

THE NEW AGE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE report of the Industrial Committee was received by the whole Industrial Conference on Friday and unanimously adopted. It constitutes, Mr. Thomas assures us in language that is familiar yet not always associated with truth, "a landmark in industrial history" and "a stepping-stone to something greater." Its main provisions, as we observed last week, are the perpetuation by amelioration of the wage-system; and its machinery is a National Industrial Council of some four hundred members chosen from the three parties to industry. It was inevitable, after the recent threat of strikes and the example of the Versailles Conference, that some portentous compromise of this kind should be attempted. If the nations can be brought to conference and agreement, why not the parties to industry? And if the former event required to be preceded by a war, was it not wisdom to call an Industrial Conference before the industrial war had really broken out? Mr. Clynes in particular was most eloquent in defence of this utterly false analogy, and ingenious in drawing unwarranted conclusions from it, and Mr. Henderson, like Mr. Thomas on a recent occasion, was fresh down from Sinai with a shining face. He had only just left Mr. Lloyd George, he said; and the conversation he had had with our Welsh Jehovah had convinced him that Mr. Lloyd George "was determined that everything should be done to remove the spectre of unemployment from the homes of the workers," etc., etc. There was nothing, therefore, to be done but to "agree"; and the "Times" was consequently justified in reporting the conclusion as "Masters and Men Agree"; "Brighter Prospect in Industry." For ourselves, however, we feel in the position of the advocate of an innocent man under trial for his life who has elected to give evidence and who begins by mistaking the prosecuting counsel for his friend. There is no "prospect" that Labour will come well out of the present compromise, even if industry should appear to be about to enter its golden age. On the contrary, the brighter prospect for industry may well prove to involve and, perhaps, to necessitate, a gloomier prospect for Labour; in which anticipated and probable event, we shall again have only the bitter satisfaction of saying that we foresaw it.

The fact is that in the present condition of things, an agreement between "Masters and Men" is bound to have been arrived at under false pretences. Masters and men cannot agree in fundamentals since they proceed from antagonistic principles. On the one hand, Capital is plainly under the necessity of aiming more and more at the concentration of control; while, on the other hand, Labour is equally under the necessity of endeavouring to decentralise control. How can two movements in opposing directions "agree"? How can contrary and mutually exclusive objects be common to their respective parties? As a matter of fact, the false pretences in the agreement are visible in the Reports and expose the cowardice of the Labour signatories. For it will be observed that as an addendum to the main and unanimously agreed Report, the Trade Union section has published a Report the substance and tenour of which is a flat contradiction of everything contained in the main Report. In the main Report we read of nothing but provisions for stabilising the wage-system, increasing wages, reducing hours, providing for and against unemployment and the like; in short, we are in the presence of the confident assumption that the present system can and must be carried on. But in the added Report of the Labour delegation we find, on the contrary, no such assumption, but the very opposite. In words as brave as the actions of its signatories are weak, the Report announces that the origin of the prevalent industrial unrest is "the increasingly vehement challenge of Labour to the whole structure of capitalist industry"; and that the only conceivably radical remedy for it is "economic democracy" in the fullest meaning of the phrase. What strikes us at once in this contrast of Reports is, as we have said, the falsity of the agreement to which, in spite of it, the men and masters have come. If it be in the least degree *meant* that the motive of Labour unrest is a challenge to capitalism, then how can the signatories of this affirmation proceed to "agree" to a plan designed to buttress up the capitalist system? And if it be not meant, whose eyes are intended to be blinded by the dust of words? Somebody, it must appear, has triumphed in this conflict of principle; and since plainly it is not Labour, it must be Capital. On the whole, in fact, we are disposed to felicitate Capitalism on its easy victory. Its only drawback is that it will not last.

One of the most popular devices mentioned in the agreed Report for dealing with unemployment is the adoption of short time during slack seasons; and speaker after speaker from the Labour side got up to bestow his blessing upon it. It is highly improbable that one of the two hundred delegates had given the subject a moment's thought, or the conclusion would have been patent that the device is nothing less than a device for throwing the whole cost of unemployment upon Labour. Apart from the question of production (which is a technical problem), the whole social purpose of employment is the distribution of purchasing-power to the wage-earning classes. By purchasing-power they live and move and have their being. It follows that if during slack seasons the otherwise unemployed are to be employed at the cost of the employment of the men still in work, the purchasing-power which would have been "earned" by the latter is merely distributed among the former. In other words, the unemployed become a charge upon the purchasing-power of the employed. By no manner of reasoning, we believe, can this conclusion be refuted; and the convincing proof that it is correct may be found in the cheerful state of optimism in which, we are told, the capitalist employers left the Conference at which the proposition was agreed. Their cause for satisfaction is substantial. Faced with the demand that the unemployed should be a charge on the industry (that is to say, upon costs and profits); or, in the alternative, that its charge should be thrown upon State taxation, the employers were suddenly relieved to discover that Labour was prepared to shoulder the whole charge itself, and by a "pooling" of its collective purchasing-power to make provision for the deficiency of purchasing-power among its unemployed members. A Daniel was come to judgment, indeed; and the generosity of Labour apparently knew no bounds. But what has the rank and file to say of it? And where are the economic advisers of the Labour delegation?

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The Triple Alliance was not formally present at the Conference and cannot formally be said to have agreed to the Report. Nevertheless, the all-pervading Mr. Thomas was present to apologise for the absence of his Union; and it appeared from his remarks that it was more by accident than design that the National Union of Railwaymen, at any rate, was not a party to the compromise. Such accidents, however, are like miracles: they do not happen; and it is possible that the Triple Alliance, though only by accident excluded from the disgrace of the "agreement," may by another accident find itself compelled to form the opposition. We have not heard the last by any means of the Coal Commission or of the discussion upon the vital question of control; and, in another sphere, the Triple Alliance is rapidly assuming an attitude of hostility to the Government which may prove infectious. We may, however, say at once that we disapprove of the action now being taken by the Miners' Federation, under the suggestion of Mr. Smillie, to employ the economic forces of the Triple Alliance in *political* issues. Nobody will suspect us of defending Conscription or of supporting the proposed war on Russia; but it is another matter when a section of the population, combined for an industrial purpose, switches off its proper line and engages in the attempt to dictate on political issues. The enterprise, moreover, is rendered somewhat ridiculous by the absence of any sense of proportion in the minds of its authors. They are calmly undertaking "control" in matters outside their province and certainly outside their power, at the very moment that they have been (temporarily) defeated in an attempt to obtain control over their own industry! Setting aside the irritation caused by the assumption of irrelevant functions, what is more absurd than for the Miners' Federation who are still on their knees for permission to control the mines, to threaten to dictate

national and foreign policy? Surely they can see that their first duty is to rule their own house before pretending to be able to rule the house of the world! The absurdity is only intensified by the discovery that, apart from the plans of the Miners' Federation in industry, the Triple Alliance, of which the Miners are a third part, has no industrial programme to set against the Capitalist Report of which we have just been witnesses. Formally self-excluded from the Industrial Conference, the Triple Alliance has nevertheless made no attempt to formulate an Opposition policy. On the contrary, as we have seen, Mr. Thomas has assured us that but for an accident his Union would have signed the agreement along with Mr. Henderson, Mr. Clynes and the rest. The practical deduction is obvious. Mr. Smillie must forgo his political ambitions until such time as his Union and the Triple Alliance have an economic policy of their own which they can carry through.

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The Industrial Conference at home has had its counterpart in the Labour Convention associated with the League of Nations; and much the same conclusions have been reached by the latter as by the former. In one respect, if words had of necessity any practical meaning, the Versailles Convention has contributed to history by its opening declaration that "the labour of a human being is not to be treated as a commodity"; but since we know how easy it is for others to make solemn phrases, the words are in all probability unimportant. The "Spectator," for example, complacently assumes that all that the words mean is that "slavery and serfdom" are forbidden; without the least apparent consciousness that the wage-system as maintained in our own country is in essence and fact trade in the commodity of human labour, indistinguishable in substance from open slavery or serfdom. In another respect, the Convention was even less satisfactory. Even the miserable minima of labour conditions which the Labour League is likely to agree upon are not to be "enforced" upon all the countries composing the League; but each of the nations is to be able to "contract out" of its obligations when these are distasteful to its governing classes. America, for instance, can plead its federal constitution as an excuse for ignoring the Convention when it suits the purpose of any of its forty-eight States. Italy, Japan, and, we understand, India, have all three declined even to be provisional signatories of the Convention; with the total result that the whole scheme of uniformity, weak in conception, is certain to be weaker still in operation. It is clear from the circumstances of the case that we are a long way off international Labour legislation of an effective character.

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The admired spirit of compromise which is said to characterise the English people is often employed as a cover for complete surrender of principle; and in no class more than in the Labour movement. Servility aping mastery is bound to result in the appearance without the reality; and it would certainly seem that the pathetic attempt of some of our Labour leaders to "live up to" the English spirit of compromise has resulted in nothing less than abject surrender. Mr. Thomas has long ceased to be able to discriminate between a desire to make peace and a desire to keep the peace. Mr. Clynes is fast moving into the same state of equivocation. And the case of Mr. Appleton, the secretary of the Trade Union Federation, is even more desperate. At the Leeds Luncheon Club last week, in an endeavour to win the applause of his masters, Mr. Appleton had the effrontery to warn "the working people" of the danger they ran from pressing their demands for life and leisure. "He wanted working people," he said, "to get back to the old truth: 'In the

sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread.' " Why the working people should have been addressed under the auspices of a Luncheon Club to which they were not invited; why the working people should need to be reminded of their daily necessity; why they should be told to "get back" to the old truth, when whole classes of the idle rich have never got forward to it—all this may be one of the mysterious workings of the great spirit of compromise. It appears to us, however, to be remarkably like surrender.

The sudden conversion of the "Times" to an aggressive anti-Bolshevism has given rise to a number of recondite speculations concerning the intellectual origin of the somersault. No such refinements, however, are necessary; for the explanation of the change may be simple. Lenin's "offer" of terms has been interpreted as a proof of weakness; and it has been concluded that with one good push the Soviet Government will finally fall. Everybody who was closely following the "policy" of the Foreign Office in Russian affairs must have been prepared for the resolution, though, indeed, the presentation of the case was clumsy. On Wednesday evening, for instance, the War Office issued the report, on Bolshevist authority, that the Bolshevist forces had been compelled to withdraw seven miles near Archangel; yet on Thursday, we were told, on "high military authority," that our army in Archangel was in danger of the fate of the garrison at Kut. The discovery, it appears to us, was too sudden to be genuine; and the announcement of the military situation too candid to be true. And our suspicions were confirmed by the publication on the same day of the Government White Paper of which the opening and continuing strain was "the approaching debacle of the Bolshevist régime." This diagnosis of the impending dissolution of the Soviet Government, confirmed apparently by the "offer" of Lenin to treat upon terms, was, no doubt, the real parent of the "policy" suddenly adopted by the "Times" in defiance of its past. If, indeed, contrary to all Lord Northcliffe's surmises, the Soviet Government was about to fall of its own accord, the chance of winning the credit of pushing it down was too good to be missed. "By a short, sharp Allied effort, supported from the sea," said the "Times," "Petrograd could be taken within a month and a staggering blow dealt at Bolshevism." It is true that the operation would be one of "offence"; in other words, we should be waging war on Russia; but (in the inevitable terms) "the offensive may be the truest defence"; and, after all, it was the Bolshevists who threw down the challenge, and for us to refuse to take it up would be to leave "an indelible stain on the British name." It is all very obvious; and it is all very plausible; but we believe that Lord Northcliffe's first thoughts were best.

It must not be concluded that our judgment of Bolshevism is changed. The dictatorship of the proletariat is as perilous to civilisation as the dictatorship of the capitalist classes. But it is not more so; and if we are presented with the choice between the *increasing* dictatorship of Capital and the *attempted* dictatorship of Labour, we should find it hard to make up our minds. In any event, the way to meet Bolshevism is not to undertake a military campaign against it, but to meet it on the plane of ideas. Bolshevism is a phenomenon with an economic cause. It has not sprung up as an idea in the brain of a single fanatic who has proceeded to impose it upon his followers; but it is an inevitable reaction, intellectual in the first instance, but human in essence, against the threatened extension of capitalist domination. We may succeed in deposing the personnel of the Soviet Government in Russia—though even this is dangerously speculative—but we shall not succeed thereby in eradicating the idea

from the world. On the contrary, we shall ensure its spread, by the extent that its suppression in Russia may be said to prove its necessity. The League of Nations, we may observe, is not the ideal of everybody, and, least of all, in its present form. What, in fact, it shows signs of becoming is what we have always feared it would become—a League of international Capitalist Governments operated by international finance. Suppose that this consummation is actually reached, and that the executive of the League of Nations becomes indistinguishable from an executive of the world's private banking interests—would not a form of Bolshevism in that event be the only terrible alternative to the still more terrible consequences of a world "free for Capitalism"? The problem is extremely obscure; but we are quite certain that its final solution is not to be found in the military occupation of Petrograd or Moscow.

The attempt to settle ex-soldiers on the land for which they have fought is meeting the expected resistance of the landlords, of whom 2,500 own more than one-half of the total acreage of the United Kingdom. Under the Acquisition of Land Bill, now under debate in Parliament, all land acquired for the use of the Government must be purchased and paid for at its "current market value," without the smallest regard to the fact that the present market value of land is at least a quarter as much again as its market value before the war. We imagine that there are, even among the landowning classes, a few individuals capable of realising the nature of the crime their class is about to commit in insisting upon mulcting the soldiers of the increased value of the land which the war has brought about. But if there are, they are very silent about it. The facts, however, are open to the day. At this moment there happen to be in the market over a thousand square miles of land, the current market value of which we may estimate as being more by 25 per cent. than its value in 1914. To whom is that "bonus" due? Whose is that increased value? We know, of course, that its increased value and the bonus represented by it are the "property," if anything ever was, of the community; and that it stands for the needs and sacrifices, not of the landowning classes alone, but of all classes. Nevertheless, as things are, every penny of the increased value will go to the present nominal owners who will thus be put into a position to penalise the prospective ex-soldier small holders by imposing upon them a rent which the war has raised. Under the most favourable circumstances we could only pity the ex-soldier small holder, but in the face of the additional burden the landlords are now proposing to put upon him, his prospects are intolerable. Is there not a single landowner in this country who has the elementary honesty or courtesy to refuse to profit by the sacrifices of the nation? Must they all be helpless victims of the unjust system?

A system so unjust cannot last for ever; or is it only sentiment that doubts it? There appear, nevertheless, to be signs that the repayment of the war-debt will involve difficulties insurmountable by the ordinary operations of finance. The German indemnity is disappearing like the fairy gold it always was; and the continuance of our national expenditure, made inevitable by the state of the world and the nation, is only adding to the problem without solving even a part of it. Lord Milner and others are trying to reassure us by the old familiar arguments that the money estimate of our national indebtedness is no measure of our real debt; and that we are fortunate in having our debt held, for the most part, in this country. But we are not consoled by it. What is the use of telling us that money values have little real relation with commodity-values when, in fact, the commodity-values of our

debt are increasing with the decline in prices? The faster the cost of living falls to our individual advantage, the faster the commodity-value of our collective indebtedness rises; our public indebtedness increases as our private transactions show signs of balancing themselves. And what, again, is the use of telling us that the money-lender in the next street to whom we owe 8,000 millions pounds is less to be feared than a money-lender (with whom our own is probably in partnership!) who lives in, say, America? Will our own, because he is near, forgo his claim any the more readily? Is there any sign that our banks are giving anything away? The simple fact is that, whether to our own or to foreign money-lenders, a good sixth of our future annual production is hypothecated. The purchasing-power distributable to the rest of the nation will therefore be the less by that fraction at the very least. And when we add to this hypothecated fraction the fractions hypothecated by the Treasury, by exports, by Rent, Interest, and Profit, the purchasing-power annually available for distribution among Mr. Appleton's working classes will be found to be a very vulgar fraction indeed.

A Policy in Russia.

By a recently returned English Trade Unionist.

I MAY disavow partisanship in respect of the various parties now contending for the body of Russia. My motive is humanitarian and takes no account of parties or forms of government while peoples are suffering and starving. No right-thinking man will confess that because Bolshevism now rules in Russia, the starvation of the Russian people is of no concern to him. Life is above politics; and the elemental problem in Russia is to save from death thousands, and, perhaps, millions of people already crushed under the burden of unnumbered horrors.

The human appeal, moreover, is one that is understood in Russia as it is nowhere else. What Liberty is to the Anglo-Saxons, and Equality to the French and Latin races, Fraternity is to the Russian people. It is a name and a thought that instantly commands their sympathy; and nobody can have lived long or intimately with Russians without discovering that the shortest way to their affections is the way of generosity. Ingratitude, I should say, is the blackest crime in the Russian's calendar. A Russian may cheat or lie or commit many crimes; but the crime of ingratitude—failure to recognise and to respond to kindness—is almost outside his comprehension.

Now, it is exactly this psychological trait which is to be borne in mind in the consideration of a policy in Russia. If it is wise to approach the English in the name and substance of Liberty, the Latin peoples in the name and substance of Equality, it is no less wise to approach the Russians in the name and with the substance of Fraternity and Goodwill. No other appeal, I feel sure, will have the enduring effect of such an appeal. Every other appeal, in fact, is liable either to be completely misunderstood or distorted by suspicion. But an appeal in the name of our common humanity and the fraternity of mankind would not only be understood, but it is my judgment that the Russian people could not fail to respond to it with gratitude.

Now, what should be our first object in intervening, in any sense, in Russia? The interests of our own foreign trade are certainly not paramount, and I will do my fellow-countrymen the justice of refusing to believe that any Western Government would intervene in Russia with a merely commercial object in view. Again, it cannot be to restore order alone, for what is the value

of order unless it ensures some still greater purpose? I conclude that the underlying motive of Western concern with Russia is nothing less than human goodwill—a desire, in fact, to relieve the suffering of the Russian people, and, if possible, to put an end to it.

It cannot be said, however, that we are succeeding in this aim. Petrograd was starving when I left that city in January last; and the conditions must be far worse to-day than they were two months ago. And Petrograd is only the index of practically the whole of Russia. It may be true that in the country districts food-stuffs are to be found in abundance; but the means of continuing the supply (machinery, etc.), are fast failing, and in no long time Russia will be reduced to misery from one end of the country to the other. It is clear, then, that, however exalted our motives may be, the consequences are disastrous. Russia is going from bad to worse; and no policy that has yet been suggested appears able to interrupt this terrible progress.

I have often been asked whether the Soviet Government may not be able in course of time to create better conditions in Russia, even without the help of the rest of the world. No doubt, if people could live without food for ten years or so, the Soviet Government could take its time to settle down, and in ten years we might see a comparatively stable system in Russia. But hunger is a fact; and non-production is a fact; and when they occur together no other remedy but food or the means of producing it is to be thought of. Without considering the theory of Soviet Government, the actual facts before us are these: that the Soviet rules over a country that is slowly starving to death; and that without immediate help, both country and Soviet must perish together. Is there anybody in the world who desires to see such a catastrophe? Ought anything to prevent us from trying any and every means of averting it?

But what are the means? Speaking generally, there are three courses open to us to take in regard to Russia. One is to intervene, with all the strength we can muster, on the side of the anti-Bolshevists; to depose the Soviet system; and to establish a representative system in its place under Western guarantees. I have nothing in theory to urge against such a policy; it might, indeed, conceivably be the least cruel in the long run, given the circumstances favourable to its practice. But I do not believe that, in the circumstances as given, such a policy is either practicable or would be effective. The intervention necessary to be employed in such an enterprise as the conquest or occupation of Russia would be on such a scale as to tax the resources of all the Allies, even if these had not just been exhausted in a long and difficult war. In short, to be quite plain, we have not the means of such intervention. Then, again, it is highly doubtful, not merely whether even the masses of the anti-Bolshevists in Russia would welcome our forcible intervention, but whether the fact of it would not be used by the Bolsheviks to rally to the common defence of Russia, under the Soviet banner, all its people. For, after all, Bolsheviks and anti-Bolsheviks alike are Russians at bottom (scratch a Bolshevik and you find a Russian); and it is less than doubtful whether an Allied occupation of Moscow and Petrograd, such as Sir George Buchanan proposes, would not solidify all Russia behind any Government, even behind the Soviet Government of to-day. Let us remember Napoleon and 1812.

If intervention in sufficient force to effect the intended purpose is likely to prove impracticable, there is a second method to be thought of—that of leaving Russia to her fate. But this policy is to be thought of only to be instantly dismissed; for upon a thousand grounds, humanitarian, political, economic and other, the world cannot turn its back upon Russia and leave it to struggle and die alone. We may be quite sure, moreover, that if the Allies could bring themselves to

adopt this policy (and I must state that I have seen no sign of their wishing to do so), Germany, to say nothing of other countries, would not sit idly by. Germany, at any rate, would know how to profit by our inaction; so that, in the end, after neglecting Russia, we might be called upon to intervene in quite another sense.

The dilemma to which we are now brought must be obvious. On the one hand, we cannot refrain from intervention of *some* kind; but, on the other hand, our forcible intervention on the side of the anti-Bolsheviks cannot possibly be made forcible enough to effect its object of restoring and maintaining a non-Soviet Government in Russia—at least, within a period short enough to save the country from wholesale starvation. What is the policy, then, left to us to adopt? If the military conquest of the Soviet Government is impracticable, and turning our backs on Russia is unthinkable, what remains to be done?

I have reflected deeply on this problem in the light of my experiences in Russia as well as in conversation with Bolsheviks of every degree in Russia and with public men in England. I realise quite clearly the difficulties involved in every policy, and not least in the policy I am about to suggest. Nevertheless, in view of the *impossibilities* which appear to me to be attached to the policies above mentioned, the difficulties attaching to the policy I offer here for consideration are, I think, comparatively small.

Let me recall what I have said in the opening of this article concerning the passion for Fraternity that prevails among the Russian people; and let me add to this my strong impression that the principals of the Soviet Government—its real heads—are no less concerned for the present welfare of the Russian people than any of our Western statesmen and parties. Lenin, I believe, is not the iron-hearted pedant of our anti-Bolshevik propagandist imagination; but, before everything else, a Russian. And I am of opinion that if he and the other Soviet leaders could be made to realise that the Allies *mean well* by Russia, an effective compromise could be established, whereby, without prejudice to the inevitable discussion of the future form of the Russian constitution, steps might at once be taken to avert the catastrophe to which Russia is fast moving.

I can be brief. Let us suppose that the Allies should enter into a provisional recognition of the Soviet Government for the specific purpose of concerting measures for the relief of the Russian people. It would not be necessary to enter into negotiations for a formal recognition, or, in fact, to do more than invite the Soviet Government to co-operate with the Allies in a humane problem outside the sphere of politics. The great fact before us in Russia is that men, women and children are dying in thousands because their Government is what it is. Yet the complementary fact to this is that that Government is no less anxious than we are to relieve the distress. Surely it is possible for the Allies, without prejudging political issues; and surely it is possible for the Bolsheviks, without committing themselves politically—to come to a specific understanding on the specific matter of food and other vital needs. There is the need; and on both sides there is the desire to satisfy it. Is a temporary and defined co-operation on this issue really impossible?

Several objections may be considered. It will be said, for instance, that even this *ad hoc* recognition of the Soviet Government will not only be employed to strengthen the Bolshevik régime by appearing to enhance its prestige, but depress still further the Russian parties whom we have hitherto been, and still are, supporting. I do not deny, of course, that these are real difficulties; but if they are otherwise unavoidable, our business should be not to run away from them, but to reduce them as far as possible. For instance, in the case that the Soviet Government might be tempted to

interpret our limited recognition as a general recognition, a specific disclaimer might be made and published, as one of the conditions of the understanding, in the Soviet Press. If the worst came to the worst, we could even adopt the tactics employed against Germany, of dropping messages from the Allies over the accessible parts of Russia. And in anticipation of the natural fears of the anti-Bolsheviks that our limited recognition of their civil opponents might weaken their own state, an undertaking on the part of the Soviets might be made an integral part of the provisional understanding. It is unnecessary to suppose that the anti-Bolsheviks are any less humane than the Bolsheviks; or that, if the latter were willing to suspend hostilities to perform a deed of mercy to Russia, in co-operation with the Allies, the anti-Bolsheviks would not permit it or the Bolsheviks not abide by the agreement. At the least, a provisional recognition would discover precisely how much both parties were prepared to risk, as regards their relative political situation, for the sake of the present generation of living Russians.

Then it may be said that we have no guarantee, in the event of our sending material to Russia, that it will reach the destination we intend and not be used as a fresh source of strength by the Soviet Government; and that, were this the case, we should really be intervening on the side of the Bolsheviks. Here, again, however, it is necessary not to be over-cautious in a work of humanity, and particularly where the Russian people are concerned. News of the arrival of supply ships could scarcely be confined to the Soviet officials, so that, even if they had a mind to retain the supplies for their own use, the demand of the people would make itself heard. In fact, any attempt by the Soviet Government to employ Allied gifts for its own political purposes would react unfavourably on the Soviet Government itself. In its own interests, therefore, and even supposing that its humanity did not get the better of its policy, the Soviet Government, I venture to think, would hesitate before acting ungratefully in response to Allied kindness.

Finally, there is the objection that under any conceivable circumstances a recognition, however limited in character or time, would have the effect of prolonging, and, perhaps, of perpetuating the Bolshevik régime. It is possible, I do not doubt, that this might tend to be the effect. But in view of all the circumstances it appears to me that the risk should be taken. We have seen what are the alternatives; they are either the conquest of Russia with the aid of the anti-Bolshevik parties—a proposal which no responsible statesman in the Allied countries or in America dare announce—or the abandonment of Russia to isolation, anarchy and death. The third course here suggested is neither one nor other of these impossible alternatives. It ignores political issues, in fact, in the superior interests of humanity. A limited recognition, provisional in character, and confined to the single matter of the vital needs of the Russian people, would, I believe, produce enormous changes at a comparatively small risk—changes, moreover, that might as easily result in the overthrow of the Soviet Government as in its strengthening. Moreover, I should like to point out that already there is a precedent for it. Reuter announced some days ago that a British mission had arrived in Moscow, under the safe conduct of the Soviet Government, to arrange humane conditions for our prisoners of war. If the Soviet Government can be recognised for this purpose; if its word of honour in the matter of the safe conduct has been accepted by the British Government; if the Soviet Government can be trusted to have regard for any humane arrangement entered into by itself on account of suffering *British* prisoners, are not the same circumstances present for a similarly successful Allied mission directed to relieve the *Russian people*?

The Trouble in Egypt.

By Marmaduke Pickthall.

Soon after the British Government abolished the Turkish suzerainty over Egypt as a consequence of our declaring war on Turkey, I wrote in *THE NEW AGE* my opinion of the whole proceeding, which many people at the time were vaunting as a step towards the consolidation of the British Empire. My opinion was that it was a reckless act which, going dead against the sentiment of the Egyptian people, was pretty sure to lead to trouble in the sequel. The wiseacres who then had charge of our Near Eastern policy—and who, for aught I know, may still direct it—seemed to suppose that any slight regret for the Ottoman name which might be felt by the Egyptians would be more than compensated by the elevation of the Khedive—the hereditary Viceroy—to the rank of Sultan, and of the country, until then in theory a mere province of the Turkish Empire, to the rank of a protectorate under the British Crown. But that, as I tried to point out at the time, was to ascribe to the Egyptians aspirations and illusions which make no appeal to them. The Khedivial family has never been so popular in the Valley of the Nile as to justify the hope our statesmen seem to have placed in it. The Egyptians have rebelled against it more than once, and once succeeded in dislodging it. But they have not rebelled, nor ever dreamed of rebelling, against the Turkish suzerainty.

To the experts who no doubt advised the British Government to venture on so hazardous a step, the Turkish Empire may have seemed a State like France or England, only much worse governed, whose only claim on the affection of the men of Egypt was the fact that its ruler was a Muslim and the titular Caliph. To the Egyptians it is infinitely more than that. It is the historic Muslim Empire, descending legally, dynasty after dynasty, from Ali, Othman, Omar, Abu Bekr and the Prophet himself. It is the kingdom of God on earth, established on the principles of the Koran and of the Prophet's teaching, in which it is illegal to take interest for money lent; in which the Abyssinian slave whose works are good is superior to the Sherif of Coreysh whose works are evil; in which the principle of universal brotherhood has overcome the principle of nationality; in which nobody has any right to riches, power or influence except he use them for the benefit of others in accordance with the sacred law; in which the service of Allah is everyone's affair. I notice that in the course of the revolt in Egypt the property of rich village proprietors has been attacked. That is because the said proprietors, though nominally Muslims, took advantage of the British régime to call their surplus wealth their own and spend it as they chose, instead of spending it for the good of others in the way which is prescribed in detail by the Muslim law. By Muslim law such selfish persons have no right to live. I have known of the existence of an angry feeling on this subject in Egyptian villages for a good many years.

To understand the feeling of the average Egyptian and the average Muslim everywhere towards the historic Muslim Empire, an Englishman must banish from his mind the notion that politics and the Constitution of the State are matters purely secular, and imagine a theocracy which covers everything. Nothing is secular to the Muslim. Ideals such as religious tolerance, the right of everyone to education and to equal opportunity, scientific progress and the brotherhood of man, which have grown up in Europe secularly, under protest from the Churches, are plainly sanctioned and enjoined by the Koran itself, which also prescribes in detail the conduct of believers in war, commerce, government and international politics. The general tendency in the advance of European thought towards principles which were first clearly enunciated thirteen hundred years ago by an illiterate Arabian as part of

the divine law regulating human progress might be regarded as a triumph for Islâm far greater than any achieved by the historic Muslim Empire in its greatest splendour. But the ignorant Oriental Muslim does not view things in this universal light. His mind has the habit of crystallising a religious thought and then admiring it instead of joining it to other thoughts and acting on it. For him the historic Muslim Empire is the Kingdom of God on earth. For the Prophet and the early Muslims and innumerable saints and learned men throughout the centuries, it was a community divinely founded having for its object to bear witness to God's kingship over every nation and to seek to bring all nations to the consciousness of one theocracy upon a basis of religious tolerance and recognition of some natural laws (or laws of God) which govern human progress temporal and spiritual. These laws, so it is claimed, are to be found clearly stated nowhere in the Koran, though all men have some inborn knowledge of them. They are laws which all men must accept, because all men are subject to them; and the world would have been saved from endless suffering if they had been generally acknowledged and obeyed. In the opinion of some learned men of my acquaintance it is for losing sight of the original and universal purpose of Islâm that the Muslims of the world are being punished at this moment, and because through admiration of the outward dignity of their religion they fell into the error of the Jews and Christians, supposing that Allah would show them special favour simply because they said a certain creed and performed certain ceremonies. But that is by the way.

The average Egyptian did and does attach a superstitious value to the Turkish suzerainty over and above the natural wish of every Muslim to preserve the historic structure of the Mohammedan community as a witness to the ideal—or, as he considers it, the fact—of Allah's kingship over earth, and as a guarantee that an unscrupulous commercialism shall not entirely supersede the sacred law in Muslim lands. There is besides an ever-growing number of people who, like myself, believe in the development of Islâm on modern lines, and desire that the development may take place under favourable and free conditions, and in friendly intercourse with Europe and with England more especially. Many of the educated Egyptians are of this way of thinking, therefore opposed to measures tending to implant enduring hatred against Europe in the breasts of Muslims. I think that I have said enough to make it evident to my readers that the abolition of the Turkish suzerainty over Egypt, which, no doubt, seemed to the Oriental advisers of the British Government the merest trifle, seems to the average Muslim a tremendous act of tyranny, almost of sacrilege, which can never be forgotten nor forgiven.

But—you will protest—why talk about Islâm and Turkish suzerainty in connection with a purely nationalist agitation, as the newspapers declare this Egyptian rising to have been? The fellâhîn who did most of the rising, the people of the country towns and villages, the desert Arabs who rode in to back them up, regard nationalism as an invention of the devil. They have not the illusions of the Cairo students who demonstrated in processions for the most part orderly. And the students' movement—a "Tu quoque" flung to England, having its origin in social grievances—is not devoid of pan-Islâmic tendency. I noticed one report from Egypt in the "Daily Telegraph" in which occurred these tell-tale words:—

"The Turkish flag is flying in many of the villages." Responsible Ministers, highly respectable men, two of whom were never reckoned nationalists in any sense, while the third is only a very moderate nationalist as things go nowadays, have practically refused to recognise the authority of a Sultan whom they hold to have

been illegally appointed. In consequence of their refusal they were deposed from office, and when they still refused to recognise the state of things as legal, they were summoned before the Military Governor, warned, and, almost in the same breath, deported. The merchant class in the towns, formerly the least concerned with politics, has shown decided symptoms of unrest. And the fellâhîn who, previous to the war, were generally friendly in their feeling for the English, have been in open rebellion. Those are a few of the signs and wonders of the past few months which show that the Egyptian people, as a whole, resents the abolition of the Turkish suzerainty, and is anxious, at a moment when the world is being re-arranged upon the basis of the wishes of the various peoples, to state its wish before the persons charged with that arrangement. Is the desire so heinous, or the rebellion—the result of gross mismanagement on our part, and which could very easily have been foreseen—so unforgivable that war in the person of General Allenby must be let loose on Egypt and mercy in the person of Sir Reginald Wingate be withheld from the unhappy victims of our own ineptitude? The whole thing could be settled by a mere assurance frankly given. But if we cannot give the Muslims that assurance there and in India—why, then, indeed, our Eastern Empire depends henceforth upon the sword alone.

An empire, founded on the love and pride of peoples, as is the Turkish Empire in relation to its Muslim subjects, cannot be destroyed. Divide it, break it as you will, each fragment will become your living enemy, striving by all means for reunion with the rest. And those who rule the British Empire with less intelligence than they bestow upon a game of golf or bridge will call that striving for reunion "nationalism" when it appears simultaneously in Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria, Armenia, Caucasasia (if their precious plan is carried out), until it meets with outside help and overthrows our Eastern power, and the Muslim Empire is reconstituted. Suppose that Lenin and his Russian Bolsheviks were suddenly to profess Islâm—a conclusion which is not outside the bounds of possibility—what would the effect be on our Eastern Empire, estranged and angered as its peoples are at present? And it is all our own fault. Until but a few years ago it was an axiom of British statesmanship that an independent Turkish Empire in alliance with Great Britain was necessary to the peace and welfare of the British Empire in the East. Until but a few years ago it was an axiom with British statesmen that the end of the Turkish Empire in Asia would be the beginning of the end of the British Empire in Asia. I am no respecter of such axioms or catchwords except in cases where my own experience and observation enable me to judge that they are sound. From my own experience and observation of Near Eastern problems in relation to the British Empire I prefer the catchwords of our old better-informed, more studious and enlightened statesmanship to the catchwords of a frantic war-time propaganda. Thanks to the collapse of Czarist Russia, it is still in our power to recover much of the ground which we have lost so foolishly. But it can only be done by strong and generous support of Turkey, the historic Muslim Empire, at the "final" settlement, and by restoring Turkish rights of suzerainty pretty widely. By such means we can still win back a large and very influential section of the Muslim world in India, and, I think, in Egypt, too, and all our Asiatic subjects would be much relieved. Otherwise, the outlook seems to me as black as can be. The older men retain some feeling of affection for the British name, remembering better days; but the generation which is growing up can only feel abhorrence of a Government which will have destroyed what they consider as their hope on earth, while breaking solemn pledges and transgressing laws which they regard as laws of God

and therefore binding upon every race which has received the Scripture.

Surely our rulers have had proof sufficient that their new and hurried Oriental policy, adopted at the behest of Czarist Russia, is a failure. If they persist in it, they will shortly be confronted with the problem: How to govern an enormous subject population, almost unanimously eager to escape from British rule, agreeably with British notions of humanity and to the satisfaction of a world democratised and super-civilised which cannot fail to be more critical than heretofore since it will possess, by law, the right of criticism and of interference on behalf of subject races.

Machiavelli—in Theory and Practice.

(To the Editor of THE NEW AGE.)

SIR,—I beg to compliment "R. H. C." on his excellent interpretation of my letter to the "Freie Zeitung" (translated by Mr. P. V. Cohn, in your issue of March 13). Your able critic, though he seems to have had some doubt on the subject, has understood me perfectly well. I do, indeed, think that politics cannot be carried on in a strictly ethical fashion. I positively deny that a community can be governed in a manner which would ruin any grocer's shop. I further do think that all statesmen, above all, those who are great, are and have to be immoral (though I kindly ask you not to turn this round: all immoral people are by no means great statesmen). And I do consider Machiavelli an honest pagan and Tolstoi a Christian humbug.

Holding such views I was, of course, unable to advise the Germans to tell the truth about the origin of the war for any other but political reasons. I was further not in a position to condemn the Germans or any other nation for "doing wrong." "Doing wrong" may, in my opinion, be necessary for the life of a nation as well as for that of an individual; and I am too fond of Life to preach death—that is to say morality—to it. My point of view—the pagan, the immoralist, the Machiavellian, if you like—does not allow me to be as inhuman as all that. Besides its greater humanity I claim for it a superiority to the current Christian ideal on account of its greater sincerity. For Machiavellianism and intellectual honesty go together, and so do Christianity and morality. But morality and intellectual uprightness exclude each other, and so do Machiavellianism and Christianity. Life is profoundly immoral: only religion is moral. You have to choose between the two.

I have chosen intellectual honesty. I therefore blamed the Germans in my letter, as "R. H. C." rightly says, "not for doing wrong, but for not knowing what they were doing." I reproached them not with their immorality, but with their ignorance, with their lack of self-knowledge and self-criticism. If they had known themselves and the world around them they would never have started this war. I condemned them on intellectual and not on religious grounds. I thought them (and still think them) Romanticists and not criminals. It was their foolish romanticism and not their sinfulness which was the reason of their action. It was likewise the reason for my scorn, which found its expression in the letter published in the "Freie Zeitung" of January 25th, and translated by you. For in my eyes foolishness and not sin is the original sin. "Sin" may be wisdom sometimes, and may, as history teaches, benefit a nation, while "foolishness of this world" never benefits anybody except a nation's enemies, though it may be "wisdom before God."

"R. H. C." is therefore wrong in thinking that my point of view is more dangerous than that of a Ger-

man professor. It is only dangerous to Religion, but not to the World. It would have kept the latter out of this war. On the other hand, it is the moral, the scholastic, the professorial point of view which is the danger to the world. For it keeps people from thinking, from knowing themselves and this world. A moral man can neither know himself, nor the world around him: if he did, he could not pretend to be moral any longer. So he shuts his eyes upon both himself and the world and—lets things go. Thus morality kills intellectual uprightness, which is the basis of all intelligent action. It produces half-thinkers, hypocrites, cows, idealists, Germans and—the rest of the Europeans. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," but if they get too numerous . . . well, look around you! . . .

All this I do not write without a certain "quake" of the pen, for the possibility of being misunderstood is great in such delicate matters. It is so great that I myself, when first reading "R. H. C.'s" terrible indictment, was obliged to put myself the question: "Am I really such a black scoundrel as all that?" Such is the force of inherited religious prejudices that it unbalances even those who think themselves quite free from their ancient tackles. I recovered, as you see, my equilibrium, but only by a trick—by forgetting my theories and thinking of my practice. As only by this means I succeeded in defending myself before my own conscience, I do not think it is an unfair request, if I beg to be allowed to defend myself in the same manner before your readers, who naturally can know nothing of my actions. You will therefore excuse me if I here become personal and inflict upon you the story of my behaviour before the war.

You know that I was born and brought up in Germany, that I have been a German soldier, that I still hold the degree of a German University. Though resident in England from 1895, I have always had many friends in Germany, and I had remained in constant intellectual relationship with that group which was mainly responsible for the war, that is to say, with the pan-Germanists and their industrial and professorial adherents. I undertook, before the war, frequent trips to Germany, and I have had many conversations with these ancient friends and acquaintances of mine. These talks frequently turned upon the war which was in the air all the time, but very much so after 1911. The Germans often told me that it was bound to come, that the sooner it came the better it would be, and I also gathered from their views that they hoped to gain some benefit from the undertaking. My usual reply to them was: "Ah, you wish to rob and to steal—excellent ideal—no country ever got big without some sort of crime—and no man either." "The first who was a king was a lucky criminal," as Voltaire has it, or nearly has it,* but for a crime you need criminals, and where have you got them? If you think you can go out conquering with William II and Bethmann-Hollweg—with a Kantian philosopher and a neurasthenic emperor—you are greatly mistaken! Those gentlemen are fit for grand opera and not for grand politics. Besides, you will have the whole world against you. How insular to think that others will suffer you as the 'bosses,' you who appeal so little to the imagination of Europe? Never! Never! Give it up—keep your romanticism for your music—lasst die Finger davon! . . . But they would never listen to me, and invariably contradicted me upon the subject. They called me a socialist, or "a member of an alien race, who could never feel like a German," or a man "who had resided too long abroad—twenty years in that matter-of-fact island across the Channel—and who was now, no doubt, utterly 'verengländert'" (Johnbullcised). . . . I beg to assure you that these conversations were no pleasure to me, that I really

* "Le premier qui fut roi fut un soldat heureux." (Voltaire: "Merope.")

suffered from seeing these men, my own people, dancing on the edge of the precipice. . . . I used to keep a diary at that time—it was a relief to write down what I had to swallow down—and looking again through it the other day I find many such entries as: "Sleepless night, owing to a discussion with X on politics." . . . "Indigestion caused at dinner by that enthusiastic fool Y, who required strong measures against France!" . . . "Row with von Z.: This war-loving people is sure to push its weak rulers into a mess one day!"

My usual residence, however, was in England, to which country I regularly returned after my Continental visits. Having more European than national interests, having more cultural than patriotic sympathies, and feeling grateful to a country where I had gained many friends and some sort of consideration, I never hesitated for a minute to tell everybody in England who came across my way what I had noticed in Germany. It is the proof of the innocence of your country in this huge affair that my best friends amongst you would never believe my words. I once told your chief contributor and my highly esteemed friend about the German danger, and his reply to me was: "The German socialists wouldn't allow it." To which I answered: "They will march like one man." The very translator of the letter you published, my gifted friend P. V. Cohn, used to doubt my statements about the threat of Teutonism, and in his innermost mind I am afraid he always thought that I must have some sort of grievance against my own country in order to be so bitter against it. . . . Three days after the declaration of war, he came to my house and said: "I beg your pardon, doctor, you were right about that Germany of yours!" . . . In all my English writings, in the "Revival of Aristocracy," in the introduction to Heine's "Atta Troll," in the essays published in THE NEW AGE I gave utterance to my forebodings—in vain! I finally wrote my introduction to Gobineau's "Renaissance," where I resumed my accusation against the German hybris, and predicted not only the war, but the defeat of Germany ("it is the pride before the fall," Chapter IV of my introduction). . . . Again there was a hitch, and this time a very serious one—due to a strong objection on the part of the publisher William Heinemann. He refused to "give my vaticination to the public" for several reasons, the principal one being my attack upon the then famous Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the man who to-day stands convicted as one of the principal poisoners of the German mind. We had a severe fight and a long correspondence over the subject, but I insisted and finally carried my point. The book was published in 1913.

But the contest cost me bad nights—this time in England. . . . During one of them I even began to envy my well-known ancestor Ezekiel: "And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on the instrument"—Mr. Heinemann thought otherwise—"for they hear thy words, but they do them not" (Ezek. xxxiii, 32). . . . No, they did not even hear them, much less did they act upon them. . . . And then the war broke out, and Mr. Heinemann was no longer ashamed of having published my introduction and I went to Switzerland, and I thought that there at least I should be left in peace, and even enjoy a growing reputation amongst the English: "And when this cometh to pass—and lo, it will come!—then shall they know that a prophet had been amongst them" (Ezek. xxxiii, 33). . . . No, they don't; they still call him a Machiavelli, a Reynard the Fox, a Super-German Professor. . . . Lucky Ezekiel! But then he was so much more moral and rightly more favoured of Heaven than

Yours very truly,

Hotel Richemond, Geneva,
Switzerland.

OSCAR LEVY.

A Guildsman's Interpretation of History.

By Arthur J. Penty.

X.

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE MONASTERIES.

THE great difference between the course of the Reformation in England and in Germany is to be found in the fact that whereas in Germany the Reformation was primarily a religious and popular movement with certain political and economic implications or consequences, in England the religious movement was artificially promoted to bolster up the political and economic changes initiated entirely by the Crown. For though Wycliffe, "the morning star of the Reformation" was an Englishman, and though Huss, Jerome and Luther were among his followers on the Continent, there does not appear to have been in England any popular movement demanding change. It is significant that no serious change was made in the doctrine, worship or ceremonials of the church until sixteen years after Henry VIII had repudiated Papal authority.

In the absence of any other intelligible explanation of the origin of the Reformation in England I feel I have no option but to accept the version of the Roman Catholics who assert that its immediate cause is to be found in the lusts of Henry VIII. It is certain that Henry was not moved by any sympathy towards the ideals of Protestantism. Had Luther not begun his work until a few years later Henry would doubtless have espoused the cause of Protestantism at the very start, for nothing would have suited him better than a new religion which allowed Luther and seven other of his brother leaders in the Reformation to grant a licence to the Landgrave of Hesse to have two wives at one and the same time.* But, unfortunately for Henry, not only had he not adopted this new religion before its possibilities and solid advantages for him had become manifest, but what was a still more serious affair, he had in 1521 opposed it, and had received from the Pope as a reward for his written defence of the Catholic faith the title of "Defender of the Faith," a title which English sovereigns still use, it being popularly supposed that the Faith referred to is Protestantism and not Catholicism, as is actually the case.

Henry was married to Catherine of Arragon, and with this lady he lived in the married state for seventeen years. He had three sons and daughters by her, only one of whom survived, a daughter, who afterwards was Queen Mary. But at the end of this period, being thirty-five years of age while Catherine was forty-three, he cast his eye on a young lady, an attendant on the Queen—Anne Boleyn, whom he determined to marry; and after six fruitless years of negotiation, being unable to persuade the Pope to take any steps towards the granting of a divorce, he resolved to overthrow the power of the Pope in England by making himself the head of the English Church. In this task he was aided and abetted by the perfidious and cold-blooded Thomas Cranmer, whom he immediately afterwards made Archbishop of Canterbury, and who speedily granted Henry the divorce he desired. By becoming a party to this disreputable business Cranmer put himself entirely into Henry's power and henceforth had to do his bidding, to perish at last amid those flames which he himself had been the chief cause of kindling.

It will be unnecessary for us to follow the matrimonial relations of this Bluebeard. It is sufficient for us

* Philip of Hesse, who had been married sixteen years and with his wife still living, asked Luther to authorise him to marry a second wife. This the Reformer permitted "in order to provide for the welfare of his body and soul and to bring greater glory to God." Both Luther and Melancthon would have permitted the same to Henry VIII. (Cf. Mrs. Hope, "The First Divorce of Henry VIII," p. 194.) Footnote by Abbot Gasquet to Cobbett's "History of the Protestant Reformation."

to know that it was in order to gratify his lusts that Henry separated the Church of England from that of Rome. By making himself the supreme head of the Church he made himself master of its property too, including that of the monasteries, which he determined to suppress, partly in order that his position should remain unchallenged, but mainly, I imagine, out of love of plunder. The Princes of Germany had shown him the way, and he was not slow to learn their lesson, for it soon became apparent that sweeping confiscations were to be made. Doubtless many of Henry's councillors and courtiers who were hoping to share in the plunder were by no means averse to such measures, for the Reformation could not have proceeded apart from the concurrence of Parliament. But this could not be said of Parliament as a whole. For the Act of 1536 which transferred the property of the smaller monasteries, three hundred and seventy-six in number, to the King and his heirs stuck long in the Lower House and was not passed until Henry threatened to have some of their heads.

The agent to whom Henry entrusted the work of suppressing the monasteries was Thomas Cromwell. He had been an underling in the family of Cardinal Wolsey, and had recommended himself to the King by his sycophancy and by his treachery to his own master. Henry made him a peer and appointed him Royal Viceregent and Vicar General. In this capacity he took first place in all meetings of the clergy, sitting even before the Archbishop of Canterbury. The procedure adopted in the suppressions was first to set on foot a visitation of the monasteries. In this work Cromwell was assisted by deputies who were as villainous as himself. They prepared reports full of false accusations in order to find pretences for confiscating monasterial property. They menaced those who objected with charges of high treason. Subsequent visitors appointed by Henry from among the country gentry sent in formal reports distinctly contradicting many of the facts alleged by Cromwell's agents. But such protests were of no avail. Henry was out for plunder, and as Cobbett rightly observes in this connection, "when men have power to commit and are resolved to commit acts of injustice, they are never at a loss for pretences."* The monastic orders were never heard in their defence. There was no charge against any particular monastery or convent; the charges were loose and general, and levelled against all whose revenues did not exceed a certain sum. "This alone," observes Cobbett, "was sufficient to show that the charges were false; for who will believe that the alleged wickedness extended to all whose revenues did not exceed a certain sum, and that when those revenues got line above that point the wickedness stopped?"†

It is clear that the reason for stopping the confiscations at the point where the revenues did not exceed a certain sum was that the public had to be brought into line before any seizure of the great monasteries could be safely attempted. The weak were first attacked, but means were soon found for attacking the remainder. Great promises were held out that the King, when in possession of these estates, would never more want taxes from the people. "Henry employed preachers and ministers who went about to preach and persuade the people that he could employ the ecclesiastical revenues in hospitals, colleges and other foundations for the public good, which would be a much better use than that they should support lazy and useless monks.‡ It is possible, of course, that Henry may have thought that he would be able to fulfil these promises; but he soon found out that he would not be able to keep the plunder for himself, and that the nobles and gentry

* "A History of the Protestant Reformation," by William Cobbett, p. 110.

† P. 126.

‡ Letter written in 1540 by Marillac, the French Ambassador.

could only be persuaded to allow him to continue his dastardly work on condition that he agreed to share the spoil with them. They so beset him that he had not a moment's peace. After four years he found himself no better off than he was before he confiscated a single convent. "When complaining to Cromwell of the rapacity of the applicants for grants he exclaimed: "By Our Lady! the cormorants, when they have got the garbage, will devour the dish." Cromwell reminded him that there was much more yet to come. "Tut, man," said the King, "my whole realm would not staunch their maws."* And thus it was that from confiscating the property of the smaller monasteries he went on to seize that of the larger ones, for there was no stopping half way once he had begun. Where opposition was encountered Cromwell and his ruffian visitors procured the murder of the parties under pretence of their having committed high treason. Here and there the people rose in rebellion against the devastations. But the local outbreaks came to nothing, since as nearly everyone of any consequence was sharing in the plunder the people were deprived of their natural leaders.

During the Middle Ages England had been the most prosperous and happiest country in Europe, perhaps the happiest country at any time in history. These monasteries were wealthy and full of things of gold and silver; and society was so well ordered that these things remained untouched, though there was no standing army or police. But Cromwell and his ruffians stripped them bare of all such things. The only parallel which history affords of such a rich harvest of plunder is that of the conquest of Peru, during which Cortes and Pizarro stripped the temples bare of their gold and silver linings.

The ruffians of Cromwell entered the convents; they tore down the altars to get away the gold and silver, ransacked the chests and drawers of the monks and nuns, tore off the covers of the books that were ornamented with the precious metals. These books were all in manuscript. Single books that had taken half a long lifetime to compose and to copy out fair; whole libraries, the getting of which together had taken ages and ages and had cost immense sums of money, were scattered abroad by these hellish ruffians when they had robbed the covers of their rich ornaments. The ready money in the convents, down to the last shilling, was seized.†

Among the libraries so destroyed was that of St. Alban's Abbey, which was the greatest library in England. But the destruction of libraries at the Reformation was not confined to those of the monasteries. The original Guildhall Library, founded by Whittington and Carpenter, was destroyed, as were also the Library at St. Paul's Cathedral and the predecessor of the Bodleian Library at Oxford. About the year 1440 Humphrey Duke of Gloucester

gave to the University of Oxford a library containing 600 volumes, only 120 of which were valued at more than one hundred thousand pounds. These books are called *Novi Tractatus*, or New Treatises, in the University register, and said to be *admirandi apparatus*. They were the most splendid and costly copies that could be procured, finely written on vellum, and elegantly embellished with miniatures and illuminations. Among the rest was a translation into French of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Only a single specimen of these valuable volumes was suffered to remain; it is a beautiful MSS. in folio of Valerius Maximus, enriched with the most elegant decorations, and written in Duke Humphrey's age, evidently with a design of being placed in this sumptuous collection. All the rest of the books, which, like this, being highly ornamented, looked like missals, and conveyed ideas of Popish superstition, were destroyed or removed by the pious visitors of the University in the reign of Edward VI, whose zeal was only equalled by their ignorance, or perhaps by their avarice.‡

Anything which was decorated apparently ranked then

* Cobbett, p. 127.

† Ibid., p. 130.

‡ "The History of English Poetry," by Thomas Wharton, pp. 344-5, 1778 edition.

as Popish superstition, which was a convenient cloak for the pursuit of plunder.

After the monasteries were plundered, sacked and gutted, they were rased to the ground, and in most cases gunpowder was employed in order to get through the job quickly. For in granting these estates, it was in most cases stipulated that they should be destroyed. The reason may be easily understood. These wonderful Gothic buildings could not be allowed to stand, for they would not only have been a constant reminder to the people that these estates had been plundered, while their destruction deprived them of all hope of the old order ever being restored. The only comfort there is in this terrible story is the knowledge that Cromwell, after having done his work, after he had plundered, pillaged and devastated England, was sent to the block by Henry once he had no further use for him. But Henry, the chief instigator of these crimes, got off scot free.

The circumstance that the suppression of the monasteries was carried through with little more than local and ineffectual risings suggests that the monastic orders did not occupy the same place in the popular affections as they had done at an earlier date. All the same, their suppression was for the people a loss of the first magnitude, and they paid dearly for their baseness in allowing themselves to be bought off by promises which were never fulfilled. The following interesting picture of monastic estates at the time of their suppression by a contemporary writer bears witness:—

There was no person that came to them heavy or sad for any cause that went away comfortless; they never revenged them of any injury, but were content to forgive it freely upon submission, and if the price of corn had begun to start up in the market they made thereunto with wain load of corn, and sold it under the market to poor people, to the end to bring down the price thereof. If the highways, bridges, or causeways were tedious to the passengers that sought their living by their travel, their great help lacked not towards the repairing and amending thereof—yea, oftentimes they amended them on their own proper charges.

If any poor householder lacked seed to sow his land, or bread, corn, or malt before harvest, and came to a monastery either of men or women, he should not have gone away without help; for he should have had it until harvest, that he might easily have paid it again. Yea, if he had made his moan for an ox, horse, or cow, he might have had it upon his credit, and such was the good conscience of the borrowers in those days that the thing borrowed needed not to have been asked at the day of payment.

They never raised their rent, or took any incomes or garsomes (fines) of their tenants, nor ever broke in or improved any commons, although the most part and the greatest waste grounds belonged to their possessions.

If any poor people had made their moan at the day of marriage to any abbey, they should have had money given to their great help. And thus all sorts of people were helped and succoured by abbeys; yea, happy was that person that was tenant to an abbey, for it was a rare thing to hear that any tenant was removed by taking his farm over his head, nor he was not afraid of any re-entry for non-payment of rent, if necessity drove him thereonto. And thus they fulfilled the works of charity in all the country round about them, to the good example of all lay persons that now have taken forth other lessons, that is, *nunc tempus alios postulat mores*.*

When these estates passed into the hands of the landlords they speedily raised the rents and enclosed the commons. In other cases the peasantry were simply turned out of their holdings in order that sheep farming might be substituted for tillage. "It seems," observes Cunningham, "that the lords had the peasantry entirely in their own power, and that, since they were technically liable for incidents of the nominal

* Cole MSS. (British Museum), XII, fol. 5, "The Fall of Religious Houses." The author resided near Rochie Abbey in Yorkshire, and had bought some goods sold out of a church by Edward's commission. (Quoted from Cunningham, pp. 472-3.)

servitude, into which they had returned since the failure of 1381, their lands were forfeited in law if not in equity.* It may be said that these changes created the problem of poverty. For though there was some poverty in the Middle Ages, the monasteries did on the whole successfully grapple with it. But after their suppression and the passing of land entirely into the hands of men who regarded the land purely commercially, the problem became a very urgent one. Great numbers were left destitute of the means of existence, and took to begging and thieving. Henry VIII is reported to have put 72,000 thieves to death. Elizabeth complained bitterly that she could not get the laws enforced against them. "Such was the degree of beggary, of vagabondage, and of thievishness and robbery, that she resorted particularly in London and its neighbourhood to martial law." But it was all of no avail. The people had been rendered destitute, and there were only two possible policies for dealing with them—extermination and legal pauperism. Shrinking from the former, resort at last was made to the latter, and some general permanent and solid provision was made for them. In the forty-third year of her reign there was passed the measure which we know to-day as the Elizabethan Poor Law, from which our Poor Law derives.

It was not only in the sphere of economics that the suppression of the monasteries made for evil. It left a gap in the educational system of the country which the attempted reforms of the nineteenth century has attempted in vain to fill. The reason why so many of the great educational endowments date from the sixteenth century is not to be found in the surmise that about that time a sudden desire for enlightenment came over society, but to the fact that when the monasteries were suppressed an enormous number of educational establishments were destroyed at the same time, and certain people, feeling the gap which had been left in society, gave money for the establishment of such institutions. The abbeys were not only centres of learning, but educational establishments, each of them having persons set apart for the instruction of the youth of the neighbourhood. Moreover, each of the monasteries had a peculiar residence in the universities which were and still are organised on a Guild basis, the whole course and the taking of degrees being parallel to the years of apprenticeship and the taking of mastership in any of the old callings regulated by the Guilds. The suppression of the Monasteries re-acted unfavourably upon the Universities. "Whereas there were in the Middle Ages nearly three hundred halls and private schools at Oxford, besides the colleges, there were not above eight remaining towards the middle of the seventeenth century."† Writing in 1824, Cobbett says he is informed there were only five halls remaining, and not a single school.‡

Educationists might do worse than study the Mediæval and monastic system of education, for it obviated one of the most glaring defects of the present system—the gulf between elementary and higher education. And this it did by a system of local autonomy which made every elementary school part of an institution which was primarily interested in the pursuit of learning. In consequence of this there were no elementary school teachers existing as a class apart, cut off from the main currents of intellectual life whose individuality was strangled by the requirements of a code. On the contrary, the whole system was free and humane, while it was organic from the top to the bottom; and this was possible because the Mediævalists were not interested in an abstraction called "education," but in certain definite things which they were anxious to teach. The problem of improvising machinery is so simple when you know what you want it to do, and so perplexing when you don't.

* Cunningham, p. 475.

† Phillip's "Life of Cardinal Pole," p. 220.

‡ Cobbett, p. 17.

Readers and Writers.

THESE are my concluding notes on "A. E.'s" "Candle of Vision" (Macmillan. 6s. net.) I hope that in the course of these, some readers, at any rate, have been sent to the text.

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Page 114. Here and in the succeeding essay "A. E." develops his intuitional thesis that sound and thought have definite affinities. For every thought there is a sound; and every sound is at the same time a thought. The idea is, of course, familiar; and, like many more in "The Candle of Vision," is found recurring like a decimal throughout mystical and occult literature in all ages. The most ancient occult literature—dispute whether that of India or Egypt—is most precise on the subject, the general proposition being therein reduced to a series of equivalents in which form, sound, colour, thought, emotion and number all seem to be interchangeable. Each of these, in fact, is said to be language—a complete language; and to the initiate it is a matter of indifference whether the text before him is "written" in form, in colour, in number, or sound. Unfortunately, neither "A. E." nor anybody within our knowledge is able to decipher even the key to the mystery. The records are so perversely confused that I cannot believe that their authors were not deliberately playing a game with us. It would be rather like the old initiates to "dis" their type before leaving it to be examined by the barbarian invaders; and certainly nobody of ordinary faculty can begin to make head or tail of the "correspondences" recorded in the Indian scriptures. It is the same, strangely enough, with Plato whose "Cratylus" deals with the relation of verbal language to mental conception. A master of simple exposition, he becomes in the "Cratylus," whether from design or feebleness of understanding, as cryptic as the Indians themselves. I have read the "Cratylus" all ways, with no better result than to feel that I have wasted my time. "A. E." has approached the problem, however, experimentally, and with the aid of his intuition. If, he said to himself, there is really a definite correspondence between sound and idea, meditation on one or the other should be able to discover it. In other words, he has attempted to re-discover the lost language and to find for himself the key whose fragments bestrew the ancient occult works. This again, however, is no novelty, but another of the recurrent ideas of mystics and would-be occultists. All of them have tried it; but, unfortunately, most of them come to different conclusions. "A. E.'s" guesses must, therefore, be taken as guesses only, to be compared with the guesses of other students. As such they are exceedingly interesting, and I do not mind saying that in many respects "A. E." appears to me to be moving in the right direction. We shall need, however, a more general development of intuition before the science of sound is definitely established.

* * *

Page 132. One of the most pleasing features of the "Candle of Vision" is the occasional ray cast by "A. E." upon the obscure texts of the Bible. The "Bible," of course, is for the most part unmistakably "occult"; and not only its stories are myths ("which things are an allegory"), but many of its texts are echoes of a gnosis or mysticism infinitely older than the Christian era. Greece, it has now been established, was an infant when Egypt was old; and Egypt, in its turn, was an infant when some civilisation anterior to it was in its dotage. The "Bible" is a kind of ark in which were stored (without much order, I imagine) some of the traditions of the world that was about to be submerged. They can be brought to life again,

however; and here and there, in the course of "The Candle of Vision," "A. E." undoubtedly rejuvenates a Biblical text and restores to it its ancient meaning. "He made every flower before it was in the field, and every herb before it grew." This points, says "A. E.," to the probability that the Garden of Eden was the "Garden of the Divine Mind," in which flowers and herbs and all the rest of creation lived before they were made—visible! Such a conception, I think, is very illuminating. Moreover, it brings the story of Genesis into line with the genesis stories of both ancient India and the most recent psychology. For I need not inform my readers that psycho-analysis, in the researches of Jung in particular, is trembling on the brink of the discovery of the divine mind which precedes visible creation. The process is indissolubly linked up with the psychology of imagination, dream, phantasm, and vision.

* * *

Page 137. On Power. "If we have not power we are nothing and must remain outcasts of Heaven." In this chapter "A. E." shakes the fringes of the most dangerous subject in the world, that of the acquisition of "spiritual" power. I put the word into doubt, because while in the comparative sense spiritual, the powers here spoken of may be anything but beneficent. The instructions to be found in, let us say, Patanjali, are full of warnings against the acquirement of occult powers before the character of the student is "purified." We are a long way, of course, from the plane of conventional goodness in the use of this word purity. The conventionally good may have all the characteristics of the black magician (so-called) when he finds himself in the possession of power. Purity, in the sense implied, connotes non-attachment, and non-attachment, again, implies the non-existence of any personal desire—even for the good! I have often said that Nietzsche died before he began to understand himself. His pre-occupation with the problem of power was undoubtedly an occult exercise; and his discovery that spiritual power needs to be exercised "beyond good and evil" was a hint of the progress he had made. Unfortunately for Nietzsche, his "beyond Good and Evil" was still not clear of the element of egotism; he carried into the occult world the attachment and the desire that emphatically belong to the world of both Good and Evil. In short, he attempted to take Heaven by egoistic storm; and his defeat was a foregone conclusion and a familiar tragedy in occult history. "A. E.," like his authorities, is full of warning against the quest of power. At the same time, like them, he realises that without power the student can do nothing. Here is the paradox, the rightiest in psychology, that the weakest is the strongest and the strongest the weakest. I commend this chapter to Nietzscheans in particular. They have most to learn from it.

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Page 153 et seq. "A. E." makes an attempt to systematise Celtic Cosmogony. I am sorry to say it appears to me to be altogether premature, and of as little value as the "interpretation" of Blake's cosmogony which Messrs. Yeats and Ellis formerly attempted. I do not doubt that Celtic cosmogony, as found in Irish legend and tradition, is a cosmogony, and perhaps one of the oldest in the world (for Ireland, you know, is always with us!). But the fragmentary character of the records, the absence of any living tradition in them, coupled with the difficulty of re-interpretation in rational terms, makes even "A. E.'s" effort a little laborious. I do not myself, at any rate, derive any illumination when his Candle is turned into Irish legend. But, perhaps, for the Irish themselves, it may be different!

R. H. C.

A Striking Parallel.

THE Reverend Buda Pesta clapped together the pages of his Sunday newspaper—you know the way, at bent arm as if they were cymbals. Heavens! The paper limped away collapsing in a heap on the hearthrug like a bundle of baby. Heavens! (The Reverend Buda was speaking.) These miners were enough to jeopardise a halo—these wretched fellows with their eternal hectoring and whining. . . . If it came to grievances hadn't he, the vicar of St. Pesta Buda's, a grievance—and a grievance which the satisfaction of *their* grievance only made greater? He had to pay the piper in his coal and his gas and in everything that was his. He had no Trade Union to run to with tales out of church. He had no employer to threaten. He wasn't a miner. And because he wasn't, here he was. Look at him for yourselves this pleasant Sunday afternoon—clad in sorrows, acquainted with grievances, suffering silently perhaps but none the less. "Grievances!" The Reverend Buda almost shouted as he got his second wind on the subject. Wasn't the Church the worst paid profession on God's footstool?—Status! Where was the status of the clergy nowadays? Where, indeed? The Reverend Buda looked about the room with eyes as round and receptive as a pair of collection plates. Nothing doing. Ah, but time was—he would ask you to remember—time was when people took some stock in their holy fathers and fasting friars. But who in Mayfair, he would respectfully warn his bishop, who was going to heed the exhortations of a man on a stipend inadequate to the maintenance in conjugal happiness of a vicar's body and soul? God knew he tried to live as others did. Was it his fault that his responsibilities were only multiplied thereby? [These good men do put things so plainly.] . . . No wonder if people complained that the Church was not what it was. Que voulez-vous? Neither were people! The things people expected of religion nowadays—for nothing! A miner was jolly well paid for his overtime. But a clergyman must be always prepared to throw in an extra prayer or vision or two without extra charge or hope of it. Heavens! It was more than flesh and boiling blood could stand! What sort of religion could people expect from a man whose energy was exhausted with nursing a lot of hungry ambitions, whose mind was always in his pocket devising and planning some means whereby to eke out or add to his contemptible mite? Did they think a man's faith could live healthily while his income was a valetudinarian? Faith needed an incentive like any other motive. It took square and regular meals to maintain a man in that Christian frame of body and mind in which he could comfort the poor in their distress without a doubt that poverty was sent by God for their good. Besides, there was not only himself to think of, there was the wife, and there were the bairns, too—or, rather, I should say, twice two. The miners. . . . Very well, but why shouldn't the clergy have their Trade Union? Why shouldn't they down harps till people were prepared to pay a living wage for salvation? The papers devoted columns to the miners. Why shouldn't the clergy have their corner? Why shouldn't he write to the papers? The Reverend Buda glared round his study at some imaginary opponent. And why not to a Sunday paper? . . . There was no one to deny him; and the Reverend Buda took up his cross. It was an up-to-date little affair, pleasant to the touch, gold-belted and sleek, and it quivered at the sight of paper like a terrier at the sight of a rat. The gentleman called Buda set it on to sermon paper with a spirit that was human still. Here you are. Here is an extract of the beef he put into it. . . . My invention flags; but a version of the text is to be found—done better than I could do it—in the "Sunday Times" of March 23, nearly a column of it, by "An

East End Clergyman," thorn-crowned with the headline, "Plaint of the Parson."

. . . Time that the one-half of the world should learn something of how the other half lives. . . . Professional classes have no trade unions to bully the employers; they must suffer in silence. . . . Plight of the parson. . . . Lucky if he gets half a day off in the seven. . . . At the beck and call of his people from morning till night. . . . Suggestion of a national minimum wage and a universal forty-hour week makes him smile; his working week is nearer eighty hours than forty. I myself . . . Ideal parson must have certain qualifications, the absence of which leaves him open to severe criticism from the disgruntled. . . . No matter how much outside work he undertakes he must do it gratuitously. . . . Another way in which parsons are at a disadvantage is in the matter of promotion. . . . Is he to be content all his life with the salary with which he commenced? . . . Is he to have no ambitions for himself or his family? This may be expected of parsons, but it is expected of no one else in the world. . . . If the laity is in earnest in its grumbles at the ineffectiveness of the churches, let it examine closely into this side of the question. . . . Constant struggle to live can lead to nothing but bitterness, disillusion, loss of ideals, and therefore loss of efficiency. If the work of the Church is to be well done, the parson must be relieved as much as possible of anxiety on financial grounds. The truth is that people want to get their religion on the cheap. Until . . . abolish sweated labour . . . the Churches will remain . . . ineffective.

Hoop-la!—or, out of the Hebrew tongue—It is finished. The hosannahs were deafening. The Reverend Buda wiped the sweat off his brow, sat back and regarded his accomplishment with a prize-exhibitor's satisfaction. Then leaning forward he carefully read the sentences over again, holding his pen over their head in readiness to italicise them into eloquence. On reviewing the result he was pleasantly surprised. The power of his elbow astonished him. He had never suspected that he might have been a journalist—perhaps a second Garvin. What a gift! What a talent to be wrapped up in a surplice! What do you say? Talent is a good horse, but libido is faster?

The Reverend Buda sat back again, already comfortably tasting the pleasures of type. His glance spread across the room. His heart stood still. His eyes blinked at the spectacle before him. Round the table down the centre of the room sat a number of men, a baker's dozen of them, working-men judging by their appearance—one of them was certainly a fisherman. They sat forward in their seats, and some were bent across the table in rapt attention. All were turned towards the one who sat in the midst of them. Was there not something familiar about this man? "Surely," said the Reverend Buda, "surely I ought to know that face." He was a brown-bearded, grave-looking Jew, young, not more than thirty-two or three, but he spoke as one having authority. No: not Babbalanja. He held a crooked stick which suggested that he might be a shepherd. Of poor parents, no doubt. Nevertheless, he spoke as one with authority; and he appeared to be giving the men instructions for a journey, some mission they were undertaking. "Poor fellows," thought the Reverend Buda, running his wife's eye over their homespun. "Not very suitably equipped for a journey." Big Business? A full-time job, was it? But what about hours? Was it to be a forty-hour week or what? And then, expenses? Yearly income? Overtime? Commission? Bonus? Annual increase? Not a word had been said about the wherewithal. . . . Ah, what was that? The Reverend Buda pricked up his ears the better to hear with them. What was that honest-looking fellow inquiring so sensibly after?

One of the company, a gentleman with a clump of red hair who sat sideways at the table, as though in two minds about the whole affair, was asking the young

man what the salary was going to be. The Reverend Buda held his breath for the reply.

It seemed that there wasn't going to be no salary.

But, surely!!! ??? Domestic duties—family responsibilities

The young Jew shook his head. "Worldly responsibilities are not for you," he said. "Cares of such a kind would hinder your work and destroy its effect. Your household would be your foes. Such work as you have undertaken precludes the domestic and even social ties."

"But hang it all——" said the Reverend Buda.

"But hang it all," said the red-haired fellow. "I've got myself to think about. Isn't there a pension attached?" "Exactly," said the Reverend Buda.

"Not in this world," said the young man. "Your reward will be in the next."

The red-haired man laughed with but half a smile, a short, horse-laugh it was, which being interpreted meant that he wasn't having any. He could work for nothing without going out of his way to look for it.

"Exactly," said the Reverend Buda.

The young man seemed ready to consider the question, whereupon the fellow with red hair changed his tone. "Come along, put a figure to it, gov'nor," he said, manifesting affability. "I'm your friend—what?"

The young man betrayed no welcome. "What is your price?" he asked. The other hesitated. The Reverend Buda tried to catch his eye. If only he were near enough to nudge him!

"Make me an offer," said the red-haired fellow. "That's the way," whispered the Rev. . . .

"What about thirty pieces of silver?" said the young man.

H. M. T.

Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

THE theatre is, at the moment, more entertaining than the drama. The Actors' Association has been a trade union only a few months, but it is making the pace rather too fast for some of the managers. As I write, the Theatrical Managers' Association has unanimously resolved that it will not be dictated to by the Actors' Association, but will maintain a free hand—which presumably means that it will not adopt the standard contract, nor pay the minimum wage. Mr. C. B. Cochran has roundly declared that he will not employ a member of the Actors' Association; and I confidently expect to see Mr. Cochran in the Bankruptcy Court within twelve months if he adheres to this resolution. Mr. Cochran seems to have a foreboding that something of this sort may happen, for he talks of retiring from the theatrical world, and, I suppose, devoting his genius to the exploitation of boxers. Into the details of the dispute it is not my business to enter; besides, Mr. Cochran may have changed his mind by the time that this article appears—certainly, the fact that "Cyrano de Bergerac" is being played by "blacklegs" is not likely to recommend it to any but the cosmopolitan crowd that now infests the West End.

I suggested some time ago that the Actors' Association would probably run through the historical stages of trade unionism very quickly. Its council is composed of some of the most brilliant of the present generation of actors, artists who, as Mr. Owen Nares says, "require no protection, as they are in demand on their own terms and conditions." It is at least probable that such men will not waste their time in mere "amelioration" of the conditions under which the theatrical wage-slaves live, although that work is necessary. It is true that the Ministry of Labour has already been questioned in Parliament concerning the present dispute; and things are moving at such a rate that a Whitley Council may be, if it has not already been, suggested in a week or two. But the way out of the wage-system leads into management; and I am glad

to see that Mr. Norman McKinnel, who is vice-chairman of the Association, is exercising his mind on the problem.

Most reformers begin with non-essentials and end with absurdities; if they begin by abolishing the footlights, they end by abolishing the actor. Or, on the other hand, they want the theatre to do everything but its proper work, either to be so like Nature that it is deluged with real rain, or to be so like Art that it presents a play as a picture. Mr. Norman McKinnel is not immediately concerned with stage mechanics or artistic hysterics; he is simply advocating a trade union repertory theatre. The simplicity, of course, is the simplicity of a revolution by means of which the essentials of drama will be established in proper relation one with the other. Mr. McKinnel truly says that only three classes of people are necessary in a repertory theatre—the actor, the author, and the audience. The usual repertory theatre excludes the audience; most of the capitalist theatres exclude the author; reformers like Gordon Craig exclude the actor; and Mr. Cochran will do likewise if he maintains his boycott of the Actors' Association. Drama can only flourish when the three essentials are related in their proper proportions; "give the public what it wants," says Mr. McKinnel, "and it will go to a tent to see it." It will do more than that, it will go to the Court Theatre, Chelsea, in these days of over-crowding on the Tubes.

It is contended by the actors that previous attempts to establish a repertory theatre in London have failed because the drama it provided appealed to only a small public. The contention is true enough, but it is even more true that the drama was not dramatic enough. Contemplative drama is really a contradiction in terms; and plays in which an actor had to do everything except act remain, and must remain, the peculiar pleasure of a public that "never goes to an ordinary theatre, don't you know." But the ordinary repertory theatre labours under another disadvantage, that of a stock company that usually is not numerous enough to contain all the actors that its repertoire really requires. Mr. Fagan, at the Court Theatre, has discovered that in his casting of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle. But the Actors' Association already numbers over four thousand members, and can provide an excellent cast for any kind of play; and if its repertoire includes "all plays from melodrama to Ibsen," and, I hope, beyond him, its stock company will include all those who can act.

The scheme, of course, is not confined to the establishment of one repertory theatre in London; there is room for at least half a dozen in Greater London, and Mr. McKinnel hopes to see repertory theatres established by actors in every large centre of population throughout the country. There is not the slightest reason why the Actors' Association should not begin at once; the repertoire is ready, it has only to be selected, and there is a company of four thousand members to choose from. The only experiment will be in management; and many members of the Association have experience of management. The previous attempts to found a repertory theatre failed because the intention was to produce plays that no one wanted to see except as curiosities of drama; but the Actors' Association intends to build up a repertoire of successes instead of failures, of plays that are intelligible in the theatre as well as in the study, of plays that people will pay to see, like those of Shakespeare and Sheridan and Tom Robertson and George R. Sims, and the roaring farces of George Bernard Shaw. The new play by the new author will have a much better chance of production under such a scheme; and instead of the preposterous announcement: "Charles B. Cochran presents" (what do we care about him?), it will be enough to notify the public in the words of Polonius: "The actors are come hither:" to ensure the presence of an audience.

Art Notes.

By B. H. Dias.

ALTHOUGH no further "nominations" for an ideal academy have yet reached me, I have been taken in argument. One man had a candidate but was not sure he had yet exhibited publicly. Another thought my just and righteous contempt for the British Academy harboured dangerous propaganda in favour of the French Salons. He said there was good academic painting in England. But I was unable to get a definition of "academic" from him before others had barged into our dialogue and diverted its course.

Whatever "academic" painting may be, British Academy painting, Tate, etc., is just the mechanisation, the discoloration, the general decadence of renaissance formulæ, with nothing whatever to be said for it, save that some of its practitioners have showed a certain zeal for accurate representational drawing, though there has never been a first-rate intelligence among the lot of them. But the Old Salon and Beaux Arts contain painters quite as bad as those enclosed in the British Academy. The alliance with France is perhaps strong enough to permit me to say that there are French painters as bad, definitely as bad, as Mr. Bundy. No greater insult has ever, to my knowledge, been hurled at French painting, but the jibe is deserved and its justness will be granted by many who recall those foamy "creations" of bibulous monks being, in allegorical vision, confronted by ballet-girls (aspect à la J'hy to Moses on Sinai) and so forth.

The statement that influenza rages in England does not imply that the disease is not rampant elsewhere. The "Mercure de France" for March 16, brings evidence that Paris is as much plagued by doddards as we are. The Ecole des Beaux-Arts started a fund for assisting art-students who had been mutilated in the war, chiefly men so mutilated that there was no chance of their continuing their work. They asked Forain to design a poster for the fund. Forain, who had done a fine poster for the Prisoners of War fund, made them a grave and sober design of a one-armed artist holding one of his former pictures in his left hand, with the implication, "That's over."

The professors of the Beaux-Arts demurred, they thought the design inopportune. First the "administration" discovered that the drawing was not in "good taste." Then M. Cormon decided that it was "dangerous and discouraging." He said: "Our wounded have not this sadness."

"Et il ajouta ces mots qui resument mieux que tous les livres du monde ou tous les pamphlets l'art de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts:

"Si encore il avait mis une allegorie . . . avec un casque."

No, London is not the only afflicted city. After several days of discussion, in which M. Bonnat took no part, the Beaux-Arts decided to refuse Forain's drawing and the thousands of francs it would have brought to the fund (for Forain had ceded all the possible profits from sales of reproductions). All this happened three years ago, but we are grateful to the "Mercure" for publishing the facts. Certainly, their correspondent is correct when he says: "Cette anecdote des mœurs artistiques de la France en guerre méritait d'être connue."

"Une allegorie . . . avec un casque." The Beaux-Arts will receive the firmest and most loyal support from "Punch's" staff of cartoonists, from Mr. Simms, from the elders of our Academy, and from most of "those in authority." A mammal in the British postal or customs service has just burnt a consignment of Rops.

THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL.

The women's pictures at the Grafton Galleries encourage one by the fresh colour which greets one on entering, but further search shows that the exhibit does not greatly differ from any of the usual male-and-female exhibits. There are the same applications of various formulæ, more or less efficient in execution. There is hardly anything first-rate save Louise Pickard's 49, "The Mantelpiece," which we have commended before (in a note on another exhibition). Her still life (9) is efficient. In 49 she is really on her own job and in full control of her style. The whole picture is a unity, not, like so many of the other canvases in the show, bits of this, that and the other, good and bad in workmanship, huddled into one frame. Mary McCrossan would be more convincing if she would come to some conclusion and not exhibit three or four pictures in as many disconnected and uncorrelated styles. For example, hard clarity here; Paris about 1909 cleanly and simply painted (39), pointillism in 59, etc. Still, she comes out with honours, perhaps second to those of Miss Pickard so far as this exhibit is concerned. I am inclined to think *Louise Pickard's* name should be italicised in one's memory, and that her work is worth watching for, as one already watches for Guevara's.

J. Mason's 11 is, I presume, decadent Carrière with colour lifted from Puvis and roughed up a little; F. Hodgkin's 19 is declined. E. Sand's 22 is flat tones well harmonised. E. Bateson's 28 portrays the frisson æsthetique occurring rather sooner than might have been expected. E. Walker's 40 is just a mess, very, very, very "modern," but in no way "abstract," or in any way related to contemporary movements for re-invigorating the structural qualities.

E. L. Rawlins, in 46, refurbishes the Corot formulæ with a new colour scheme. We do not know what A. E. John has done to deserve F. Hodgkin's 70. We elegiacly recall the late and great author's "If, if, if that's what comes of reading my books; if that's what comes of reading my books, I wish people would leave them alone." C. W. Robertson is, in 75, pseudo-somethingorother, possibly Russian peasant, plus Gauguin Tahiti, plus Jan Weber. (I give it up; the diagnosis is too complicated.)

G. M. Parnell shows excellent craftsmanship in some of her Cheyne figures (case V). I think 3 and 9 are about the best of them. The merits of P. Stabler's case VII are undiscoverable. E. M. Henderson's 144 shows drawing of some merit. F. Hodgkin is, in 126, Mary Cassatt, very much fuzzied, and thoroughly bad.

M. McDowell shows, in 153, the wooden-naïve; the mode is possible, but the example not good enough. P. Sutton renders, not inefficiently, in 173, the glad eye, wistful as usual; in her 207, we find the glad eye with humorous invitation less efficiently done. F. Hodgkin again draws the glance with 203, Gauguin a bit seedy, but the child to the left well done. J. M. King had a clever idea for dark trees against pale background but failed to carry it out in any creditable fashion. E. Dateson's 229 is Rodinism at its last gasp. E. Wrighton, 232, hopeless. G. Leese, 236, pseudo-Nevinson. F. Callcott, 233b, hopeless; M. Layng, 251, hopeless fake-Spanish. I. A. Dods-Withers, 259, insufficient. A. L. Faulkner, 263, same old hump of hill, same plough, same horses on top of same hump of hill jutting through the same sky-line. V. Wilson's Summer Flower (264) are fresh in parts. H. B. Bryce, 266, is well painted in parts; L. W. Wright has something in 272, and is hopeless in the next picture. M. McDowell shows pleasant humour in 276, old Italian formula table, Dutch corridor, Matisseism in colour. L. Hervey has dash of humour in gulls. L. Pilcho shows Russian peasantism as Parisised about 1906. J. Gibson gets some visible pigment into her "Orange Shawl."

The Old Master as Grotesque.

By Huntly Carter.

II.—THE EARLY CHINESE.

RUSKIN is of the opinion that the expression of noble grotesque is the outcome of a superb imaginative extravagance dissolving in playful laughter. He does not, however, make it clear whether by this he means that the artist is so acted upon by the grotesque element that it actually directs him, or whether this element is arranged by him. Whether, that is, the expression amounts to a revelation, or is a reasoned calculation. But does not the noble grotesque artist impart to his composition a truth apprehended in a flash and expressed with that individualising property which places the subject in an exalted niche of its own, as distinct from every other subject; so that it might truly be said that though this and that part could be espied, the whole is inimitable, simply because it was born of a unique flash of vision. I think he does. I believe it is in this very individualised re-illuminating that the nature and essence of the noble grotesque are alone to be sought.

Here, in my opinion, is a worthy starting-point for a new history of painting. Such a history would tell the story of the passage of painting in the light of noble grotesqueness. It would not affect "progress and development," for I doubt if there is a "progress and development" of spontaneous vision and interpretation. So, running through the whole work and bridging the pinnacles, would be great recurrent manifestations of the noble grotesque spirit. These manifestations would exhibit varieties of joy experienced by great painters. It is one of my assumptions that the noble grotesque is associated with joy, as joy is linked with abundant health whence emerges the highest species of playful laughter; and joy has its distinct varieties, as may be seen in the decorative joy of Botticelli, the joy of design of Blake, and the colour joy of Turner. The effects of the varieties are the same—refinement. Of course, this is not the traditional historical order of painting, which, as we know, seeks to follow the awakening of the painter to a consciousness of an objective or subjective world and his increasing skill to subtract (rather than abstract)—as one might do by covering life with tissue paper—something from his experience of these worlds of a theoretical or practical character. Hence, clearly defined "periods" of growth of an emotional order—as recorded by Mr. Haldane Macfall in his monumental "History of Painting," and of other orders, such, as for instance, that to which Mr. Clive Bell's provocative "Art" introduces us. Here each "period" begins on a terrible peak and is followed by a terrible "slope" worthy of a switchback railway.

This, as I say, is not my order. I have a history of painting in mind that would present a bird's-eye view of eminences marking the great movements when the sensible artist is seized by intuition, deprived of self-consciousness, especially in his art business, saturated with livingness—that is life intensely raised to a higher pressure than actuality—and led to complete exhaustion before any conflicting emotions or restraining ideas have had time to spring up to interfere. A little below these eminences would flow the long lines of continuators, re-initiators, etc.—painters inspired not by first-hand vision, but by vision of vision. As traditionally, Sebastiano del Piombo, Catena, Giorgione, Titian, Palma Vecchio, and many another, flowed from the wonderful Bellini eminence. Perhaps I can illustrate what I mean, in this and succeeding articles.

Some years ago when the post-Impressionists appeared for the first time at the Grafton Galleries, and the hair of one's head stood up with consternation at the fearful noise they made, I went to the British

Museum to see, in a comparison with other painters, if there was anything to justify the loud hee-hawing. At that time ultra-moderns were accustomed to treat the great old men as despicable, and I was anxious to ascertain whether the new men were justified out of this exhibition in calling the old men fools. I had a notion that it was they who were despicable for despising their betters, and wilfully ignoring the truth that all complete artists are richly endowed in one particular at least. They have the same power of vision, and are, therefore, equal, in this respect, in the sight of the Lord. But though they are equal in sight, they may differ in theories and ideas of touch and technique, hence the difference between one complete painter's work and another. If sight comes first in art-expression, as I believe it does, and Velasquez and Kandinsky are equal in sight, then it cannot be fairly argued that Velasquez is a fool because his vision affects representative forms, and Kandinsky is a wise man because his vision neglects them. Or to take a fairer comparison, must we believe that Fra Filippo Lippi on fifteenth century Florentine eminence and Cézanne on a nineteenth century French eminence, vastly differ in intelligence because Lippi's vision saturated him with the magic joy of the spirit of the "Adoration of the Magi" which his technical experience clothed with overwhelming sentiment in form and colour and jewelled details, and Cézanne's vision gave him the essentials of natural forms which he expressed with rigid simplicity? Must we join Mr. Bernard Shaw in calling Shakespeare a fool because he preferred to give full rein to his amazing imaginative extravagance, rather than to waste his time telling his contemporaries about "Mrs. Warren's Profession"? Would it not be better to call Mr. Shaw a fool for not perceiving Shakespeare the idealist placed in a world of monsters as a very necessary refining instrument of joyous laughter?

Well, I made my escape to the absorbing exhibition of Chinese and Japanese paintings, now, alas! closed by the War. I was accompanied by two books, Mr. Laurence Binyon's "The Flight of the Dragon," and Mrs. Laurence Binyon's, "The Mind of the Artist," which, like the exhibition, were of immediate interest as synchronising with the appearance in London of the post-Impressionist movement in painting. Actually they provided a key to this movement and yielded a clear idea of the true significance of its absurd claims. Passages sprang from these books challenging our lusty impressionists on their own grounds, and overcoming them with their own bedraggled principles, culled, it would seem, from a garden of art many centuries old. I no sooner set eyes on the early Chinese concepts of art and its business, than I saw it was far in advance of the new men's, whom, indeed, it reduced to a pack of hopeless technical theorists. "How many," I thought, "have woven into their works the following blossoms of Chinese subjectiveness." "Art is essentially a conquest of matter by the spirit." "It is within humanity, not outside it, that we must seek for the authority of art." What is meant is that Art is subjective not objective. I knew that some ultra-moderns were concerned with a theory of "the fusion of the rhythm of the spirit with the movement of living things." But I noticed their theory left out the spirit, and endeavoured to seize by means of tricks the rhythm expressed in the movement of material forms rather than "to pierce beneath the mere aspect of the world and to seize and themselves to be possessed by that great cosmic rhythm of the spirit which sets the currents of life in motion." Turning to the elect among the Chinese pictures I was quickly reminded that the principle was not an abstract thing, but actually had entered into their production. I noticed two by painters supreme in Buddhist themes. These themes related man to external nature. "There is the thought of one life or soul manifested in both, so that the spring-

ing and withering of the wayside grasses are felt to be something really related to the life of the human spirit contemplating them." It was, doubtless, this inspiration that called forth the perfect unity and gorgeous colour of Chao Mêng-fu's "The Beginning of Winter," and the no less gorgeous colour, decoration and universality of Li Lung-Mien's "Arhat and Apsara." It is true both pictures were wrecks, but what superb wrecks. There were a score more that set one floating in contemplative joy. This idealisation of nature and powerful feeling for colour not only brought many of the pictures into line with the modern movement, but it gave them all the present-day pictures contain and a great deal more. It gave them that note of abundant health and imaginative exaggeration dissolving in laughter, which I maintain characterises the noble grotesque.

Views and Reviews.

AN ESOTERIC COMEDY.

THEOLOGY, being an attempt to interpret the universe in the terms of personality, is always beset by the supreme danger of making itself ridiculous much more surely than it makes the universe intelligible. Theosophy is, of course, only eclectic theology, and its strong tendency towards polytheism multiplies the danger of absurdity. The danger itself arises from the difference between the reality and the attempted interpretation of it; the universe is not a person, nor is its meaning a person, and if we personify what fragmentary meaning we may have perceived or invented, and call that God, and proceed to attribute other personal qualities to it, we presently discover, as Matthew Arnold said, that "it is not a person as man conceives of persons, nor moral as man conceives of moral, nor intelligent as man conceives of intelligent, nor a governor as man conceives of governors"—in short, we discover that our interpretation needs to be interpreted. The difficulty, I say, is not diminished, but is increased by the Theosophical tendency to polytheism; and Theosophists tend to lapse into the familiarity of talking of strange Gods as though they were fellow-clerks in the War Office. It is not often that we find these "occultists" committing themselves to any more definite statement than that the mystery which explains why Tuesday is the third day of the week cannot be revealed to sceptics, or, if they do, that it is possible for a person like myself to trace the subsequent history of the statement. This time, I have all the evidence in my hands.

I have before me a pamphlet entitled "The Cross of the Coming Teacher," by C. G. M. Adam and B. A. Ross, which may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing House or "Modern Astrology" offices. It is an attempt to give an "esoteric" explanation of the map of the solar eclipse of January, 1910. It is a pamphlet that should interest all those readers of THE NEW AGE who prefer "intuition" to "logic," intuition being, of course, an uncritical acceptance of our own opinion or the assertion of unprovable statements. For example, the authors of this pamphlet declare that, since 1910, as I understand it, "an astral appeal on a gigantic scale was made to the people of England, to accept a Uranian King, but it proved a failure." The statement, like all statements of intuition, is incapable of proof or disproof; but I may say that King George V succeeded to the throne on May 6, 1910; and as he was born with Neptune rising, he cannot be called a Uranian, and there was no other candidate for the throne. Like all intuitionists, the authors "meditate" when they want to know anything; for example, they declare that "this horoscope [of the eclipse] seems to denote a literal war in Heaven—a contest between the Planetary Rays for supremacy! With re-

gard to this, Mr. Sutcliffe has suggested that the head of the 2nd or Neptune Ray for this globe is the Silent Watcher; but meditation on this idea gives one the impression that this is only part of the truth. This mighty Being may have evolved in past kalpas along the Neptune Ray, but it seems probable that He is actually the Controller of all the Planetary Ray influences for this globe. To use a material analogy, if one may say so without irreverence, it seems that He regulates their flow like a man at a switchboard, turning them on and off or moderating the force of some and increasing that of others. Just now He appears to be reducing the force along Saturn and Jupiter lines and increasing that of Neptune, till eventually, as the number of physical centres for Neptune increases during the next few hundred years, it will colour the whole world and reign supreme. Well, I dined with a Deva last week, and He told me that the latest News from Nirvana is that the Silent Watcher has changed His mind again.

However, the authors declare that the meaning of this map, and of Neptune's position in it, is "that neither Spiritual Enlightenment nor temporal power can be manifested in the future except through Neptunian methods and ways of working." The Uranian "autocracy" must be clothed in the forms of Neptunian "democracy"; as the authors put it: "The rulers of the future will have to cover up their mailed fist in a thick, velvet glove"; we shall have Tory men and Whig measures, a League of Nations and Large Navies, Lloyd George and Labour Troubles, and so forth. As this pamphlet was originally published in "Modern Astrology" in 1917-18, the subsequent history of this esoteric interpretation is to be traced in that magazine. Neptune became quite noticeable in the pages of that magazine, so much so that readers began to ask whether the other planets had ceased to have any influence. Finally, in July last, an article entitled: "Saturn or Neptune?" appeared, and the subsequent controversy ended in the resignation of the editor. He did so with dignity, remarking that "much of the occult teaching which has been given during the last few months has been misunderstood, perverted, trampled in the mire, and made into an excuse for scandal. For this reason it is obvious that no more can be given out publicly on these lines," etc. I may say that the "occult teaching" referred to amounted to no more than the statement that celibacy is not necessarily a proof or a condition of spiritual excellence or power, with the inference that even the occultist could live a normal married life. Martin Luther declared against priestly celibacy before the Silent Watcher switched on the Neptune Ray—and, indeed, in our own generation, George Tyrrell revived the Lutheran teaching on this point, and the whole "advanced" movement of the 'nineties had sex-freedom and birth-control as its inspiration. Why drag in Neptune, more particularly if the intention is to promote a reverent familiarity with the Secrets of the Solar System?

A more complete exposure of the vanity of pretensions to occult knowledge I do not remember to have read. The legitimacy of substituting a person for a power is, of course, the fundamental subject of dispute between theologians and their opponents; but admitting the legitimacy, the impropriety of attributing our own errors of judgment to beings who are presumably immune from them is obvious. If Neptune is the planet of Intuition, the Silent Watcher must be credited with considerably more than a mere human editor could exhibit; but we are asked to believe that the Hierarchy, as it is called, blundered when it offered the Uranian influence, and corrected the blunder by disguising it in the Neptunian Ray—and failed a second time. The authors tell us that "the Uranian methods in the Theosophical Society began to prove a failure," owing to defects in the Society; the substitute was the

Neptunian method, and that proved a failure in "Modern Astrology." The Silent Watcher at the Switchboard ought to be asked to resign; instead of which, the editor of "Modern Astrology" resigned after a controversy that never rose to vivacity.

A. E. R.

Reviews.

German Social Democracy during the War.

By Edwyn Bevan. (Allen and Unwin. 5s. net.)

This is a study of the part played by the Social Democratic Party from the outbreak of war up to the fall of Michaelis in 1917. It is necessarily based upon what has been published in Germany by men who have themselves taken part in the events they explain; but we doubt whether Mr. Bevan's insight into character would have been sharpened by personal contact with the leaders. Anyhow, here is a connected narrative of the facts up to October, 1917, with some shrewd comments on the personalities, and a clear summary of their conflicting arguments and the general trend of events from Right to Left of the party. The tabulation in syllogistic form of the four conflicting views is itself a triumph of clear explication, and incidentally, we think, exhibits the radical weakness of Socialism in political practice. Here are the four syllogisms:—

(1) Socialists ought always to support their State in a war:

This is a war:

Therefore, German Socialists ought now to support the German State.

(2) Socialists ought to support their State in a defensive war, but oppose it in an aggressive war:

This is for Germany a defensive war:

Therefore, German Socialists ought now to support the German State.

(3) Socialists ought to support their State in a defensive war, but oppose it in an aggressive war:

This is for Germany an aggressive war:

Therefore, German Socialists ought now to oppose the German State.

(4) Socialists ought always (till the coming of the Socialist order) to oppose their State in a war:

This is a war:

Therefore, German Socialists ought now to oppose the German State.

It is easy to see why the Party had to split. Although syllogisms (1) and (2) agreed in their practical conclusions, they did not agree in principle; if it were proved that the war was not a defensive war, those who adhered to the reasoning of the second syllogism would find themselves in agreement with those who argued in the terms of the third; and as they agreed in practical conclusion, although not in principle, with those who reasoned in the terms of the fourth syllogism, the tendency to slide to the Left would be fairly constant, and the Party would finally divide on the question of principle: whether Socialism did or did not support the State at war. In both cases, the assumption is that Socialism cannot provide an alternative Government; it can only determine whether it will be a Coalition or an Opposition Party. That the Majority Socialists are no longer in power, and Liebknecht is for the moment in the saddle, reveals at last the fact that the only difference between those who hold syllogisms (1) and (4) is a difference of time; for the entry of the Socialists into power is obviously interpreted as the coming of the Socialist order, in which it is the duty of Socialists to support the State in a war. Pacifism is revealed as the weapon of a Socialist Opposition; a Socialist Government has to adopt precisely similar means of maintaining itself to those that are usual to capitalist Governments. The question: "Is Socialism an alternative of men or measures?" is answered by the facts;

the more the men are changed, the more the measures remain the same.

Mummery: A Tale of Three Idealists. By Gilbert Cannan. (Collins. 6s. net.)

A novel is capable of achieving more than one kind of success, and "Mummery," we think, aims at a succès de scandale. The chief characters are real people very thinly disguised; in the case of the bookseller in Charing Cross Road, he is not disguised at all. He is given his local habitation, but not his name. There must be few indeed of Mr. Cannan's readers who cannot recognise which of the West-End theatrical managers would be likely to say: "Why did you bring that dreadful man into my beautiful theatre?"; even if the more obvious marks of identification were lacking, and they are not, his speech bewrayeth him. That young peer with his enormous rent-roll derived from a well-known estate in the West-End, that creative artist who wanted to produce plays which were, in his opinion, best performed by puppets, that amazing actress who played Ariel once and then married the greatest playwright that the repertory theatre ever inspired (he was so great that he never offered his works for performance), it would be absurd to pretend to be ignorant of the identity of some of them, at least: we are not sure about the playwright. If Mr. Cannan is not obliged to study that form of literature known as a writ, it will be because his characters are more tolerant of libel than he deserves. For it must be said that the novel attempts nothing more than a narrative of events; it does not establish a point of view, it does not develop a character, it does not give us, in any convincing form, an artistic realisation of anything, not even of a rehearsal at the Imperium Theatre. It drags in bigamy and blackmail, apparently with the idea of effecting a realistic contrast to the idealism of the artists; perhaps "brutality in Bloomsbury" is to be the key-note of naturalist fiction, anyhow, Mr. Cannan experiments, with little success, in this milieu. The story ends with the marriage of the amazing actress to the greatest playwright, presumably because it must end somewhere, and marriage is the end of all things. But the end is so utterly irrelevant that it is obviously an evasion, if we are to credit Mr. Cannan with any artistic intention. There is no need to compass Heaven and half London to effect the marriage of an actress, unless, of course, Mr. Cannan has accepted the prescription of the sentimentalists, and will sacrifice even the art of acting which he practises none too well on the altar of domesticity.

What Never Happened. By "Ropshin." (Boris Savinkov.) Translated by Thomas Selzter. (Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d. net.)

The abortive Revolution of 1905 has provided more than one of the Russian novelists with a subject; but Savinkov manages to treat it from a new point of view, from within the party. He deals with the Terrorist activities, the propaganda by deed; and gives us a powerfully drawn picture of the fighting at the Moscow barricades, of some of the "expropriations," and of a few simple murders and executions and suicides. But it is never the action, it is the psychology of the Russians that it is interesting; and Savinkov, although not so profound, is more orderly in his developments of his characters than was Dostoieffsky, for example. Savinkov has done his work so well that we know why the Revolution failed; these men were not doomed because they adopted terroristic methods, they adopted terroristic methods because they felt that they were doomed. A more hopeless lot of conspirators never breathed together; they seemed to think that because they were fighting a losing battle it was their duty to lose. They had a genius for inappropriate meditation on the morality of their conduct; it was usually when they

were armed and posted for assassination that they began to argue with themselves about God and His commandments, and to seek answers to the riddles of existence. They knew every secret service man except the one who was their secretary; they were so open to argument that they could even tolerate the suggestion that the best way to smash the autocracy was to join the Okhrana. The only thing that they seem to have organised efficiently was the forgery of passports, and the disguise of their spies; for the rest they blundered on from resolution to resolution, but could neither command the activities of the rank and file, nor direct them when they could no longer be checked. Savinkov's picture of their complacent incompetence is tragically true; one marvels indeed that men so set on harbouring traitors or so desirous of death should have survived long enough to provide material for a novel of 448 pages. "What Never Happened" has the "dying fall," like most Russian fiction; but it handles reality with less morbidity and less brutality than is usual.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

ART AND ECONOMICS.

Sir,—In THE NEW AGE of March 27 I expressed a hope that "R. H. C." would give a fresh statement of the writer's position in society. I do not know if that hope will be gratified. It may be that this subject, so interesting to myself, leaves other readers unmoved, and that the burden of conducting this controversy will have to be supported by myself alone. I shall not criticise the argument of my imaginary Guildsman, but will deal instead with some statements at the end of Mr. Cole's "Labour in the Commonwealth."

"I share to the full," Mr. Cole writes, "William Morris' happy conviction that joy in life, and art as the expression of that joy, are fundamental, and, if you will, natural to free men and women."

Happy this conviction certainly is, but on what is it based? I cannot quote the whole of literature against Mr. Cole, but where in Homer, the Bible, or Shakespeare will he find any support for this conviction that men are fundamentally and naturally joyful? Certainly there is the qualification "free." Perhaps Mr. Cole means that the members of a society based on a perfect economic system would be fundamentally and naturally joyful. Unfortunately, as human nature precedes economics, such a society never has existed, and never will.

"Art as the expression of that joy." But joy is not the cause of art: art is the cause of a transient but perfect joy. I will not entangle myself in metaphysics, borrowed from Schopenhauer or anyone else, but will content myself with the testimony of a consummate artist, Heine. "Sickness is, indeed, at the root of the impulse to creation. In creating, I found health. In creating, I became sound."

"King Lear" is an incomparably greater work than "Henry V." Its effect, too, is more sustaining and enriching, I may even say more joyful. But "Henry V." was certainly written in a time of greater national and personal happiness.

"Morris," Mr. Cole continues, "was supremely right in holding that the only art that is truly expressive and valuable is popular art, art arising directly out of the life and spirit of the people, and expressing their hopes and fears, their ideas and their conceptions of value."

"Henry V" must then be a truer and greater work of art than "King Lear." It expresses the triumph of England's hopes, the dispersal of its fears. Its ideas, its conceptions of value, are on a perfect level with the contemporary pride in the defeat of Spain.

"Lear" was written in a time of national reaction and deepening gloom, and without doubt Shakespeare himself, at the date of its composition, was passing or had just passed through the most tragic years of his life. No work has ever expressed a deeper sense of the chaotic torture of existence. Yet the total effect is inspiring, because the poet has won to harmony through despair, transcending the "ill thoughts," not by the blissful contemplation of "the life and spirit" of Jacobean

England, but through the agency of his own marvellous nature.

The truth which Mr. Cole does not seem to see is that each man works out or fails to work out his own harmony. "Incentives," Browning writes, "come from the soul's self. The rest avails not."

The times may be so confused and disheartening that many do not attain the harmony they would have attained in a less disturbed age. But a few in every age are not defeated.

I will illustrate what I mean by defeat from Tolstoy. To my mind his later years are the record of a great failure, a failure in the very thing he preached. Love, love, love—that was his gospel, but there was no effluence of love from this bitter apostle. Probe deep enough, and one finds nothing but a rancorous disillusionment with life, a pitiful reliance not on love but on logic. The blind guide leads him to despair, and he stumbles out on the final journey to seek the last and for him the only way of escape.

Many admire Tolstoy's failure more than Shakespeare's victory. They find him more human, more sympathetic. To me Shakespeare and Tolstoy seem both equally concerned with their own salvation. But Tolstoy is driven to seek it at the hands of others, and that flatters us. Shakespeare does not beg from us, and we are offended.

Without cant, I am convinced that the impulse of the artist is twofold, first, as Heine describes it, and secondly, the impulse to reach the hearts of other men. The artist wishes not only to create, but to have his creations understood and loved. The impulse, though mixed with human weaknesses, is noble, and redeems him from the charge of indifference to his fellowmen. He helps humanity in one way, the social reformer in another, and when the social reformer jeers at him he is repeating the plaint of Martha against Mary, a plaint with which Rudyard Kipling sympathises, but which a greater than Rudyard Kipling condemned.

To return to Mr. Cole. "Such an art (the true popular art of William Morris) cannot exist under a plutocracy. For, under plutocracy, art, like everything else, is perverted by economic distinctions. There are at least two arts, and both are false and defective. The art of the rich has inevitably about it the air of poison. It expresses the false ideals of a society based on the subjugation and subjection of the people."

This is all too true of the art of Mr. Robert Hichens and Mr. E. F. Benson. But if I am right in saying that the true artist works in conformity with his own ideals, and finds harmony in his own soul, not looking for it where it has never yet been found, in the outside world, then Mr. Cole's argument does not touch him. By the true artist I mean, for example, Milton, Rembrandt, Beethoven, Blake, and Wordsworth. These men do not, in the works which have made them illustrious, express "the false ideals of a society based on the subjugation and subjection of the people."

"Good Art," Mr. Cole goes on—"that is to say, art that expresses fine ideals—can live only in a commonwealth based upon fine ideals."

This must mean that an artist is dependent for the fineness of his ideals on the fineness of the ideals which permeate the nation to which he belongs. I quote this sentence only to show how far a fixed idea can whirl a really admirable writer from the path of sober thinking.

I may quote Chaucer here with some relevance, because Chaucer is the Guildsman's refuge in moments of spiritual doubt.

"Hold the high way, and let thy spirit thee lead,
And Truth will thee deliver, it is no drede"—
"thy spirit," not Guilds, mediæval or modern.

"Enlightened demand," Mr. Cole says, "is vital to the artist." Extraordinarily helpful, but never, to the great artist, vital. Milton received £5 for "Paradise Lost"; Wordsworth, by the time he was fifty, when all his great work was already written, reckoned that in twenty-five years he had not received £100. But everything I have said, if it is true, disproves the statement that great art is not produced except for adequate monetary reward, welcome though that reward is if it comes.

In conclusion, I shall try to explain what appear to me the reasons for Mr. Cole's attitude, and why I am trying to show the unsoundness of Mr. Cole's position.

The quarrel between the social reformer and the artist is an old one. Mazzini attacked Goethe, Börne, Heine, Tolstoy, Shakespeare. This antagonism can be explained by Nietzsche's theory of the Will to Power—the species is affronted by the existence of another, and tries to annihilate it. There is a good deal of the Will to Power in Mr. Cole's attempt to suspend the artist's activities until the establishment of Utopia.

But there is a nobler element in this antagonism. The reformer, struggling with the cruel systems of organised society, cannot understand how the artist can hold himself aloof. I have tried to show that the artist works in his own way to the enrichment of life, and that the value of his work is not dependent on the state of the society in which he lives. The value of that work is often great, in some instances incalculably great. By it the artist pays his debt to society, often many times over.

I have written this letter in the hope that it may convince one or two persons, perhaps even Mr. Cole, that there is no ground for the antagonism between the reformer and the artist. I have attacked the reformer, but some artists justify anger by a pose of self-sufficiency which parodies the true artist's conviction that he can work best only within his own limits. Shakespeare did better work for the world as a playwright than he would have done as Burleigh's private secretary. Mr. Shaw thinks otherwise, but Mr. Shaw is arguing from a false analogy.

The affected indifference of the artist, the rancour of the reformer, are bad for both, and react unfavourably on the different ways in which they serve a world which thinks the artist a fool and the reformer a nuisance.

HUGH LUNN.

* * *

"INTELLECTUALS" AND LABOUR.

Sir,—After the splendid success achieved by the co-operation of the despised "intellectuals," "bourgeoisie," and "middle classes" with the miners' own delegates, we can readily understand why, hitherto, capitalist organs like the "Times" have warned the wage-earners against such an association. What is less easily understood is the support the "Times" has hitherto received from journals like the "New Witness" on the one hand and the "Call" on the other. Surely common decency now demands an apology from both these journals for having opposed a policy which has, when tried, produced such excellent results.

T. R. BAXTER.

* * *

IBSEN'S "GHOSTS."

Sir,—It was not my intention to give in my last article on Ibsen an analysis of Ibsen's "Ghosts," but to indicate only my standpoint concerning this drama. To be brief, I consider "Ghosts" as a social drama *par excellence* for the reason that evidently it was not the "psychology" and the inner tragedy as such of Mrs. Alving that Ibsen was chiefly concerned with, but in the first instance that poisoned social "atmosphere" which was the real cause of her personal tragedy. The whole of this drama is eminently symbolic—by its very realism. In other words, the chief rôle of this drama belongs to the social "ghosts" (the sham idealism is one of their aspects), which govern the living men, paralysing their wills, maiming their lives, their selves. The characters are either conscious (Mrs. Alving) or unconscious victims of "ghosts." Hence the symbolic *arrière-pensée*: we are slaves of "ghosts"—created by the past generations as well as by ourselves. We are not free. The whole of mankind is under the spell of "ghosts," and even when we consciously try to fight them we cannot get rid of them, for our life is pestered and "vermoulu" by them in its very origin. . . .

That explains the pessimistic mood and the "fatalistic" atmosphere of Ibsen's "Ghosts." "The fault lies in that all mankind has failed," he writes in his preliminary notes. And again, "Everything is ghosts." "The keynote is to be: the prolific growth of our intellectual life, in literature, art, etc.—and in contrast to this: the whole of mankind gone astray. . . ." And so on.

Of course, one could say some quite interesting things as to the single characters, but in my series I am interested in Ibsen's works only in so far as they give a clue to Ibsen himself—i.e., to his personal inner drama. And in this pursuit I have to limit myself (so far) only to the essentials.

JANKO LAVRIN.

Pastiche.

ANY GUILDSMAN TO ANY ARTIST.
Of old with undivided heart
I chanted my immortal songs,
A guileless votary of art,
Who never recked of social wrongs.
Then came the premature deceases
Of my immortal masterpieces.

Sulphurously, at first, I flamed
Against the public's lack of taste.
Unmanly heat! I grew ashamed,
And firmly the dilemma faced—
My verse is bad and best forgotten:
Or else the State of Denmark's rotten.

But which. A friend of other days
Met me one day and clasped my hand.
"Come, build Jerusalem," he says,
"In this (in posse) pleasant land.
Lay by the lutes! Unstring the fiddles!"
"Be plain," said I. "You speak in riddles."

"'Tis plain enough," my friend replied.
"Read Hobson, 'R. H. C.,' and Cole.
Eschew the artist's barren pride,
And economicise your soul.
Read Brown on Charlie Chaplin's 'comics,'
Then turn to Reckitt's economics.

"There's nothing, here, below, above,
That economics don't precede,
Politics, port, lamplighters, love,
The Oxford don, the centipede.
Nay, though a First Cause win your credence,
Still economics have precedence.

"Now as to you. The poet breed
From Homer to the present day
Try to make poetry precede,
Think Art, ye Gods, should show the way,
And sacrifice to their creations
The economic health of nations.

"Henceforth the artist must employ
His gifts as Orage shall decree.
Art must be based on general joy,
And general joy is yet to be.
Till then, my poets, painters, mystics,
Apply your minds to Guild statistics.

"Till brewers brew their beer with song,
Till navvies talk in rhythmic prose,
Till it is deemed a deadly wrong
To patronise the picture-shows,
Art must be bad, and best forgotten—
Because the State of Denmark's rotten."

HUGH LUNN.

TO PSYCHE.

Rosy gleam the sacred hours,
O my dove, my undefiled,
When the incense of the flowers
Rises stilly in the wild;
When the hart-eyed evening leads
Through the blue-stained wastes afar
Over water-girdled meads
Her one white ecstatic star;
And the youngest child of Mornus
Brims her alabastrine cup
Beyond the sun-flushed mountain-horns
With the dawn-flame frothing up:
Here at peace we lie all day
By the margent of green wells,
While the small cicadas say
Remote and immemorial spells;
Minim unto minim shrills,
Hidden away in sun-scorched thyme,
The rune of the eternal hills,
Silence out of secret rime,

And the Mountain Lily bends
To the raptures of the bee:
All these beauteous things are friends;
Is't not so with thee and me?

WILFRED CHILDR.

PRESS CUTTINGS.

The Nationalists, the members of whose delegation, it is now officially stated, are to sail on the "Minerva," have provided ammunition for another delegation, one of natives from the Free State, who intend hurrying after them.

Mr. De Beer, of Harrismith, moved two amendments to-day to Mr. Blaine's Bill, both being intended, according to the language of one of the speakers in the debate, "to tighten up the slave system of the Free State." There exists in the Free State a class of native squatters who enjoy pasturing and ploughing rights in return for the services which they render to the landowner by an old Act of the Free State confirmed by Union legislation. They rank as "servants," and their children with them. The significance of this classification is that they fall under the Masters and Servants' Law, which in the Free State is particularly stringent. They cannot, for instance, leave their employer's farm without a written pass. Consequently the children are precluded from getting into the service of another employer who might pay them personal wages. This safeguard had been found inadequate by Mr. De Beer, who moved to make it a criminal offence for any person to employ native children of the class above described without the written consent of their father's employer. Going further, he proposed to deprive such children of the right to sell their own labour until they reached the age of 21 years. Nationalist members backed him to a man, reckoning nothing, it would seem, of the difficulties which they might be creating for their delegation in the presence of President Wilson.—"Rand Daily Mail."

May not this provide the way out of the public's difficulty? The public dislikes the idea not of national ownership, but of bureaucratic management. If the State nationalises the mines or the railways, the problem will be that of devising some method of management which is at once efficient and democratic. Surely the way to do this is to enlist the active co-operation in the task of the workers engaged in these vital services and of their Trade Unions. I know that there are still many people, especially among those who have Collectivist sympathies, to whom this seems a dangerously revolutionary idea, hardly to be distinguished from Syndicalism or Bolshevism or whatever the latest name for the lowest ring of Dante's inferno may be. But it is in fact a very different thing; for the proposal is that the State should own the mines and the coal that is gotten from them, the actual work of managing and organising the supply being largely and to an increasing extent delegated to the miners themselves. No one pretends that such a system can be established completely at once; it is indeed rather an ideal to which a gradual approach should be made than a proposal immediately to be applied in full. But it does provide a safeguard against bureaucracy, and also a means of enlisting the active help of the workers in making industry as efficient as possible.—"Journeyman" in the "Daily News."

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