressed by the men and women who are expected to operate the "machinery." Does Viscount Haldane of Cloan, O.M., K.T., the Chairman of this Committee, imagine that his colleagues of government, whether in or out of office, whether students or high officials, can raze this spirit and ride rough-shod over those who mean to make the Civil Service a profession, with the pride and independence of professionals? The Viscount is very old and youth will be served. We can understand Mr. E. S. Montagu, Sir Robert L. Morant, and Sir George H. Murray ensuring in any official Report the dominance of the Treasury. Mrs. Sidney Webb doubtless imagines that an exercise in bureaucratic symmetry more than suffices. But Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P.? This gentleman is Secretary of a great Trade Union, which demands control. Did it not occur to Mr. Thomas that if control for the railwayman is desirable, it is also desirable for the civil servant?

The terms of reference of the Machinery of Government Committee do not preclude the discussion of control; on the contrary, it is distinctly implied. It is charged "to advise in what manner the exercise and distribution by the Government of its functions should be improved." Since the Committee knew of these Service associations, knew that they aimed at more than mere salary, aimed at definite status, I am reluctantly driven to one of two alternatives: either the question was too ticklish or the Committee advocates government from above. The second alternative is probable, because the power of the Treasury is not only endorsed, but its extension recommended. As we have seen, the dissipation of Treasury control, carefully, however, retaining Treasury supervision—the supervision to which responsible accountancy is entitled—is a condition precedent to democratic control. As affairs have developed in the Civil Service, the decisions of the Treasury become the fiat of an oligarchy.

We cannot too carefully distinguish between control in the workshop and control in the Civil Service. The former is an economic method, which in Guild organisation would solely pertain to the jurisdiction of the Guild Congress; the latter pertains to State government and is in an altogether different category. Workshop control is compatible with private capitalism, but is essentially transitional in character, being deliberately designed as the first step towards self-government in industry. But control in the Civil Service is not transitional in the same sense, since the continuance of State government is predicated. Nevertheless, the two have points in common, notably in discipline and in the disbursement of money allotted for such definite purposes as come within the competence of control. Thus, the alternative to Treasury control is a responsible committee, who will undertake, on behalf of their colleagues (by whom they have been democratically chosen), to do certain work or perform certain functions, on the terms and at the cost agreed between the parties concerned. There is no reason why the Minister of a Department should not obtain from Parliament a vote to cover the year's expenditure. That is the theory upon which we are supposed to proceed. The Treasury should, of course, criticise the Minister's estimates. There are, however, overwhelming reasons why the Treasury should have no power of veto, whether in form or substance. This veto rests upon the disposition, largely theatrical, of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to resign if his veto be disregarded. If the Commons choose to spend more upon public health or

education than the Chancellor thinks necessary, then let the Chancellor accept the decision and proceed to levy the required taxes. In no other elected body does the Treasurer (or Chancellor) assume such prerogatives. It is a dangerous anomaly in a democratic system and should be determined. If, then, we give each Minister free access to Parliament, undisturbed by the Chancellor's threats of resignation, and if the Minister gets his vote, it remains for the Treasury to see that the money so voted is properly spent, whilst it remains for the Minister and his staff, from the highest to the lowest, to control the expenditure of the money voted. The method suggested is by committee and conference—a method in which civil servants have already acquired considerable proficiency. Finally, to avoid a scramble in Parliament, let an inter-departmental committee meet and, in consultation with the Chancellor, agree upon the approximate amount of the Budget and the relative proportions to be assigned to each Department. The comedy of the Chancellor sitting upon Parliament's head in mistake for its purse is now stale and unprofitable. It is, indeed, too tragical to be amusing.

There remains to be considered how far the Civil Service is ripe for self-government; how far it is susceptible of Guild organisation.

S. G. H.

A Reformer's Note Book.

THE BIRTH-RATE.—Everything associated with sex is usually best discussed indirectly. This is not to advocate evasion of the subject, nor is it to deny its importance. Quite the contrary. Being what it is, however, one of the great natural phenomena of life, it partakes of the final mystery; and, like all the final mysteries, can be properly discussed only symbolically, allegorically, metaphorically, in a word, indirectly. An analogy is presented by the phenomenon of sleep; and, by the way, Wordsworth, without intending it, pointed it out in his line: "Our birth is but a *sleep* and a forgetting." Let us suppose that the nation became suddenly afflicted with insomnia. We can imagine the hue and cry that would be raised as soon as the fact had become unmistakably clear. We can also imagine the variety of attempts that would be made, first, to cure the trouble, and then to discover the cause. Among the cures that would in all certainty be suggested are the usual narcotic drugs; hypnotism; superstitious charms; old wives' remedies. Then we should have people recommending as an infallible cure some particular attitude for lying down to sleep, or some particular hour or time of the day, or some particular room or place or bed or pillow or dress, or some preliminary exercises. Others, again, would recommend various mental tricks, such as counting sheep going through a gate, repeating poetry, reading until the eyes are weary, or talking oneself tired. Still others, of a more intense type, would recommend the doctrines of the Christian Scientists and bid the victims commend or command themselves to sleep. What would be the probable effect of all this direct attention? Sleep thus deliberately and consciously pursued would almost certainly continue to evade us; and the insomnia of the nation would be increased. Then would be asked in the sociological and other experts to diagnose the cause; and here once more the variety of the reports would be astonishing. This school would discover the cause to lie in the regimen of the nation—the food and drink and so on; that school would attribute the epidemic insomnia to occupation; a third school would trace it to a psychological or religious origin; a fourth to special circumstances like sun-spots or the easterly winds. In the meanwhile it is highly probable that sleep would continue to mock at these efforts also and to recede as fast as it was thus pursued. What, then, we may ask, would be the proper treatment? The reply is that the proper treatment would be to ignore the insomnia and to cease to care whether we slept or

not. It is true, of course, that unless we slept we should become ill and finally die; but since it would be no less evident that sleep was not to be obtained by taking thought, the proper course would be to cease to take thought. And in all probability the moment we did so, we should fall asleep! The birth-rate, it may be repeated, is analogous. Deliberately pursued, with intent to raise it, the birth-rate, like sleep, appears to take a pleasure in evading us. As a matter of fact, not all the efforts of the reformatory leagues have succeeded in raising the birth-rate; but, on the contrary, with every fresh league against it, the birth-rate has only fallen the faster. And it will continue to decline for just so long as society is alarmed at the fact and tries to prevent it. The proper course is to cease to talk about it, to cease to think about it, to cease to care about it. Thus left to Nature it would be found in all probability to restore itself to health.

MARRIAGE.—The subject of marriage is full of paradoxes. Marriage is for the sake of children, yet a marriage contracted for the sake of children is only an intelligent bestialism. It is for the sake of children, yet a man and woman who thought so would be unfit for marriage. It is for the sake of children, yet if the marriage should prove childless it still need not have failed in its purpose. The presence of these paradoxes is evidence that marriage is by no means for everybody, for how many people are subtle enough to perceive and to realise them? On the contrary, marriage is a vocation for the minority, an art of life for the few. That in each of the arts there are a few artists and many dilettants applies to marriage also. Many think themselves called, but few prove to be really chosen. In marriage, also, as in the other arts, the many dabblers tend to bring into disrepute the whole art. Because they, as we say, "make a mess of it," the art or institution of marriage is imagined to be at fault; its bunglers call for its abolition. To abolish marriage on account of its failures would, however, be as sensible as to abolish music and painting on account of their unfit practitioners. The more difficult an art the greater the number of students who fail in it. The greater the number of failures, therefore, the more confidently should we conclude that the art is both difficult and high. What is wrong with marriage to-day is not marriage but those who marry; and to remedy this wrong it is necessary, not to abolish marriage, but to discourage from it the people who have no gift or talent for it. The privilege of marriage should be reserved as a privilege for the fit—not, be it understood, for the eugenic fit, but for the fit to marry! We allow to practise the other arts only those who show themselves to be gifted; or, at any rate, criticism denies to the rest, whatever their apparent success, the name of artists. Similarly, a good social criticism would deny to unfit and bungled marriages the honourable name of marriages, and would, indeed, eliminate from the practice of the art the people who have proved to be without any talent for it. But how is this to be practically accomplished, since the problem is complicated socially by the presence of children? To begin with, we should make it a social custom or rule that nobody should be allowed to set up in marriage until he or she is, at least, twenty-five years of age. Marriage is not for boys and girls. Next we should not only permit divorce by mutual consent at any time, we should insist upon it. There should be no incompatible couples in our high estate of marriage; they should be degraded without mercy. But what of the children, either of unions before twenty-five or born out or divorced out of marriage? Such children would become the care of the State and would never begin or, having begun, would cease on the divorce of their parents, to be the care of their physical parents. It would be impossible, even if it were desirable, to prevent such children being born. On the other hand, it would be undesirable that they should be brought up by parents unfitted for marriage.

The best thing for them, therefore, would be to take them from their inadequate parents and to put them under the charge of the State. In a society so ordered, there would thus be two classes of children—State children, and children in marriage. A spirit of emulation between the respective authorities of the State and the married Home would soon establish the superiority of the Home over the State, and thus raise Marriage once more to its ancient honour.

Readers and Writers.

No interest having been expressed in my notes on "A. E.'s" "Candle of Vision" (Macmillan. 6s. net), I propose to continue them for my own.

P. 20. "Our religions make promises to be fulfilled beyond the grave because they have no knowledge now to be put to the test. . . . Mistrust the religion that does not cry out: 'Test me that we can become as gods.'" This is an excellent observation, and accounts, to my mind, for all the so-called scepticism of modern times. It is usual to attribute to our predecessors, the most remote as well the more recent, a quality of "faith" superior to our own. They are said to have been more religious than we are. I simply do not believe it; or, rather, I believe that they were religious because they had very good reason to be; in other words, they were not only told the mysteries, but they were shown them. Either they or their priests had the "open vision." Is it conceivable that the primitive peoples had the confidence-trick played on them? Or, again, is it the fact that credulity is less to-day than before? I feel sure that if our ancestors were brought to belief, it was by means which would equally carry conviction to the present generation. To repeat myself: they believed because they were shown. "A. E." suggests that the after-life promises of modern religion are a substitute for and an evasion of present demonstration. Religions, that is to say, concentrate upon the invisible because their power over the visible is gone. It is not the fact, however, that the earlier religions ignored the after-death adventures of the soul; they were quite as much concerned with the life beyond the grave as our own religions. What they did and what our religions fail to do was to give present guarantees for their future promises. Their priests could procure belief in the after-life on the strength of their demonstrated power over this life. It is probable, indeed, that many of the elect experienced "death" before it occurred physically. The Egyptian mysteries were a kind of experimental death.

P. 21. Here and on the neighbouring pages "A. E." expounds his method of meditation—the means, I assume, by which any "ordinary" person may acquire spiritual experience. "A. E.'s" method follows the familiar line of the mystic schools, namely, "unwavering concentration on some mental object." (See the "Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali" (price sixpence), Theosophical Publishing Society, 161, New Bond Street, W.). "Five minutes of this effort," "A. E." says, "will at first leave us trembling as at the end of a laborious day." I can testify that this is no exaggeration; for, like "A. E.," I have practised meditation after the methods prescribed. It is no easy job; and after months of regular practice I was still an amateur at the simplest exercises. There is no doubt, however, about the benefit of it. Much is learned in meditation that cannot be realised by any other mental exercise. The *mind* becomes a real organ, as distinct from the personality as a physical limb. And gradually one learns to acquire sufficient control over it, if not to use it like a master, at any rate, to realise that it *can* be so used. I have not the smallest doubt that one day men will be able to "use" their minds and thus to cease to be "used" by them; for it is obvious that at present we are victims rather than masters of our mind. Medita-

tion, as a means to mind-control, is the appointed method; and "A. E.'s" personal experience should encourage his readers to take up the discipline.

P. 41. In regard to "visions," they are usually dismissed by the commonalty as products of imagination, "as if," says "A. E.," "imagination were as easily explained as a problem in Euclid." This habit of referring one mystery to another, as if this latter were no mystery, is very common; and it arises, no doubt, from intellectual apathy. We cannot be bothered to reduce mysteries to knowledge; and, moreover, the realisation that literally everything is a mystery, that we simply live in mystery, is a little disconcerting. Hence, our preference for assuming some things, at any rate, to be below the need of explanation. Imagination, however, provides us with no escape from the mysteries of vision, any more, I may say, than matter is an escape from the problems of spirit. "A. E." raises some difficult, and, probably, insoluble problems concerning imagination itself. *What* is it in us that imagines? *How* does it cast thoughts into form? Even allowing (which we cannot) that imagination is only the "refashioning of memory," what re-fashions and transforms out of their original resemblance the memories of things seen? "A. E." has had many visions, some of which, no doubt, he could trace to recollected impressions; but, leaving aside once more the difficulty involved in this reconstruction, what of the visions that had, or appeared to have, no earthly progenitors? "A. E.'s" conclusion appears to me to be indisputable, that "we swim in an æther of deity"—for "in Him we live and move and have our being."

Passim. Is it possible that telepathy occurs between people having the same mental "wave-length"? Coincidences (another Mesopotamian word, by the way) are too frequent to be accountable on any other supposition than that of an established communication. Like many another, I could give some remarkable instances of telepathy; but they would be tedious to relate. Mental training, however, is certainly a means to this end; for in proportion as the mind is brought under control, its susceptibility to thoughts from outside palpably increases. The experience of the Old Testament prophet who knew the plans of the enemy before they were uttered is not unique, even in these days. It will be far less uncommon in the days to come.

P. 54. "Is there a centre within us through which all the threads of the universe are drawn?" An ingenious image for a recurrent doctrine of mysticism, the doctrine, namely, that everything is everywhere. One of the earliest discoveries made in meditation is the magnitude of the infinitesimal. The tiniest point of space appears to have room enough for a world of images; and the mediæval discussion concerning the number of angels that could dance on the point of a needle was by no means ridiculous. If I am not mistaken, "A. E.'s" problem is identical with it.

P. 89 The Architecture of Dreams. In this chapter "A. E." sets himself to casting some doubts (shall we say?) on the sufficiency of the Freudian theory of dreams. Dreams, according to Freud, are the dramatisation of suppressed desires; but what, asks "A. E.," is the means by which desires, suppressed or otherwise, dramatise themselves? "A mood or desire may attract its affinities"; in other words, there may be a congruity between the desire and the dream which serves the Freudian purpose of interpretation; but desire can hardly be said "to create what it attracts." Between anger, for instance, and a definite vision of conflict, such as the dream may represent, there is a gulf which the theory of Freud does not enable us to cross. What, in fact, are dreams? *Who* or *what* carries out the dramatisation? Assuming, with Freud, that their impulse is a desire, what power shapes this desire into the dream-cartoon? "A. E." throws no light on the mystery; but he, at any rate, does not dismiss it as no

mystery at all. Its philosophical discussion, by the way, is to be found in the Indian philosophy known as the Sankhya.

P. 89. "The process must be conscious on some plane"—the dramatisation, that is to say, must be the conscious work of some intelligent agent or quality. I am a little doubtful of this, for reasons to be discovered in the Sankhya philosophy just referred to. Is the pattern taken by sand on a shaken plate a "conscious" design? Are frost-flowers the work of intelligence? Forms, according to the Sankhya, are the reflection in matter (Prakriti) of the activities of the spirit (Purusha); they are consciousness visible. But it would not follow that they are themselves conscious or that their creation is a "conscious" process.

P. 90. "Have imaginations body?" In other words, are the figures seen in dream and vision three-dimensional? "A. E." describes several incidents within his experience that certainly seem to suggest an objective reality in dream-figures, and the occasional projection of dream-figures into phantasms is a further evidence of it. But, once again, I would refer "A. E." to the Sankhya aphorisms and to Kapila's commentary on them. The question is really of the general order of the relation of form to thought. R. H. C.

The Old Master as Grotesque.

By Huntly Carter.

I.—RUSKIN'S THEORY.

A work of art may be said to be grotesque in proportion to the high laughter transmitted. High laughter is the accompaniment of high play, which, in turn, is a characteristic behaviour of youth and health moved by the universal spirit of joy. Whether the spirit comes uninvited is not now the question. But the nearest approach to a perfect expression of it, I think, comes from those who manifest it while being unaware of its presence. In the full expression of feeling—in which an intense effect is transmitted unimpeded from one human being to another—this unconscious receptivity seems indispensable. Yet, it is noticeable that very few professed laughter-makers do obliterate themselves so completely as to liberate from their works a sufficient quantity of quality laughter for purifying purposes. What they do is to glance timidly at the wonderful spirit proclaiming the follies and weaknesses of mankind, and make references to it in the shape of parody, satire, ridicule and humour (all of them admirable specialised forms of laughter), thus setting free sufficient of it for the purpose of producing a transient rather than a permanent effect. This leads one to inquire whether the absence of complete joy-saturation from some works is not a proof of the powerlessness (due, say, to ill-health) of their producers to be provoked into complete joy expression, while its presence in others is the highest proof of a special preparation (on account, say, of abundant health) of the producers not only for undergoing saturation, but for saturating their fellow creatures. I am inclined to believe that the latter stand nearest to the grotesque fount, and that in speaking of an artist—whether writer, painter or doer of any order—as grotesque, I speak only of the greatest artist. This theory—really one of fullest awareness by the healthy of the absurd limitations of a diseased world of men—I expressed in these columns long ago.

Some time after I had conceived the theory, and while yet engaged illustrating it, I came across Ruskin's theory of the grotesque. It is contained in the chapter on Grotesque Renaissance in "The Stones of Venice." The first thing that strikes one on opening the chapter is Ruskin's firm insistence on the primacy of morality. To him, as indeed to most mid—and late Victorian writers, including Browning,

Meredith, Henry Arthur Jones, Pinero, Wilde, Shaw, morality always comes first. Throughout his writings he appears in a moral toga acclaiming the rare virtue of morality as the surest line of conduct and foundation of æsthetic expression. He goes so far indeed as to confuse it with the things behind human activities. No better illustration of this exists than his identification of art with morality. It is as well to remember Ruskin's steady pursuit of morality, for it accounts for our meeting him on the high road to a new definition of grotesque. He is set simply upon making known its exact moral form, just as I desire to uncover its art form—which is a very different matter. It seems that Ruskin was led to take this road by a serious quarrel between his moral sense and the particular spirit of jesting observable at the moment of the Renaissance when a great moral decline of the Venetians took place, when, in fact, they had fallen "from pride to infidelity and from infidelity to the unscrupulous pursuit of pleasure," and had reached the lowest stage of "self-indulgence." Morally, matters were getting worse and worse every hour, and, of course, expressing their ugliness in thoughts, manners, customs, occupations and civic monuments. Naturally, the architecture raised at Venice during this period was extravagantly bad, and involved ideas repugnant to Ruskin's moral sense. "It was," Ruskin remarks, "especially distinguished by a spirit of brutal mockery and insolent jest, which, exhausting itself in deformed and monstrous sculpture, can sometimes be hardly otherwise defined than as the perpetuation in stone of the ribaldries of drunkenness." This is an exceedingly significant passage. It discovers Ruskin as the parent of present-day civicists. Like his inspired disciple, Professor Geddes, he sees no difference between the beast of architecture and the beasts who design and use it. Ugly is as ugly does. Moreover, it reveals his overwhelming moral sense applying the lash with loathing to an intolerable spirit of jesting, usually labelled grotesque, and wooing another by "examining into the nature and essence of the Grotesque itself, to ascertain in what respect it is that the jesting of art in its highest flight differs from jesting in its utmost degradation."

I see five conclusions arise from the foregoing. 1. Ruskin had an exalted idea of the grotesque. 2. He identifies it with the spirit of jest. 3. He, therefore, exalts the spirit of jest. 4. Hence, would arise a sharp division of the spirit of jest into good and bad, with a corresponding division of the grotesque. 5. The good, or noble, spirit of jest would, in Ruskin's view, nearly approach pure laughter, that is, laughter actuated by a powerful morality, rather than laughter, as I conceive it, produced in the healthiest creative mind by contemplation of a world of human monsters.

Well, Ruskin's moral disgust does move along the lines indicated. The reader of his chapter can see him watching the wings of the grotesque expand and following eagerly as they beckon him on to a new definition. And all the while, as he goes, there is the sort of protest the Christian moralist is sure to make, who seeks to get rid of disgusting objects by blowing away the infected air, and thrusting aside debased forms in order to get a clear view of the exquisite grotesque emotion evoked into being by these things. Actually, Ruskin proceeds by way of comparison, and, to begin with, wreaths himself with a happy legend told in true Ruskinian fashion. He bids us fix our minds for a moment, "on the contrast between the former and latter aspect" of a certain plot of ground; "the former, when it had its Byzantine church, and its yearly procession of the Doge and the Brides; and the latter, when it had its Renaissance church 'in the style of Sansovino,' and 'its yearly honouring is done away.'" He then relates how the first church was founded where the Bishop of Uderzo saw a white cloud rest. He describes the noble and magnificent marriage custom of

the Venetians, which sealed the fame of the church. And he tells how this church was swept away and replaced by another. This is what he finds on the second church. "A head—high, inhuman and monstrous—leering in bestial degradation, too foul to be either pictured or described, or to be beheld for more than an instant: yet let it be endured for that instant; for in that head is embodied the type of the evil spirit to which Venice was abandoned in the fourth period of her decline; and it is well that we should see and feel the full horror of it on the spot, and know what pestilence it was that came and breathed upon her beauty, until it melted away like the white cloud from the ancient field of Santa Maria Formosa."

Ruskin sets this expression of ignoble grotesque recoiling from his principle of grotesque expression, that nothing should be admitted to jest that is not healthy and marked by the most magnificent conditions of fantastic imagination, sanctioned by the moral conscience. A conscience, that is, capable of differentiating between Good and Bad, and embracing Good jewelled with Christian qualities. Anyone can obtain a perfect idea of Ruskin's conception of ignoble grotesque from the Renaissance heads on the houses in Queen Anne's Gate, and an idea of his conception of noble grotesques would come by refining these with the fullest appropriation of the play spirit in Nature, or "God's bounty" as Ruskin would term it. In sum, a work of art is an ignoble grotesque when it is not doing its best to express man's full appropriation of "God's bounty." It is a noble grotesque when it fully expresses this spirit in the highest species of play springing from the healthiest state. It is a state capable of making the "lightest words reverent," the "idlest fancies profitable," and the "keenest satire indulgent." To Ruskin, the noble grotesque is health reviving life with high moral spirits.

Music.

By William Atheling.

I HAVE been to more interesting concerts (Czernikoff, Nevada, Stroesco, Tinayre-Hess, Rosing) during the past fortnight than I shall be able to discuss on this page; but there are two pests of the contemporary concert stage ripe for internment or deportation.

FIRSTLY, there is the species which thinks that when it has got half a dozen engagements at the Queen's or Albert Hall, and has the prospect of six or a dozen more, its career is made, that it has nothing more to learn about music, that the art presents no opportunities not already exploited. All countries contain this kind of idiot, and for this reason good musicians in any country are often foreigners.

SECONDLY, there is the illiterate song-setter. The give-away, or at least one give-away, of this tribe is the frequency with which the same poems from certain anthologies are set and reset, while poems concealed in volumes of particular authors persistently escape musical notice. A comic detail appeared last week, when one of the double star "younger composers" set two "verses" of a familiar three-strophe poem by one of the best known living poets. He is now worrying the publishers for permission to publish the setting of the fragment, naively making the excuse that he didn't know there was any more of the poem. The accident *might* have happened to an artist; but it appears very much like a symptom of the general slovenliness of the British Georgian composers. If there is a literate class in England, which one is sometimes inclined to doubt, it does not go in for music. And if there are English musicians with anything like general culture, they are screened from the public gaze with an amazing assiduity.

Thematic invention in music has coincided with periods when musicians were intent on poetry, intent

on the form and movement of words. Thematic invention is the weakest spot in contemporary music *everywhere*. The rhythms of French are less marked, but only in France do we find a careful study of the verbal qualities. I do not think I have shown any delirious or unbalanced appreciation of modern French music, but among their song-setters are practically the only contemporary song-setters whom one can respect.

English contemporary poetry is, I suppose, very dull, and there is very little rhythmic invention in it; but, even so, writers intent on melody would, if they were serious in their technical intention, make greater effort to combine with musicians, and musicians would attempt to learn something from authors about the meeting-points of the two arts. As it is, the musician's attitude towards the lyric is too apt to be "Get me something that I can end on a high note. Got to make some money." Players will not practise for trios and quartettes; there is no place or company where any number of writers and musicians meet to try new experiments of an "unpractical nature." I recently met a poet who wanted a poem set to cymbals and 'cello in order to develop or illustrate the tonality of his words. The man is "of course" a lunatic. No Chappel-Ballad-minded aggregation would tolerate such departure from suburban custom. A "song" is words set to py-ano music. It doesn't matter what words. It is not the business of the business-like song-setter to express anything, or to find poems worth further musical development, or poems in which the verbal rhythm contains the germ of larger musical structure. All of which is very lamentable.

CZERNIKOFF.

I have heard Vlădimir Czernikoff under all, save concert, conditions during the past ten years, and I have long promised myself a fairly careful analysis of his work. I have heard Czernikoff in a cabaret, playing as suited a cabaret; I have heard him among fat-heads giving fat-headed effects; and I have heard him among connoisseurs playing as only connoisseurs can. I arrived at the Wigmore (March 15) with a ready-made theory, to the effect that Czernikoff is the tolerant connoisseur. There is certainly no one among us who knows more or cares more about music. Czernikoff's "error" is the error of the "human" as opposed to the "intolerant" or "inhuman" temperament. Czernikoff has never been able to hurt anyone's feelings by hurling at them something which they cannot understand; or by cursing a second-rate composition for its shortcomings when he is perfectly aware of its merits. I think the first, and possibly the second, of these processes is wholly or very nearly unconscious. Czernikoff unwittingly absorbs the temper and mental aroma of his surroundings and fits his music to them. For this reason you never can tell how he will play on any given occasion, and for this reason his success, by no means negligible, is still, and will probably remain, incommensurate with his fine musical comprehension. Sympathy is in some cases an artistic faculty, but in Czernikoff the capacity has got out of hand. He would be a better artist and a surer performer if he preferred something, it does not matter what, to something else. The artist must have a faint touch of fanaticism *somewhere* in his nature. Heaven knows that fanaticism in excess is worse than garlic in excess, yet both the quality and the herb have their uses.

I do not know that my theory found much confirmation on March 15 (Wigmore) save in so far as one might predicate that the audience decidedly got on Mr. Czernikoff's nerves. He began the Bach Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue with a slight dulness of impact, then sharpness and flat sound; one thought it was going to be a fiasco, but it became interesting in a sort of literary way, if one is permitted the term. He began to make the instrument "talk"—that is to say, he was intent on the meaning of each phrase, on the vocal or almost "verbal" meaning of each statement of the music, and

by this he took one's mind off the actual sound quality. Then when the fugue developed, the more strictly musical qualities crept into the playing, and the technical grasp of the form was increasingly apparent. I don't know whether the early plainness of tone was intentional restraint or not, but the whole performance of the piece was extremely instructive. I cannot recall hearing a piece of Bach more thoroughly analysed; and I am inclined to think the plainness of colour at the start was justifiable whether done by design or not; it would be perfectly defensible on the ground that if the early statements are made too mellifluous one would get one's pleasure from accidents and incidentals and not from the main contrivance of the piece. Czernikoff's resonance and his ability to get thunderous noise out of the bass notes were amply demonstrated later, and his arrangement of Arne and the Mozart were given with delicacy. I cannot remember hearing more sound driven from a piano than was expelled during the Liszt "Funerailles." We observed how hard Czernikoff can hit; and we noticed also how STUPID Liszt was, and how little he knew about chords. Czernikoff did all or nearly all that was possible with this piece, and the composer let him down, let him down through sheer stupidity. Stupidity is not an asset in the arts. Passion is as blind as you like, and it sweeps over intellectual subtleties in the drive upon its own truth, but there is a fundamental stupidity in some natures, and, alas! in many composing and writing natures, against which no perseverance or labour is any avail. Liszt was stupid. You can make impressive sounds on the piano while playing Liszt, but you cannot completely conceal his fundamental and congenital and ineradicable lack of intelligence, his lack of susceptibility. He would try to make a watch go by beating it with a potato-masher.

In his second group Czernikoff ran to virtuosity, almost to trick-playing, and only re-ascended to his Bach level in the sub-aqueous tide and colour of the Scriabine "Desir Caresse." Scriabine was just brushed by too great a desire to be unusual. One can, perhaps, have no advance and no artistic discovery without this. It is the peril of inventors, and one should not grumble at its spoiling or damaging part of their work if the other parts attain ultimate beauty. I made nothing of the second Scriabine piece.

WINIFRED PURNELL (Steinway, March 11) showed resonance and volume of bass, but none of the more unusual qualities which we have noted in former recitals.

Mr. Penty's Idiosyncrasies.*

SINCE it may be taken for granted that any book by Mr. Penty, and particularly one under this arresting title, is worth reading, I propose in the following notes only to comment on one or two of Mr. Penty's points. My objections to Mr. Penty's views are "subject to correction"; and they must be regarded as questions rather than as conclusions.

In his Preface, Mr. Penty states that "Prudence suggests the wisdom of accepting revolution as inevitable." In what sense is the word "revolution" used here? Overleaf I gather that Mr. Penty is employing the word in the accepted sense of violence; and in that case I must, until better advised, disagree with him. It is true that the economic movement of the world as represented by the capitalist cry for Super-Production is moving inevitably towards a cul-de-sac; but Mr. Penty is in error, I think, in believing either that the cul-de-sac is very near, or that a revolution of the kind he has in mind is the probable way out. Both propositions may, in fact, be doubted. As regards the first, Mr. Penty cannot have had much conversation with intending super-producers themselves if he has failed

to realise the hopes they have built on the elimination of a good part of Europe as a considerable world-competitor with Allied capitalists. Their theory is that the economic cul-de-sac was indeed very near us before the war broke out; but that the elimination of Germany has removed the climax by a good many years. The cul-de-sac was, in fact, produced by the pressure of equal competitors to capture the foreign market; and, since that pressure has been reduced by the dropping out of Germany, the experience of the cul-de-sac has been again temporarily postponed. Putting it another way, we may say, perhaps, that the war was the cul-de-sac; and that it has for the time being solved the immediate problem. I must repeat, for Mr. Penty's information, that the Allied super-producers are in no instant fear of the recurrence of the cul-de-sac.

As regards my second reservation, revolution is not the probable solution of the cul-de-sac, even in the absence of war. There are several alternatives, of which the Servile State is only one. Still another is the introduction of profit-sharing on a collective scale. A fourth is State-Capitalism. It should be remembered also that we have in this country tremendous organisations both of the employers and of the employed which between them exercise in a period of industrial trouble much more power than the State itself. Against whom, then, would a violent revolution be directed? And who would carry on the revolution? It would not be directed against the State, since the State is not the strongest of the parties. And it would not be countenanced by the organised Trade Unions since these, by their very nature, are anti-revolutionary organisations that work hand in glove with the capitalist organisations. At the approach of the cul-de-sac, the Trade Unions would infallibly enter into conference with the Employers' Associations and arrange matters with them, leaving, I may ask, what importunate remnant of the rank and file to riot in the streets? No, a revolution in this country of the violent kind is impossible. I do not say it is unthinkable; but it is so improbable under the given circumstances that prudence would suggest the very opposite of Mr. Penty's conclusion.

Page 29. Mr. Penty traces the origin of modern commercial competition to "the sin of avarice," which leads people to re-invest their money commercially instead of spending it on crafts and arts. There speaks not only the theologian, but also a leader of the Arts and Crafts movement. It is a case of nothing like leather. But is it a fact that the "sin of avarice" is greater to-day than it was in the Middle Ages? And, again, would the expenditure of surplus wealth upon art instead of upon machinery really solve our economic problem? To the first question I reply that avarice is no more widely spread to-day than at any time in history. I reject the notion that we are spiritually more debased than our ancestors, whether of the Mediaeval or of any other period of our history. There was a simple reason why surplus wealth in the Middle Ages was not re-invested in commerce—it was that under the limitations of transport and geographical communications reinvestment for foreign trade had no attractions. If all the surplus capital created in England to-day were forbidden export, much the same condition of things as prevailed in the Middle Ages would be re-established. Capital would be cheap; and I have no doubt that a considerable amount of it would be spent on what Mr. Penty calls crafts and art, but what to-day we call "amenities." But this brings me to the second question. Suppose the capitalist classes refrained from commercial re-investment and, instead of looking for fresh dividends, spent their surplus in "amenities." Would the purchasing-power of the wage-earners be necessarily increased? I knew a city merchant who devoted the whole of his considerable annual surplus to the creation of a deer forest in an agricultural district; he ultimately acquired a good many square miles of land from which he was content to draw only a negli-

* "Guilds and the Social Crisis." By Arthur J. Penty. (Allen and Unwin. 2s. 6d. net.)

gible rent. Would Mr. Penty say that an "amenity" or work of craft of this kind, which in itself provided no employment and consequently dispensed no purchasing power, was a solution of the industrial problem? The inequality of the original division of the fruits of industry would remain under Mr. Penty's suggestion. The only difference would be that instead of spending their surplus on new machinery the capitalist classes would spend it on art and pleasure. And what a status Mr. Penty gives to art in this argument! Art is to be the mere safety-valve of the capitalist system and to depend on the "surplus" extracted by Capital from Labour! No surplus, no art! If Labour should ever succeed in absorbing the surplus, then, according to Mr. Penty, there could be no Art. Art, as Whistler used to say, happens; but it has remained for Mr. Penty to declare Art to be an accident of the ratio of Production to Consumption!

Page 46. "To Mediæval social arrangements we shall return . . . because it is imperative to return to a simpler state of society." I am afraid I do not see the necessity; and, even if I did, the aim of restoring the mediæval social arrangements would appear to me to be somewhat dubious. What reason does Mr. Penty offer us for his imperative? It is that the complexity of modern society is beyond the power of man to order; confusion is inevitable. But this is a counsel of despair and belongs rather to the sphere of Mrs. Shelley's romance than to actual life. Frankenstein's monster outgrew the control of its creator; but there is nothing in machinery to compare with the will of an invoked demon. The cases are, in some respects, analogous, but they are by no means identical. Our way, I think, is through complexity to future simplicity, but not backwards to an old simplicity. It is probable that in this development we shall return to *some* of the social arrangements of the Middle Ages; but the parallels will be, so to say, accidental, arising from the common characteristics of simplicity. They will not be the result of a design to return to Mediævalism, but the consequence of that control of modern machinery of which Mr. Penty—who is not an engineer—despairs. It is not, I repeat, in an effort to return to Mediævalism that we shall make progress; but it is in an effort to make progress that we shall reproduce some of the Mediæval conditions. Strangely enough, Mr. Penty on the very next page (47) abandons his contention that machinery is beyond control; for he says that "the same machinery" which before the war was out of control is being controlled in Lancashire and Yorkshire to-day." It is—or was; and what can be done under war conditions can be done at any time.

Page 54. Here and on the succeeding page we come across another instance of Mr. Penty's prejudice against machinery. Our object, he says, is to substitute qualitative for quantitative production as our ideal; and such a change, he thinks, "means the revival of handicraft together with a definite limitation of the use of machinery." "That the revival of handicraft would assist us in our efforts to cope with the unemployed problem becomes apparent when," etc., etc. (p. 55). Unemployment is certainly a serious problem; and I naturally agree with Mr. Penty that it is the key problem of modern society. But I am again surprised to find a craftsman advocating the revival of handicraft merely as a means of finding work. If there were anything in the nature of machinery that *necessitated* unemployment, the limitation of its use and the revival of handicraft might conceivably be justified; but the unemployment consequent upon the free use of machinery is a *social* and not a mechanical consequence. In other words, it is not in the least degree necessary. Under the existing wage-system, no doubt, the unlimited employment of machinery is a direct cause of an increasing amount of unemployment; but I repeat that the ultimate cause of the unemployment is not the unlimited use of machinery, but the wage-system.

Abolish the wage-system, and I, for my part, cannot see why the use of machinery should be limited. On the contrary, there would be every motive for its extension. If everything of an economic character could be performed by automatic machinery, provided we all shared in the proceeds, I see no objection to allowing it to be done. I do not wish to work, if nature will work for me. Work is the curse of Adam; and the less of necessary work there is, the more choice mankind will have in the other activities. The gods do not work; they have no economic problem. Why should we be afraid to reduce our own to a minimum by the employment of machinery? Once make it possible for machinery to be employed without involving "unemployment" (in the poor-law sense), and I, for one, am all in favour of making machinery work. The arts and crafts could safely be left to the considerable leisure of a machine-served society.

Page 58. In his chapter on "The Spiritual Change," Mr. Penty appears to me to fall into the profound error of dualism. He sets "materialism" over against "spiritualism," and argues as if they were necessarily inimical to each other, instead of being, as I think, complementary. A religious revival, he says, would be useless unless it were accompanied by a change in the economic system; and similarly an economic change would, he thinks, be useless unless it were accompanied by a religious awakening. I do not, of course, deny that such would, in fact, be the case; but what I question is Mr. Penty's assumption that either is possible without the other—the religious revival without an economic change or an economic change without a religious revival. Mr. Penty appears to think that two activities must be carried on simultaneously by each class of "reformer": the religious reformer must couple economic reform with his religious mission; and the economic reformer must couple religious reform with his economic mission. My view is that the cobbler should stick to his last. A religious reformer, in so far as his reform is religious, will effect an economic change; and an economic reformer, in so far as his reform is economic, will effect a religious change. Nobody can say which is first or second, which precedes or follows, which is cause or which consequence; since economics and religion do not stand to one another as primary and derivative, but as equal activities of the spirit of man. Each is therefore aboriginal; and the perfect discharge of either activity involves the perfect discharge of the other. Give me a perfectly religious society, and I will assert that its economic system is perfect. Similarly, give me a perfect economic society, and I will assert that its religion is perfect. We are too apt nowadays to identify economics with Capitalism, and to conclude that because Capitalist production is the very devil, economics must always be the dark material side of religion. Nothing of the kind. Materialism and spiritualism are names for converging lines.

Page 60. "Religion, then (in the Middle Ages), was not a thing to be indulged in by some and ignored by others . . . but was the creative force at the centre of society; the mainspring and guiding principle that shaped art, politics, business, and all other activities to a common end." Really? Really? I am afraid I must be one of those "modernists" who are "the last to be willing to admit the fact"; and fall under the sentence Mr. G. K. Chesterton passed on Ruskin that "he wanted all parts of the cathedral except the altar." It is not that I do, in fact; but it is certainly my view that where all the parts are beautiful the whole is a sufficient altar. Mr. Penty's talk of the need for reviving religion appears to me to be singularly impracticable, if only for the reason that human beings can no more "revive" religion than they can "revive" the poetry of the Elizabethans or the dramas of Greece. Religion, even more than Art, happens; by the mysterious will of God, if you like; or, as I should prefer to

say, when men have put themselves right as far as they can. But to aim at reviving religion is to endeavour to lift ourselves by our boot-straps. Our business is to order what is in our power to the best of our ability and to leave the rest to God. Ruskin, in fact, was quite right in "wanting" all parts of the cathedral save the altar. The altar, like Elisha's fire, would be there, if God willed, as soon as all the parts were perfectly in place. I would dispute, too, Mr. Penty's assumption that the people of the Middle Ages were fundamentally better than ourselves. I do not believe that there was ever more goodwill than exists to-day. What differentiates the Middle Ages from our own is that the goodwill then existing was not found to be incompatible with the economic system; whereas, in our day, goodwill and capitalist economics are poles apart. Once again, therefore, I would say: abolish the Capitalist system, and the goodwill now condemned to personal and private relations for the most part will become public again. And, in my judgment, we shall beat the Middle Ages hollow at the game, given the right economic circumstances.

Page 101. With nearly all that Mr. Penty has to say on the subject of the "Class-War" I respectfully agree. Here, as in many other matters, Mr. Penty is not only a wise and illuminating but a convincing teacher. At the same time, here, as elsewhere, he misuses the word "materialist." "Force in the hands of materialists," he says, "always produces the very opposite effect of that which is intended, for materialists never understand psychology." Apart from the question whether anybody *understands* psychology, the materialist here in question is simply a fool; and it would be quite sufficient for my purpose to say that force in the hands of fools is dangerous, without identifying all fools with "materialists." Are there no fools among anti-materialists, in whose hands power would be dangerous? Have sincerely religious persons made no errors to be deplored? Mr. Penty may remember that Robespierre initiated a bloody revolution in the name of the fatherhood of God and the immortality of the human soul. It is ignorance that is the enemy; and this whether it occur in a materialist or in a religious person.

When all has been said, however, Mr. Penty's book remains a contribution of the first order to modern thought. Nobody insists more clearly or with more cogency on the fundamental fact of our day, namely, that the present industrial system is doomed. Nobody is more illuminating on the issue before us: whether that system is to be peacefully superseded or to be brought to an end in blood and tears. Nobody, finally, is more penetrating in the analysis both of its nature and of the nature of its superior successor. What I have done is to indicate some of the idiosyncrasies of Mr. Penty's mind—as they appear to me—in the hope that they may be regarded as such. T. N. G.

Recent Verse.

WILLOUGHBY WEAVING. *The Bubble and other Poems.* (Blackwell. 4s. 6d. net.)

OF Mr. Weaving's first volume of verses, "The Star Fields," eulogies in the Press have been many. The eulogies cannot be said to have been wholly due to the fact that Mr. Robert Bridges wrote an introduction, though that may have dazzled the eyes of several critics, for, indeed, Mr. Weaving's verses have a good deal of merit. He is one of the dozen or score of contemporary writers whose verse shows promise, if not of fruit this season, of fruit in the coming age. He is a self-critic, which is a good sign, and in a poem "Apology," as well as in several other poems, he candidly indicates his own defects.

No music of the wild wood
With rapturous note,
No lucid melody

Lingering can I devote.
Alas that my song so thickly
Laboureth in my throat!

Examples of this "throatiness" are to be found in practically all the poems contained in this volume. It is particularly audible in "Ariadne," and, again, in "Apple-bloom."

No wanton wind may blow that steady flaming—
Blow it roaring out to a swift ashy end,
And flakily fill the lurid darkness with lights shaming,
Like the flame-flight of leaves at Autumn's end.

The third line is throaty to raucousness; and so is the first stanza of "Apple-bloom."

Apple-bloom! Apple-bloom! blown out flakily and drifting

Over the billowy grasses like a lace of sprays,
And afar against dark woodlands mistily, as a shifting,
Lost, bedayed, star-scattered milky way.

The predominance of the "k" sound is singularly out of place in a poem about apple-bloom. The sonnet on p. 10 probably represents an attempt at clearing the throat; and the sextet is certainly fluent.

And while I think that I too soon have loved
And into dark despondency must fall,
I suddenly am by thy beauty moved
Upon my silly tardiness to call,
Knowing full well how long hath beauty proved
The oldest and most transient thing of all.

Here, however, the wild notes are missing; the third and sixth lines might, save for an inversion in one, be prose. In his laudable endeavours to combine flexibility with inspiration Mr. Weaving has had recourse to the example of other poets. Several of his poems are written under the influence of Mr. W. B. Yeats and the Irish school.

Who art thou calling to me from the sighing air?
Who are thou calling to me from the sobbing trees,
From the wavy-whispering fields and the moaning seas,
From all things restless, and roving of all things fair?
and again on p. 61—

Belovèd, if I could gather the lovings of all the times;
and still again on pp. 68, 101, and 117—

Would I could shiver the world at a stroke like a bottle
of glass. . . .

All beautiful things that I have loved ere now, . . .

Loop up thy ample tresses dim
Upon thy jasmine-pale broad brow. . . .

At least three of the poems derive from the fatal Meredith, whose "Love in the Valley" has tempted many imitators to their undoing.

Melodious is the white-massed may like a music pre-
vailing,
Milk-mossing, cream-clustered, bough-burdening sweet
refrain!

A winter, but brought back warm and snowily engrail-
ing

With loveliness' excess the joy that scattereth it again.
It is artfully varied from Meredith's clapper-clapper;
but the original is unmistakable. So is Blake in "The
Bow."

I strung the bow of ineffable desire
With the silver cord of love,
And fitted the slender arrow of piercing song,
Marking my prey above.

An image which may be mistaken for fine, but sins by association, opens the long and rather wearisome poem, "The Niche."

When Autumn, waking from her hidden sleep,
Threw back green summer coverings from her bed
And stretched her ruby self upon the world. . . .

The picture is Alma Tadema or some such person, and would do well as a coloured plate.

One of the happiest images is contained in "August,"

Now lithe young August like an Indian basks
His tanned and naked body in the sun,
And who beholds his comeliness, but asks,
"For sure, is this the shy white-withered one

Who fled in April down the woodland ways,
Hiding his face and weeping half his days?"

"For sure" is a fill-up; "white-withered" is the wrong word for an impromptu question; and "down the woodland ways" is a little worn. Otherwise there is poetry here. With the second stanza of "The Song" there is scarcely a fault to find. It is Mr. Weaving's clearest note.

And when the dazzling Spring was spent,
And pallid skies glowed naked bare,
And in his green habiliment
Each tree seemed all too usual there,
And birds drank back their drops of song,
He stayed while Summer crept along,
"With Silence so to rival me
How could my song be heard?" said he.

It is evident that Mr. Weaving has skill and conscientiousness. He knows his aim; and let us hope that one of these days he will reach it.

F. W. BOURDILLON. Russia Re-born. (Humphreys. 1s. net.)

The title-poem was written soon after the Russian Revolution and must be read as verse rather than as history for the present. As verse it is mediocre but accomplished, containing neither faults nor merits. The inevitable Meredith is to be heard in the rhythm, as an example will show.

Long, long delaying, as morning slow in breaking,
Bright on the summit, but darkling in the vale;
The soul long enslaved, shall it not be slow in waking?
The heart long in prison, shall it not quake and quail?
What seduction there is in this rhythm may be examined on another occasion. Certain it is, however, that it is the cheapest on the present market. "Verdun" is an address to France—

O re-incarnate, O eternal France!

As it opens so it continues. Unsatisfied, as he well may be, the author tries again—and is equally unsuccessful.

O France, fair France,
Through change or chance,
Thou art still the world's desire!
Still, still thy name
Sets love aflame,
And chivalry on fire!

"Edith Cavell" is prosaic, but the author is fair-minded.

Aye, there are many righteous with our foes,
With us are many sinners.

In "The Pledge" he records his resolution to live in gratitude to the soldiers who have died for us.

Dying forlorn in a foreign land,
Soldier dying for me,
Across the gulf I reach my hand
And seal this debt to thee!

If only our poets would make England realise what it owes, and how much we can never repay though we should build Jerusalem in our green and pleasant land, what a memorial to the war! But Mr. Bourdillon plays on too thin a reed. "April 1917" is a fancy where imagination should be.

Cried the song-bird to the sea-bird, as he neared with weary wing
The far-sought cliffs of England: "O Brother, is it Spring?"

Everything here is left to the imagination, even to the species of the birds. There are two poems addressed to America, in the style of the common exercise—

Giant daughter of Freedom, sprung
From the ancient home of the free!

and there is not a phrase to redeem it. The last poem is the poor best, and the best lines of it are the first two of these:

What can repay
The ruin of the roses,
Though weeping day
In golden sunset closes?

And even in these two lines the word "repay" is ruinous.

STEPHEN MAGUIRE.

Reviews.

Youth Went Riding. By C. E. Lawrence. (Collins. 6s. net.)

All tales of knight-errantry suffer by the inevitable reference to Don Quixote; but Mr. Lawrence manages to avoid too frequent comparison by confining himself to the limitations of the English convention, and leading the hero through the lists to the altar. There is a touch of satire in Mr. Lawrence's treatment of Michael of Palentyre's first loves; but the combats, the story of the long struggle with the Brute of Boutclere, and of the rearguard action fought on the way to Palentyre, are in the real vein of romance. The women, although they give their names to the six chapters of the book, are of secondary importance to the soldiering; and Argovie was an ideal place for a young knight who was determined to win his spurs. There was the tyrant to overthrow, there was the band of outlaws (who were the Emperor's men) to assist, there were the distressed maidens whose capture by the Brute constituted the *casus belli*; and Law and Order triumphed even in the trial by combat which proved that the Brute was no true knight. It is a very pleasing story; Michael has grace as well as youth, and a virtue that is not disfigured by piety. He makes friends easily among all good men and true, including the readers of the story of his adventures.

Mothers and Children. By Frank Danby. (Collins. 6s. net.)

This, we are told, is the only MS. spared by the author from the ruthless destruction of her unpublished works that she made shortly before her death. Whether she intended that they should be published in their present form, or intended to develop them into works more worthy of her reputation, we are not told. That the manuscript had some value for her, there can be no doubt; it reveals, even in these skeletons of stories, a maternal passion that is always poignant and sometimes painful. That she loved children intensely, there can be no doubt whatever; but if she wished to communicate to or inspire in others this love, these sketches in their present form fail to achieve her purpose. They have all the crudeness of melodrama; they fling familiar facts at us in a style that is barren of everything except superlatives. They are wantonly violent; Gerald, for example, falls in the playground, and "will never be like other boys again." That a child may fall without injuring his spine, is a fact of common observation; for what purpose is Gerald's spine injured? Only that his mother, who loves him, will have to tell him that he will not be able to go to Eton, and that he should break her heart with his simple answer: "Poor mother! Poor mother!" But surely mother and son could comfort one another, the pathos of love could be better manifested, without this outrageous wresting of circumstances from probability. Melodrama always assumes a certain insensitiveness in the reader or spectator, and those who are repelled by the violence of the assault instinctively adopt a critical attitude. We object to Frank Danby's deaf mutes, her congenital idiots, her orthopaedic cases, because they ask too little of mother-love. Love, "the intelligence of the heart," is not best expressed by the cherishing of monstrosities, or by sobbing and sighing over calamities; there is more pathos, because there is more promise, in "Derrick" than in "Gerald," in "Janey" than in "Phi-phi." The unsatisfied need of the normal child for the nourishing and sustaining influence of that perpetually passionate friendship that we call mother-love is far more touching than these maternal researches into teratology. Frank Danby, let us hope, did not save this manuscript for publication, but for correction: it certainly needs it if mother-love is not to be regarded as the monopoly of monsters.

Pastiche.

ENNUI.

Why the devil was I buried alive in this hole
To fester alike in body and mind and in soul?

God!

What dreams did I have in my youth, not divining that
this would come
Day in and day out to live like a hermit by slovenly
rule of thumb,
Stewing and sweating and rotting down here . . . what
mummies the best of us,
To eke out our portion of time in this dismal and dreary
sarcophagus
Of a subterranean office, in a catacomb dirty and dark,
Where monotony rules like a monarch and passion is
dead and stark?

God!

What fools are we to endure the dull routine of the day,
To bury our dreams in a ledger, while over the way
There's a broad-hipped gipsy woman and a swarthy man,
And a rabble of pagan babes in a painted caravan,
With carpets and baskets and chairs and brushes and
brooms hung over,
And a grandam, wizened and wasted, contentedly sitting
inside,
Dozing and dreaming of days so long dead and her lover,
And the moon that hung out of heaven on the night
that he died!

God!

What fools are we to be copying such entries as these,
In a loose leaf ledger with a clasp that shuts like a vice!
Oh, gold and silver and ivory! Oh, peacocks and
chimpanzees!
Oh, ginger and raisins and pepper, molasses and sugar
and spice! Oh, Ophir and Sheba and Sidon! Oh,
coral and pearls and lagoons!
Oh, monkeys and Moslems and mangroves and myrrh
and monsoons!
Oh, anything that doesn't smell musty or mouldy or
stale!
Oh, magical words that can shatter the walls of my jail!
But what had I done so amiss to deserve all this present
pain
When I was Tamerlane's bodyguard or Solomon's
chamberlain?

What fools are we to be chained to a bunch of keys,
When there in the street is a sailor from over the seas,
With his broad, bare chest tattooed with memories of old
Japan,
A sugar-loaf mountain, a cedar, a fish, and an open fan!
And here in the gutter is a dirty Italian man,
With eyes like a saint or a child, and with rings in his
ears,
With a monkey for mate, and he grinds and he bows
and he leers,
And thinks of his old mother begging on the steps of a
church in Milan.

Oh, gold and silver and ivory! Oh, peacocks and
chimpanzees!
Oh, Japs and Bedouins and Malays and oily Japanese!
Oh, sultans and sandals and sashes! Oh, sheiks and
saddles and steeds,
Bazaars and baboons and banyans and bangles and beads!
Oh, anything that doesn't smell musty or mouldy or
stale!
Oh, magical words that can shatter the walls of my jail!
But what did I do so amiss to deserve all this present
pain,
When I was a Caliph in Bagdad or a great hidalgo of
Spain?

FREDERIC L. MITCHELL.

PRESS CUTTINGS.

Even where, as is very often the case, the employers are excellent, where they take great trouble to meet the wants and desires of their employees, where they pay them good wages for moderate hours and provide them with various amenities as well, all this is done for the men as a voluntary act of benevolent despotism, or as the consequence of the law of supply and demand. That is to treat the relations between the parties from a wrong standpoint. A man's labour is a part of himself, and not a mere commodity to be bought and sold in the market. He has a right to be consulted as to its disposal, and cannot give to another uncontrolled power over it without injury to his self-respect.

It will no doubt be said that if the employees are to have a share in the management of industry it will mean a loss in efficiency, and since the real cure for industrial difficulties is increase of output, such a change would be a retrograde measure. The same argument has often been applied in the political world; indeed, it is the mainstay of the defence of Kaiserism. Granted an absolute Monarch of intelligence and probity, it is at any rate plausible to contend that his State will be administered more efficiently than it would be by any democracy. Nevertheless, the world has decided against autocracy, and for good reasons. In the first place, history shows that really good despots are rare, and I suspect that the same is equally true of captains of industry; and, in the second place, the argument leaves out of sight the passion of mankind for liberty. Over and over again we have seen men prefer a bad Government for which they are responsible, and in which they have a share, to a good Government imposed upon them from above. And I believe the same is as true in industry as it is in politics. Moreover, industrial efficiency itself depends upon the hearty good will of the workers. Without their hearty co-operation the most skilled captain of industry is powerless. . . .—LORD ROBERT CECIL.

Now we come to Rathenau's practical suggestions. These are along lines reminiscent of the old guild system. The different branches of wholesale industry are to be formed into great federations—all the cotton-spinners in one group, all the cast-iron works in another, and so forth. These federations, which will thus embrace the whole productive system of the Empire, will look after their own prices, wages, etc. (in co-operation with the workers' unions), but will be subject to State control to prevent their exploiting the community and for purposes of organisation (i.e., in overcoming wasteful competition), although at the same time it is an essential part of Rathenau's ideas that private enterprise and initiative should be as far as possible retained. What is aimed at is rather a co-ordination of private effort than its supersession by any cast-iron system of Socialism. The various federations are conceived of as being equipped with far-reaching legal powers, in exchange for which they are to assist the State in administrative work and to pay to it a regular percentage of profits. The federations would for the most part take the form of share companies, and after a reasonable interest has been paid on the capital the remainder would be divided between (1) the State, (2) a fund for financing social reforms and raising wages, and (3) another fund for lowering retail prices.

Membership of a federation would be obligatory in the case of all businesses affected, and incompetently managed concerns would be bought up or closed.

The whole idea is described as a great federal system of self-governing units.—"The Ploughshare."

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