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## NOTES OF THE WEEK

The question of prices in relation to income, particularly to income in the form of wages and salaries, has now become, in the words of the "Times," a political question of the first magnitude. It is more, indeed, than a problem; it is the problem, of the day; and not only of the day following the war, but, we may say, of the whole day of civilisation. War itself has not the menace for civilisation which the conflict of prices with income has; for whereas war comes to an end after a period of violence and is, besides, the occasion of many virtues, the war of prices upon income is a continuous and grinding reduction of everything to a mean and miserable powder. All its casualties are disguised, nor are there any virtues to be develop'd in it, unless it be the virtue of protestation which, to say the best of it, is only a negative virtue. At the present moment, and largely in consequence of the other war, the war of prices upon income has become more than usually intense; and it is even more worldwide than the military war just concluded. Every country, in fact, even those that were neutral in the recent war, is now engaged up to its neck in the present economic war; and in every country, according to its wisdom or folly, one measure or another is being taken to mitigate, in the hope of curing, the worse consequences of it. What effect on the main issue these various measures may have we are in little doubt: they will be scarcely ameliorations even, for the problem is too radical to yield to a temporary or superficial remedy. On the other hand, we are no less convinced that the nation which first discovers and applies the real and the radical remedy will thereby place itself at the head of civilisation. Whichever nation, in short, first finds the permanent solution of the problem of prices and income is destined to become, not only happy and prosperous at home, but the honoured pioneer of a new world.

Among the alleged causes to which we may confidently say the present prevalence of exceptionally high prices is not due to profiteering. As the authors of the word itself we, in particular, have a right to define its meaning; and from no kind of meaning that we can attach to it can the conclusion be drawn that the present high level of prices is due to the phenomenon of profiteering. Still less is it the case that profiteering in the popular sense of the word can be the complete explanation of high prices, for if all the extortionate charges which, of course, we do not deny are here and there made, were absorbed in a reduction of price, there would remain a residue of price which, from a comparative point of view, would still be very high. The "Daily News," therefore, is wrong when it asserts that the "profiteering middlemen" are responsible for artificially driving up prices; and even more in error when it alleges that their names are well known to the Government; and it is most wrong when it affirms that "there is no doubt of the Government's power to stop them." All this is to assume that if profiteering in the extortionate sense were put an end to, prices would return to their "normal" level; it is to assume, in fact, that this form of profiteering is the main if not the only cause of high prices. And this is not true. We may similarly say, and with equal confidence, that neither is the main cause of high prices to be found in the shortage of supplies. That a shortage of supply, relatively to an effective demand, has the inevitable tendency, under the competitive system, of raising prices beyond the general level in respect of just those commodities in which the shortage exists, is, of course, true enough; and this would account, no doubt, for the particularly high prices of certain foodstuffs of which the normal, that is to say, the pre-war supply, has been definitely reduced while the demand has remained the same or been actually increased. But it is a matter of common observation that a high level of price applies not only to commodities of which there is known to be a shortage of supply, but to commodities of which there is no abnormal shortage, but even, perhaps, the very reverse. To take a simple example, why, for instance, were strawberries this season three times their pre-war price? It could not be due to a comparative shortage which did not, in fact, exist; something more than short supply is, therefore, necessary to explain the fact. Finally, we may declare, beyond fear of reasonable contradiction, that the present high level of prices is not due to the present high level of money-wages. In the first place, the purchasing-power of wages—real wages—is little more to-day, if it is not actually less, than their value in pre-war days; and, in the second
place, the rise of money-wages followed and was a practical consequence of the rise of prices. Even Mr. Strachey, who does not hesitate to affirm that high prices are caused by high wages, will find it difficult to maintain that an effect is its own cause.

If to none of these things—at any rate, principally—can the prevalence of high prices be assigned, it is obvious that, however we may deal with them, no real remedy can be found in them. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, for instance, believing that profiteering is at the root of the matter, suggests that the Government should institute a series of prosecution of profiteers and inflict fines and imprisonments on the notorious offenders. "A few clean-run British officers with plenary powers would very soon," he says, "set things right." In Italy, France, and elsewhere, even more drastic steps have been taken or are in process of being taken. Riots have occurred in Italy; and the guillotining of flagrant profiteers is being seriously considered by the French Government and public. Jutifiable, no doubt, such measures would be if, in fact, flagrant profiteering or, indeed, profiteering of any industrial description, were really the sole or even the main cause of high prices. But since it is not, all these measures are not only beside the mark, but they the immediate effect has been the reduction of prices by one-half; but the public, neither in this country nor in Italy, has not yet been told that the secondary effect has been to discourage production to a corresponding extent and, thereby, to add a fresh shortage to the already existing secondary causes of high prices. But if action of this kind has had no better effect in Italy than positively to intensify the evil against which it was directed, what better effects can be expected of the less drastic action now advised by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and others in this country? A hundred prosecution of profiteers a day would have little if any immediate effect upon the level of prices; and their secondary effect would be in all certainty to paralyse the existing stimulus to production and thus, in the end, to raise prices still higher. **

Increased production is certainly what we need; but we must carefully discriminate between the increased production of necessitier and the increased production of luxuries—including, for the moment, the production of intermediate commodities, which are not, in themselves, articles of consumption. To hear some of our public men talk, you would think that any kind of production quantitatively increased would have to lead to the effect of reducing the common cost of living. We are only, in fact, to go in for a course of super-production of anything that chances to be in demand in any class or part of the world, to ensure a fall in prices generally and, in consequence, a decline in the cost of living among the wage-earners and the salariat in particular. It is a little difficult to expose in all its blushing nakedness the fallacy of this supposition, for the simple reason that, as regards the commodities subject to super-production, a fall in price would undoubtedly be not only beside this argument but the concomitant effect of a decline in the cost of luxuries, resulting from the super-production of such commodities, and involving, therefore, the transfer of capital and labour from one form of production to another, would inevitably be to maintain if not to raise the price of the commodities of necessity, in other words, the cost of living of the working classes. It is unnecessary, indeed, to resort to theory in order to establish the point. Circumspice. At the present moment and when the cost of living of the general consumer is unmistakably rising, the cost of luxurious living is, quite as unmistakably, falling. Moreover, the banks will advance loan-credit on any enterprise designed to stimulate the sale and to reduce the price of luxuries such as motor-cars; but they force the burden of the cost of these luxuries to any other of the commoner necessities. And the reason is plain; whereas the rich have a margin of spending power available for the exploitation of Capital after they have satisfied their common necessities, the poor have no such margin. All the spending-power of the poor is absorbed in necessities; Capital can make no more out of them. It is, therefore, to the exploitation of the rich that Capital inevitably turns. It follows from all this that super-production as now preached is no cure for high prices in just those commodities whose price is now a public grievance. Expedit for the rich, the super-production now in financial fashion may easily be—we say it will be, in fact—an additional burden on the poor. **

It is scarcely necessary to say that violence, on the part either of the Government or of the "people," is no remedy either. The "Daily Herald," we observe, in its policy of pure negation, is rapidly drifting in the direction of what Wright, in his "Les "Heraldites." To the latter, apprehension or doubt to the governing classes than public feeling (if not public sense) on our side. The consequences, moreover, of such a conflict of forces are less a matter of apprehension or danger to the governing classes, than they appear to be to the heated imagination of the "Revolutionary Left"; and in one of its issues last week the same paper raised as a provocative query the head-line: "Will it come to violence?" Two parties, however, can play at the game of violence; and it requires no esoteric information to be aware that at least one powerful party in the governing classes is even more disposed to violence than the "Daily Herald" dare even appear to be. The question of violence presents itself to this party in a perfectly comprehensible aspect. After all, they say, it will sooner or later have to come to a conflict of force; things cannot continue indefinitely in their present vicious circulatory. Why not anticipate the inevitable climax and thus choose our own moment for it? At present we are organised—thanks to the war; we have also public feeling (if not public sense) on our side. Now, therefore, is the moment to strike, if only messieurs les assassins (in other words, the "Daily Herald") will oblige us with the occasion. The consequences, moreover, of such a conflict of forces are less a matter of apprehension or danger to the governing classes, than they appear to be to the heated imagination of the "Revolutionaries." To the latter, if they speculate at all on the issue, a demonstration of violence would appear to promise at least the effect of stirring the governing classes to remedial legislation. The demonstration, in fact, would have nothing but pleasant after-consequences whatever its immediate character might be. But to the party we have in mind, the issue is calculably very different; for, after a revolt, intellectual by hypothesis, the "people," it is anticipated, would settle down in the received acceptance of a permanently reduced level of living. Which party is wrong in its forecast we have little difficulty in deciding. It is enough to say that a negative policy, such as that of the "Daily Herald," is never right. **

In the particular instance of coal, it is a little disingenuous of the miners to profess to be indignant at the figure of six shillings now proposed to be clapped on to the selling-price of the ton. Would it make so very much difference to the average total wages if there were four or two instead of six? Would it even make any radical difference if the price of coal were actually reduced by as many shillings as it is now proposed to put on to it? Remembering that the price of coal, the raw material of every industry, really sets the price...
of every other commodity, if the margin between national prosperity and national ruin is, indeed, no larger than a few shillings per ton of coal, we are in imminent peril of disaster always; and no immediate compromise on the immediate difficulty can be any comfort to us. It is a little disquieting also—undeniably be it be sheer ignorance—to pretend that the nationalisation of the mines and the industry will effect a material reduction in the selling price of coal; or that, in fact, it will not in all probability result in a further increase. Nationalisation which bureaucratic control has always had the effect of raising prices; and it may be remarked that the recent German Coal Commission condemned the Prussian State coal mines on that very account. It is scarcely likely that with an inferior bureaucracy (from the point of view of industrial efficiency) we are likely to succeed where the Prussian bureaucracy failed. Whatever, therefore, may be the driving reasons for the present agitation against the nationalisation of the mining industry, the public reasons against it are sufficient in themselves to justify the opposition. If the prevalence of high prices is, as it is, the major political issue of the day; and if, further, the proposed nationalisation of coal (with all that it presumably connotes as regards the pay and conditions of the workers) is likely to have the effect of raising the price, not only of coal, but of all the commodities into which the cost of coal enters as a factor (that is, of all commodities), the public opposition to the proposal is reasonable, whatever may be the private motives of the capitalist classes. The merits of nationalisation in the abstract may be plausible; it may even appear to contain compensations for the future more than sufficient to make up for its defects. But here and now, and as applied to the mining industry in relation to the common and imperative question of high prices, the nationalisation of the mines and the industry would aggravate the situation without any adequate compensation whatever.

It will be agreed by the miners that what is not to the public interest cannot in the long run be to their own. What would it matter, for instance, if the mines were nationalised and every miner received a pound a day for a six-hour day, if the cost of living, in total sequence of the increase in the selling price of coal, were to rise beyond the present ratio of prices to income? Whatever the rate of nominal wages, if their purchasing value in commodities is constantly being reduced, the effect of a rise in wages is obviously always an annihilation; and the total effect on the changes as the miners wish to bring about might, therefore, be to make them princes on paper and us and them paupers in fact. But this is not the only consideration for the miners to take into account in their present demand for nationalisation. Nationalisation, under the existing conditions of public as well as private apprehension, is bound to cost them dearly even in the matter of the accompanying circumstances. We have pointed out in previous issues the clauses in the Chairman's Report which definitely indicate an intention on the part of the Government's advisers to make nationalisation, if the miners insist on it, as unpleasant as possible to the miners themselves. They are to be legally restrained from striking except by permission of the State; they are to be subject to Committees in which they are in a reduced minority; they are to shoulder the whole burden of full market compensation for the mines, plant and royalties; and, finally, they are to be driven by the subtle device of comparison to an increased expenditure of their labour-energy. We say that bad as the effects of Nationalisation (in this case as against the general consumer (amongst whom is included the miner himself) will be, the effects on the mine workers will be an addition to the evil of them. The public will pay more for its coal; but the miners will pay more for the getting of it.

It is an unhappy conclusion of thirty years of Fabian propaganda; but it was inevitable from the superficial character of the pedantic Socialist analysis. Synthesis follows analysis; and from the discovery that all that is wrong in society is the existence of private property, nothing more was to be expected than the announcement that nationalisation is the cure for everything. The miners, unfortunately, have become the victim of this false theory; and, unless they can perform the miracle of confessing themselves to be wrong both to them and we are now about to suffer for it. Neither the Government, we fear, nor the Parliamentary Labour Party, we are certain, has either the clue to the error or, still less, the alternative doctrine that would lead to a right practice and a happy issue out of our present afflictions. We gather that the Labour Party is preparing to support the miners in their demand for the Sankey Report as a means to reducing the present high cost of living. They propose to the Government, in fact, the dilemma of reducing the cost of living or resigning—in order to "give some other Government [Labour implied] an opportunity of organising the supply and distribution of commodities at prices on the basis of actual cost." But what is their plan, other than the nationalisation of industry, beginning with the mining industry of which the highest bureaucracy? It is a mere question of anything but of reducing the cost of living? Synthesis, we repeat, cannot be different in nature from analysis; and since it is absolutely certain that the analysis of the causes of the high cost of living which the Labour Party has made is wrong, their positive legislation, if ever they come to undertake it, is certain to be as wrong as well. It is neither guess-work nor prejudice that leads us to say that, if a Labour Government were formed to-morrow, and if a free hand were given to its policy to construct, the effect of its legislation would be to increase the cost of living, not what of the present Government? We are told that it is "trying to formulate proposals," that the Cabinet has even arrived at agreement as to plans. We are in no political secrets; what is public is enough for us. From nothing, however, that we know of it, can we anticipate that the Government, any more than the miners or the Labour Party, has discovered or will be able to discover any real remedy for the risen and still rising cost of living. Negative action, such as resistance to crude Nationalisation, and the abolition of doles, may be likewise expected; finally, large diluents of the eye-wash called "Control" are, no doubt, in preparation; but of a permanent remedy for the chronic disease of civilisation, we need expect no sign.

It would be a large undertaking to attempt to indicate in a few paragraphs the cause and nature of the disease from which society is suffering; and a larger undertaking still, perhaps, to prescribe the appropriate remedy. Both the diagnosis and the prescription, however, are in existence, and all that is needed to bring them to the light of day is a real demand for them. We have not the smallest doubt, for ourselves, that a remedy for the high cost of living is not only discoverable—that goes without saying—but has been discovered and we have still some hope that when all the patent remedies of the quacks have been tried and have failed, the real remedy will be attended to. The more particular cause, not of high prices in individual commodities, but of the present high level of prices, which compares with particular prices as a tide compares with its individual waves, is to be found, we have no doubt, where Mr. Roberts and others have occasionally told us to look for it—in the general depreciation of the value of money; and it must therefore be the case, if we are to find the remedy, that we must look for it on the plane of origin of the
I have just received from Holland a copy of an appeal addressed to Mr. Wilson by the Ottoman Colony in Vienna. It is dated March, 1919, and in the light of subsequent events we may conclude that it was ineffectual. We may also conclude that it was never answered. Yet it is a vastly more effective and convincing plea for justice than the extraordinarily feeble Memorandum of Damad Ferdi Pasha on which I commented in last week’s New Age.

"Confiding in Your Excellency’s sentiments of justice," it begins, "the paper now fast in your hands. But the disappointment we experienced upon the assembly of the Interallied Conference in Paris has been aggravated on verbalization of the address delivered by your, Mr. President, on March 4, at the Metropolitan Opera House, in which you spoke of the disappearance of the Turkish Empire, and the liberation of the oppressed nationalities. Mr. President, it was not with this result in view that we accepted your 14 points.

"Among the nationalities that go to the formation of the Ottoman Empire, there are only the Armenians who were unfortunately impressed, and only since they began to excite troubles and revolts. The Armenians, however, are minorities, enclosed in the midst of a great and overwhelming majority of Musulmans."

A brief and accurate history of the Armenians in their relation to the Turks follows.

"The creation of an Armenian State would only be possible where the Armenians lived in more or less compact masses, and its extent and limits can only be fixed on the spot. The ‘Grande Encyclopédie’ contains the following judicious observation on the subject of the countries which, by a false interpretation, are classed under the name of Armenia: ‘An ethnographic map of Armenia would present a most fantastic mosaic, since one cannot travel a hundred kilometres in that country without encountering three or four different populations. In compact masses the Armenians are only to be found in the valley of the Choroukh, whereas in all other parts they form but isolated groups.’"

"In 1896, at the session of the Chamber of Deputies on November 3, M. Gabriel Hanotaux, then French Minister for Foreign Affairs, declared that, according to the statistics, the Armenian population certainly did not represent a proportion of more than 13 per cent. of the inhabitants. It is needless to say that neither this declaration nor the statistics in question had been prepared in defence of the Turkish cause."

"The women and girls of the Armenians (say, one in a hundred thousand of our population), would have the effect of reducing the general level of prices beyond anything we have ever known —would it be worth the consideration of the miners as an alternative to their present policy of Nationalisation at all costs? Are they prepared to consider it? If the synthesis we have in mind can be shown to follow the analysis, and the analysis is correct, we ought to be able to promise a considerable reduction in the price of coal. Together with the satisfaction of all the just claims of the workmen, the management, the present coalowners, and the public in general, the problem of high prices as affected by the price of coal would, we believe, be solved; but also, we believe, the transition from capitalism to economic democracy would be effected without the risk of the threatened revolution into nothing.
"The Greeks in Asia have mingled with the Turks and do not form a separate race. They live in small minorities amid Turkish majorities.

"The vestiges of a distant past can confer no rights upon the Greeks.

"For the purpose of masking the great numerical inferiority of the Greeks upon the Asiatric continent, Venizelos adds the population of the Archipelago to his fictitious estimates. The Ottoman Isles of the Archipelago are, indeed, very greatly inhabited by Greeks, but they are at the present moment subject to occupation by foreign troops. They have no ethnographic or administrative connection with Anatolia, which is almost exclusively inhabited by Turks.

M. Venizelos's claim that the Vilayet of Aydin (including Smyrna) is predominantly Greek—a most astounding claim to all who know that province!—is thus treated:—

"The area of the Vilayet of Aydin (Smyrna) measures 53,798 square kilometres. The Greek element is only concentrated in the Sandjak of Smyrna, where it forms one-fifth of the population. According to the last estimates the Sandjaks of this vilayet comprise:—

"Sandjak of Smyrna, 630,000 inhabitants, whereof 130,000 are Greeks; Aydin, 300,000 (15,000 Greeks); Sarouhan, 450,000 (35,000 Greeks); Denizli, 270,000 (2,600 Greeks); Menteche, 190,000 (10,000 Greeks). We believe that there is no need to add other commentaries to these eloquent figures."

The Appeal goes on: "Besides this, the Powers wish, without demanding their consent, to liberate certain Mussulman peoples of the Ottoman Empire, peoples that have never expressed a desire in that direction, for our Empire is a Mussulman State, in which Arabs and Kurds enjoy the same rights as Turks. Islam recognises no differences of nationality. Are we then to be ruled? That is a pretext to destroy us and reduce us to slavery! . . . This mania for dismemberment and this mode of procedure are far, Mr. President, from corresponding to your initial intentions. . . You pledged your word and the honour of the United States in promising us the justice which we shall not cease to claim. . . . We had the misfortune to be precipitated into this war under well-known circumstances, and consequently we were obliged to defend ourselves. That was the whole extent of our war, and we have suffered more than any other nation. But there must not be two sorts of justice. If you desire really to apply the principles of justice, why exclude the Turkish nation and the Mussulmans? Why wrench from them their patrimony? . . . The Ottoman Empire constitutes an indivisible whole, in which, among Turks, Arabs, and Kurds, there are neither oppressors nor oppressed."

The Ottoman Colony in Vienna includes all those races.

I read in my daily paper that the situation in Asia Minor is becoming dangerous. The outraged Muslim population is gathering to form huge armies. Not only Turks are joining them, but Kurds and Arabs. They threaten the Italians at Konia and the Greeks in the vilayet of Aydin. The position is regarded as extremely serious. The Muslim world will fight—as I have said over and over again in these articles—rather than submit to the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. There is only one way to avoid that great and ludicrous catastrophe—ludicrous because our rulers have been talking as if they represented a majority of the inhabitants of Turkey—and that is to give up every project of dismemberment. If such a change of policy could be announced, the danger in the Muslim world would vanish instantly. I do not ask the Government to take my word for anything. Let them watch events and hear the people on the spot. And for God's sake let them beware the honeyed counsels of MM. Venizelos and Sazonoff!"

Economic and Political Action.

A REPLY.

My little book on the Philosophy of Syndicalism, which has just been overhauled by Mr. Matthew Robeson in two successive numbers of The New Age, was not written with any expectation that it would arouse so much attention. Seeing, however, that it has been judged to be of such importance to the circle of readers for which The New Age caters, I could not take the opportunity here to bring one prominent feature of it frankly into the open. "Syndicalism and Philosophical Realism" (primarily a philosophical book) has occasion to characterise the philosophy which peeps through the Syndicalist movement. According to my present critic, it is a document with a bad political flavour.

This is a matter upon which I could wish any prospective reader to be clear from the outset. Mr. Robeson is by no means the only person whom it has thus impressed. Unhappily, to most palates, it appears to be indeed so. I have even been told—by an exceedingly able writer in the "Nation" whom a god in the shape of an Editor protects—that my book is just wicked; and have been referred for due edification to a certain passage of the Gospels, where there is a story of a man with a withered hand, and of some persons who lay in wait, on the occasion, for the great Healer, trying all they could, to get Him to do it on the Sabbath Day "that they might accuse Him." The great Healer in the eyes of this critic happened to be philosophical realism. His complaint was that I did not try to refute it as a philosophical proposition at all. I found a better way of attacking it, namely, to go around writer-talking about its immoral consequences. "See," I said, "it supports the Syndicalists; and, therefore . . ."

And now comes along Mr. Robeson, to whom the great Healer happens not to be realism but Syndicalism itself—or, if not Syndicalism, then something included by implication in my too indiscriminating use of that word. And although he is far removed from any disposition to say that I do not argue my case; and never hints that I am a mere Pharisee, going behind the back of Syndicalism, so to speak, and trying to get it a bad name by connecting it with something reprehensible in philosophy, namely, realism; still, he charges me with the results of a certain carelessness, a certain unfortunate failure to distinguish between Left and Right within the movement which I call Syndicalism itself. These results are, in sum, that I have given my book a bad "flavour," the flavour of having been written in a political interest. I want to say frankly, I bow to the charge. My book has that flavour. I cannot help it. But I should like to tell my own story.

For what I really sought to do is something in essence very simple. I seized what I took to be a fact, and pointed it out. The fact concerned three powerful modern things, namely, the new realistic philosophy, Bergsonian intuitionism, and the Syndicalistic trend in recent social movements. It was to the effect that they had a mutual inner affinity; that they were working in the same direction; that without necessarily knowing it, they were swimming in the same stream; that they were even, here and there, explicitly meeting. I thought I saw this; and thinking that, if true, it could not fail to be of some importance for the deeper understanding of our times, I resolved to make it as clear as I could in a book.

There was risk in the step. I was correlating three things. They were all "advanced" movements. I obviously did not properly believe in any of them. It might very well be, therefore—thanks to a fallacy to
which human nature is prone—that in attacking new things I should seem to be advocating old ones; that in criticising emancipatory movements I should seem to hold a brief for the status quo; that, whilst it would rather stick in the throats of many ardent reformers, it should appear good reading to the apostles of conservatism and reaction. I will not say that I foresaw all this. The inexplicably favourable reception which the book has had in some sections of the Press I certainly did not foresee. I foresaw only the extreme Left of the Syndicalist position, it does not apply to the Right which The New Age represents. I do not want to urge against Mr. Robieson the vulgar answer to this: namely, that if the cap did not fit him he did not need to put it on. And yet I should like it borne in mind by any who may have happened to take an interest in the matter, that my book was not meant as an attack upon the Guild Socialist in the first instance. It was concerned with just that extreme Left, to which my critic is willing to allow it some applicability; which is certainly a social force in being; and which is sufficiently powerful to claim some attention. But if Guildists are going to start up and nervously (“savagely” is Mr. Straker’s word) condemn the thing, it is that they themselves do not say that. I only say “do it, if you are going to do it, without abandoning politics.”

And my reason is not that I choose to make something peculiar by the word politics; still less that I fail to see that there is a politics and a politics, and that the world has not yet either disentangled itself from the Right or that I have forgotten the yawning gulf which lies between the irresponsible game which nowadays passes under that title, and the exalted pursuit which formed the subject of Aristotle’s treatises. My reason is, I think, in the principle stated. My reason is simply that you must do your good deed in the name of the right thing; since otherwise you will do it amiss; and risk falling out of step with the march of things. The penalties are too great to incur, unless you do the abolishing of wages, whilst still, in my critic’s words, “having regard to social life as a whole.” I have tried to maintain that this is not the matter involved.

And I think I have a reason. For bad as things are, you cannot do this, you cannot act “having regard to the social life of the whole,” if you wholly abandon even the sorry mechanism now called politics. In saying so, I am as far as possible from saying that you must give the Labour members of Parliament the job to do. I don’t know what the present members of Parliament are capable of. I do not think that they could run the industrial organisation of the country for very long. Indeed, I do not think you could effect any considerable reform by merely moving the hearts of Parliament and remaining otherwise idle. But you cannot do it, either, if your principle is to ignore Parliament. That is the point. Mr. Straker, to take a concrete instance, has a brilliantly worked-out scheme for joint control of the mines by the miners and the State. He cannot have followed this principle, or it is difficult to see how he could have brought it before the Coal Commission. And to have advised him to eschew Parliament and its Commissions would have been false both as morals and as policy. You need not commit reformed industry into the hands of Parliament to run. My contention is simply that you will fail of something if as a matter of principle you are determined to ignore the sanction of Parliament and all those social and economic commitments of the Left which seem to me to stand between the Right and effectiveness so long as the Right consents to carry them. I had no remotest intention of saying that reformers should confine their attention to “abstract politics” in the natural sense of that term. I do not simply against all that eloquent and powerful preaching of the Right which finds classic expression in the phrase “Hell with politics.” In taking such a line, I am no doubt attacking many Guildists; every movement has its varieties of supporters. But that I am attacking Guildism, with all respect to Mr. Robieson and those for whom he speaks, I am not at all sure.

J. W. Scott.
**Economic Democracy.**

**By Major C. H. Douglas.**

**CHAPTER VIII.**

**Admitting,** then, that any decentralised scheme of society must first justify itself economically, it is necessary to grasp problems, at any rate, the main features of the radical reconstruction necessary before any attempt can be made to forecast the political aspect.

The starting point is clearly a reasonably uniform and plentiful production of simple necessaries; food, clothes, housing, etc.

Now the actual production of these articles presents no difficulties whatever. Notwithstanding the diversion of the major portion of the world's energy for four years to purposes of destruction, the actual economic want in the world has been almost entirely artificial, i.e., has been confined either to countries effectively blockaded, or else lacking the mechanical facilities for effective distribution. In fact, it is most significant that while useful (in a peace sense) production has been enormously increased in Great Britain during the war, the standard of comfort has been more uniformly high than ever before.

The explanation of this is simple: The payments made in wages have increased, prices and the production of luxuries have been partly controlled, and sabotage has disposed of useless product, and so kept up wage distribution.

The practical problem, then, is to make it certain that commodities are produced under satisfactory conditions, and equally certain that they are distributed according to necessity, and the organisation for these purposes may well determine the social structure; inasmuch as a complete success would be the most powerful incentive to the adoption of similar methods in less fundamental directions.

Profiting by the deduction made from the examination already made of the results of various types of organisation it may be repeated that the best results would seem probable from a co-ordinated organisation for purposes of technique with the greatest decentralisation of initiative in the use of the facilities so provided.

Now, it should be clearly grasped at the outset that at least two main problems are involved in the question at issue which may be broadly defined as that of the producer and the consumer; and not only are these entirely separate, but, rightly considered, they are on completely different planes of existence.

The problem of the consumer is essentially material; he is concerned with quality, variety, price, supply; he is concerned with product.

On the contrary, the producer is almost entirely concerned with psychological issues; fatigue, interest, welfare, hours of labour, all of which, qua producer pure and simple, are broadly summed up in the word "contentment."

The consumer is interested in distribution; the producer is concerned with effort.

It is particularly necessary to emphasise this distinction since the existing structure of industry based on finance takes it for granted that the possession of large quantities of goods, or their equivalent purchasing power in money, is a good and sufficient reason for the exercise of a preponderating voice in the conditions and processes of production.

We say, and it is only now that it is fairly contested, that he who pays the piper calls the tune. The idea that it is the hearer who is primarily concerned in the tune, the piper primarily in the instrument, and the payment a mere convenience as between the two parties, is so novel to large numbers of unthinking persons, that it is not to be expected violent opposition to the world-wide efforts being made to reconstitute society on these very principles.

Bearing these distinctions in mind it will be recognised that there are two separate lines along which to attack the situation presented by the dissatisfaction of the worker with his conditions of work, and the not less serious discontent of the consumer with the machinery of distribution, and these may be called medievalism and ultra-modernism.

Medievalism seems to claim that all mechanical progress is unsound and inherently delusive; that mankind is by his very constitution compelled, under penalty of decadence, to support himself by una'ied skill of hand and eye. In support of its contentions it points to the Golden Age of the fourteenth century in England, for example, when real want was comparatively unknown, and green woods stood and clear rivers ran where the slag-heaps and chemical works of Wigan or Wednesbury now offend the eye and pollute the air. When arts and crafts made industry almost a sacrament, and faulty execution a social and even a legal offence; when the medium of exchange was the Just Price, and the idea of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market, if it existed, was classed with usury and punished by heavy penalties.

While appreciating the temptation to compare the two periods to the very great disadvantage of the present, it does not seem possible to agree with the conclusion of the Mediævalist that we are in a cul-de-sac from which the only exit is backwards; and it is proposed to make an endeavour to show that there is a way through, and that we may in time regain the best of the advantages on which the Mediævalist rightly acts such store, retaining in addition a command over environment which he would be the first to recognise as a real advance; a solution which may be described as Ultra-Modernist.

In order to do this certain somewhat abstract assumptions are necessary, and it has been the object of the preceding pages to present as far as possible the data on which these assumptions are made. They are as follows:—

1. The existing difficulties are the immediate result of a social structure framed to concentrate personal power over other persons, a structure which must take the form of a pyramid. Economics is the material key to this modern riddle of the sphinx because power over food, clothes, and housing is ultimately power over life.

2. So long as this structure of Society persists personality simply reacts against it. Personality has nothing to do with the effect of the structure; it simply governs the response of the individual to conditions such as he cannot control except by altering the structure.

3. It follows that general improvement of conditions based on personality is a confusion of ideas. Changed personality will only become effective through changed social structure.

4. The pyramidal structure of Society gives environment the maximum control over individuality. The correct objective of any change is to give individuality maximum control over environment.

If these premises are accepted it seems clear that the first and probably most important step is to give the individual control of the necessities of life on the cheapest terms possible. What are these terms? What is the fundamental currency in which the individual does in the last analysis liquidate his debts? A little consideration must make it clear that these can be only in one reply; that the individual only possesses inalienable property of one description; potential effort over a definite period of time. If this be admitted, and it is inconceivable that anyone would seriously deny it, it follows that the real unit of the world's currency is effort into time—what we may call the time-energy unit.

Now, time is an easily measurable factor, and
although we cannot measure human potential, because we have at present no standard, it is, nevertheless, true that for a given process the number of human time-energy units required for a given output is quite definite, and, therefore, the terms on which the individual can liquidate his debt to nature in respect of food, clothes and shelter, is clearly dependent on a process; and by getting free of this debt with the minimum expenditure of time-energy units, of which his individual supply varies, but is, nevertheless, quite definite at any given point, is clearly so much the richer in the most real sense in that he can control the use to be made of his remaining stock.

But, and it is vital to the whole argument, improved process must be made the servant of this objective, that is to say, a process which is improved must, by the operation of a suitable economic system decrease the time-energy units demanded from the community, or to put the matter another way all improvements in process should be made to pay a dividend to the community. (It will be noted that an admission of the theorem is a complete condemnation of payment by results on any grounds; that is to say, an arrangement of remuneration designed to foster an increasing use of time-energy units.) The primary necessary of life as above defined, i.e., food, clothes and shelter, have an important characteristic which differentiates them from what we may call conveniences and luxuries, that is, the quite apparent inability of a single person to make any appreciable supply of either quantity per head of the population; in other words, the average human being requires as a groundwork for his daily life a definite number of heat units in the form of suitable food, a definite minimum quantity of clothing and a definite minimum space in which to sleep and work, and the variation between the minimum and the maximum quantity of each that he can utilise with advantage to himself is not, broadly speaking, very great.

This fact renders it perfectly feasible (it has already very largely been accomplished)—to estimate the absolute production of foodstuffs required by the world's population; the time-energy units required at the present stage of mechanical and scientific development to produce those foodstuffs; and the time-energy units approximately available. Accuracy in these estimates is unnecessary, since there is not the smallest doubt that the large that it is only the failure of "effective demand" under existing circumstances which has prevented over-production. The most superficial consideration of the earnings of agriculture before the war must make this obvious.

There is good ground for stating that the subsistence basis of the civilised world stated thus in time-energy units represents a few minutes' work per day for all adults between the ages of 18 and 40. Exactly the same principle is applicable to the provision of clothing and housing, and the "maintenance rate" in respect of these staple commodities as distinct from the "exploitation effort" necessary to put the world on a satisfactory basis does not again exceed a few minutes per day per head on the assumption that the fullest use is made of natural sources of energy, and that all the human effort specifically connected with the system of production for profit is eliminated. The exact figures are beside the point, but something over three hours' work per head per day is ample for the purpose of meeting consumption and depreciation of all the factors of modern life under normal conditions and proper direction.

Now, such a line of policy is clearly based on co-ordination of design, but it evolves under certain conditions radical decentralisation of initiative.

These conditions are firstly definite productions of ultimate products to a programme, and consequent limitation of output to that programme; and, secondly, the provision of an incentive to produce which shall ensure the distribution of the article produced. The basis of the first condition has just been indicated briefly; the provision of an incentive requires more extended analysis. There is a desire on the part of certain idealistic people, and, in particular, in quarters obsessed by the magic of the State idea, to decry the necessity of any organised incentive in industry at all. They seem to suggest either that the problem is merely one of designing a huge machine of such irresistible power that no incentive is necessary because no resistance is possible, or, alternatively, that the mere creative impulse ought to be sufficient to induce every individual to give of his best without any thought of personal benefit. In regard to the former idea, it may be said that quite apart from its fundamental objection it is quite impracticable; and in regard to the latter that it is not yet, nor for a very considerable time, likely to be practicable to satisfy the creative impulse through the same channels as those used for the economic business of the world.

Under existing conditions there is much necessary work to be done which cannot fail to be largely of a routine nature, and the provision of an incentive external to the performance of the immediate task seems both practically and morally sound.

First of all, some consideration of the defects of existing incentives is necessary in order to meet the difficulties so exposed. Broadly, remuneration, or the system by which the amenities of civilisation are placed at the disposal of the individual, is of three varieties; payment by financial manipulation (profit), payment by time (salaries and time-rate wages), and payment by results (piece-work in all its forms), and it should be noticed that only the first of these combines possession of the amenities with opportunities for their fullest use.

Payment by financial manipulation whether through the agency of profit (other than that earned by personal endeavour), dividends, stock manipulation or otherwise, is quite definitely anti-social. It operates to neutralise all progress towards real efficiency by diluting the medium of exchange, and by this process it will quite certainly bring about the downfall of the social order to which it belongs, largely through the operation of the factory economic system already discussed.

Payment by time fails for two practical reasons; it is based on the operation of the fallacy that the value of a thing bears any relation to the demand for it, and the assumption that money has a fixed value. Because of the first reason it clearly penalises genuine initiative (because there is no demand for the unknown), and because of the second, it fosters aggression. The policy of Trade Unions in regard to time rates of pay has simply been successful to the extent that it has used its organised power for aggressive action; and while such a policy may be sound and justifiable under existing conditions it clearly offers no promise of social peace.

Payment by results or piecework may be considered as the final effort of an outworn system to justify itself. Superficially, it seems fair and reasonable in almost any of its many forms; actually it operates to increase the individual time-energy units expended while decreasing through diluted currency, the exchange value of each time-energy unit, and crediting to the banker and the financier nearly the whole value of increased efficiency. If this contention is questioned, a reference to the much greater purchasing power of labour in the Middle Ages admitted in such books as "The Six Hour Day"* must surely confirm it.

In actual practice, anyone giving free time does nor can take into consideration that just as there is no limit to progress either of method or dexterity, so is there no

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* "The Six Hour Day and other Industrial Problems,"—Lord Leverhulme.
The fundamental relation between money and value as at present understood.

Consequently, all piecework systems produce in varying degree one of three conditions, either

1. Large classes of workers earn continuously increasing sums of money which bear no ratio to equally meritorious efforts on other bases of payment.

If any effort is made to unify the basis on a large scale the purchasing power of money becomes completely unstable.

or

2. A piece rate is "nursed" to avoid any urgent incentive to change of method as an excuse for cutting the rate and earnings, with the result that output is restricted to a locally agreed basis, having no relation to either real or effective demand.

or

3. The price will be cut periodically by dubious management, a constant state of friction engendered, and the whole affair surrounded with an atmosphere of suspicion.

These results are logical, and to blame any special interest for any of them is beside the point. The usual value of the product, short time, unemployment, to say nothing of the elemental facts of industrial psychology and economics, are not considered at all in such systems; with the result that the victims make, so far as Trade Unions on the one hand and Employers' Federations on the other, can assist them, their own arrangements for protection against the more dire consequences of crude forms of scientific management, or lukewarm service.

We have now arrived at this position; we desire to produce a definite programme of necessary with a minimum expenditure of time-energy units. We agree that the substitution of human effort by natural forces through the agency of machinery is the clear path to this end; and we require to co-relate to this a system which will arrange for the equitable distribution of the whole product while, at the same time, providing the most powerful incentive to efficiency possible.

The general answer to this problem may be stated in the four following propositions, which represent an effort to arrive at the Just Price:

1. Natural resources are common property, and the means for their exploitation should also be common property.

2. The payment to be made to the worker, no matter what the unit adopted, is the sum necessary to enable him to buy a definite share of ultimate products irrespective of the time taken to produce them.

3. The payment to be made to the improver of process, including direction, is to be based on the rate of decrease of human time-energy units resulting from the improvement, and is to take the form of an extension of facilities for further improvement in the same or other processes.

4. Labour is not exchangeable; product is.

No attempt will be made to prove these propositions since their validity rests on equity.

It should be noted particularly that none of these points has any relation to systems of administration, although a recognition of them would radically affect the distribution of personnel in any system of administration.

While the distribution of the product of industry is fundamentally one of the industries to vary the articles produced are clearly modified to a degree which would profoundly alter the industrial situation, no extension of bureaucracy in the accepted sense is implied or induced.

It may be argued that these principles are not susceptible of immediate embodiment but it is, nevertheless, well to bear in mind the imminence of an economic breakdown (as a direct result of the inflation of currency by the capitalisation of negative values) already discussed, and the probability that a new economic system, having as its basis the principles of the law of the conservation of energy, will replace it.

It may be said in regard to proposition (1) that it involves a co-ordination of plant which is clearly an injustice to the present owners. But is it?

A reference to the accounting process already described will make it clear that the community has already bought and paid for many times over the whole of the plant used for manufacturing processes, the purchase price being included in the selling price of the articles produced, and representing, in the ultimate, effort of some sort, but immediately a rise in the cost of living. If the community can use the plant, it is clearly entitled to it; quite apart from the fact that under proper conditions there is no reason why every reasonable requirement of its present owners should not be met under the changed conditions.

Before allowing the methods of compromise, which may or may not be desirable in the practical evolution of a better conception of the community based on these propositions to obscure the objective, a purely idealistic interpretation of them may be worth consideration, as a basis from which to deduce a practical policy.

Let us imagine the theories of rent and wages to be swept away and discredited, the existing industries plant to be the property of the community to be operating with technical efficiency. We are in possession of a census of the material requirements of the community, and are producing to a programme either based on those requirements or on the indirect achievement of them by the processes of barter with similar communities.

Since no extension or alteration of this programme is possible without affecting the whole community, the administration of real capital, i.e., the power to draw on the collective potential capacity to do work is clearly subject to the control of its real owners through the agency of credit.

Let us imagine this collective credit organisation, which might preferably not be the State, to be provided with the necessary organisation to fit it to pass upon, and if desirable to sanction any private enterprise deemed to be in the interest of the community represented, the necessary capitalisation being secured by the general credit. It is clear that such an arrangement involves an appraisal of values both in respect to persons and materials, but it does not necessarily involve any control of policy whatever in respect of the internal administration of any undertaking once originated.

Under these conditions the community can be regarded as a single undertaking (decentralised as to administration to any extent necessary), and every individual comprised within it is in the position of an equal bondholder entitled to an equal share of product. The distribution of the product is simply a problem of the arbitrary adjustment of prices to fit the dimensions of a periodical order to pay, issued to each bondholder, and it will be found that such prices will normally be less than cost, as measured by existing methods.

Let this annual order to pay be inalienable but carrying the assumption that a definite percentage of the individual's stock of time-energy units is freely placed at the disposal of the community. Let these time-energy units be graded so that the lowest grade represents the poorest capacity multiplied by the time-factor, and let all adults on entering productive industry be so graded, and let the least attractive work be done by the agency of these time-energy units. Let an improvement of grade be based on the proposal by the individual of methods, processes or organisation resulting in a diminution of the total time-energy units required for the programme of production, and the success of the proposals. (It will be
noticed that the strongest incentive to right judgment as regards facilities for trial exists here.) Let the possession of a definite "grade" of time-energy unit be the absolute qualification for a superior product; that is to say, proved ability to render special service will be the qualification for facilities to render service, but will not affect the division of product.

Now, it will be noticed that we have under these conditions absolute equity both personal and social. All improvement in process is to the general benefit, while, at the same time, the psychological reward of specific ability is exactly that which common experience shows to be the most perfectly satisfactory. No questions of material remuneration enter into the problem of administration at all; and increased complexity of manufactured product is either bought by increased efficiency or longer working hours; while simplicity of life provides greater opportunities for the use of the product and other activities. A system not dissimilar from the existing Shop Steward system, but with its members acting in the role of Citizens and not as Artisans, might control policy absolutely, i.e., increase or decrease programmes of production and efficiency, etc., without interfering or having any possible incentive to interfere in direction or function. Economic incentive to competition other than in efficiency would disappear completely, and with it the primary cause of war.

**Drama,**

By John Francis Hope.

The new comedy at the Kingsway Theatre is so oddly named that many may hesitate to choose it for an evening's entertainment. "St. George and the Dragons" suggests, however perversely, something of chivalry, acquainted with a superior standard of manners, Mr. Eden Phillpotts are the distressed ladies themselves, and in the last act they shout and rage around St. George in a manner that must make him glad that he is protected by his cloth. The comedy is perverse, and has, indeed, a smack of cruelty in its development; and instead of leaving us, as comedy should insensibly do, emancipated in this case by the clerical lover, points out that celibacy is as surely a gift as opposed to a measurable period of war.

The Bishop has the strategic mind. Having carefully located Stonelands Farm on the map, he goes fishing; and with some ingenuity loses himself, and walks into a bog just outside the farm. He throws himself upon the hospitality of his rescuers, and is thus able to spend the night at the farm, and in the morning the lovers would be off to London to be married at a registry office.

Mr. Phillpotts begins with a perfectly legitimate theme. The daughters of Lord Sampford have received a modern education, and are full of ideas of emancipation and of a passion for "reality." It is legitimate comedy to give them reality, but it is not legitimate comedy to torture them, and to force them to renounce the only reality they are ever likely to know, love. The manner in which it is done condemns it as comedy, for the Bishop grossly abuses the confidence reposed in him by the two characters primarily concerned. The original situation is familiar: the daughter of the aristocrat wanted to marry beneath her rank. It is true that her choice had a longer pedigree than her father; he told her father that the Copplestones were there before the Conqueror, but nobody had heard of the Sampfords before Henry VIII.; but an eternity of yeomanry is not equivalent to a measurable period of nobility, however obtained, although few of the Reformation peers regard them. Mr. Phillpotts has extolled the Devonshire Yeomanry as though theirs was the life to live, the real life of Nature compared with which civilisation was only a decaying odour. On the other hand, he has been a very sympathetic advocate of the emancipation of women, and his general sympathies have been "democratic," as the phrase goes, as opposed to...
the more rigid and exclusive ideal of caste. Yet here, reversing even the theatrical tradition of comedy, he breaks the young, fresh spirits into conformity with the rules of life, and instead of teaching the younger generation to be responsible for themselves, the superior claims of Church and Family are urged. The assumptions are that a lady ought not to marry a working farmer, and that a clergyman ought to be celibate; and both assumptions reveal such a spirit of exclusiveness that we can suppose that Mr. Phillpotts has been dining with a lord, perhaps at a tenants’ dinner. His St. George is not a patron of Merrie England, and a comedy that ends in the weeping of women is a cantoankerous comedy. The sooner that Bishop orders his tomb the better it will be for the comic spirit.

A Reformer’s Note-Book.

RE-INCARNATION. We cannot know whether re-incarnation is a fact in nature until the independent existence of the soul is scientifically established, and the actual process of re-incarnation becomes an observable phenomenon. In other words, the doctrine must lack intellectual evidence until the faculty of clairvoyance has been more fully developed. On the other hand, the same is true of all the various spiritual doctrines, including, of course, all the doctrines of religion, and that is why we may suppose that Mr. Phillpotts has been trained in the more rigid and exclusive ideal of caste. Yet here, reversing even the theatrical tradition of comedy, he breaks the young, fresh spirits into conformity with the rules of life, and instead of teaching the younger generation to be responsible for themselves, the superior claims of Church and Family are urged. The assumptions are that a lady ought not to marry a working farmer, and that a clergyman ought to be celibate; and both assumptions reveal such a spirit of exclusiveness that we can suppose that Mr. Phillpotts has been dining with a lord, perhaps at a tenants’ dinner. His St. George is not a patron of Merrie England, and a comedy that ends in the weeping of women is a cantoankerous comedy. The sooner that Bishop orders his tomb the better it will be for the comic spirit.

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Homage to Sextus Propertius.

By Ezra Pound.

III.

Midnight, and a letter comes to me from our mistress

Telling me to come to Tibur "At once!"

Bright tips reach up from twin towers,

Anianen spring-water falls into flat-spread pools.

What is to be done about it?

Shall I entrust myself to entangled shadows

Where bold hands may do violence to my person?

Yet if I postpone my obedience,

because of this respectable terror,

I shall be prey to lamentations worse than a nocturnal assailant.

And I shall be in the wrong,

and it will last a twelve-month,

For her hands have no kindness me-ward,

Nor is there anyone to whom lovers are not sacred at midnight

And in the Via Sciro.

If any man would be a lover

he may walk on the Scythian coast:

No barbarism would go to the extent of doing him harm,

The moon will carry his candle,

the stars will point out the stumbles,

Cupid will carry lighted torches before him

and keep mad dogs off his ankles.

Thus all roads are perfectly safe

and at any hour;

Who so indecorous as to shed the pure gore of a suitor?

Cypris is his cicerone.

What if undertakers follow my track—

such a death is worth dying.

She would bring frankincense and wreaths to my tomb,

She would sit like an ornament on my pyre.

Gods' aid, let not my bones lie in a public location

With crowds too assiduous in their crossing of it;

For thus are tombs of lovers most desecrated.

May a woody and sequestered place cover me with its foliage

Or may I inter beneath the hummock

of some as yet uncatalogued sand;

At any rate I shall not have my epitaph in a high-road.
will sometimes exclaim bitterly: "If I had as much technical talent as the designer of that hideous wallpaper, I would be a noted artist." Or, "If I had the digital facility of that execrable violinist, I could give pleasure to thousands."

There is in theory no actual line of demarcation between the psychological teaching of English composition and the practical instruction of the pupil. The paradox is this: that the potentials of genius are sufficiently universal and patent in this particular subject to admit of the profitable application of the above principle in class; and, as I have said before, individual genius thrives in the atmosphere of fellowship.

To conclude this chapter I will quote the first part of the sketch by Radcliffe (aged 13), mentioned last week, which perhaps I ought to say was a pure effort of imagination. The form was simply given the subject with no suggestions as to its treatment whatever.

The humour is in places somewhat crude—he should have known better than to use the words "hubby " and "gingham "—but I think it shows considerable power of observation and insight into human nature as the result of close observation. It will be noticed that the writer sees most of the events through the eye of Mrs. Brown, introducing effectively such a phrase as "How tiresome!" without the use of inverted commas. A subjective atmosphere is thus created—a whiff of actuality. Whether he had on some occasion encountered this unfamilial artifice in his reading, or whether he evolved it himself, I cannot say. Nor do I know to what extent its use was unconscious; but I remember when I was reading it through with him that with much hesitation and embarrassment he called my attention to the word "pickles," which I thought he wished me to realise was not his own term, but Mrs. Brown's. Perhaps I wished him to see that I felt rather aggrieved at his inadequate conception of my powers of comprehension. Anyhow, I replied rather coldly that I thought I was capable—whereupon he disarmed me at once with an appealing look and words to the effect that I was showing considerable power in his company.

Here, then, with all its faults and merits, is the instrument of one boy's "literary conversion":

MR. BROWN TAKES HIS FAMILY TO THE SEASIDE.

There were five in the family altogether; Mr. Brown, a short, stout, and homely man; Mrs. Brown, also stout and strong; he must have on some occasion encountered this unfamiliar artifice in his reading, or whether he evolved it himself, I cannot say. Nor do I know to what extent its use was unconscious; but I remember when I was reading it through with him that with much hesitation and embarrassment he called my attention to the word "pickles," which he wished me to realise was not his own term, but Mrs. Brown's. Perhaps I wished him to see that I felt rather aggrieved at his inadequate conception of my powers of comprehension. Anyhow, I replied rather coldly that I thought I was capable—whereupon he disarmed me at once with an appealing look and words to the effect that I was showing considerable power in his company.

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off, with many complaints on the part of Mrs. Brown about shoes, hats, umbrellas, etc.

Now the taxi has stopped at Victoria Station. Mrs. Brown gets out and pays the taximan, complaining that it is too dear. No, whether is Mr. Brown? He has gone to fetch a porter. Oh, here he comes. Mrs. Brown bustles about the luggage, tapping it all with her gingham, and telling the porter at the same time which is where is Jacky? He is nowhere to be found. Ada must go and find him. No, she is indining the luggage; well, hubby must go. Hubby disappears.

"Two wholes and three halves to Brighton, please."

Mrs. Brown takes the tickets and goes in search of the others. Where can they be? They must be at the labelling place; but no, they are not there—how tiresome! Where they are! Ada and Willy were found eating caramels on the sly. Ada is there, and the happy family is united once again. At length they are in the train.

At last! Now we are off; the train is moving out of the station, and Mrs. Brown sinks down utterly exhausted. Ada and Willy clap their hands, Ada adjusts her hair, and Willy smokes his pipe. Mrs. Brown does not mind smoke, especially in her present condition. Now they are in a tunnel, and Mrs. Brown insists on having the window shut; she then goes to sleep.

Suddenly Mrs. Brown was rudely awakened from her peaceful sleep by a very familiar sound; it was that of thuds, screams, and labelling. Now what are those children up to, I wonder?" said Mrs. Brown, and going out into the passage she looked for a minute, then, coming into the carriage, she seized her gingham and marches with a very superior air back into the passage again. More, heavier thuds are heard, screams, bangs, and still language. Mrs. Brown then enters, carrying Willy under one arm and Jacky, who is very puffed and disreputable, under the other. Ada follows sheepishly behind, and Mr. Brown looks over his spectacles at the scene and does not know whether to laugh or be angry. Willy and Jacky are made to stand in opposite corners, Ada and Willy more adjusts the tiresome hair of hers, and at length peace and order is restored.

At last the train pulls up at Brighton, and, having alighted, they get into a rickety horse-bus and drove up to the Westerner Boarding House. When they got out they looked with much awe at their new surroundings. The boarding house was tall and old-fashioned, slate-grey in colour, with "The Westerner Boarding House" outside in big gold letters. Mrs. Brown immediately put on an air of authority, walked up the steps, and rang the bell.

VAS HONORABLE.

Tower of ivory and gold,
Mystic Rose, whose petals fold
Softly o'er the God they hold;
Ecce ancilla Domini.

Heaven's unclouded empyres,
Depths where ocean deepest lies,
Mirror'd in a Virgin's eyes;
Ecce ancilla Domini.

Garden-close where no winds stir,
Camphire, frankincense, and myrrh,
Breath of cedars fanning her;
Ecce ancilla Domini.

Seven joys my Babe did bring,
Seven swords from them shall spring,
Hush, my Babe, the heavens sing
How happy am I, O Heav'nly Domini.

Small red lips that seek my breast,
Little limbs now closely press'd
Where a Thorn-Crown'd Head shall rest;
Ecce ancilla Domini.

Sweat of blood and anguish'd cry,
Bitter night of agony,
Long the way to Calvary,
Ecce ancilla Domini.

Sleep, my Babe, nor weep to hear
O' er Thy Head the branching Tree
On my heart I cradle Thee;
Ecce ancilla Domini.

HELEN ROOTHAM.
Recent Verse.

M. ST. CLARE BYRNE. "Aldebaran." (Blackwell. 2s. net.)

Mr. Byrne makes the common mistake of giving us a catalogue of things instead of a swift vision. In the very first poem, "Devotion," he enumerates the things which he will remember when he comes to die—your hair, the cracking of the fire, bare trees in November, and so on; and, again, in a later poem he draws up a list of the things that have power and wonder with his soul. Very, very rarely are such catalogues even interesting to the reader; for the poet has all the advantage of an emotion he fails to communicate. "Michael Dreams," which we remark because it has previously been published, is a mere vignette, such as a novelist introduces by the score into a single narrative. Mr. Thomas Hardy is a master of them. But here, again, observation. The things she observes are as the sands about, and a song in free rhythm, too? More is expected of the freedom of rhythm than a prose trifle of this kind. "In the Garden" is the sort of poem that used to appeal to boys, still does, in the "Girls' Own Paper" or the "Quiver."

You and I, in the garden, Walking up and down, All in the chill December, And the trees so bare and brown. "Domiduce" has likewise "also ran" somewhere.

The best verse is as follows:

White bread on thy board; Let thy land afford Lettuces green and sweet, Apples to eat.

It will be hard to get a moment of pure contemplation out of five verses like that. "Blessing the Bounds" is not wholly without merit, and the fourth verse has a slight atmosphere.

May every walk of grass Where the young rabbits pass Be green and soft to tread: Fragrant each flower bed.

"Antinoë," a prologue, slips in its verses by conveying purely modern, even recent, notions into an antique story. Sharp prows running curving beaches do not fit in with lines like these:

With summer sunset flaunting in the west, And the world-wearied sun, sinking space. The ancient Greeks did not cultivate the style of 1892. Even from these low levels, however, there is a descent, and it is made in the poem "The Explorer." Way for the recitation!

I knew it was only fancy, But for hours I could not go to bed, Fretting that I'd been fooling. When I might have been with her instead.

Mr. Byrne leaves us fretting.

SUSAN MILES. "Dunch." (Blackwell. 2s. 6d. net.)

Mrs. Miles is a real original; and we can rejoice in her as in George Ake—once! There is, in fact, something American in her invention, and still more in her observation. The things she observes are as the sands of the seashore for multitude; and they are that 'cute, and that happily expressed, that the reader may burst his sides a-laughing. The free rhythm, or, let us say, the typographical style, in which they are written adds nothing whatever to their effect; but it is, no doubt, a particular whim of the writer to give such instructions to the printer as the American school advocates. Here is an example which has possibly not been already quoted:

Minnie Rolls' mam says as there's more Under that boy's cap Than what you'd think for. Minnie Rolls don't half squint; But it ain't a squint, not really; The doctor what lives up at the hospital Says it's all along of Minnie Rolls having Elephant's Eye. Minnie Rolls' mam's got a tumour What the doctor up at the hospital Put seventy-five stitches in. It didn't half hurt.

This is plainly marked down for a "character-sketch" on the music-halls. Who is it that does them so well? On communicating with Mrs. Miles, she will hear something to the advantage of her repertory. Note, by the way, that this fragment, like its block, would have been none the worse for straightforward print. "Daffodils" introduces the first hint of something better than the high-class music-hall. It is a tender and not unimaginative study of a little boy bearing daffodils on a train journey. The author sees him "no longer in a railway carriage, But straining at the hand Of Caspar, Out-pacing Melchior, and Urging on with impatient cries Balthasar." Mr. Chevalier rarely, if ever, achieved such heights. "Despatches" is even better. Save, perhaps, for "The Wind," which is in its proper tenses and might have appeared in Stevenson's "Child's Garden of Verse," "Despatches" is really the best poem in the volume. Is there a probability to Mr. Ezra Pound's "Cathay," and, further, it suggests the possibility that Mrs. Miles, with her incomparable gift of observation and her happy knack of "hitting off a characteristic, may also have a talent for prose poems after the Chinese manner. There is undoubtedly a place for this form in our literature. Much of modern "verse" is really looking for it as for a form in which its sentiment can lie comfortably. "Despatches" is almost in it. "Dunch," by the way, is a book to buy.

VERA AND MARGARET LARVINIE. "Out of the East." (Blackwell. 2s. net.)

A comparison of the verses of these two sisters (we presume) might lead us into over-curious speculations. Let us take them one by one. The poems by "Vera" owe a good deal to the celebrated song-writer, Temple Hope, or some such name, one of whose songs contained lines that used to be on every girl's lip once upon a time:

Less than the dust beneath thy chariot wheels, Less than the dust that never stained thy sword.

Vera Larvinie writes:

Less than the least, more lowly than the low, Whose heart is in the dust beneath thy feet: Less than the least, yet highest of the high. If thou, my lord, have any joy in me.

That this is a sincere and not a spurious imitation of the original sentiment is proven by the fact that the mixed humble-proud and altogether melancholy mood is maintained throughout all the poems of "Vera." Repetition, it is well known, is the habit of mind of the disappointed humble; and in poem after poem phrases and words are repeated with all the monotony of an uncontrolled dissatisfied mind. In a poem of five four-lined stanzas the phrase "The night drew down" is repeated no fewer than ten times. The effect is hypnotic. "The Ghost" is passable verse, but the eeriness is spread too thin. A little ghost goes a long way. "Thanksgiving" betrays the bitterness which usually lies hid in Oriental humility. No poetry can be made of such a mood or such a sentiment. Here it is, whole:

I thank my God that he is only dead;
That is the lightest burden I could bear—
To know him safe and undisboshered where
He cannot shame the better men he led.
Let other women mourn the sons they bred,
With all the splendour of high youth they wore;
This is the voice of wrongs, but not of error. Margaret Larvinie not only desires balance, but occasionally arrives at it, though after oscillations of sentimentalism. I know a face where wrinkles steal like shadows at the close of summer's day, where greyness doth usurp the rose. As mists of evening blot the sun away. This verse would be all the better for the omission of the second and fourth lines. "Mine" is likewise in a serene tone: Memory, be a little kind; Grant him, his day within my mind; Let the clouds blot out the sun, Fortune's stars fade one by one. Only, Memory, hear my plea: Keep this one day sweet for me. The experiences are commonplace, and the expression suits them. 

views and reviews

Judge-made law.

The announcement that the ex-Kaiser will be tried in London seemed to set the seal of reality on the Peace Treaty. The one tangible result of the war has been the stimulation to the point of inflation, of the legal imagination. Judge-made law, which Dicey said is apt to be hypothetical law, constitutes a considerable, perhaps the major, part of our law; and the trial of the ex-Kaiser (if and when it takes place) will afford full opportunity of the legislative activity of the Bench. The Court, according to the Peace Treaty, will consist of five judges, one each from America, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan; the language in which the pleadings will be made, and rebutted, is not stated; the offence is not defined; nor are the penalties known. "A supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties" is not the language of an indictment; and the fact that it will be the duty of the Court "to fix the punishment which it considers should be imposed," is very clear indication that no law exists at present relating to the alleged offence. The law, if it is ever declared, will run counter to one of the fundamental principles of law; it will be retrospective in its effect, making a criminal offence of what, at the time it was committed, was not a criminal offence.

The last edition of Sir Frederick Smith's book on "International Law," edited by Dr. Coleman Phillipson and published last year, leaves us wondering what is "the supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties." "Treaties," we are told, "form the contract law of States, and it is in dealing with their enforcement and duration that international law most prominently fails. In the absence of a supreme authority capable of developing a system of law and enforcing its decrees, all rules are of the nature of suggestions for the guidance of conduct; and while nations are so careful as they are at present to reserve their right of answering questions concerning 'their honour and vital interests' in all general submissions to arbitration, the rules applicable to treaties of the more important kind, which do not merely deal with points of detail, must remain largely in the region of 'pious aspirations.'"

But the analogy between contracts between States and contracts between individuals must not be pushed too far, we are told, if the purpose is to state the law as it is. Particularly in the case of duration of treaties is the analogy of the municipal law of contracts misleading; though, possibly," says our author, "the claim which States make to disregard a treaty if the circumstances have changed may be supported by reference to those cases in municipal law, such as bankruptcy and the disappearance of the subject-matter of the contract, in which provision is made for the release of the parties otherwise than by mutual consent; and it must always be remembered that in municipal law the breach of contract is condoned on payment of damages, and that the enforcement of specific performance is an exceptional measure applied only to contracts of a particular kind." In municipal law, breach of contract is not a criminal offence; in international law the breach of treaty is only doubtfully a civil offence. But the Peace Treaty declares that the judges will not be bound by international law; in its own words: "In its decision the tribunal will be guided by the highest motives of international policy, with a view to vindicating the solemn obligations of international undertakings and the validity of international morality." This may be very comforting to our consciences, but it does not help us to understand or to define the offence.

For the Extradition Treaties are international undertakings, and breach of treaty is not an offence for which a demand to be made for the extradition of the offender. The Peace Treaty tacitly admits this, and expressly states: "The Allied and Associated Powers will address a request to the Government of the Netherlands for the surrender to them of the ex-Emperor in order that he may be put on trial." This will be an extra-legal request, going so far beyond the solemn obligations of international undertakings as represented by the Extradition Treaties; and in the event of the Government of the Netherlands failing to comply with the request, a new conflict of international law will be inevitable. The principle of international policy was not formally expressed in the Extradition Treaties, making the rule of a State criminally liable to the unwritten law of another State for a breach of treaty; the omission makes the introduction of a new principle of international law so difficult, that it is to be presumed that the precedent established by the trial of the ex-Kaiser will introduce a new principle—the principle that a ruler is responsible not only to his own people, but to the peoples of other countries. We surely cannot try the ex-Kaiser without recognising that the ruler of England, for example, ought equally to be liable to trial by a foreign body of judges if he were guilty of some unspecified offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties. Judge-made law, we know, is always made ah hoc, but it elevates precedents into principles; and if the Allied Court of Judges were to declare that it is incumbent on the ex-Kaiser, the position of the ruler of any country will not be an enviable one if "the validity of international morality" is established on any principle other than that of Vae Victis.

On all grounds, it is to be hoped that the ex-Kaiser will not be tried. The alleged offence against the sanctity of treaties presumably relates to the violation of Belgian neutrality; and the author of "International Law" declares that "the draftsmanship, for example, of the Belgian guarantee is lamentably defective." For the Court to sit without registering a conviction would make the whole procedure ridiculous, and bring international law into contempt; but to register a conviction, it will have to refuse validity to the defendant's interpretation of an admittedly defective piece of legal drafting, it will have to establish a new principle of political responsibility in international law, it may even have to act in contradiction to existing international law. If there has been manifest, as Dicey declared, a decline of respect for law throughout Europe during the last forty years, the fault has been largely that of the lawyers; and it will not be remedied by an obvious wrenching of legal terms from their legal meanings, by a compulsory misapplication of legal machinery, for no other apparent purpose than that of humiliating a fallen enemy. Invented offences and ad hoc judgments are the simple negation of law and order.
The Maiden of Kossovo.

Translated from the Serbian by Helen Rootham.

Early rose the Maiden of Kossovo,
Early rose she on a Sunday morning,
Rise before the brilliant sun had risen. She has rolled the white sleeves of her robe back, Rolled them back up to her soft white elbows; On her shoulders, fair white braid she carries, In her hands two shining golden goblets, In one goblet she has poured fresh water, And has poured good red wine in the other. Then she seeks the wide plain of Kossovo, Seeks the noble Prince's field of battle, Wanders there amongst the bleeding heroes. When she finds one living midst the wounded Then she laves him with the cooling water, Gives him sacramentally the red wine, Pledges with her fair white brea the hero. Fate at last has led her wandering footsteps Unto Pavle Orlovitch, the hero, Who has borne the Prince's battle-standard. From his gaping wounds the blood is streaming, In the whole world no more splendid hero, On the ground his clanking sabre trilling, Silken cap with proudly waving feathers, And around his neck a silken kerchief, On his hand a golden ring is shining, And upon his arm a golden bracelet. Then he gazes round and looks upon me, He takes off and gives it to me, saying : Here hast thou my ring of gold, oh, Maiden! By it thou wilt have me in remembrance, By this gold ring shall my name live with thee. New, dear Maid, must I go forth to perish, Now, dear Maid, must I go forth to perish, There where camps our noble Prince's army; Pray to God for me, dear Maid, my sister, That I may come back again in safety. Then, dear Maid, that good luck may attend thee I will marry thee to my friend Milan, Him whom God has given me as brother, My friend Milan who is my sworn brother. In God's name and good Saint John's, I promise I myself will give thee to the bridegroom. 

And then went away these mighty leaders, And to-day I seek them here, oh, brother, Seek them here, upon the field of battle!

Pavle Orlovitch then makes her answer : "Oh, dear sister, Maiden of Kossovo, What great need has forced thee here to wander, Thou, so young, amongst the wounded heroes? What dost thou upon the field of battle? Dost thou seek a brother's son, or brother? Dost thou seek, perchance, an aged father?" Answered her the Maiden of Kossovo : "Oh, dear brother! Oh, thou unknown warrior! None of my own race am I now seeking, Not a brother's son, nor yet a brother, Neither do I seek my aged father. Hast thou noticed, oh, thou unknown warrior! When three weeks ago to all his army Prince Lazar the Sacrament has given By the hands of thirty holy fathers In the splendid church of Samodreza? When Lazar and all the Serbian army There the Holy Sacrament have taken, Three vovodas last of all did enter; First of them was Milosh, the great warrior, Ivan Kossanchich was close behind him, And the third, Toplitsa Milan, followed. I by chance stood them within the doorway When there passed young Milosh, the great warrior, In the whole world no more splendid hero; On the ground his clanking sabre trilling, Silken cap with proudly waving feathers, Many-coloured mantle on his shoulders, And around his neck a silken kerchief. Then he gazes round and looks upon me, He takes off his many-coloured mantle, Takes it off, and gives it to me, saying: Here, oh, Maiden, is my golden bracelet. By it thou wilt have me in remembrance, By this golden bracelet shall my name live with thee. Now, dear Maid, must I go forth to perish, Now, dear Maid, must I go forth to perish, There where camps our noble Prince's army; Pray to God for me, dear soul, my sister, That I may come back again in safety; Then, dear Maid, that good luck may attend thee, I will take thee for my true beloved."

And then went away these mighty leaders, And to-day I seek them here, oh, brother, Seek them here, upon the field of battle!

Ivan Kossanchich was close behind him, In the whole world no more splendid hero; On the ground his clanking sabre trilling, Silken cap with proudly waving feathers, Many-coloured mantle on his shoulders, And around his neck a silken kerchief, On his hand a golden ring is shining, Then he gazes round and looks upon me, Takes the golden ring from off his finger, Takes it off, and gives it to me, saying: Here hast thou my ring of gold, oh, Maiden! By it thou wilt have me in remembrance, By this gold ring shall my name live with thee. New, dear Maid, must I go forth to perish, Then, dear Maid, that good luck may attend thee, I will marry thee to my friend Milan, Him whom God has given me as brother, My friend Milan who is my sworn brother. In God's name and good Saint John's, I promise I will be a groomsmen at thy wedding.

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