

# THE NEW AGE

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, AND ART.

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

SUMMER and the peace celebrations are here, and it is an unthankful task to break into a period of pleasure-making with the reminder of the troubles that are before us. Even in a democracy such as ours, however, some foresight is necessary; and we make no apology to our readers for resuming the discussion of the problem of prices in relation to income where we left it off last week. It is idle to pretend that by shutting our eyes to the problem—the most fundamental of all the problems of all civilisations—we shall be able to escape the consequences of failing to solve it. It is no less idle to flatter ourselves with the hope that any kind of a makeshift solution will serve, or that we can trust to improvisations as the occasions successively arise. The coming difficulties are as tremendous as the onset of the recent world-war; and they may be expected to occur with equal suddenness. Earl Brassey, who said in the House of Lords last week that "we were in for a disaster similar to that which overtook the Roman Empire in its last days," was not merely melodramatic or misled by historic analogies. From the reactions of the present high level of prices almost anything in the way of disaster may be confidently expected. Unemployment, starvation, the loss of our world-trade, and a violent state of unrest in the whole of society—these may be only the mutterings of the storm that must break upon us if we neglect to deal effectively with the immediate problem of the cost of living. Neither the nation at large nor the working-classes in general are in a particularly submissive mood. With the share of an unparalleled victory to their credit, and with a world in revolution about them, the latter, we may be sure, will be wanting neither in the spirit nor in the example for resistance to the reduction of the present level of living. If, therefore, the governing classes have no better solution to offer of the whole problem than increased production and reduced spending, the clash is certain; and

from that clash it is barely possible that the British Empire will escape with its life.

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Under these circumstances, so contrary to the common expectation while the war was in progress, it is scarcely permissible for anybody to depend upon a general formula. As Mr. Hartshorn said in the Commons Debate on Monday, we must approach the question primarily as citizens, and not as Labour leaders, employers, Socialist theorists and what not. It is true, of course, that many of us are "committed" to a particular view and a particular solution; and it is also true that, given the maintenance of the normal conditions or even the restoration of the normal conditions, we should all feel ourselves justified in working to make our solutions prevail. But it is clear that the conditions prevailing at this moment are so far from being normal that they show no signs of ever being normal again. The world is undergoing a new birth; and not one of the formulæ applicable to the circumstances that prevailed before the war has now the sovereign virtue of immediate healing. Take, for instance, our own solution—the institution of National Guilds. We have less doubt than ever before that it is to National Guilds as our permanent industrial structure that the nation and even the world must come. The wage system must go, because the world can no longer hope to live by it; and National Guilds are the only positive and practicable alternative. But between the breakdown of the wage system—which we are now witnessing—and the complete establishment of National Guilds there is certain to be an interregnum, long or short as our practical wisdom or the lack of it determines, which must be bridged by measures, economic, political and social, the nature of which is likely to be the subject of fierce discussion. It will even probably be the case that the bridge-builders between the old and the new social orders will be accused of heresy and of all manner of intellectual crimes. We shall be told that we are compromising on the pure doctrines of the Gospel in our efforts to establish them in fact. We are not so sure, indeed, that these charges have not already been brought against us, though only whispered in a corner. Our reply, however, is to point to the circumstances in which the nation is placed; and to put the onus of discovering a better way of approach upon

those who dislike our own. What, we ask, is to be done—not in the circumstances which no longer exist, but in the circumstances that surround us at this moment? We have before us the most critical problem presented to civilisation—the collapse of a universal system before another has been brought into being to take its place. How can we best make the transition to the new system from the given conditions in which we find ourselves? How should we act, in short, in order to bring National Guilds safely and as painlessly as possible out of the existing chaos? That is the question to which we propose to devote ourselves—we hope with the good-will of our readers—for the next few months.

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The event of the week has not been the peace-celebrations, for that referred to the past, but the decision of the Miners' Conference at Keswick to decline the offer of the Government. This has significance for the future. On the face of it, the offer of the Government to suspend the addition of 6s. per ton to the selling-price of coal until such time as the Miners admitted it to be necessary was reasonable enough. But the consideration of what the offer implied was bound to prove fatal to it; and the Keswick resolution was, from our point of view, a foregone conclusion from the moment that a period for examination of the offer was allowed. For, in the first place, the acceptance of the offer would have been tantamount to the admission by the Miners of their prime responsibility for the shortage in coal production; and, in the second place, the acceptance of the obligation to refrain from striking during the experimental period of three months would have conceded industrial peace on any conditions the employers liked to impose throughout the twelve weeks. And what were the Miners to gain by these admissions and sacrifices? Suppose that, at the end of the period, production had been found to have gone up sufficiently to make any increase in the price of coal unnecessary—would anything more have been established by the fact that the present system of control can be made compatible for a time and under special circumstances, with increased production? Would the object of the Miners—the transformation of the wage-system—have been brought any nearer? And suppose that, at the end of the period, production had been found to have gone down—what would then become of the Miners' claim that the proposed increase in the price of coal is unnecessary? From whatever point of view, other than the most superficial, the offer is looked at, the advantages of it to the Miners must appear to be small in comparison with its disadvantages. In a word, we find it rightly condemned by them.

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In the course of the Commons' debate on Monday several notable speeches were made. Those by Mr. Hartshorn and Mr. Brace showed a realisation of the gravity of the occasion which is not always conspicuous in Labour circles. The most comprehensively intelligent speech, however, was delivered by Lord Robert Cecil; and we wish we had the means of publishing the whole of it. Lord Robert Cecil's analysis of the situation, we may say, is not unlike the analysis we published in our Notes of last week; and we feel constrained to add that not much improvement can be made on it. All that is now needed is the synthetis, for which the world is waiting with remarkable patience. The prevalent high level of prices, Lord Robert Cecil said, is not due to local or even to moral causes. Items apart, the general level of prices is due to the inflation of currency brought about by the creation of vast drafts on future values. At the same time, we could not expect to get back to the old system by mere juggling with the currency. As we understand him, Lord Robert Cecil is of the opinion that we cannot expect, in fact, ever to return to the old system. Out

of the complex problems represented in their figurative aspect by the state of the currency, some new system of industry would have to emerge—"some system by which the wage earner will have—I will not say full control—but, at any rate, a voice in the management and a share, I think, in the profits of the industry." Since at least as much as that is also the wish of the Labour movement; and since, as we say, the means to this end are now known and only await discussion and adoption—the debate in the Commons may possibly lead to something practical. Even Lord Robert Cecil is not to be lightly ignored.

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We shall return to the views of the Miners in a moment. In the meantime, what of the views of the Government? For, after all, it is not upon the Miners that the responsibility of discovering the way to the new system rests; without abdicating its function, indeed, it is impossible for the Government to stand aside while the future structure of society is being determined. The problem of high prices in relation to income is, however, immediate; and it would be enough to demand of the present Government to solve this problem without prejudice to the future order. The mode of approach, it appears, is to be dual. On the one side, we are to have a Select Committee of the House of Commons charged with the duty of making a full inquiry into the causes of the present level of prices; and, on the other side, the Food Ministry is to resume the control of common necessities and to extend its operation by means of a network of local Price tribunals. Of the first of these devices for gaining time there is little to be said. We shall see what we shall see. If, however, financiers like Lord Cunliffe are to be the referees of the Inquiry, we may be quite certain that only an increased Banking control will come out of it. In other words, its value will be a negative quantity. The second device is, for public consumption, more promising of results. We cannot help thinking, however, that they will be illusory. For what is the assumption upon which the whole proposed fabric of control rests if not upon the *false* assumption that profiteering in the popular sense is the main cause of high prices? We shall not be accused of harbouring any affection for profiteers as such; as far as public opinion will allow flagrant profiteers to be fined, imprisoned, hung, drawn or quartered, we are prepared to go with public opinion. All experience, all reason, however, convinces us that it is not individuals who are to blame for the present high level of prices, but the system that allows and, in fact, provokes them to profiteer. But what is the use of prosecuting profiteers if profiteering is continued as a system? How much better off shall we be if we succeed (as we certainly shall not) in bringing down prices to the level of the bare cost of production measured in a currency over which we exercise no control? It is not this price or that price of this article or that article that matters—it is, we repeat, the general level of prices. We are in a tide, not a mere wave; and the efforts of the Control Committees to control the waves will leave unaffected the mighty tide. However, there it is; and Mr. Roberts will probably have his tribunals. We will only predict that food prices in general will continue to rise in spite of them.

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The Miners, it must be admitted, have a perfectly good case; though this is not to say that their reasons are adequate to their conclusions. The first Report of the Coal Commission definitely declared, as everybody knows, that the present system of ownership and control of the industry stands condemned. In other words, there can be no question of returning to it, unless the Commission is to be thrown over and treated as if it had never been appointed. The second

Report of the Commission, as likewise everybody knows, went further and, by a majority, if a somewhat mixed majority, declared in favour of the nationalisation of the mines and the industry pending an inquiry into the means and times of bringing that about. The Miners, we think, have every right to demand that either the Reports of the Commission, including the second, shall be made the basis of legislation; or, in the alternative that the Government shall produce a third plan, which is neither that of returning to the former system nor the present proposal for nationalising the industry. Moreover, it is the duty of the Government, in formulating its scheme, to provide for the objects implied in the demand of the Miners for Nationalisation; objects of which nationalisation is only, and only, perhaps, one of the means; in short, for the sharing by the Miners in control. But this, it seems, is precisely what the Government is not ready to do, and, in fact, appears to regard as superfluous. The difficulties may be partly domestic; for no fewer than three hundred members of the Coalition have petitioned the Government against the adoption of Nationalisation without, at the same time, defining what in their opinion should be done. Domestic difficulties or not, however, the onus is clearly on the Government to make a decision in response to the decision of the Miners. The latter have carried out their part of the bargain implied in the acceptance of the Royal Commission. By a majority Report their case for a change of ownership has been proved; by another majority Report their case for nationalisation has been more or less approved. Under these circumstances the Government cannot do anything without breaking its implied pledge. It cannot simply refuse nationalisation and return to a system which the first Report condemned.

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We say all this naturally without any prejudice in favour of nationalisation as proposed in the Sankey Report; for we remain convinced that from the men's own point of view, and equally from the point of the general public, the nationalisation of the mining industry as outlined in the Sankey Report would be an unmitigated evil. Everything is wrong with it that can be wrong with a re-constructive scheme; and not the least of its evils is indicated in the defence made for it by Mr. Masterman and others. "At least," says this writer in the "Daily News"—"at least it will mean that the workers, in future demands or disagreements, will be up against the whole nation, instead of a limited class of private owners." At least, therefore, they are "bound to fail" when their opposition consists no longer of a handful of owners, but of "the State with the whole community behind it." The intention—or, rather, shall we say, the compensation implied, in nationalisation is clear. Its purpose is not to forward the objects of the Miners' Federation, but to oppose to them a more powerful authority than that of the existing proprietary. It is to substitute not an Amurath for an Amurath, but Rehoboam for Jeroboam—an authority whose little finger shall be equal to the waist of the authority now about to be deposed. We say, therefore, that the Miners have the *right* to Nationalisation by the terms under which the Royal Commission was assembled; in the absence of any third proposal emanating from the Government or elsewhere, and designed at once to supersede the present condemned system and to fulfil the objects of the Miners' demands, they have not only the right to expect Nationalisation, but the right of rebellion to enforce the terms of the public contract with them. But their right, as we said, is not an adequate reason for their conclusion that Nationalisation is worth the demand or the enforcement of the demand. The nationalisation likely to be extracted by force will prove to be the defeat of all the objects for which the Miners are about to enforce it.

It will not be so easy, however, as some of the Miners imagine to enforce even a suicidal nationalisation. Political action, it may be taken for granted, will fail against the opposition of considerably over three hundred members of the Government; and the industrial action which Mr. Frank Hodges threatens is scarcely more likely to succeed against the opposition, not only of Parliament but of the vague but real force known as "public opinion." We would it were not so, but the fact is plain that by industrial action the Miners might succeed in causing a great deal of trouble, but they could not succeed in accomplishing their real object of obtaining a share in the control of their industry by means of nationalisation. To the party of the so-called Left that calls for a "great attack on the citadel of Capitalism," we would put these questions: Which is the real citadel? Suppose the present citadel to be only the mask and defence of the real citadel? What is to be gained by an attack at every step of which you must alienate an ever increasing number of people? If your attack succeeds, what have you immediately to put in its place—what is there now growing that we can depend upon to sustain us over the interregnum? And if your attack fails, what must be the consequences of failure? We belong to the Left ourselves. Twelve years of profitless wandering like a voice in the wilderness is an earnest of the fact. We are for revolution, for the revolution of the wage system into National Guilds. But a revolution without a policy, a revolution that is not prepared for the morning after, a revolution of mere negation—is, in our opinion, likely to be only a slaves' revolt. The nationalisation demanded by the Miners is not worth the cracked skull of a single wage-slave. If there must be cracking of skulls, let it be for an object not only realisable by that means, but a just and worthy cause.

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It is no exaggeration to say that the right solution of the present Coal problem is the condition of our national—we were going to say, of the world's—future. The problem of prices is, in part, dependent upon it; and with prices go unemployment and all that that involves. Further than the immediate question of prices, however, the course of the future of industry depends on the twist given to the solution of the problem presented by Coal. If, as we do not anticipate, the Miners should succeed in establishing nationalisation against the will of the existing authorities, against the sentiment and opinions of the public, and against the warnings we and others have uttered, the future course of industry is clearly marked out. The forces now opposed to nationalisation, when defeated on the claim of Coal, will concentrate their defence upon the other industries, with the consequence that every step towards complete nationalisation will become not easier (as the Fabians pretend), but more difficult. Nationalisation is against the grain of society; and the resistance to be anticipated will increase as the knots multiply. On the other hand, it is the business of Reform to ally itself with the grain of the wood; every good workman knows that. And, given a "sweet" solution of the Coal problem, every succeeding problem would almost fall to pieces of itself. We are not boasting when we say there is a means by which a "sweet" solution is possible. The problem presented by Coal can be solved (impossible as it may sound) to the satisfaction of all but the minutest minority of the people of these islands. Every just interest would be respected in it—the ideal objects of the Miners, the just claim of the consumer to cheap coal, and (we are not afraid to add) the prescriptive rights of the existing proprietary. Moreover, it would enable us to bridge over the chasm that now yawns between yesterday and to-morrow.

## Economic Democracy.

By Major C. H. Douglas.

### CHAPTER IX.

WHILE a much higher development not only of civic sense but of material progress is necessary to any realisation of a scheme of society based on anything approximating to the foregoing sketch, it is quite probable that eventually such an arrangement might be the only solution having inherent stability.

But a transition period is highly desirable, and as the present structure is susceptible of change by metabolism, it may be well to consider one of the numerous expedients available to that end.

Since an immediate levelling up of real purchasing power is absolutely essential if industry is to be kept going at all, the first point on which to be perfectly clear is that increasing wages on the grand scale is simply childish. Given a minimum percentage of profit and a fixed process, under the existing economic system the real wage, in the sense of a proportion of product, is steadily decreasing; and nothing will alter that fact except change of process (temporarily) and change of economic system (permanently). Even taxation of profits is quite incapable of providing any real remedy, because, as we have seen, the sum of the wages, salaries and dividends distributed in respect of the world's production, even if evenly distributed, would not buy it, since the price includes non-existent values. There is no doubt whatever that the first step towards dealing with the problem is the recognition of the fact that what is commonly called credit by the banker is administered by him primarily for the purpose of private profit, whereas it is most definitely communal property. In its essence it is the estimated value of the only real capital—it is the estimate of the *potential* capacity under a given set of conditions, including plant, etc., of a Society to do work. The banking system has been allowed to become the administrator of this credit and its financial derivatives with the result that the creative energy of mankind has been subjected to fetters which have no relation whatever to the real demands of existence, and the allocation of tasks has been placed in unsuitable hands.

Now it cannot be too clearly emphasised *that real credit is a measure of the reserve of energy belonging to a community and in consequence drafts on this reserve should be accounted for by a financial system which reflects that fact.*

If this be borne in mind, together with the conception of "Production" as a conversion absorbing energy, it will be seen that the individual should receive something representing the diminution of the communal credit-capital in respect of each unit of converted material.

It remains to consider how these abstract propositions can be given concrete form.

So far as this country is concerned, the instrument which comes most easily to the hand to deal with the matter is the National Debt, which for practical purposes may be considered to be the War Debt in all its forms, although it should be clearly understood that all appropriations of credit can be considered as equally concerned.

Some consideration of the real nature of the debt is necessary in order to understand the basis of this proposal.

The £8,000,000,000 in round numbers which have been subscribed for war purposes represents as to its major portion (apart from about £1,500,000,000 rent) services which have been rendered and paid for, and in particular the sums paid for munitions of all kinds, payment of troops and sums distributed in pensions and other doles. Now, the services have been rendered and the munitions expended, consequently, the

loan represents a lien with interest on the future activities of the community, in favour of the holders of the loan, that is to say, the community guarantees the holders to work for them without payment, for an indefinite period in return for services rendered by the subscribers to the Loan. What are those services?

Disregarding holdings under £1,000 and re-investment of pre-war assets, the great bulk of the loan represents purchases by large industrial and financial undertakings *who obtained the money to buy by means of the creation and appropriation of credits at the expense of the community through the agency of industrial accounting and bank finance.*

It is not necessary to elaborate this contention at any great length because it is quite obviously true. Eventually, to have any meaning, the loan must be paid off in purchasing power over goods not yet produced, and is, therefore, simply a portion of the estimated capacity of the nation to do work which has been hypothecated.

Whatever may be said of subscriptions out of wages and salaries, therefore, there is not the slightest question that in so far as the loan represents the capitalisation of the processes already described, its owners have no right in equity to it—it simply represents communal credit transferred to private account.

To put the matter another way: For every shell made and afterwards fired and destroyed; for every aeroplane built and crashed; for all the stores lost, stolen or spoilt; the Capitalist has an entry in his books which he calls wealth, and on which he proposes to draw interest at 5 per cent, whereas that entry represents loss not gain, debt not credit, to the community, and, consequently, is only realisable by regarding the interest of the Capitalist as directly opposite to that of the community. *Now, it must be perfectly obvious to anyone who seriously considers the matter that the State should lend, not borrow, and that in this respect, as in others, the Capitalist usurps the function of the State.*

But, however the matter be considered, the National Debt as it stands is simply a statement that an indefinite amount of goods and services (indefinite because of the variable purchasing power of money) are to be rendered in the future to the holders of the loan, i.e., it is clearly a distributing agent.

Now, instead of the levy on capital, which is widely discussed, let it be recognised that credit is a communal, not a bankers' possession; let the loan be redistributed by the same methods suggested in respect of a capital levy so that no holding of over £1,000 is permitted; to the end that, say, 8,000,000 heads of families are credited with £50 per annum of additional purchasing power.

And further, let all production be costed on a uniform system open to inspection, the factory cost being easily ascertained by making all payments through a credit agency; the manner of procedure to this end is described hereafter. Let all payments for materials and plant be made through the Credit Agency and let plant increases be a running addition to the existing National Debt, and let the yearly increase in the debt be equally distributed after proper depreciation. Let the selling price of the product be adjusted in reference to the effective demand by means of a depreciation rate fixed on the principle described subsequently, and let all manufacturing and agriculture be done with broad limits, to a programme. Payment for industrial service rendered should be made somewhat on the following lines:—

Let it be assumed that a given production centre has a curve of efficiency varying with output, which is a correct statement for a given process worked at normal intensity. The centre would be rated as responsible for a programme over a given time such that this efficiency would be a maximum when considered with reference to, say, a standard six-hour day. On this rating it is clear that the amount of money available

for distribution in respect of labour and staff charges can be estimated by methods familiar to every manufacturer.

Now let this sum be allocated in any suitable proportion between the various grades of effort involved in the undertaking, and let a considerable bonus together with a recognised claim to promotion be assured to any individual who by the suggestion of improved methods or otherwise, can for the specified programme, reduce the hours worked by the factory or department in which he is engaged.

Now, consider the effect of these measures: Firstly, there is an immediate fall in prices which is cumulative, and, consequently, a rise in the purchasing power of money. Secondly, there is a widening of effective demand of all kinds by the wider basis of financial distribution. There is a sufficient incentive to produce, but there is communal control of undesirable production through the agency of credit; and there is incentive to efficiency. There is the mechanism by which the most suitable technical ability would be employed where it would be most useful while the separation of a sufficient portion of the machinery of economic distribution from the processes of production would restore individual initiative, and, under proper conditions, minimise the effects of bureaucracy.

This rapid survey of the possibilities of a modified economic system will, therefore, probably justify a somewhat more detailed examination of certain features of the proposed structure, and clearly the control and use of credit is of primary importance. It should be particularly noted at this point, however, that every suggestion made in this connection has in view the maximum expansion of personal control of initiative and the minimising and final elimination of economic domination, either personal or through the agency of the State.

## The Lesson of the Caucasus.

By Marmaduke Pickthall.

THERE is a growing suspicion even among the peoples of Europe that the British Government is bent on re-establishing the Russian Empire as nearly as possible in the form in which it existed before the war. Among the peoples of Asia who are on the spot the same idea has passed beyond the stage of mere suspicion. What else can be the reason of the refusal of the Peace Conference to consider the just claims put forward by the Persian Government? How else can one explain the cold reception given to deputations from the peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia, or our persistence in the Czarist projects with regard to Turkey, not to mention our support of Denikin and Koltchak? The war, begun (as we are told) upon behalf of democracy, and to secure the right of self-determination for small nations, ends in a struggle to restore the Russian Czarism, that robber of the rights of nations, great or small.

I know that the idea, in this crude form, is not admitted. We do not want the Russian people to be tyrannised; but it is imperative that we should have a government in Russia which will acknowledge and repay the debts of Czarism; it is imperative that we should put an end to a régime in Russia which is ruinous to vested interests, and aims at their destruction in the whole of Europe and America; and so on. The panic of the financiers has communicated itself to the rulers. But panic is a bad counsellor, apt to create the very danger which it dreads.

It is fairly evident by now to most men who have kept their judgment that the Russian Bolsheviks, if let alone, would settle down to an existence no less respectable for being different from other systems of society, that they would be quite prepared to do their duty, even as capitalists estimate it, towards the rest of Europe in return for peace and a supply of food

and other necessities; and that the sympathy excited not only among communists, but also among lovers of fair play in every country, by what appears as an attempt to quash the first experiment in real democracy, would soon become dispassionate if we gave up attacking them. Then public feeling would be governed by the conduct of the Bolsheviks themselves; now it is exasperated by a reckless propaganda, a needless war and tactless hints of class antipathy.

So much for Europe. Now please condescend to give a thought to Asia. The bugbear of the Asiatic is not Capitalism nor Communism; it is Czarism. The Asiatics most affected in the case before us happen to be Muslims. Islâm has its own sociology. It is a religion involving a complete system of society which every Mussulman believes to be the only practicable way of human happiness. The object of all Muslim revolutions and progressive movements is to restore the Muslim order in its pristine purity. That order has strong elements of communism, and no elements whatever of commercialism; but it has the code and manners of an aristocracy, and hitherto it has felt drawn towards the aristocracies of Europe rather than towards democracies which thump and shout; at all events, the communism of a Lenin and the aristocracy of a Lloyd George are equally foreign to it. Regarding both these new phenomena as among the errors of the Christians, so no concern of theirs, the Muslims of the world would be indifferent to both, if let alone. But Czarism was the active enemy of them and of their social order. They praised God for its downfall; and they cannot look forward to its restoration with complacency.

When the Armistice came, the Persians, Khivans, Turcomans, Circassians—all of them looked to England to secure their Muslim status. The Foreign Minister of the Republic of the Northern Caucasus announced his wish to come and visit me in England in a letter overflowing with pro-British sympathies. He was to come to England after he had done his work in Paris, of which he had no doubt of the successful issue. That was three months ago. He never came, and now his country is a "Soviet republic," which merely means that it has been obliged to look for safety to Lenin at Moscow. The Committee of Union and Progress is not a General Council of the Turkish Soviets, but it is near enough to such a body to be able to assume the style and title at a moment's notice. The same can be said of the Persian revolutionary organisation, and all the Muslim councils in the late Czar's territory. Does anybody think that such accessions would be unwelcome to the Bolsheviks because the Muslims will not discard the monarchist paraphernalia which have become identified with their ideal of theocracy? I am speaking of no distant possibility; the thing is imminent, owing to our efforts to restore the old régime in Russia. Those efforts constitute a menace to the Muslim order of society, for which all good Muslims are prepared to fight and die, if necessary. When we have made the necessity quite clear to them—and we are daily working hard in that direction—you will see.

The Muslim countries must have frontiers possible for defence. Yet Persia is denied her natural, strategic frontiers, her own territories taken from her by the Czarism, which the Russian people's Government was willing to restore; nor only that, but she has every cause to fear that the said strategic frontiers will be once more placed at the disposal of a Czarist army, the said territories once more handed over to the tender mercies of a Denikin. That means that her condition of the last few years before the war will be made permanent with the approval of the League of Nations—the same League of Nations which would place the Turkish people at the mercy of their most bitter enemies and deprive them of all access to the sea!

She will have no security, will live in constant terror



of a Russian inroad, hampered at every step by Russian interference. It means that she can never hope to regain her old prosperity. Russian aggressions had reduced her to the very limit of existence as a self-providing State, and now she will be kept in that constrained position, always menaced with extinction if she dare complain. Persia still looks fairly big upon the map, but the whole central portion of the land is desert, so that the prosperity of Persia has always, in her history, been a matter of circumference.

Our rulers would do well to ponder all these things, and ask themselves if it is really wise and politic to drive so many peoples to despair.

## A Guildsman's Interpretation of History.

By Arthur J. Penty.

XIV.—THE FRENCH REVOLUTION—(continued). It was because Rousseau had built the elaborate superstructure of his reasoning upon a foundation of false history that he was driven to postulate the existence of something at the centre of society which he termed the General Will, and upon which he relied to usher in the new social order. Exactly what he meant by this general will is most difficult to determine, for while on the one hand he exalts it into a fetish capable of performing every imaginable kind of political miracle, on the other he proceeds to qualify his original proposition in so many ways as almost to rob it of any definite meaning, "So long," he says, "as a number of men in combination are considered as a single body they have but one will, which relates to the common preservation and the general well being. In such a case all the forces of nature are vigorous and simple, and its principles are clear and luminous; it has no confused and conflicting interests; the common good is everywhere plainly manifest, and only good sense is required to perceive it. Peace, union and equality are foes to political subtleties. Upright and simple-minded men are hard to deceive because of their simplicity; allurements and refined pretexts do not impose upon them; they are not even cunning enough to be dupes. . . . A State thus governed needs very few laws; and in so far as it becomes necessary to promulgate new ones the necessity is universally recognised. The first man to propose them only gives expression to what all have previously felt, and neither factions nor eloquence will be needed to pass into law what everyone has already resolved to do, so soon as he is sure that the rest will act as he does." The general will, he goes on to say, is indestructible. It is always constant, unalterable, and pure; but when private interests begin to make themselves felt it is subordinated to other wills which get the better of it. After telling us all these fine things he has some misgivings, and proceeds: "the general will is always right, but the judgment which guides it is not always enlightened," and that "there is no general will with reference to a particular object." After making these qualifications there does not appear to be very much of the general will left, and we begin to wonder what was at the bottom of his mind. The only explanation I can offer of these apparent contradictions is that the general will is something which relates to the subliminal consciousness of mankind, but is not a part of his normal consciousness. Mr. de Maetzta says there is no such thing as a general will, but only different groupings of individual wills,\* and for practical political purposes I think he is right. I have a suspicion that Rousseau really agreed with him.

What Rousseau feared came about. All the careful detailed reservations he made to protect possible mis-

\* "Authority, Liberty, and Function," by Ramiro de Maetzta.

applications of the principles he enunciated were disregarded by his followers. All the ideas which he regarded as means to ends came to be exalted as ends in themselves, and to be believed in with all the fervour of strong religious conviction. Nature, the rights of man, liberty, equality, the social contract, hatred of tyrants and popular sovereignty were for the Jacobins the articles of a faith which was above and beyond discussion. They did not believe these things in the more or less philosophic spirit in which Rousseau believed them, but in the way that only men of simple and violent temperaments can believe things. Their firm conviction made them the driving force of the Revolution, for it gave them great strength of will, which enabled them completely to dominate the more intelligent but weaker-willed members of the Assemblies, while it created a kind of revolutionary religion in France which inspired the armies of the Revolution.

In the Constituent Assembly the Jacobins were a small group, and at no time were they very numerous, though during the Convention they dominated France. The Revolution had not yet got its stride. This first Assembly consisted of landlords, magistrates, physicians, and lawyers. It was what in these days would be called a business Government, that is, a Government of men who wanted to see things changed politically, but not economically, who believed in liberty, but not in equality. They enjoyed the illusion which business men generally enjoy, that what is in their personal interests is necessarily in the interests of the community. This limitation, though it gives annoyance to others, may not, under normal conditions, have serious consequences, but in a time of crisis it is a fatal defect for a class who seek to wield power, for it raises a barrier between them and popular feeling. So it was that the Constituent Assembly forfeited the confidence of the people by two of their actions. They thought they could decree the abolition of feudal rights while asking the peasants to pay for their surrender, and that they could limit the franchise to property owners while men were preaching daily Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Their attempt to distinguish between property owners whom they termed *active citizens*, and others members of the community whom they termed *passive citizens*, was unfortunate for them. For this distinction was open to an interpretation the exact contrary of that which they had intended. Journalists protested that those who stormed the Bastille and cleared the lands regarded themselves as the *active citizens* and objected to being treated as the mere raw material of a revolution for the benefit of others. But such protests were in vain. The members of the Constituent Assembly were entirely out of touch with popular feeling. And they remained out of touch until the people of Paris armed with pikes invaded the Assembly Hall to break up their deliberations—a habit which, once formed, continued almost daily throughout the Revolution. The Convention, while under the influence of the Girondins, corrected the blunder of the Constituent Assembly by removing the distinction between the *active* and *passive citizens*, but in other respects it was equally out of touch with popular sentiment. As a result, power in the Assembly passed entirely into the hands of the Jacobins, who, whatever their shortcomings, at least enjoyed the confidence of the people of Paris.

The rise to power of the Jacobins—known in the Convention as the Mountain as distinguished from the Plain, which designated all its other members—is to be attributed to many causes, but the principal one was the imperative necessity of firm government. The Girondins, who had hitherto led the Assembly, were Liberals in temperament, and like Liberals all the world over they had little sense of reality. They were hostile to a strong executive in the name of liberty, hostile to Paris in the name of Federalism and hostile to the economic aspirations of the people in the name

of order. The result was as might be expected: they were conquered by the force of circumstances. A time came at length when the growth of economic anarchy and civil war at home combined with the need of defending the Republic against other European powers demanded strong and vigorous measures, and these the Girondins were unable to supply. Power passed into the hands of the Jacobins because they alone were capable of determined action.

The situation had been the Jacobins own creating. Earlier on they had been the means of bringing about the execution of the King, which proved to be the turning point of the Revolution, for not only did it bring about civil war, but armed Europe against France. In order to save the Republic from its enemies without, and from disruption within, the Jacobins resorted to the most ruthless measures. They massacred people wholesale. In the Vendée alone it is estimated that over half a million suffered at their hands. Old men, women, and children were all massacred, and villages and crops were burned. Yet in spite of all their savagery, despite the delegates sent with guillotines into the provinces, the Draconian laws which they enforced, they had to struggle perpetually against riots, insurrections and conspiracies. But the reaction upon themselves is the interesting sequel. They would brook no opposition, and in order to carry through such ruthless measures they had to be equally ruthless with their critics. It was in order to rid themselves of them that they instituted the Terror, which, after a run of ten months, came to an end with the execution of Robespierre and the leading Jacobins. The circumstances of its ending are interesting. Robespierre had come to dominate the Convention absolutely. He had been sending to the scaffold the most eminent deputies, but in order to do so it was necessary in each case to get a vote of the Assembly. His over-confidence led him to attempt to get the Assembly to vote a measure which would permit deputies to be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal without the authorisation of the Assembly. Tallien, knowing himself to be marked down for early execution, and having therefore nothing to lose, accused him of tyranny. Some conspirators who were in with him shouted, "Down with the tyrant." From that moment Robespierre was lost. The cry was repeated by other members present. Robespierre tried to defend himself, but it was no use. His voice was lost in the uproar. Without losing a moment the Assembly decreed his accusation, and outlawed him. After the lapse of a few days Robespierre and his band of Jacobins, to the number of a hundred and four, were guillotined. He had all along defended the Terror before the people of Paris, and his execution was interpreted by them as having put an end to it. The Committee of Public Safety, recognising this, acted as if such had been their intention. "Robespierre," says Le Bon, "was one of the most odious tyrants of history, but he is distinguished from all others in that he made himself a tyrant without soldiers."

As the Revolution proceeded, power became concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. The Committee of Public Safety which had dominated the Convention consisted of eight members. Under the Directory which followed, the executive power was vested in the hands of five men. This was provided for in its constitution; the framing of which was the last act of the Convention. In so far as the change was accompanied by a change of policy it was in the direction of not seeking to reorganise France but to leave it to organise itself. It governed, moreover, through a period of reaction. The only true Republicans were now the young men, and they were to be found in the armies which were spreading the revolutionary ideas over Europe. In France a counter-revolution arose which took the form of a rebellion of the rich. They asserted that on the maintenance of property depended the cultivation of the fields, all production, every means of work and the whole social order.

## Objective Ends.

By P. A. Mairat.

AFTER perusing leading and special articles in all kinds of journals from the "Labour Leader" to the "Church Times," I find agreement in one important matter: that the state of the world is deplorable. Different observers are horrified by very different things, but all are disturbed and there are even some writings that suggest desperation. Wherever any optimism is reflected it is shallow, almost surely the fruit of transient smugness, a larger meal or some more tobacco. All serious men have clouded minds, and few have anything clear or useful to propose. But since something quite surprising is likely to happen soon, we look to the reformers, even if their plans are obscure. And a rapid survey of all their present published plans of action makes one restless in mind, wondering whether all our tradition of social reform is not ill-founded, based not on a truth but upon a phase of our life, upon circumstances now finished with. Must it not be a false, misconceived science of social progress that is culminating in this rising clamour? After the vastest expenditure in our history we seem determined to have more for everybody. We want half a million more houses, costlier education, more pensions, larger armaments, cheaper travel, less work and better conditions (meaning more money) for everyone; quite apart from maintaining full interest on loans and also raising more loans. Some of these things are good, and one could add even better to the list; but each is another claim in a world already suffering from claims: all the gloom, irritation, and sense of evil pervading men and nations comes from this rank overgrowth of claims, this discord and din of demands from every side. Leaders and followers, both conservers and reformers are alike in a dismal mood; they think of nothing but securing claims or evading them. It is a small matter that they must fail, and even if they are near a serious fight we must remember that they would also fight on higher grounds. But their state of mind! That is what hurts the dignity of man. They are all objective—seem to have lost subjective consciousness. They give up human dignity to gain their ends; care nothing for falling into feelings like a pig's or fox's, endure a mindful of thoughts that are slippery and unscrupulous as eels or snakes. It is time to realise that human happiness is not served by this over-sacrifice to outward gain—indeed, everyone is appalled at the selfishness of all the others—at his own reflection in the social macrocosm.

Such convulsive grabbing, such imminence of pandemonium, could not have happened but for our decadent philosophy and religion which have been cursed with the same bias, for a century of our life at least: which teach that to gain objects is the purpose of life: to gain them for others, for groups or sections of persons, is social devotion, reform—the good. And meanwhile what spiritual states of irritation, envy, egotism, or blindness to beauty we may incur, is considered as nothing, as simply arising out of the objective success or failure. We have not dared be conscious of our states of mind, to work by will upon our emotions as well as on our surroundings: have actually pretended that such consciousness is something unhealthy!—as, for instance, in the following sentences from the conclusion of Bertrand Russell's "Principles of Social Reconstruction":—

"Subjectivism, the habit of directing thought and desire to our own states of mind rather than to some-

thing objective, inevitably makes life fragmentary and unprogressive."

True, it may make a man realise that the manner of his "progress" is making his soul foul, or that his life is integral only in its meanness of thought; and that he had better make it in these ways "fragmentary and unprogressive" for his own and the world's advantage.

"The same evil of subjectivism was fostered by Protestant religion and morality, since they directed attention to sin and the state of the soul rather than to the outer world and our relations with it."

This is quite untrue. Protestantism abolished the practices of self-examination in meditation and confession, and emphasised the more objective aims of morality. Its excessive stress upon the doctrines of original sin and damnation did do harm by amounting to a hypnotic suggestion to behave as sinners. But it could never do such villainous mischief as to teach this ideal of unconsciousness of the soul—which would make men revert to animal existence. The following sentence, however, is the crowning absurdity in Mr. Russell's denunciation of subjectivism:—

"Only a life which springs out of dominant impulses directed to objective ends can be a satisfactory whole, or be intimately united with the lives of others."

So here, in a book devoted to the ideals of peace, subjective aims are excluded from the good life! We are to believe that men become "intimately united" by "dominant impulses" (such as lust, hunger, pugnacity, and display) directed to "objective ends" (such as food, revenge, money, domination). Mr. Russell does not mean such things, of course; but they are the true and chief examples of "dominant impulses" and "objective ends." Equally absurd is the suggestion that men are "isolated" or in any way sterilised by the aims of love, detachment, true judgment, pure inward self-esteem, or any of the qualities and capacities attainable in the subjective life.

Of course it is dangerous, and may be vicious even, to neglect the necessity of material means to the subjective life. But never was Europe in the least danger of this error, and still less England. Our danger and disgrace, from which few of us are clear, is to persist in material aims long past their need or usefulness to any subjective good. Aristotle said that the "good" life was impossible without some minimum of material wealth. We believe it but too well: and aim to set the good life upon a sound material basis; and when we have firmly founded it, insured and reinsured it till its security is perfect—when we have, in fact, set ourselves free safely to think of other things—then we return to thinking of this same material basis, nine hours out of ten. We forget that to pursue a material purpose beyond its subjective value is to materialise the psyche, is a going towards vulgarity. Who really wants the entire world at such a price?

There is one really sound cause with a material object, and it is to secure the Aristotelian minimum of material good for all. Which cause no man really serves, but for a subjective end—to set his thought free, to clear his psychic life from the shame of being in the way of those who have too little. Beyond this all causes and all activities that are worthy of a man have quite subjective ends, are means to attain psychical qualities and beauties.

If the ideals of a people are those of subjective attainment, its life is not therefore sterile but the reverse: it is necessary to destroy and create many things for the soul's freedom. I do not know whether we should attain peace by subjective ideals; but we should finally escape from animalism and attain to manhood. And we should escape from the one-sided philosophy which has taught us to believe that everything is terribly real but our own selves, which are probably imaginary—escape also from such a possibility as the present world, where greed is sitting tight on its treasures and need making politics to get them.

## Drama,

By John Francis Hope.

THE authors of this play, which was produced at the Plymouth Repertory Theatre during this summer, have found their subject in history. Those who have had the good fortune to read "The Village Labourer" and "The Town Labourer," by J. L. and Barbara Hammond, will know that the period from the Napoleonic wars to the passing of the Reform Bill abounds with likely subjects for plays; although the real tragedy of the history is that it happened, and not that it can be represented. The Hammonds' extraordinary industry in unearthing the Home Office records has revealed the fact that there was a deliberate conspiracy of the governing classes to degrade the working classes. Thorold Rogers affirmed that "from 1563 to 1824, a conspiracy, concocted by the law and carried out by parties interested in its success, was entered into, to cheat the English workman of his wages, to tie him to the soil, to deprive him of hope, and to degrade him into irremediable poverty." The Hammonds have documented the assertion; and the authors of the play declare in a prefatory note: "If this play should induce any one who reads it to turn to the Hammonds' admirable book, the authors will not have failed in one of their principal objects." As a generous compliment to the authors of two very valuable studies of industrial history, this "object" is praiseworthy, and I give it currency because I agree that the books ought to be read by everybody—but as an artistic principle it is not so agreeable.

For we ought not to regard a work of art as an introduction to anything else; it is of a separate order of reality, and is apparently unconditioned by the laws of another order. Just as a good story is none the better for being true; in fact, its "truth" is irrelevant to its "goodness"; so a work of art that leaves us searching for the facts has failed to fulfil the first condition of a work of art. For the historian gives us the gist of a period by his selection of appropriate facts; but the artist reveals the Geist, the spirit of the times, by means of appropriate symbols. The story, in such a case, is only of functional importance; what it reveals is the reality with which the artist works; and in "Captain Swing"\* the authors have degraded tragedy into melodrama, with a touch of farce. They tell us that "in the writing of it the conditions of the theatre rather than those of the study have been kept in mind"; but they do not tell us what conditions or what theatre, and the play itself presents us only with a few stock situations.

The contrasts are legitimate, although familiar. The first act shows us the Squire's family at dinner in the Manor House; the second act shows us an injured peasant in a hovel on the estate with nothing but a dish of tea to sustain him. How the rich live contrasted with how the poor live, and what the rich think of the poor contrasted with what the poor think of the rich. How the poor would live if the rich were poor is, perhaps, a sequential problem, which the authors are under no obligation to solve, although it allures the speculative mind; they show us instead, within a mile of each other, two scenes which are supposed to be the obverse and reverse of the same reality. But what is the reality is not clear in this play; we should certainly have to turn to history to discover it. Indeed, the

\* "Captain Swing." By F. Brett Young and W. Edward Stirling. (Collins. 2s. net.)



realities which are here in conflict are not represented, but perverted, by "the conditions of the theatre" to which the authors have submitted. For it is clear as daylight that the conflict between love and duty, as it is here expressed in so many different forms, is not relevant to the issue of freedom or slavery for the working classes. It matters nothing to that issue, or to the interpretation of it, whether "Captain Swing" swings or escapes; and Lady Bullingdon's "strong scene" with her husband is irrelevant to it and unrepresentative of it.

The authors have really attempted not to reveal the spiritual reality of the conflict, but to show some of the possible reactions of it; their work is one of observation rather than creation. In spite of their "realistic" technique, they are capable of making an ignorant (but beautiful, of course) peasant girl turn upon the word "starved" with the comment, "it is not a pretty word." But apart from slips like that, or Clive's love-speeches (which are intolerably manufactured), the play follows the melodramatic convention with considerable skill. The gentle and sympathetic mother is contrasted with the stern (but secretly loving) father; and Love, triply represented, triumphs over Duty in the end.

For "Captain Swing" is none other than Clive Bullingdon, who reads (and defends) Shelley in the first act, and confounds but does not convert the oppressors with a few facts of economic history. We discover, in the second act, that it was not Shelley nor the facts of economic history that had made him a revolutionary; it was Naomi, the ignorant (but beautiful, of course) peasant girl. "You're an image of England, suffering, down-trodden England. You have her beauty: you have her strength: you have her dark and glowing passion. Now I understand. It was through you and your loveliness that I came to understand what this sad England meant. You're an image of her distress. You're a cause. Your beauty is a banner. England. . . Naomi. . . I would die for you, as Byron died for Greece." Byron was a generous lover, and there certainly was a "maid of Athens" who had by some means obtained possession of his heart, and whom he implored to "keep it now, and take the rest"; but I am not aware that she inspired him to catch the fever at Missolonghi; nor is there any record that his speech on the Frame-breaking Bill was inspired by a love-affair with a spinner. Clive Bullingdon mixed his politics with his love unnecessarily, and incidentally reduced his politics to secondary importance.

That he should be caught (in women's clothes) and brought before his father to be committed for trial, is the necessary consequence of submitting to "the conditions of the theatre." It is a "strong scene," of course; the stern father doing his duty against his natural inclinations, refusing to take advantage of the loopholes of the law, resisting the protests of clerk, friend, and wife—but it is only "the conditions of the theatre" that prescribe the conflict. Shelley's father, for example, would in such a situation have condemned him with gusto; the tragedy of the period was not that men did their duty against their natural inclination, but that they did not perceive that their "duty" was their natural inclination formulated as law, which they administered. Lady Bullingdon's strong scene in the next act, when she sentimentalises over Clive as a baby in a vain attempt to make the father relent, only serves to show us how far from their original inspiration the authors have wandered. The conclusion, with its alarms and excursions, and Clive, escaped, with women clinging all over him instead of running with the rescue party, adds the final touch of farce to a play which, whatever its setting, is only our old friend the melodrama, in which a hero, none too remarkable for brains, falls in love with a girl of lower station, and, for her sake, defies his martinet of a father. "The Village Labourer" ought to inspire something more relative than this.

## A Cubit to His Stature.

At the beginning of the war psychical research had reached a barren period in its history. The influence of Myers and Gurney had rendered orthodox a certain attitude which was beginning to betray its limitations. Further insight, it had concluded, was to be looked for by the secret and luxurious study of the scripts or utterances of trance mediums, in the hope that an analysis of their content might produce evidence of information which could be possessed only by discarnate spirits leading an existence continuous with the known history of the souls of individuals now dead, or of cross-correspondences explicable only on the hypothesis of a single spirit making use successively of the bodies of independent mediums. Though this method has provided an immense amount of extremely interesting and valuable material, the published results at least can hardly be said to have yielded any clear and definite conclusion compelling a large amount of agreement. Along with it we have had, besides the breaking up on a great scale of new ground in psychology, an influx of new working conceptions the significance and use of which we have little more than begun to understand. The ideas of which Myers made excellent use in attempting to explain the nature of the subliminal self and its connexions with the conscious take us, we can now see, only a little way: they throw little light on the causative factors which underlie disintegrations. The general effect of this is to postpone still further the stage at which it may become necessary to fall back on the hypothesis of discarnate spirits, and, in consequence, to increase enormously the research that must be carried out before relatively final conclusions can be formulated. The programme drawn up by Myers and his associates is not merely still incomplete. It is not half done, and is still being extended.

In the minds of those who have carried on the Myers tradition—much more than in that of their master himself—the acceptance of this programme was accompanied by the definite suggestion that from a study of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism no advance was to be anticipated. Legends about these are of very ancient date, and their repute, like the company they have kept, has throughout been none of the best. In the middle of the nineteenth century there was an outbreak of them on a considerable scale; and the reputations of the scientific men who investigated them, perhaps never shone afterwards with their former lustre. Practically none, even of the most celebrated mediums in whose presence physical phenomena are alleged to have occurred, left behind them memories quite untouched by the suspicion of fraud. The exposure of Eglinton's methods of spirit-writing was a severe shock to faith. Professor Munsterberg's unenviable claim to have detected Eusapia Palladino in the act of fraud during a test seance in America left Mr. Carrington's position that, nevertheless, there was in her case a "residuum" of genuine phenomena difficult to defend. The apparent impossibility under the circumstances of taking precautions which would absolutely rule out the tricks of the fraudulent medium—most of all the grave difficulty of continuous observation—produced the feeling that there was not much hope of progress along these lines.

To the common sense sceptic, compensated by his belief in the miraculous efficacy of that blessed word "fraud," these considerations, no doubt, seem decisive. Physical and trance phenomena, together with telepathy and clairvoyance, and all the rest of the box of tricks, are mere symptoms of a curious regression to a primitive animism which is a special disease of the modern mind. The separation between the two which is apparently fairly completely accomplished by Mrs. Sidgwick and others is much harder to understand and to justify. In many cases, particularly in that of

Stainton Moses, the two types of phenomena were almost indissolubly connected; and it is obvious to any investigator that the psychological mechanisms on which the emergence of the trace-utterances depend are very similar to those by which are given the curious explanations which generally accompany physical phenomena, and through which, in most cases, they can be partly guided by the sitters. The kind of "fraud" which occurred in a bad sitting with Mrs. Piper is analogous to the performances of Eusapia in circumstances which we may infer to be psychologically of the same kind. The just conclusion, in fact, which follows from a study of the material on physical phenomena is that nothing is to be learned from further consideration of it. Too much remains unknown, and not a little was always uncertain and hardly verifiable. We must wait until we can examine the case of a new medium, and hope that the phenomena themselves will be better, and the conditions of their occurrence simpler. Should it prove possible to show with reasonable probability that such things as telekinesis do occur, and to make any study of its conditions, we may revise in the light of such evidence our judgment of the older cases. Eusapia's "residuum" might be rendered a practical certainty; and D. D. Home certified as not always the fool that he sometimes looked.

In the words of Josh Billings, I found this out more nor seven years ago. But I never thought of the appearance of such a medium as a probable event. It was, in fact, a theoretical fiction. Still more naturally, I did not consider beforehand that when that impossible event took place, I should be living practically in the next street. We have now, however, two books\* which contain a very complete record of physical phenomena occurring in the presence of a certain Miss Goligher, of Belfast. I shall discuss in a moment in what respects these phenomena are most novel. Their general character is familiar enough. You have a family circle sitting regularly as a kind of religious ceremony, in the belief that they get, through the medium, into contact with a group of discarnate spirits, who make their presence known by loud raps on the floor, by the ringing of bells, by the levitation—a clear foot or more in the air—without contact, of a small table, and in other similar ways. A conversation is carried on between the sitters and the spirits—operators or controls—by means of raps according to an elementary code. Dr. Crawford, who is by training a mechanical engineer, has carried out an extremely elaborate series of experimental investigations of the phenomena, assuming that they involve the operation of a force not otherwise known to science but which is capable, if sufficient trouble be taken, of being treated scientifically and the laws discovered to which it conforms. To attain this he has used much the same empirical methods as would be used in a scientific laboratory in studying the mechanics of those forces to which we are accustomed. In particular, Dr. Crawford has made very careful records of alterations in the weight of the medium under various conditions during the sitting: and on this basis he has formulated a striking theory of the means by which the results were produced. The phenomena themselves are fully described in these volumes. I need add only that his account of what happens at a seance is perfectly accurate, so far as my experience goes. These things occur, whatever the explanation may turn out to be.

That curious variations in the weight of the medium take place during the production of such phenomena was observed, or, at least, suggested many years ago by Ochorowicz: but I know of no previous attempt to

study them in detail. Nor am I aware of any former case where the opportunity to achieve this has been anything like so good. Miss Goligher's mediumship is purely unprofessional; and very great care has been taken to hold sittings seldom but at perfectly regular intervals, and in private. The number of types of phenomena produced is small; but they are remarkably good of their kind. In three respects at least a material and highly important difference can be observed from the work of a typical medium like Palladino. The visibility is relatively very good. The seance room is lit by a fish-tail gas flame shining through a red glass screen. The result is that after a little time the observer has no difficulty in distinguishing everything in the room; and, in particular, the position of the hands and feet of the medium and of the other sitters can be clearly seen. In like manner the medium wears no "voluminous plaid silk gown," of which we heard so much in the case of Palladino. For any practice which demanded darkness rather than light it is not easy to imagine a less suitable costume than the white blouse and skirt of recent fashion. Secondly, at no period during an ordinary sitting does the medium touch the table at all; these are not "contact" phenomena. Most of the actual levitations I have seen took place at a distance from her of eighteen inches to three feet. The same remark applies to the other sitters, except, of course, in the matter of distance. I have been inside the circle when a levitation was taking place, and been able to see all round the table and below it, and feel the sometimes very great force which was operating on it, satisfying myself at the same time that the hands and feet of the medium were where they ought to be. By leaning back in her chair a person of the height of the medium could touch the table with outstretched foot. He might succeed in kicking it over. I, for example, in experimenting after a sitting, with the advantage over the medium of considerably superior length of limb, did that rather easily. But for anyone to levitate it in such a manner for this position is a mere physical impossibility. In the third place, Miss Goligher does not go into trance, as most such mediums have done. She retains consciousness, replies coherently to a question, but herself says little or nothing. I imagine, in fact, that she develops a kind of hypnoidal state.

About the question of fraud I shall say very little. If one could adopt it, it would save one the disagreeable necessity of thinking. But it requires, surely, a little evidence to support it. Enough is known about psychical phenomena by now to make it certain that where such fraud occurs, it need not be conscious, and most often is not so. It may easily be one of the tricks of a suddenly developed, rather cunning, infinite personality. But I could not discover any trace either of the development of secondary personalities or of any sort of fraud. Moreover, I can suggest no conceivable means by which the phenomena I saw and which are here recorded could be produced. Should anyone mention the quite respectable hypothesis of collective hallucination, I should reply that with the possibility in mind I observed my attitude and condition of mind, and found them normal; that the other visitor and I (so far as we could test the point) agreed precisely and relevantly in our observations and memories; and that hallucinations which continue to develop with the uniformity of natural events over a period of years, and which, moreover, can be weighed and measured, constitute a psychological marvel quite as interesting and important as the phenomena the hypothesis was intended to explain away.

Mr. Edward Clodd would solve the whole difficulty (while denying that it was one) by saying I had been the victim of the confidence trick. I have nothing to say about this except that it is not true. Other unwearied defenders of the glorious achievements of modern science, jealous for their heritage, who urge that since phenomena of this type do not occur, there must be

\* (1) "The Reality of Psychic Phenomena." (Second Edition, 1919.) (2) "Experiments in Psychical Science. Levitation, 'Contact,' and the 'Direct Voice.'" By W. J. Crawford, D.Sc. (London: John M. Watkins, 21, Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road.)

fraud which remains undetected and is probably rather skillful because of the lack of evidence, must wait for a consideration till the application of psycho-analysis to social theories and beliefs has proceeded further; and, meanwhile, try to endure their neuroses as best they may. For my part, I only state the conviction that we have here a peculiar group of phenomena, very difficult to study, but unusually in need of disinterested examination. To this Dr. Crawford has made an important contribution.

M. W. ROBIESON.

(To be concluded.)

## In School.

### XII.—VOCABULARY.

As an exercise in the practice of close observation I asked the form one day to write a character-sketch of a dull-witted housemaid at the school by name of Emma. The results were all successful in depicting a vivid likeness of the original and were, to my surprise, written with apparently considerable restraint.

Here are a few typical observations:—

She glides silently into the room with features absolutely immovable. On these occasions what is she thinking about? Is she dreaming, or is she fully awake to what is going on about her? She seems quite above the other maids, or is it merely her quiet ghostly way.—G. DICKENS (aged 12).

She walks very smoothly and never moves her head when she talks, and thus gives you an impression of a ghost. At meals when she takes your plate away and asks, so quietly that you can hardly hear, if you want a second helping you get the feeling as if the air is speaking.—G. DE BAILLET (aged 13).

I have never seen her laugh right out; she only smiles, and in her smile you can see that she thinks you are very stupid. She looks as though she has just been born and is very surprised at what she sees.—H. SILO (aged 13).

The following I think are worthier of quotation at greater length:

Emma is one of those numerous superannuated people who are described as being "helpless things." This in some ways is true, but one is forever looking for the faults of a person. Emma is a very singular character. She inspires one with a feeling of superiority to her timid ways. She has the very undesired habit of always turning up at the wrong moment. This is when she triumphs. . . .

Emma is the source of general amusement to her colleagues. Despite her obvious simple ways, she has the habit of getting a very cunning revenge clothed with the perfect mask of simplicity, which immediately clears her of all possible suspicion. This is one of her chief faults: one might almost call it an advantage to her, but not to her tormentor. She is certainly aware of the fact that she is the cause of general amusement, and she prides herself on it, and also takes advantage of it. Her shield is that of simplicity, and her weapon is cunning. She is a tempter. . . .

Sometimes Emma makes grave mistakes. These she stares at, and occasionally overdoes her simplicity.—R. RADCLIFFE (aged 14).

She looks like a stately goddess of ancient days who has been captured and made to serve at the table of her conquerors. But even though she's brought to such disgrace she holds herself erect. She does not mind abuse. She does not deign to answer when spoken to, but simply does what she is asked without speaking. She walks like someone who is walking among the dead, afraid lest she might wake them up. . . .

She reminds one of a ghost of ancient times who cannot understand the modern ways. She steals upon one like a cat upon a bird, but she never strikes. . . .—H. BULL (aged 14).

Gliding with silent footsteps that seem to belong to another sphere of activity than our own, and which seem to denote the presence of a being quite outside the ordinary phase of existence, she goes about her work in the

extraordinary and quiet way, habitual to her. Sly almost to the point of unreasoning fear of her incapacities, she leads a daily life that few of us would care to lead—the cruel expectancy that her every action is going to be one of foolish incompetence.

One cannot help wondering on occasions at her terrible slowness and even chafing at it, but it is this very slowness that saves her doing a great many unusual and idiotic things which would be put down to the failure of her mental faculties, but which would be, in reality, the consequence of hustling a naturally furtive and retiring turn of mind.—A. HATHAWAY (aged 17).

Hathaway was of course much older than the rest of the form, and though he had actually left the school, worked with my English class for two terms while receiving private tuition elsewhere. In form he was not treated differently from the others, and so far as it is safe to draw a conclusion from one case it seemed that my methods would require little alteration if applied to older boys.

A comparison of the above productions will show the great advantage a boy of 17 has over one of 14 by reason of a more extensive vocabulary. While Hathaway can trot out apt polysyllables with apparent ease Radcliffe is struggling in vain over the word "superannuated." Cross-examination on this point revealed that he had recently encountered the phrase "a superannuated *enfant terrible*," and that he thought it "sounded rather good." (Unconscious appreciation of humour.) I forget whether I rebuked him; probably I did, but it is possible to make out a case for his defence.

Let me say, however, first of all, that no one could have tried harder than myself to make the form aim at sincerity and simplicity in writing, and avoid anything in the nature of portentousness. Any text-book on the writing of English will state the importance of using the Saxon word, when available, in preference to the Romance, a rule which it is difficult always to obey, though in theory admitting of few exceptions.\* But its familiar stern extension, "Prefer the short word to the long," which may seem a good enough rule in itself, needs very considerable qualification. And while its necessary qualifications may be consciously apparent to experienced writers they are only unconsciously apparent to children, with the result that a literary complex is set up in the child's mind which may be crudely expressed in the following interrogative form: "Why am I denied the use of words which appear constantly in what I am told is the best literature?"

But if the rule is qualified as follows: "Other things being equal, the short word should be preferred to the long," then as a mere rule it becomes virtually ineffective for the simple reason that the "other things" seldom are equal. Apart from the desirable cadence of a sentence, requiring possibly the use of a long word in preference to a short one, an effect which I hope I have already proved a child to be quite capable of unconsciously considering, the fact is that there are few actual verbal equivalents in our language. My experience in teaching has proved to me conclusively that a child of twelve is able unconsciously to appreciate most delicate shades of meaning, and in a creative capacity anxious to produce them on paper. I do not suggest that the written evidence I am submitting proves this point, but if it be accepted on trust the conclusion follows automatically that it is absurd to try and defeat healthy unconscious activity by an ascetic rule of thumb. If there is no merit in polysyllabism as such, equally is there no corresponding merit in monosyllabism.

\* I do not attempt (try) to follow it strictly.

Now in order that the verbal nuances may have free expression in writing it is necessary that the child's limited vocabulary should be extended, which object the teacher can easily effect by refraining from talking down to the form, a point which was discussed at length in my first article. I doubt whether the wisest man on earth could "talk down" to children without their recognition of the fact, at least unconsciously; and such recognition leads inevitably to unconscious resistance, even if there exists a simultaneous conscious appreciation of the speaker's kindness. In speaking to his form the teacher should never reject a suitable word on the sole ground that the majority have probably never encountered it before. Nor should he stop to explain the meaning of such a word, unless it is a technical concrete term, for it by no means follows that the majority will fail to understand its significance from the context. Of how many words that we use has the meaning ever been consciously explained to us? And are there not a few special enemies whose meaning we do determinedly look up in the dictionary at odd intervals, only to forget it the next day, so transitory is the effect of conscious learning?

The unconsciousness will occasionally make a bad shot at the meaning of a word, as in Radcliffe's case, but I have not encountered half-a-dozen such instances during the last two years. How many of the words that the child hears sink into his vocabulary it is of course impossible to say, but those that do not are for the most part simply put aside by the unconsciousness in its ineffable wisdom to await a more favourable reception in "their own natural home, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival."

It is, of course, possible—I do not say frequently advisable—to extend the unconscious vocabulary of the form by a less negative process. Here, for instance, is the passage containing the phrase that led to Radcliffe's undoing, which I chose for "dictation" to the form intentionally to bring to their notice words unfamiliar to most of them.

He could picture her carrying off some devastating *faux pas* in a crowded drawing-room as unconcernedly as Artaxerxes with his waving tail would appear from nowhere and cause havoc by strolling over the exposed hand on a bridge table, treating it not as a matter for regret or apology, but with buoyant indifference or even self-approbation in an indolent sort of way. Perhaps her rôle in life was that of a psychological Juggernaut trampling over people's inmost feelings as though she were doing them some unmerited favour egregiously, or, in her lighter moods, acting the part of a superannuated *enfant terrible* self-licensed to play with and injure with impunity the hidden mechanism of a sensitive mind.

These thoughts and others less distinct he gathered into his consciousness, not by way of wantonly decorating her latent individuality with fanciful accomplishments and charms, but inquiringly, as one might take a passing interest in discerning the deeds and merits of some unknown celebrity set forth jerkily on an epitaph in the half-light of a cathedral, reading them from a distance and vaguely wondering whether they were true.

If I were asked how much of this passage was consciously intelligible to the form I should say, probably very little. At the same time it must have made some sort of appeal, for without expressing definite appreciation of it they asked me quite spontaneously to read more to them from the same immortal source. The literary taste of the form is often startling, sometimes erratic, but always expressed sincerely. I believe, moreover, that it afforded them much unconscious help in their attempts to delineate poor Emma's negative personality, and that without such help these attempts would have failed completely, or, what is more probable, never have been made at all, for it is a mistake to insist on their writing upon a subject to which they have a reasonable resistance.

T. R. COXON.

## A Garrison in Bosnia.

By Svetazar Carovic.

(Translated by P. SELVER.)

It is nine o'clock. Everybody must be in barracks. Along the wall, the cracks in which are occupied by large colonies of bugs, extended a long row of dirty palliasses—about forty in number—arranged closely side by side. On each palliasse were squeezed two soldiers, covered with a light blanket. Here is one who, in deep thought and with a sadly puckered face, has propped his elbows on the pillow and is smoking. Another has decided to clean a pair of boots this evening by the pallid light of a lamp which is spluttering on a table in the middle of the barrack-room. Woe betide him if the sergeant-major should come, especially if he happens to be tipsy, and not find them polished. In a corner in the gloom about four or five have formed a group. They have crouched down with their heads close together, and are eagerly whispering. One of them, Krivusta, is holding in his hand a sweat-stained, crumpled paper which he has just taken from inside his shirt, and with a sweep of his arms is arguing about something. The others, as if to defeat his purpose, are raising a protest.

At last a certain Glavonja rose up on his palliasse. Supporting his hands on his knees, and eyeing them with a dark glance, he asked, angrily:—

"What's all the fuss about? You stop a fellow from sleeping. Damn you all!"

Krivusta turned to him, stretched his shaggy hand across his chest, and replied in his defence:—

"Why, brother, this evening I had a letter from home. Now I want to read it, but they won't let me. They say I mustn't, and the light's got to be put out."

"Why didn't you read it before?" came someone's smothered growl from under a coverlet. "You could have."

"God's my witness, brother, I couldn't," replied Krivusta, briskly, as if he were battling with tears. "I've not even been able to get any supper. I bought the corporal a cigar, and had my ears boxed for my trouble. I carried wood for the sergeant-major, and rocked his baby to sleep. I cleaned the sergeant's boots and bought him brandy. I had to parade before the officer in the tavern and then pay for two litres of his wine. I was dead-beat, brother. How could I read?"

Glavonja frowned, and as if reflecting to himself, he said:—

"Well, if that's the case. . . ." Then he stood up, and looking savagely at those around Krivusta, he shouted to them:—

"Why don't you let him, ill-tempered brutes? Let him read it. Let's see what they've written to him."

They all became, somehow, uneasy and embarrassed. They rose up from their palliasses, and, searching for their tobacco-pouches, made ready to listen. It was as if each one had received a letter and were impatient to know what was in it. Somebody, as it were under constraint, fetched the lamp from the table and put it in front of Krivusta, to show him some light. Several crowded round so as to hear well. They took little boxes, small cases that stood by the palliasses, and sat down on them.

"What do they write?" they ask, softly, kindly, almost anxiously.

Krivusta scratched behind his ear and yawned. He opened the letter, unfolded it, and lingered as if he were somehow afraid to look at it.

"What do they write?" repeated someone, impatiently, bending down over his shoulder.

"Are they all well?" asked Glavonja, and became as excited as if somebody were giving him news about his own home.

Krivusta put his hand to his mouth and coughed.

Then, gently nodding as he spelt it out, he began to read aloud:—

"Dear Brother,—As you ask to know how we are, we are still well, thank God, which we hope in God's mercy, you are, too. Only mother has been laid up for quite three months and cannot get well again. She has stabbing pains in her chest and complains all night. The priest came and she received the Sacrament, and now she is quiet. Only she prays to God for you to return safely to us, you and Jovan and Pero and Jacim from the Army, and our old father from prison at Arad. She would like to kiss you all."

"Four sons, and not one with her!" muttered the man beneath the coverlet. "Just like us. Three brothers and not one at home. And so many women to work and so many children. Ah!"

"I've heard nothing for a long time," remarked another, smoking violently. "I don't even know where they are and what they're doing."

"My home, my sorrow," said the voice of someone in the darkness, and it was as if he had beat his breast.

Krivusta continued:—

"And what you ask us in your letter, how is the harvest, I have no good news for you, I swear to God. The sun has burnt everything up. Our fields are all cracking and dying with the heat. When I wake up in the night and look into the darkness, I hear them sighing. Misfortune upon misfortune, dear brother. And of last year's corn not a grain left. Some we used up, and some they took from us, for the emperor's granary. For a whole week we have eaten nothing but bread. From this, or it may be God's will, diseases have come into the world. People swell up and suffer pains. Every day we take someone to be buried. But do not worry about us, dear brother. If only God guards and saves you, all will be well. . . ."

"Ah, ah. . . . There's no corn! None!" again came the voice from under the coverlet, "only ash-bark, only grass. . . . Ah, black poverty, God has deserted you! God preserve and provide!"

"If anyone called out hurrah for the war now, I'd smash his head, the dog!" snarled Glavonja, and looked around him, challengingly, as if seeking any such eager for war.

Krivusta turned aside his head, coughed loudly, and in order that the rest might not see, wiped away a tear with his sleeve. Then he looked at the letter and again began to read:—

"And they have taken away a cow and eight sheep and four goats. That is for you, they tell us. We have two sheep left, but mother says that is enough for us. Do not regret anything we bear for you. And mother greets you, and says that you are to take care of yourself and not get frozen. And Pero Abradov asked me to marry him, the one who has thirty acres and bought himself out of the Army. He wanted the wedding at once. I told him that he is a good and honest man, and that I thank him very much for not forgetting an orphan like me. But I do not want to marry until my brothers come back. He took Jela Stojanova. Now I ask you, dear brother, to write to me also. With many kisses from your sister.—  
MILICA."

All were silent. It seemed to them as if at this moment hundreds of those who were dear to them were complaining and lamenting. And if he had been alone, each one would have cried aloud and bewailed his fate. But they were ashamed, they hated the thought that another should see a tear, that another should hear a lament.

"Oh, God, dost Thou see this? Oh, Lord God, where art Thou?" whispered someone from the darkness, from a corner.

All turned and looked towards him. The man beneath the coverlet crawled out and stood up. He de-

voutly crossed his hands upon his breast, and softly, contritely prayed to God. And the rest, urged by a marvellous instinct, took off their caps. All began to pray. And a blurred, pious whispering was shed over the whole barrack-room.

"Put out the lamp, for God's sake! Here's the officer," called out someone, in terror, opening the door and stamping loudly on the threshold.

Nobody moved. The lamp finally emitted a hoarse sound and went out. But in the dense gloom the whole barrack-room went on praying for a long, long time. . . . Ever softer . . . ever softer . . . ever softer. . . .

(Svetazar Carovic, b. 1875, d. April 17 of this year as the result of an illness contracted in an Austrian prison, where he spent three years during the war. He was one of the most prominent authors of modern Serbia. His best work consists of short stories, the subjects of which are taken from his native district of Mostar.)

## Views and Reviews.

### A SYMPOSIUM.\*

MR. HUNTLY CARTER'S amazing industry in collecting opinions is gradually establishing a tradition; the succession of symposia edited by him proves him to be the most self-abnegating of writers. A man who can write as well as Mr. Huntly Carter writes (when he is in the mood) is usually only too pleased to find opportunities to tell us what he thinks about everything; but Mr. Carter politely asks all the other people to tell us what they think, and forbears even to criticise their opinions. His symposia have the effect of a House of Commons debate which does not proceed to a division, an ideal debate in which the Speaker neither speaks nor checks a speaker, and in which every speaker feels at liberty to interpret the motion in his own way. The result, of course, is a series of obiter dicta which bind none, not even the lips that utter them; to be asked: "What in your opinion will be the situation immediately after the war as regards State Control?" affords most of the participants in this debate the opportunity of appearing wise by declining to prophesy. The question allowed most of them more liberty than they were prepared to exercise at the time. But the other two questions: "What in your view is the limitation of State Control to be maintained?" and: "What in your view is the best policy of control to be pursued in the highest interests of commerce, trade, and industry?" elicited a variety of replies that surely cover the whole field of possibility. From Mr. Harold Cox, with his "no control at all" to Mr. Bernard Shaw with his "complete ownership, control, and administration," the answers range; and the contributors include "peers, legislators, and administrators," as Mr. Carter quaintly differentiates them, the magnates of shipping, ship-building, engineering, mining, the cotton industry, alkali, publishing, banking, finance, and agriculture. There is also a selection of "political views" (presumably the "peers, legislators, and administrators" do not express political views), "sociological views," one "socialistic view" by Mr. Bernard Shaw, "labour and industrial views," and Mr. Robert Williams, in a heaven by himself, taking the "Trade Union view."

I have not bothered to classify the replies, but the general impression is that the objections to control proceed from the people who are controlled, and the arguments in favour of control proceed from those who do, or would like to do, the controlling—which is very human and very interesting. But I am by no means sure that Mr. Carter would not have elicited an equally interesting series of replies if he had widened the scope of his questions: The trend of his three questions

\* "The Limits of State Industrial Control: A Symposium." Edited by Huntly Carter. (Fisher Unwin. 16s. net.)



reveals his assumption that some policy of control will be maintained; and if he had added a fourth question, offering a choice of controls to his correspondents, the result might have been even more illuminating. For some control we are certainly going to have; the question really is whether that control will be exercised by the amalgamated banks, by the Employers' Federations, by the Trade Unions, or by that invisible but powerful body of international financiers who alone clearly understand the economic clauses of the Peace Treaty. The only control that we are not likely to have is "Consumers' Control"; even "State Control" is only producers' control tempered by political considerations.

But if Mr. Carter had put this fourth question, I fear that the answers would have thrown him into a more alarming state of interrogation than he here expresses in his preface. The effect produced by a symposium of representative opinions is disturbing; the same words are used by different contributors with such diverse meaning that Mr. Carter is practically justified in concluding that "words are the present day root of all evil." He has the philosopher's preference for meanings rather than for words; but I incline to the opinion that it is this preference for meanings that has inflected our staple words with such variety of meanings. "State, Liberty, Authority, Democracy, Association, Capital, Labour, People, Peace, Power, Empire, League of Nations, Patriotism, Reconstruction, Control—all these formative words, what do they mean to most people?" he asks. Most of them are technical terms wrested from their technical meaning by popular usage, until at last they come to include their opposites; and the State is the People, Democracy justifies Dictatorship, Empire means a congeries of self-governing Dominions, Reconstruction means "policies in a box," and even Capital, as represented by peers and peeresses, identifies itself with the Labour Party. Royalty has become "democratic," and the King is familiarly regarded as the crowned President of a Republic. Words mean whatever the speaker wants, but they also mean whatever his audience understands by them; the result may be confusing, its only merit is that it gives everybody a chance to express himself, and we ought not to forget that it was a furious and revengeful man, Macduff, who exclaims: "I have no words, my voice is in my sword."

Mr. Carter concludes, not that we should, like Macduff, stop talking, but that we should, like Jack Tanner, "go on talking," with this difference that "the moral is, be careful that you handle words to mean truth, and do not let periodical revision rob them of their Gospel verity." It is easier said than done, for there is no guarantee that the original sense of a word is its truth. If a modern man were to say, in Hamlet's phrase: "I'll make a ghost of him that lets me": in the sense that Hamlet used, and modern lawyers, too, use, the word "let," he would not convey truth of intention to his hearers. For we use "let" to mean "permit," but Hamlet used it to mean "hinder." A League of Nations to "prevent" war, to take another example, would not truly express the modern intention if the word "prevent" were used, as the Prayer Book uses it, to mean "go before." When we say that a thing is absurd, we simply mean that it is silly; we do not mean that it comes from one who is deaf, as the word originally meant—although, in this case, there is only an extension, and not a perversion, of meaning. Indeed, a study of etymology only adds to the list of possible meanings of words; what was an "idiot," for example, but a "private person" to the Greeks? It is true that most public men regard most private persons as idiots, but the variant inflection of meaning is only another instance of the impossibility of our expressing truth in the original meaning of words.

The only way in which we can express truth in words

is by defining the sense in which we use them; and the truth then expressed is not necessarily philosophic "truth" (what is truth, by the way), but only sincerity, which originally meant purity, of intention. But the sense in which we use words frequently conflicts with the purpose which we wish to effect by their use; when President Wilson, for example, used the phrase about "making the world safe for democracy," he would not have effected his purpose if he had added: "and by democracy I mean, as Madison defined the term in 'The Federalist,' a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person." If he had so defined his term, his assertion would have been ridiculous, his very purpose would have been prevented; for Madison further declared that such a society "can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction," and President Wilson was prescribing a cure. By democracy, as everybody understood, President Wilson meant the Allies, who included Japan, which has an Imperial constitution deliberately modelled on that of the German Empire. These "spacious meanings" of words can only be properly apprehended by an exercise not of intelligence but of sympathy; we have to "feel with" a man before we can know accurately what he means—and then we usually discover that it does not matter. My own conclusion is that the limits of State Control are defined only by the capacity of the State Controller. A. E. R.

## Reviews.

**The Cormorant.** By Anne Weaver. (Melrose. 6s. net.)

Here is our old friend, Virtue in Jeopardy, brought up to date and treated in the "luscious" style. It was impossible that she should steal the necklace, impossible, too, that one so virginally passionate should yield to any man but her husband; but O and alas! she was accused of the one offence, and only an air-raid saved her from the other. Let us record this incident to the credit of the Germans, that they enabled the heroine of an English novel to emerge from a dangerous situation flustered, perhaps, but uncontaminated. Such a sweet girl, too, euphoniously named Cynara (abbreviated to Cynnie); so well-born, so well-connected, so well-dressed, and thoroughly efficient, we may say, in the performance of all social and secretarial duties; just the person to "fiddle harmonics on the strings of sensuality" without striking the wrong note, quite innocently, at first, but, later, with a deft skill that would have given her an introduction to the demi-monde, if the enemy aircraft had not proved to be the guardian angels of English morality. But Virtue is rewarded; she discovers an aunt, and becomes her heiress, she is proved, most dramatically, innocent of the theft to which, in a sort of confusion of mind, she had confessed, and, at long last, the man who first kissed her kissed her again. "She was in his arms, the yielding softness of her held close, her glowing face raised to his. Once more he knew the touch of her light hands upon his shoulders, the clinging warmth of her lips." And now they are married, we will wish them joy. But there is something called literature that Miss Weaver has carefully ignored in the construction and execution of her story.

**Joseph Sturge: His Life and Work.** By Stephen Hobhouse. (Dent. 4s. 6d. net.)

The revival of interest in the history of the Chartists entails a study of the personalities as well as of the principles and the prime motives of that movement; and Joseph Sturge, almost forgotten by this generation, is worth a monograph. It is characteristic of the Quakers that they are easier to live with than they are to read about; their genius for practical morality reduces their activity (and Sturge was astonishingly active) to mere matter-of-fact. If the incidents of their

lives do not lack the element of surprise, their reactions do; they are as consistent as—as Yorkshire pudding, as wholesome and as aesthetically unsatisfactory. "If I know your sect, I anticipate your argument," said Emerson; and Sturge was, of course, an advocate of slave emancipation, a "democratic" politician, an advocate of peace, a believer in education, a very charitable man. But his life makes dull reading, none the less. He was troubled, as so many Quakers are, in his conscience concerning his business as a corn merchant; but the Quaker habit of regarding all things reasonably prevented the disturbance from becoming dramatic. Sturge, as represented by Mr. Hobhouse, is not a man, he is a tradition, and a singularly uninspiring tradition. Sturge did not lack passion, but he suppressed it so effectually that the story of his life reads like that of a man without religion. If only he could have sinned, and repented, he would have redeemed himself from this barren mediocrity of morality; but he made mistakes, and corrected them—and on this level, there is no drama, least of all, spiritual drama. The "inner light" never flares into a flame; there is not one magnificent burst of inspiration in this book, not one vivifying phrase, not one action in the grand manner. Sturge did magnificent things, like his journey to the West Indies, his peace mission to Russia and to Denmark, in a most matter-of-fact way; a village constable could not have been more pedestrian. He cannot be numbered with the saints, nor with the sinners; he belongs to the category of worthy people, of whom we are told that the publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before them.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

### ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTION.

Sir,—Controversies on political theory are specially apt to be endless and unprofitable. The most one can hope to do without undertaking the writing of volumes is to try to state with some definiteness the chief points of divergence in opposed points of view. This is, at least, all I intend to attempt by way of acknowledgment of Mr. J. W. Scott's reply to my articles on the book which he wrote in criticism of the philosophy of Syndicalism.

Mr. Scott's chief conclusion appears to be that the National Guilds theory is quite compatible with acceptance of the main principle he laid down, the primacy, namely, of politics, that activity which has regard to social life as a whole. I thought this was a central contention of my argument also. To abolish the wage system, we maintain, is the imperative necessity in social development. But to do this with any hope of substituting for it a stable integrated social order, you must not turn your face from Parliament and deny the State, as the Syndicalists do. It is not here, therefore, that our views part company. I admit—in fact, I definitely suggested in the original articles—that there is a certain justice in Mr. Scott's complaint that I tend to criticise a book on the philosophy of Syndicalism by defending some rather non-philosophical aspects of a theory which is not primarily Syndicalist at all. The charge, therefore, is hardly surprising that my unconscious recognises a distinct applicability in the criticism (which comes to the surface in the word "savagely"), which it could accept only by dissociating itself entirely from the negative attitude of the Left. On the general question of my treatment of Mr. Scott's book I need only say that I was trying to carry the discussion further by considering how from premises not dissimilar Mr. Scott and I should derive political attitudes evidently very diverse. And I wished, I think, incidentally to indicate to Mr. Scott what seemed to me the valuable contributions to political theory which have been made by National Guilds writers, and to suggest that from the constructive point of view these penetrate to a deeper layer in social consciousness, and are much more worth his attention than a somewhat easily criticised and superficial theory like Syndicalism. About the attitude of National Guild theory to the latter there has never, I am sure, been any

doubt. It definitely and specifically rejected its main principle, which is hostility to the State, and the substitution of economic for political action. It can hardly be the case, therefore, that I imagine Mr. Scott has hit the National Guild movement in criticising this principle.

What I felt, in fact, about Mr. Scott's book was that he had been negligent of what I knew to be an extremely important element in his own philosophical attitude. He had dealt faithfully with the errors of a widespread and significant modern point of view and theory. But he had not, as it seemed to me, realised sufficiently how much truth the movement nevertheless contained. Though he saw that it was a reaction against the failure of political action, he did not grasp that it was an exaggeration of the proper corrective, a by no means uncalled for protest against the traditional idea that constructive social thought activity cannot be directed to economic ends or use economic means, but must confine itself, not to politics, but to playing games with the machinery of government. Had Mr. Scott realised this, I thought, he would have devoted more attention to the really vital question of modern politics, and in my second article I tried to indicate what these are.

When I said that Mr. Scott's book had a thoroughly bad political flavour, I meant something of this sort. He did seem, instead of trying to integrate Syndicalism, to have fallen back pretty definitely on precisely that half-conscious tradition about politics which has led to the trouble. The apostles of conservation and reaction naturally agree completely with this tradition, and Mr. Scott's book was to them an excellent rationalisation of their unconscious attitude. Even though this has surprised Mr. Scott, he must accept a certain responsibility for it. His book annoyed me because, though he put down exactly what he thought to be true, and I did not contradict it, he had not thought more and further and about the other side. I might recall to Mr. Scott J. H. Green's remarks about the consequence of actions. They are always relevant, and all of them are relevant. Those of them which surprise us usually give us that information of which we stand most in need on the real nature of the action we performed. And this underlay my deliberate use of the term "savagely." It was an attempt to stir up Mr. Scott's unconscious. M. W. ROBIESON.

[We regret to say that the writer of the foregoing letter, our colleague, Mr. M. W. Robieson, died of syncope on Wednesday, July 14, while bathing in Cornwall.—Ed., N.A.]

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### A POLICY FOR BRITISH LABOUR.

Sir,—In the event of the policy of British capitalists becoming one of co-operation with American capitalists, entailing, as you point out, the progressive subjugation of the world in general and of Anglo-American Labour in particular, to the international Trusts, then British Labour will find itself at cross-roads. The British and American Labour movements are pursuing courses so divergent that co-operation against their united opponents will be difficult of attainment, and the path of Anglo-American capitalists will be correspondingly the smoother. Which will the British Labour movement find to be the easier course to follow in these circumstances—that towards a common policy and united action for Anglo-American Labour, or that towards a Commonwealth of Communist peoples comprising the European revolutionary countries and the British Colonies, between the Labour movements of which there is a closer agreement as to policy and greater unity of purpose? C. W. WILKINSON.

\* \* \*

### A CORRECTION.

Sir,—We note that there are two Mr. Holbrookes who participate in British music—Mr. Joseph and Mr. Josef. Of those, the Mr. J. Holbrooke now resident at Harlech, in Wales, desires with a zeal worthy of the ancient denizens—Men of Harlech, Pibroch of Donildhu, and the rest of it—utterly to dissociate himself from the performance of songs rendered by Miss B. Sharpe at the Wigmore Hall on April 9 of this year. Anyone who attended that performance, and no one more feelingly than myself, will readily understand the earnestness of Mr. Holbrooke's (of Harlech) wishes, and heartily compliment him thereupon. WM. ATHELING.

## Pastiche.

### THE REGIONAL.—IV.

I HAVE, I trust, never intimated that idiocy is a national quality, or that any border quarantines prevail against it. For the safety of intelligence, which can never be wholly a safe possession for the possessor, one can but try to diagnose and discriminate between different species of imbecility, some international, some of them possibly local, or more prevalent in certain localities. If England and America suffer, as I think they do, because the Napoleonic wars checked the due flow of French eighteenth century thought into English, one must balance this by the more than Tory muddle, the more than "British" stupidity displayed in Vol. X ("Political Mélange") of Chateaubriand. I suppose that no institution save an American institution of learning would imagine it conferred a favour on you in requesting free copies of your works. I suppose that the "Eduardi Septuar Suargibolian" (a poem celebrating the death and decorated ascension into Paradise of the late Edward VII, R.I.) could only have been written in Bengali; and I suppose with equal chance of correctness that the volume before me could only have originated in the "fertile" mind of a Frenchman (presumably a disciple of M. Albalat, and confessedly an approbator of Academician Jules Lemaître).

The work is neither by Maurice Lauban nor by the celebrated M. Cardinal. If I conceal the name of author, volume, and publisher, it is only to prevent its importation and translation by Burns and Oates, who would certainly welcome such a pillar. We have, it is true, a contemporary who addresses sonnets (by the volume) to "Lord Northcliffe and Josephus Daniels"; we have the unended dullness of Mr. Marsh's protégées, but for lyric fervour commend me:

"Qu'il s'agisse du pauvre, intérêt social,  
Des Universités . . . besoins de la science,  
Des encouragements à la vertu, du mal  
A combattre, et à vaincre, à force d'endurance,  
De courage et de force, en toute occasion,  
Rien ne coûte à cet homme . . . un véritable apôtre."

This is from an homage to Andrew Carnegie, who has, we are assured, "une épouse de choix" ("la fin, le tout, Je but, Ainsi Dieu fit Adam"). The author also tells us that "Astor et Carnegie ont trouvé le remède." This is, we presume, but a longer variant on the austere "That's mighty white of Andy," and might pass as the normal emotion of the beneficiary. It is the whole volume which commands our attention, not this one flower of lyricism. We have, to begin with, 61 pp. of denunciation of Voltaire, for which the muse of Juvenal is involved; we are told what Boileau would have added to Hugo's reprobation (metre as in "It was the night before Christmas, and all through the house not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse"):

"O Pégase indompté, qui te cabre, étend raide  
L'impertinent auteur, mal assis," etc.

(i.e., Voltaire, of "affreux caractère"). We are told that Aronet was a bad subject at school, and that he insulted Jeanne d'Arc. This last is probably the root of the matter. "Français, mes bons amis," are asked to "Flétrissez ce bandit" if they respect themselves. The title-page is undated, but some of the poems are signed as late as 1914. Space forbids, etc. There follow some complimentary lines to a certain Louis Veuillot; some in memory of Henri Rochefort (Marquis de Rochefort-Luçay); of Deroulède, then the Carnegie, then a Marseillaise des Écoliers; the bi-centenary of Rousseau brings forth seven pages of abuse. This also might be explicable. The final touch is a two-page insult to Stendhal who "sent l'infect arôme! . . ."

As all long poems may suffer from inapt quotation, I find it difficult to convey the full *arôme*, the diffused and airy clarity (oh, *bien*, the clarity *française*) of this volume by a single paragraph. Some can, however, be gathered from the passage where the author tells us what he would do to Voltaire if he, the author, were a grave-digger.

"Je te hais" (footnote by author to explain that the

hatred is addressed less to the individual Aronet than to "cet être special Voltaire" who incarnates "plus qu'aucun autre" the impious sectarianism, etc., of the eighteenth century, "méchant et cynique". To continue:

"d'une haine implacable, féroce! . . .

Si j'étais fossoyeur, je creuserais ta fosse  
A telle profondeur, que tu t'abimerais  
Jusqu' au fond de l'enfer, au centre de la terre,  
Dans cette énormité de feu, de flamme, où pierre,  
Métaux, verre et silex, sont tendres minerais,  
Se volatilissant en un brasier immense,  
Par cent mille degrés d'une chaleur intense! . . ."

The technical delights of the author are evenly and unflaggingly distributed, but even a foreigner indifferent to the subtleties of the *e* mute cannot fail to receive the impact of some of them.

Since my discovery of the neochromatist who rhymed *ardoise* and *framboise* in his endeavour to persuade "her" to let down her slate-coloured hair over her raspberry-coloured flanks, I have found no work of quite this delectability.

Nothing but my well-known bitterness and my terror of Mr. Wilfred Meynell's certain boom of the author prevents me from revealing his name, address, and publisher.

The author adds even modesty to his other effulgent attributes, voire p. 12, where he speaks of his poem as "presque aussi fatigant Que les vers de Voltaire," but more noble; naturally much more noble.

EZRA POUND.

### TACE (I).

Kind is the earth's breast:  
She shall still thy crying  
With a little rest:  
Thou shalt hush thy sighing,  
Lying under a green tree, and there in quiet dying.  
There the gentle season  
Tripping o'er thee fleetly  
(Save but winter's treason)  
Shall attire thee featly:  
Meetly thou shalt wear flowers, the which embalm thee sweetly.

And when the voice of heaven  
In thy bed shall shake thee,  
And thy robe be riven,  
Love therefrom shall take thee  
And make thee a fair robe, against thou turn and wake thee.

### TACE (II).

Here shall no lightest care call through thy slumber,  
None shall tell over to thee the names of woe;  
Far and full faint for thee is the voice of cumber;  
Thou art the angel of the seasons slow  
And silent lovelinesses without number.  
Fair of thy dews thou makest the bright chrisom  
That all thy children crowns with worthiness;  
Even the least life and undiscover'd blossom  
Beareth thy diamond love upon his dress,  
Safe harboured in the earth above thy bosom.  
Would'st thou have music where thy spirit hideth,  
Would'st thou be guarded in thy long repose?  
Lo, the shrill fly upon the aether rideth,  
The cricket pipeth; mansion'd in the rose  
The mailèd beetle faithfully abideth.

RUTH PITTER.

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