NOTES OF THE WEEK.

It is enough for most people, no doubt, to have to pay high prices, without being called upon to think about it as well; and this must be held to explain the singular concentration of the popular Press upon anything other than the most continuous and pressing problem in every household. Sport, murder, celebrations, flying—anything that will serve to make a newspaper-stunt is seized upon by our friends of the Press as a means of diverting us from the daily, indeed, the almost hourly, problem of making both ends meet. It is very kind of the Press to consent to entertain us in this manner; and it must go strongly against their reason and policy; and, in any event, no great harm is done by inquiring who or what fixes prices, and why it suits the convenience of these entities to put up the prices of necessities? The instinct of the financial classes may be alone to credit for the discovery and operating their wonders to perform. To romanticists like ourselves, however, it all appears remarkably like the pea is being manipulated somewhere else. And the somewhere else, in the present instance, is the Trusts are "efficient," employ "admirable methods," and "do not seek to obtain exorbitant prices for us; and the reason is the obvious reason that someone has concluded that Labour has too much money in its pocket to be disposed to work at the intensity expected of it. Men with money in reserve are independent to the extent of their tether; though only wage-slaves, they are remarkably like the other classes when they have a few pounds in the family-stocking. It must, therefore, be taken from them; they must be bled of their independence; and what is more convenient for the purpose than the subtle, intangible, invisible, indiscernible device of putting up the prices of necessities? The instinct of the financial classes may be alone to credit for the discovery and use of this instrument of blood-letting. Or, again, it may be only the sacred laws of supply and demand operating their wonders to perform. To romanticists like ourselves, however, it all appears remarkably like reason and policy; and, in any event, no great harm is done by inquiring who or what fixes prices, and why it suits the convenience of these entities to fix the prices of necessities high, while aiming all the time at cheapening luxuries.

The popular mind, judiciously assisted by the popular Press, has come to the conclusion that profiteering is the main, if not the sole cause of high prices. The "Daily Herald," for example, is willing to allow that "reckless borrowing, the inflation of the currency, and the extravagance of Government Departments" have played their part in diminishing the purchasing-power of the tokens we call money—"yes," it says, "but the main cause of high prices is profiteering." The "Daily News" is of the same opinion; and so, by a strange coincidence, are the "Daily Express" and the "Evening Standard." On the other hand, people who are supposed to know even better, Mr. Roberts of the Food Ministry and men of similar experience, seem rather to deny than to confirm this popular consensus of interested ignorance. "If every profiteer in the land," says Mr. Roberts, "were guillotined to-morrow, it would not bring prices down to the level we desire." And if it be suggested that it is not the individual profiteer but the collective profiteer in the form of the Trust who is to blame, we have the word of Sir Edgar Jones that the Trusts are "efficient," employ "admirable methods," and "do not seek to obtain exorbitant
profits." Which are we to believe of these two reports —the report of the men who know or the report of the men who write for the popular Press? For ourselves, we have made our choice. Profiteering, while, of course, a contributory cause of high prices in special cases, is so far from being the main or even a chief cause of the present high level of prices that if all profits were abolished to-morrow, absorbed into price, like the tail of the tadpole into the frog, the resultant level of prices would still be too high for the present level of wages and salaries to compete fairly with it. What, in fact, we have to learn sooner or later is that the "profiteer" who forms part of price is only a fraction of the price as fixed by other circumstances than profiteering. We have to go further and learn that if every commodity could be marketed at cost price, there would still be an enormous surplus of goods over the purchasing-capacity of wages and salaries. And finally we must be prepared to accept the conclusion (paradoxical as it may seem), that prices must in general be fixed considerably below the conventional cost of production in order effectively to distribute the national production.

We may take it for granted that the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the cause of high prices is not intended to arrive at any conclusion worth the pains of its members. We have seen what Mr. Roberts has to say on the relation of profiteering to high prices; and it may be remembered that, a week or two ago, we quoted Mr. Roberts as remarking that the question of currency and credit had more to do with the matter. By a clever oversight on the part of the Government, however, it is precisely the relation of currency to high prices that is excluded from the directions in which the Select Committee is commanded to seek an explanation. The particular, and, in fact, the only question set for the Committee to inquire into is the effect of profiteering upon high prices; and since, as we have shown on good evidence, the effect of profiteering on high prices is fractional, the conclusions of the Committee are likely to have, at best, only a fractional value. It would be too curious to ask what is the reason of this strange limitation of the spirit of inquiry into a subject of such universal importance as that of the cost of living. We suggest it, however, as a problem for the tea-table when a cup of tea is charged at threepence. For ourselves, once more, we find little need to speculate on the matter; for the deduction appears to be obvious that since, as we know, the Government is in debt to the banks for some thousands of millions of pounds; since, moreover, the banks are concerned with currency, and have a particular interest in keeping prices high by means of currency—the exclusion of the subject of the relation of currency to prices is a financiers' command. A Government, indeed, that dared to appoint a Select Committee with a free hand to inquire into the cause of high prices—would be a Government of yesterday. Better to follow the popular Press and look for the cause where nobody in the know expects to find it, namely, in profiteering.

We have a respect for the King, which does not seem to be shared by the people who advise his speeches. Nobody will accuse the King of being in the Capitalist conspiracy to maintain and strengthen the strange hold of Capitalism upon the working-classes of the country. Yet, if his purpose had been to avow his alliance with the super-producers, profit-seekers and money-lenders, his speech at the Guildhall on Tuesday last could scarcely have been better composed. His flattering references to City finance were as undeserved as many decorations; and his appeal to the workers for "strenuous and unremitting industry" was in the Ercles vein of Lord Leverhulme and other captains of industry. There is no need for anyone to teach the King the principles of economics; he knows them very well. But to his advisers upon this occasion we would express the warning that they cannot conceal themselves behind the King's popular majesty; and, above all, that it is disloyal of them to employ his Person as their shield. The intentions of the group of uncappingly engaged in exploiting the popularity of the Throne are very well known; and the implications of their programme are matters of simple reasoning. Contrary to the statements innocently fathered by the King, we affirm as facts or deductions accessible to everybody that the "City" has not served the nation well in the matter of finance during the war, but spoiled it of thousands of millions of pounds; that "super-production" is not a necessity, but, rather, that a better distributive system is the first condition of increased production; and, finally, that "strenuous and unremitting industry," while necessary and desirable upon occasion, is not a task to impose upon a modern nation as an ideal of life. The realm of His Majesty has many troubles to endure; it is with only the utmost good fortune, the utmost goodwill and the utmost intelligence that we shall survive the task which has been created against our passage into smooth water if the King were to allow himself to be used by a system that must pass away.

The American Federation of Labour, under the able leadership of Mr. Gompers, has never been characterised by the possession of ideas; and in its latest Manifesto, naturally welcomed by the super-producers of this country, it appears to have joined forces with the frenzied producers of America. Its thoughtful leaders, headed, of course, by the friend of princes and potentates, Mr. Gompers himself, have arrived at the surprising conclusion that since the more there is of the more there is to divide, the business of the Federation of Labour is to "welcome science," and, indeed, to give science all the assistance within Labour's power. Both the proposition and the deduction would be impeccable if, in the first place, such a thing as a community or commonwealth really existed; and if, in the second place, in the absence of such a commonwealth, we could be sure that the super-production rendered possible by science were applied, first and foremost, to the commodities mainly consumed by the wage-earners of America. Its thoughtful leaders, headed, of course, by the friend of princes and potentates, Mr. Gompers himself, have arrived at the surprising conclusion that since the more there is of the more there is to divide, the business of the Federation of Labour is to "welcome science," and, indeed, to give science all the assistance within Labour's power. We must repeat for the instruction of our American second cousins of the Federation of Labour that what is wrong to-day is not our productive system, but our distributive system; that super-production is no remedy but rather an aggravation of under-consumption; that the super-production of luxuries positively ensures the increasing cost of necessities; and, lastly, that whoever talks of increasing production before providing for increased consumption by means of better distribution is talking Capitalism.

Nobody, least of all the Government itself, is certain at the moment of writing what the issue of the Coal dispute may be, whether it may resolve itself into nationalisation, into the Duckham scheme, or into a scheme not yet defined; but the omens for the present are against nationalisation and in favour of a more or less modified form of the Report and recommendations of Sir Arthur Duckham, summarised clearly by himself in a telegram to the "Daily Herald" as "nationalisation of minerals, unification of areas, re-
presentation of workmen on governing bodies, restriction of profits." Mr. Smillie has already anticipated this decision and pronounced himself against the Duckham scheme as "a symbiotic movement of mine-owners and workers against the consumer." And he has, moreover, interpreted the Bothwell election result as a verdict in support, if not in command, of nationalisation. As we said last week, it is clear that if the miners reject this, the Government scheme has no power to enforce it. On the other hand, it is no less true that neither can the miners enforce nationalisation against the will of the Government. It, therefore, comes to this, that each party has a scheme unacceptable to the other; and, moreover, that each party can veto the scheme of the other without, at the same time, being able to carry its own. If no third scheme, alternative to both, and acceptable to both parties, can be discovered or brought to the light of day, the deadlock of the situation is apparent. Something, it is clear, must give way in the end, for a deadlock is not a stable condition of things. Which is it to be?

The seriousness of the "direct actionists," who are now taking a poll of the Triple Alliance to discover whether the notions of Mr. Brailsford and other Liberals are worth a national strike, does not lie in what they are likely to accomplish by this means—for nobody believes that a strike is probable; nor does it lie in the "challenge to constitutional action" which its authors profess they are making; but in the certain and, we dare almost say, the calculable discredit the movement in favour of "direct action" is bound to bring upon the Labour movement as a whole. If the "Daily Herald" were being employed to depopularise Labour as fast as the increasing pressure of high prices would otherwise be certain to popularise Labour, it could not be discharging its function more efficiently. Nothing is missing in its propaganda—and summarily in its recent Manifesto—to jeopardise every acquisition of public esteem and sympathy which Labour has recently made for itself. Slim arguments, misleading analogies, special pleading, sentimental arithmetic, and false assumptions—these appear to be the ingredients of the mess served up by the "Daily Herald" as nourishment to its readers. The very phrase "direct action" is itself question-begging. Direct implies the shortest line to a given end; and action is presumably a positive means towards it. Is it "direct" to bring about (or, rather, to talk about bringing about) a general strike and a general sympathy for Lloyd George to influence Mr. Churchill to influence the Allies to influence Koltschak? The fetch seems to be almost round the compass. And the action again—what action is involved in ceasing to work? One of two things must follow if the attempt is persisted in (as it will not be): either it fails, whereupon all the consequences fall upon Labour; or it succeeds, whereupon—what? Is Mr. Lansbury prepared to take over the Government with the help of Mr. Brailsford and his staff? The directness of that action to anything but chaos does not appear obvious. We set aside the folly of diverting popular attention from the grievance of high prices—the ultimate consequences of which, Mr. Lansbury will discover, are to be found in foreign policy (for foreign policy is only an extension of social policy, and social policy has its roots in wages and prices); we set aside the folly of attempting to "save Russia" while we do not yet know how to save Bow and Bromley; the particular folly of the "direct action" conception seems to us to lie in the said certainty that Mr. Lansbury is being made a tool of, for the discrediting of Labour. Direct action, with the people behind you—that is one thing; but direct action with only the Liberals behind you—that is a price too high to pay for the restoration of Mr. Asquith to the premiership.

By Telepathy.

First Financier: What's the game? I hear you are supplying money to some of these people who are out for a general strike!

Second Financier: Hush! Not a word! We're all in it on the stock QT.

F. F.: I've heard nothing of it! What's up? What's the idea?

S. F.: I dare scarcely think of it, let alone put it into words. You ought to know the game without having to be told.

F. F.: Well, I don't; and I don't like what I hear about it.

S. F.: You know very well that Labour's getting the upper hand, don't you?

F. F.: So it seems, when you're putting money into it!

S. F.: Who said it's money? Wait a bit; we can do it very cheaply.

F. F.: Do what?

S. F.: Well, as I was saying, you know Labour's getting the upper hand. That's got to be stopped! You agree about that, I suppose.

F. F.: Naturally, but you're doing nothing to stop it; you're encouraging it!

S. F.: Steady, my boy, steady! Am I likely to? Not in these clothes!

F. F.: What the deuce are you after, then?

S. F.: I was telling you as fast as I dared. You tell me why Labour is getting on top?


S. F.: Not good enough—doesn't carry us forward. Now let me tell you. Labour's getting on top for a simple reason that nearly everybody has a grievance. High prices, unemployment, and so on. Do you catch me?

F. F.: No; no trade!

S. F.: Well, what's going to happen if everybody except a few of us finds himself in the soup and thinks the Labour people alone know the way out? Do you catch me now?

F. F.: You mean a revolution?

S. F.: You've partly got me; but I mean something worse—a successful revolution; a revolution led by Labour and backed by everybody with a grievance about high prices. Between you and me, Labour has the chance of its life. It's only to sit tight and behave itself and talk high prices to have everybody on its side—everybody, I mean, but people like you and me. We shouldn't stand a chance against 'em. They'd have a General Election and a Labour Government in two ticks. You know the winter is going to be a scorcher for everybody who hasn't the means of making money.

F. F.: I still don't see what your game is!

S. F.: Come again. Suppose you could persuade Labour to kick up such a stink that everybody would drop it like a hot brick.

F. F.: I'm beginning to see the light!

S. F.: Good for you. Then I needn't go on. The game, you see, is quite simple. We're playing for the public which, at present, is disposed to look for shelter under Labour's umbrella. Let's get Labour to make a fool of itself—try a General Strike about some crazy notion or other—get the backs of everybody well up—and there we are! Labour knocked out for ten years at least.

F. F.: Surely some of the Labour fellows will see the game; and they'll tell the others.

S. F.: We who are running this thing weren't born yesterday. The Labour fellows who know have no influence. Nobody takes any notice of them. And the Labour leaders who don't know have all the say. They've got the Labour daily; and you'd better back it if you want your money's worth.

F. F.: I thought Lansbury was above that sort of thing.

S. F.: That's just the game. So he is—miles and miles.

F. F.: I thought Lansbury was above that sort of thing.

S. F.: Why he cannot be bought. Everybody knows he cannot be bought. It makes him cheap for the people behind you—that is a trouble.

F. F.: Well, well, you support all that in love and finance. But I hope there's not going to be any trouble.

S. F.: Only enough to stave off the bigger trouble of a popular revolution.

R. M.
I have gladly stood aside during the latter weeks while Mr. Macmillan presented the case for the Muslims. Had it even been the case for the Muslim peoples alone, the charity of the British Press should, I agree, have been sufficient to include it—if not in a more widely circulated paper than The New Age, at least in as independent a journal. But it was not the Muslim case alone that Mr. Pickthall was presenting, but the case of a considerable majority of the people we are pleased and, occasionally (on high days and holidays), proud to remember form the British Empire. Except as the result of unavoidable repetition, no exaggeration of the facts or of the seriousness of the facts was contained in the whole series of Mr. Pickthall's articles. They contain a sober and truthful, though, of course, and rightly, an entirely sympathetic statement of the psychological situation as it stands between our politicians and a considerable part of the Empire—and so, in our name. The responsibility upon those who have now had an opportunity of realising the facts is tremendous. It will not do for us to say that “nobody told us,” “nobody warned us.” We have now been both warned and told.

Leaving the general question aside, and coming to the particular case of India, the Joint Committee of the two Houses considering the Bill for the future government of India are probably deciding the fate of the Empire—deciding whether to hold India by force or by affection. At present there are in India only two parties; the officials, eager for repression, at least, for the moment; the rest of India united in opposition. For sixty years British officials have framed political policies and carried them out—efficiently, honestly, and with some consideration. Indians have demanded for thirty years British officials yielded nothing to the united request of Indian representatives, even in trifles. Throughout the war, India, as a whole, supported even official administration, believing in the claim that the war was for Right. The visit of the King brought the redress for a grievance of years—the re-union of Bengal. Lord Hardinge openly sided with Indian feeling roused by the oppression of the Secretary of State. By these means India was won to the support of the Empire during the war. Another European, Mrs. Besant, seeing the youth of India drifting rapidly to the extreme Left, formed a party for constitutional agitation for freedom—and was interned. Bureaucracy lived on its alleged garrison India where no party is in love with the equality with representatives, even in trifles. Towards National Guilds in Italy.

By Odon For.

VII.

It has been sufficiently proved in the preceding chapters that co-operative farms are a widespread institution in Italy and not a local experiment conducted by a few enthusiastic idealists. Indeed, the various types of co-operative farms—those under united management, those under divided management, and the mixed type where a central administration decides when and what work is to be done collectively or on individual lots—correspond exactly to the technical, financial, and social conditions and to the spiritual preparedness of the members. While the forms are different they all have in substance the same object: to secure for the farm workers the direct management of the land.

While the actual needs of agriculture, considered as a modern industry and a social problem, largely determine the form of organisation, the co-operative types are preferred by those who work for a substantial social transformation, inasmuch as they give a greater intensity to those forces of solidarity which, through difficulties and struggles, will undoubtedly be finally victorious. As a tendency, as an effort, therefore, the socialists prefer and advise the creation of co-operative farms under united management, and the foundation of Agrarian Universities, while the conservative and the catholic organisations lean towards the divided type. Moreover, the type in which all members participate in the cultivation of the whole estate, under an elected director, is generally believed to offer the greatest
facilities for the ownership and use of machinery and the application of everything that modern agricultural science has invented, in short, for scientific management. But the socialists readily admit that co-operative farms under divided management are not merely creations of conservative intentions, but often are determined by necessities. Often the conditions of tenants on share or the special conditions of the fields are great obstacles to united management, while there are certain operations, especially in intensive agriculture, the execution of which in a collective way is very difficult and for which the individual or family management and responsibility is a necessity. The socialists do not therefore reject the divided type for abstract reasons; above all, they want to avoid economic errors; and when, by the conditions of the fields or the traditions of a locality, they are obliged to adopt divided management they try to correct it by providing for a single technical direction and the common management of everything that can be done collectively—the buying of raw materials, fertilisers, machineries, the transportation of products and their sale, collective insurance, etc.—and by in solidarity amongst the members and amongst the various organisations.

The remarkable success of these various types of co-operative farms, their adaptability to the varied agricultural conditions in all parts of Italy, the demonstrated fact that they improve the land, increase and improve production, and raise the status of the agricultural workers, and the fact that they have outgrown their initial scope and temporary purpose—the relief of unemployment—and have become stable enterprises demonstrating the capacity of the agrarian proletariat to manage associated the farming industry, have given them a national importance. Their more recent developments, characterised by a strong tendency to expansion by the absorption of more technical experts, more members, and by the leasing and buying of great estates, have assumed such vast proportions that their disciplining on a national scale became an urgent necessity, and they have at length decided to pool their forces into a national Federation.

The aim of the "National Federation of Agricultural Co operative Societies with a Commercial Agency" is thus defined in the legally approved statutes: "In order to co-ordinate and concentrate for the greater development of Italian agriculture all the scattered forces of labour and co-operation, a strong organism of production is to be created in which, under the stimulus of a more direct interest, the farm-labourers shall become factors of economic progress both for the working masses and the nation." To realise this aim the Federation proposes:—

(a) To favour the constitution and development of co-operative societies, colonies, and collective landholding societies in all parts of Italy;

(b) To emphasise the moral and economic superiority of agricultural co-operation, combating all the forms of profiteering and parasitism of the middlemen who stand between the landowner and the labourer, facilitating by all means and methods the direct assumption of the control of the estates by farm labourers united in agricultural co-operative societies;

(c) To institute commercial offices and agencies for the collective buying of the raw materials necessary for agriculture, of machines, tools, etc., and for the sale of the products;

(d) To create and manage factories for the production of fertilisers and articles useful in agriculture;

(e) To provide the best defence of agriculture against the damages of fire, pest, and pestilence, stocks diseases, etc., by direct and mutual insurance;

(f) To assume directly or on the account of the federated societies—leasing or buying—the management of the fields;

(g) To set up scientific centres and experimental laboratories in order to provide the affiliated societies with the greatest possible amount of guidance and practical advice.

The co-operative societies which seek admission to the National Federation must be legally constituted and must conform in their action to the principles and policy laid down by the national organ of co-operation and trade unionism. This means that they must accept and act upon the socialist ideals.

The Federation is already at work; it embraces more than 500 affiliated co-operative societies; expert agriculturists are directing it; it sums up the experiences of a long period and is shaping a national policy out of them. It comes into being at a moment when great activity prevails in agriculture.

Farming is becoming a modern industry scientifically managed. Few private landlords have either sufficient financial means, administrative capacity, or area of property for the conduct of agriculture on modern industrial lines. The great tenants are regarded by them, and still more by the farm-labourers, as exploiters with no vital functions or interests in the permanent improvement of the land. Even if they are able men, they have no other interest than to squeeze out from the land the greatest possible output for the time being. And if profiteering considerations weaken in the long run in agriculture still more certainly. The Italian farm-labourers, living and conscious factors of the agricultural industry, are determined both to avoid the destruction of the land and to improve agriculture; and they are not willing to suffer any longer the exploitation of their forces.

At present they are fighting in many districts where agriculture is an industry, for the eight-hour day on the land, for the improvement of the housing conditions, for standard wages. They have established their control over agriculture in the private farming enterprises through "shop-committees," which have now the power to determine the methods of cultivation, the number of labourers employed, as well as all other matters regarding the management. This struggle has been victorious in many localities, and a law is now before Parliament to regularise and legalise the eight-hour day in agriculture which has been won directly by the workers.

But the trend towards great agricultural enterprises cannot be dammed, nor would this be in the interest of the farm-labourers; it is rather in their interest to back it. A rational development of agriculture in many Italian districts is technically and financially impossible without large-scale farming. This may assume two principal forms of realisation: private joint stock companies, leasing for a long period or buying great estates and managing them under the direction of experts and employing farm-labourers at wages—this is the trend towards Agricultural Trust; or agricultural co-operative societies, which represent the trend towards Agricultural Guilds.

Capitalist large-scale farming—recently introduced in a few places—has come, however, too late; it comes at a time when great co-operative estates have already established themselves successfully and permanently; it may succeed temporarily, especially where the agricultural labourers are still unorganised or at the beginnings of organisation, but it has no chance whatever in the districts where the agricultural labourers are fully conscious of their industrial capacities and social mission and refuse to be wage-earners.

Logically, then, the technical function exercised in industry by the great combinations should fall in agriculture to the guilds of farm-labourers. If for technical reasons the great agricultural enterprises are inevitable, it is not equally inevitable that they shall take the form of capitalist trusts. The National Federation will become an organ for the conducting of large-scale agri-
culture, for the industrialisation and socialisation of farming, in two ways:

(a) By assuming the management of vast estates and by their cultivation with all the established modern methods and means. In this case it will become the strongest and most successful opponent of the anti-economic, anti-technical, and anti-social schemes of breaking up those great estates in small farms in which the superior efficiency of large-scale farming is beyond discussion; of all those schemes, in fact, which are proposed partly by the landowners, partly by the great profits to be made of the sale of their latifondi, partly by conservative politicians who hope to silence the growing discontent amongst the farm-labourers by settling them on small allotments, without regard to the question whether these may yield a decent living to the settlers and their families.

This work of the Federation will be increasingly facilitated in proportion as it seeks the support of the agricultural unions; and in the measure in which it draws its strength from this source. We read in the annual report of the Co-operative Farm of Santa Vittoria (in the province of Reggio-Emilia) that it has reached 40,000. These trees do not figure amongst the schemes, in fact, which are proposed partly by the landowners, partly by the great profits to be made of the sale of their latifondi, partly by conservative politicians who hope to silence the growing discontent amongst the farm-labourers by settling them on small allotments, without regard to the question whether these may yield a decent living to the settlers and their families.

(b) By creating an understanding between the various affiliated co-operative farms for the cultivation of such products as can be transformed industrially in the factories owned or managed by the Federation or by the co-operative societies of production or by the municipal bodies.

The National Federation, controlling directly and indirectly through its affiliated societies vast masses of agricultural labour, is already at its disposal a sufficient number of expert agriculturists, cultivating already hundreds of thousands of acres, and being in close relationship with the co-operative societies of labour that specialise in reclamation works of all kinds, is actually the greatest agricultural enterprise in Italy. It is capable of assuming in any part of the country any species of work relating to farming, from the reclamation of waste lands to their transformation into fruit gardens. It is already a "national enterprise" for the very reason that it has its affiliated estates scattered in many parts of the country. It has all the technical elements—lands of various quality, staff, labourers, machines, etc.—that are indispensable for that unity of management and purpose which makes the co-ordination of production possible under an organically developed agriculture enterprise and none of the drawbacks of unwilling labour. It truly represents effective organised energies with a potential capacity of directing the re-organisation of agriculture on a national scale so as to put the land to the fullest possible use for the benefit of the collectivity as a whole.

A practical example will illuminate the latent possibilities determined by the fusion of local and limited initiatives into the unified national approach. We read in the annual report of the Co-operative Farm of Santa Vittoria (in the province of Reggio-Emilia) that it has cultivated about 25,000 Canadian poplars along the banks of the irrigation canals and in other places that were hitherto neglected. Soon the number of poplars will reach 40,000. These trees do not figure amongst the assets of the farm, and are considered by the management as constituting the reserve fund to meet unforeseen losses. This is, of course, an excellent device. Consequently, many industries could produce more, and many new industries could be created.

The Federation, functioning nationally, may be able not only to evade and supplant, but also to jump a phase of capitalist organisation that hitherto seemed inevitable. It might realise on a truly national scale that which the capitalists and the State have failed to realise and upon which Italy's economic prosperity depends: the establishment collectively of organic and continuous relations between agriculture and industry for the supply to the existing industries of raw materials obtainable by the intensification and re-organisation of agriculture. Italy could produce many of the raw materials hitherto produced by other countries chiefly because of lack of co-ordination, of mutual confidence and of stimulus between industry and agriculture. Consequently, many industries could produce more and many new industries could be created.

The Federation is obliged by its own constitution, derived from the propulsive forces of its constituting bodies—to follow an agricultural-industrial programme with features of permanency and not of speculation. The various effects of such an activity are evident, but above all it will stabilise and impose co-operative farming and co-operation in general. Not could the State refuse its support to such a useful and necessary industry. A series of such new possibilities for new industries could be enumerated; but this one example suffices to emphasise the "capital value" of "national organisation." The very fact of the national organisation of the co-operative farms has a latent capital value which brought into action and associated with other enterprises and initiatives acquires real value.

No doubt all the latent forces in the National Federation will be realised through assigning them special and new functions. The new functions will create a source of new rights; for more important and advantageous leases, for security of tenure, for vaster credit and finally the exclusive right of the co-operative farms to manage public lands. The Federation, functioning nationally, may be able not only to evade and supplant, but also to jump a phase of capitalist organisation that hitherto seemed inevitable. It might realise on a truly national scale that which the capitalists and the State have failed to realise and upon which Italy's economic prosperity depends: the establishment collectively of organic and continuous relations between agriculture and industry for the supply to the existing industries of raw materials obtainable by the intensification and re-organisation of agriculture. Italy could produce many of the raw materials hitherto produced by other countries chiefly because of lack of co-ordination, of mutual confidence and of stimulus between industry and agriculture. Consequently, many industries could produce more, and many new industries could be created.
its own initiative. And there are not wanting signs that the State is preparing to ally itself with the Federation. When this alliance materialises, the Federation will become the Italian National Agricultural Guild, and its activities will develop at a very rapid pace.

CHAPTER XI.

The awful tragedy of waste and misery through which the world has passed, it has been shown that it has brought about a widespread determination that the best efforts of which mankind is capable are not too much to devote to the construction of a fabric of society within which a repetition of the disaster would be, if it impossible, unlikely; and the major focus of this determination has found a vehicle in the project commonly known as the League of Nations.

The immense appeal which the phrase has made to the popular and honest mind has made it dangerous to fail in rendering lip service to it; but it is fairly certain that under this pressure the logical and inevitable end of economic competition is for the distribution of purchasing power, through the medium of wages in particular, more and more ineffective; and as a result individual discontent becomes daily a more formidable pressure to the system. It must be evident therefore that an economic system involving forced extrusion of product from the community producing, as an integral component of the machinery for the distribution of purchasing power, is entirely incompatible with any effective League of Nations, because the logical and inevitable end of economic competition is war. Conversely, an effective League of Free Peoples postulates the abolition of the competitive basis of society, and by the installation of the co-operative commonwealth in its place makes of war not only a crime, but a blunder.

Under such a modification of world policy, interchange of commodities would take place with immeasurably greater freedom than at present, but on principles exactly opposite to those which now govern Trade. The manufacturing community now struggles for the privilege of dominating the economic system, which production is distributed. This failure involves the necessity of an increasing export of manufactured goods for export to less developed countries. Non-competitive industry would largely leave the trading initiative to the supply of raw material. Since any material received in payment of exported goods would find a distributed effective demand waiting for it, imports would tend to consist of a much larger proportion of ultimate products for immediate consumption than is now the case; thus forcing on the more primitive countries the necessity of exerting native initiative in the provision of distinctive production.

Again, International legislation in regard to labour conditions under a competitive system must always fail at the point at which it ceases to be merely negative, because it has ultimately to consider employment as an agency of distribution, and rightly considered distribution should be a function of work accomplished, not of work in progress, i.e., employment. As a consequence, this most important field of constructive effort resolves itself into a battleground of opposing interests, both of which are merely concerned with an effort to get something for nothing. The inevitable compromisation can be nothing but a settlement of such questions, any more than the succession of strikes for higher pay and shorter hours, which are based on exactly the same conception, can possibly result in themselves in a stable industrial equilibrium.

Examples of the same class of difficulty might be multiplied indefinitely, but enough has probably been said to indicate the disruptive nature of the forces at work. To state whether or not the general confusion and misdirection of opinion will make a period of power control inevitable, in order to unite public opinion against it, would be to venture into a form of prophecy for which there is no present justification; but it is safe to say that whether after the lapse of a few months, of a very few years, the conception of a world governed by the concentrated power of compulsion of any description which will be finally discredited and the instruments of its policy reduced to impotence.

CHAPTER XII.

As a result of the survey of the wide field of unrest and the attempt to analyse, and as far as possible to simplify, the complex elements which are its prime movers, it appears probable that the concentration of economic power through the agency of the capitalist system of price fixing, and the control of finance and
time disappear because it would lack objective. But there would still remain the task of eradicating the hypnotic influence of a persistent presentation of distorted information, at any rate so far as this generation of humanity is concerned, and it seems clear that a radical and democratic basis of Publicity control is an integral factor in the production of the better society on which the Plain People have quite certainly determined.

Thus out of threatened chaos might the Dawn break; a Dawn which at the best must show the ravages of storm, but which holds clear for all to see the promise of a better Day.

[The end.]

Listen, Children.

By R. A. Y. G.

II.—THE BOOK REVELATIONS.

What is book revelation, brothers? There is no book revelation, but there are only book records of revelation.

What are temples, the abiding houses of God, brothers? Temples of stone are only copies of the real abiding houses of God.

Man is the vehicle of God's revelation, brothers. The stony temples are merely projections of an original building. Every temple is a book written in special letters, and, like every book of revelation, it is a memento of what has happened in the living man.

How can the book-records of somebody else's revelations of God be useful to you, brothers?

By evoking similar revelations in yourselves. As long as they remain somebody else's revelations, those books will be to you objects of curiosity or idolatry.

How can temples of stone be useful to you, brothers? By reminding you how to build the temple in yourselves of the chaotic material which is in you. Unless they move you to build similar buildings in yourselves, they have failed in their mission and will be to you objects of curiosity or idolatry.

A company of men stood in a sandy desert before a sign-post, upon which was indicated the right way to go to get to the oasis. Instead of going the indicated way on the board, the men bowed day and night before the board, worshipping it and singing in chorus: "This way leads to the oasis." But they did not make a move on the way. The revealer of the way knew the way, for he went it and saw the oasis and wrote the words on the board in order to help other travellers. Yet the travellers, instead of going that way, stood there worshiping the revealer's revelation and suffered thirst and heat.

I asked them: Why don't you go, then? Whereupon they answered:

If we go, who will worship the great revelation?

First of all, said I, you do not know whether it is great or small or no revelation at all unless you make the same revelation yourselves. Secondly, the revealer in the other world would rejoice more if he see you going without worshipping than if he see you worshipping without going. Thirdly, could not you combine both?

Brothers, I am not showing to you the way which somebody else went, but which I went myself. Believe me, and try the way. Try the way and you shall believe me.

The revelation I am making is not the repetition of a real book, but it is the first-hand music which is played by a new-born player on the mortal reed of myself.

The temple I am leading you to is not a temple that...
you get in from outside, but it is a cradle in which God is born.

And now listen to the romance of life of the new-born child in me.

THE SERPENT THAT BITES ITS TAIL.

One morning when the Earth was warming her shoulder, upon which I lived, in the sun, my eyes opened and I saw a cobra coiled upon my breast, its upper body bent in the air, its glistening head hanging over my face, its fiery awaiting look fixed upon my eyeballs. My whole body shivered for a second. My brain stood still, and all the millions of my subconscious cells awakened to the danger of death.

In the next second, my whole life, my known and unknown past, contracted itself into one word—God. In fixing with my eyes the metallic eyes of the serpent, I whispered in my heart:

Where are thou now, O God? In me—or in the beast?

And I felt as it were a deluge of flame running through my body. And I heard a childlike voice in me:

I am both in you and in the beast. In you I am a born child, in the serpent I am a sleeping child. If the serpent kills you, I shall suffer; if you kill the serpent, I shall suffer. It is I that always suffers in all sufferings in Heaven and on earth.

When mountains fall upon the cities of men and when the green valleys turn into cemeteries of dead armies, it is a stroke upon me to bring about my birth. It is my pain, my loss, and my gain.

Starry wheels and dancing dust are mothers, whom I shaped in order that they should give birth to me. All mothers are meant to be my mothers, all fathers also to be my fathers.

I am a virginal God emerging from sleep. I set traps for myself upon my way. Yea, my way is sown with deadly danger. Dangers shake me and make me wake.

You are a trap for me that am in the cobra—God. And the cobra is a trap for me that am in you. My path is full of pitfalls. Cumbersome! Is my lonely walk.

You count but little; the cobra counts but little; it is I that count in both of you. A golden cradle is of less worth than the child, and a slummy cradle is of less worth than the child.

When the cradle is more praised than the child, the cradle will be kept well and the child will be suffocated under silks and jewels. But when the child is seen in the cradle, not the cradle but the child is praised and admired.

I am the builder and sweeper of every cradle. Even while sleeping I build and sweep every cradle. Less I care for cradles when asleep than when awake. Yea, when awake I am taken by wonderment more about what is in the cradle than about the cradle itself.

Now, you are a cradle of me and the cobra is another. In the cobra I am anxious only about the cradle which bears me. In you I am a little child awakened, which can think of itself both in you and in the cobra and in everything moving in the Universe. All the cobra knows—and that knowledge comes from the sleeping child in it—is that it—the cobra, the cradle—is in deadly danger. And you know something more—i.e., that both your cradle—yourself—and your young God—myself—are in deadly danger.

It is always a god that threatens another god. All struggle in the world is the struggle of gods. In you I know this, in the cobra I do not know.

In you I know this, and in angels I know it still better, and in archangels still better.

If you lay your hand upon me in you, you shall reach unity and might, and the sleepy child in the serpent will not prevail against you.

Well, well, well! Look how the cobra is slackening, slackening, slowly but steadily slackening. There its eyes are dim, its neck no more stiff. Look, look, look! It is falling off, it has fallen off—off.

Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

The war was responsible for a shortage of many things. I remember that even a shortage of curates was reported; but it was also responsible for a glut of some things, particularly gentlemen and the titular distinctions of gentility. The civilian gentlemen have not yet received their full measure of dramatic recognition; but the military will probably wish that they had not been so conspicuously genteel if Mr. H. F. Maltby's "A Temporary Gentleman" sets a fashion, as its successful production at the Oxford may. There is no more legitimate subject of comedy than the correction of manners, no type more in need of that correction than the prig, clothed in a little brief authority, no more obvious example of that type than the military officer.

There is no more obvious audience for such an exercise, I may say, in a final affirmative of positivism, than an audience consisting largely of demobilised men, as it obviously did when I saw the play performed. With such an audience, such a play cannot fail to be theatrically successful; there is the instant apprehension and appreciation of every point made by the author, because the audience has the culture of experience in the subject-matter. Indeed, we are all judges of manners—other people's manners—and comedy therefore has a natural advantage over tragedy, which depicts passion and reveals mind and will intertwined in disaster. We may not sympathise with the passion, nor understand the revealed mind; but we can all condemn the "bounder," and derive our enjoyment from the fact that we are not and would not be as he is.

The manner in which Mr. Maltby administers his correction is also perfectly legitimate; he allows the natural order of events to admonish the person, makes the wisdom of experience the real teacher of manners (although Mr. Maltby does also permit some characters to deliver lectures on the subject). The demobilised officer, mistaking his temporary gentility for a permanent elevation, is confronted with the difficulty of getting a living in a world where people are expected to do their own work. The modern Cincinnatus does not return freely to the plough; he looks around for a junior partnership, or a seat on a board of directors (preferably of a 'guinea-pig')—and finds no overwhelming demand for his services in these capacities. Having been a gentleman by the King's commission (it is a legal doctrine that "the King can do no wrong," but he is not always successful in the manufacture of gentlemen) does not entitle the holder to equal rank with those who are enabled by the King's will—although Sir Herbert Hardcastle can well enough affirm that he was enough to use that argument. He adopts what has been called the "functional principle" in argument; the officer had held the position of junior clerk, he was not technically qualified to hold any other position, therefore, so much, and no more, than the function of junior clerking demanded should be permitted to exercise. He who had commanded men, and horses, and other things of which he understood nothing, repudiated the suggestion as unconscionable to one who had held the King's Commission; he held no military decorations, and so was disqualified, as he said, for the Hippodrome chorus; but at last he accepted a post as commercial traveller for a firm that made stoves. This, as we learned in the last act, was a position with emoluments superior in value to those accruing to the rank of officer; it was a position that enabled a considerable acquaintance with men without too exclusive an application of the principles of selection, and this acquaintance resulted in an increasing callosity to the epidermis which may reasonably be supposed to continue until sensibility is entirely destroyed.

It must be admitted, also, that Mr. Maltby has chosen a corrigible character for correction, and his
“temporary gentleman,” therefore, is not a mere butt for
twitticisms. In the “third act,” indeed, Walter Hope
develops an appetite for correction that is nearly as
gross as his previous priggishness; he will learn the
manners of a gentleman even from the admonition of a
servant girl, if he will know, are the
real custodians of tradition in this matter. His sister,
who had somehow maintained the dignity of a V.A.D.
without perishing of inanition, suffers an equivalent
transvaluation of values; and bids fair to become one of
those women who have not manners enough to permit
other people to do their own work. The downward
road is an easy one, and the servants’ hall seems to be
its terminus; and Alice, while developing the servant’s
virtue of practical ability, seems to be developing the
lady’s vice of menance and to have adopted the saving
of halfpence as her creed. “The tact to let external
forces work for us” is as necessary to the good life as
the determination not to permit others to do for us
what we can best do for ourselves; and a miserly busy-
body is not an improvement on a supercilious and idle
woman.

The defect of the play as a comedy is that it reveals
no clear standard of manners. Its sympathies are
obviously what are called “democratic”; the
“Tommy’s” and the “Waac’s” standard is apparently
the accepted one. It is a good standard, but
it reveals more virtues than graces, is a standard of
conduct rather than of behavior. Indeed, as the
Jacks, although they were, as Mrs. Hope
said, “very nice people,” were too insensitive
and soft-hearted more than good
manners. The Jacks, although they were, as Mrs. Hope
said so often, “very nice people,” were too insensitive
to personal influence to be really tactful, and were
incapable of the supreme virtue of hospitality, that of
giving a guest what he wanted. They offered freely
what they had, but without due regard to the fitness of
the thing to the person.

The object of comedy should be what Hazlitt said its
effect was, the abolition of its subject-matter—which is
singularity of behaviour. A gentleman, I suppose, is
in the final definition one who can express the virtues
by means of the graces without being singular; he
should be at home wherever he is, and where he is
should be home. Shaw said once that universality of
spirit is impossible without a share of vulgarity; but
the real object of comedy is not to import vulgarity into
universality of spirit, but to make universality of spirit
common, that is, vulgar. This is not done, as Mr.
Maltby seems to imagine, by accepting the standards of
common people, but by devising common standards
for the people. The object of comedy is not to make
vulgarity, but gentility, common, to refine manners,
not to corrupt them. Accept the Jacks, as Mr. Maltby
does, and we accept people who do gracious things in a
graceless way, and make the root of the matter
bottle of whisky. In the strict sense of the
words, they are abortions; they “arise not” even to the
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thing to the person.
Towards National Guilds.

[In the following series of Notes we have in mind the scheme already several times referred to for bridging over, without social catastrophe, the interregnum between Capitalism and Economic Democracy.]

Why is Production flagging? At least as good an answer as the usual reply is that Production is flagging from a defect of Consumption. Two causes may produce abstinence from eating. One may fail to eat because one has no food; or one may fail to eat because one has no appetite. Production, likewise, may flag for two causes: one, a shortage of raw materials, the food of Production; the other, an insufficient Consumption or power of absorption or appetite for the product. From which of these causes is Production suffering to-day? There can be no doubt of the answer. Production is flagging because of an insufficient Demand. Consumption cannot take the goods off the machine of production fast enough to enable it to go on. What is to be done? The productive processes are in such advance of the distributive processes that they must be idle from time to time to give distribution time to catch up.

The association of production with distribution, however, tends to bring about this result: that as soon as Production ceases, Distribution also ceases. Note the paradoxical state in which this lands us. Production, we have assumed, has been brought to a standstill because it has overaken Distribution. Yet the moment it stops, Distribution has to stop as well! The absurdity of making distribution depend upon production: or, rather, of making the process of distribution depend upon the process of production, cannot be more clearly demonstrated. The sensible arrangement would be to separate distribution from production; and to make distribution a process apart from the process of production. This, however, would involve a separation of the two processes so complete that, in effect, two different authorities would be necessary. On the one side, we should have our productive machine controlled and administered by the producers—organised in productive Guilds. On the other side, we should have our distributive machinery organised to distribute the products of the productive machine. The latter would be relatively independent of the former; and might be therefore expected to keep it always busy.

Cost equals the cost of production. Price equals the means of distribution. Our aim in the first process is to produce at a minimum cost in labour, wear and tear of machinery, and in the amount of raw material consumed. This, in general, is the economy of Production. Our aim in the second process is to distribute by means of Price, and the purpose of Price is to facilitate the distribution of the commodities produced. Price, we may say, has, therefore, no necessary relation with Cost; for the aim of Price is not to recover Cost, but to distribute goods.

Consider society first as an organisation for Production. Assume, for the moment, that Society needs to consume nothing, but that its whole and sole purpose is to produce. What are the conditions of and inducements to maximum production? Stated generally they are three: duty, pleasure and profit. When Society finds it simultaneously a duty, a pleasure and a profit to produce, maximum production is the natural consequence. A producing society, thus motivated, would
in all probability organise itself into Guilds; not because Guilds in the abstract are desirable, but because, as a matter of practical fact, a Guild organisation is the best instrument for maximum production. Guild organisations, in other words, would follow from the desire for maximum production.

Now consider Society as Consumer: Assuming production to have taken place, what is the best means of distribution? The best means is obviously not to distribute according to share in production—for, in that case, distribution would be according to production. That is to say, only the producers would receive any commodities whatever. The non-producers of all kinds would absolutely depend on the goodwill of the producers. The best means, on the other hand, is to distribute according to (a) the amount available for distribution, and (b) the number of people among whom the distribution is to be made. In other words, price, as the means of distribution, must bear a relation not primarily to Cost of Production, but to the two factors of (a) amount to be distributed, and (b) the number of the beneficiaries. Let us repeat: Price is a means of distribution; and must be fixed in such a manner as to bring about the most equitable distribution.

The question of a "Fair Price" or a "Just Price" will thus be seen to be fundamental in social consideration. If Price is the means by which goods are distributed; and a fair or just price is the condition of a fair or just distribution; then, plainly, not only is distribution a function of Price; but price-fixing, it follows, must be taken out of the hands of the producers. It must be resummed or assumed by the community as a whole. Only by fixing prices in accordance with social needs can the community ensure a social distribution.

Mark what follows. The community as such has now a double duty: to provide the conditions for maximum production; and to provide the conditions for a just distribution of the product. The first of these duties the community can perform indirectly: that is to say, the community can entrust to Guilds the responsibility of producing as much as possible at as small a social cost as possible. The second of these duties, however, the community can perform directly—by the simple process of fixing prices. It is the duty of the Guilds to produce: it is the office of the community to distribute by means of a Just Price.

Keeping our categories separate, we may say that relatively to each other the process of production and the process of distribution are different functions exercisable by different authorities. From the standpoint of the consumer, anybody can produce that can or cares. From the standpoint of the producer, anybody ought to be able to consume that needs. Production is not the direct concern of the consumer; nor is Consumption the direct concern of the producer. We do not want Production by the consumer, but by the producer. Equally, however, we do not want Consumption controlled by the consumer, but by the community. We must produce as Guilds and distribute as a community.

The immediate inferences to be drawn from these considerations are these: No nationalised production—but production by producers; No nationalised distribution, but consumption regulated by the community by means of Price.

NATIONAL GUILDSMEN.
new light—a light which thrilled me through and through—came upon his face, and, tearing after the ball, I after him. I succeeded in getting back the ball, and went on to the playground again. Sam followed me and made a dash for the ball, but he did not get it, and after a while, with a look of boredom, he lay down, not troubling to look at me or the ball again, as though he despised us.—P. Kingscorn (aged 14).

Most four-legged animals have the extraordinary power of making any unsuspecting, innocent child have an unbounded sympathy for them; their sad and wistful faces act as a magnet on one's feelings. The other day, as I was walking on the lawn, I found the dog Sam basking in a lazy, comfortable manner in the sun. His face was away from the sun, and he was lying on his side towards the house. I immediately gave way to his wonderful pleading eyes, and, going near him, I began to stroke the top of his head. The feeling of his soft head filled me with a liking for him which I cannot express, and I put my face close to his. He then pawed the air in an effort to say, "Thank you; I cannot do any more because I am too lazy." With this he rolled over on his back and feebly waved his paws in the air. I then fell to pushing the folds of his skin up and down, and he looked very unconcernedly up at the sky—"It is all very well you doing this, but I don't think your liking for me is at all genuine.

"Come," said I, "it is," and I began to pull the flabby part of his jaws out and to let them go with a flip. Suddenly he put his dirty rough paw on my nose. "Do you like it? What are you laughing at?" he said, with a puzzled expression on his face, as I began to laugh at the ridiculous position I found myself in. He seemed a little piqued at my laugh, and rolled over, turning his back on me, but he found the sun a little too bright for him, so he reluctantly turned round again and faced me with a more humbled look on his face. He jerked his head along the grass and stretched his hind legs and gave a little quiver as a fly settled on his nose. "I am sorry; I know that I am not equal to you; it must be worse.

"Sam," said the stern voice of Nurse, "come here." Sam clumsily, yet very eagerly, got up and went running sideways towards Nurse, who had a large basin in her hand.—R. Recius (aged 14).

Another passage which has always made a most striking appeal to the form is a Description of a Cold Morning, which was written by Rackliffe when he was not quite fourteen.

There is a stealthy mist creeping over all the town, and a freezing breeze is blowing, and there is an air of superiority over everybody. Now there is a chatter and a bang which seems to echo through all the neighbouring streets, and the milkman, having knocked sharply at the door, proceeds to get his tin jugs ready with the air of a man who has really done a great thing in getting up on a cold morning. The door is slowly opened and a muffled-up figure comes out and murmurs something about a cold morning. The door is closed, the mumps are given in a jerking way, and greetings are exchanged in a sullen way. The city man is up, and walks, head bent, briskly to the nearest station. Now little children with satchels over their backs are thrust out of doors and went upstairs.

Now there is a rumble in the distance, and a gay young bread-man comes tearing round the corner with a steaming horse. Having pulled up, he springs down from his perch and taps sharply at the door, which is slowly opened by the same muffled-up figure who took in the milk. It greets the bread-man very curtly, and, having taken in the bread, slammed the door to and went upstairs. The bread-man then walks slowly back to his cart, wondering why everybody is so disagreeable this morning. T. R. Coxon.
Army contractor, who made a fortune and obtained the O.B.E.; Samuel Pepys said that we would fight to the last man and the last shilling, which would be graciously bestowed on the dependants of the last man. Samuel Pepys was just the ordinary man who was above military age and was "in the swim," was just the man who made the war possible; but he was not the man of the war. He is now, I believe, engaged in the governing of Ireland, with the usual results.

The simple fact is that the diary of the great war cannot be written in the terms of Samuel Pepys, and only the dull, artistic sense of the Pepys type could assume that he could. This was rapidly taught us something, but so many of the Pepys family were elected last December that we have forgotten what it was. For a moment the heavens opened; and there was a vision of a reconstructed England, of a reconstructed world modelled on the City of God—but the vision passed, and what we saw was the frontispiece of this volume, Mr. Samuel Pepys, Junior, on "the greatest day ever known in all the world," as he describes it, dancing with Mistress Cripps "from Swan and Edgar's Break Street." When Napoleon was crowned Emperor, Augereau said that the ceremonial wanted "nothing to complete the pomp of it, nothing but the half-million of men who had died to put an end to all that." This was a war to abolish Samuel Pepys in all his varieties, the Holdfasts, the Sit-Tights, the Standard-pots, and their connections; but the very reason that Mr. Pepys had for dancing was disqualified him to write a diary of the war.

For the true diary of the war is the record of a broken heart. It is true that there was, even at the beginning, the bestial appeal, but it was confined to a few specialists in hysteria, such as the "Referee" and "John Bull." Certainly of the first million men it is true to say that the majority were idealists, responding to a chivalrous appeal and hoping, at least, that the war would be better than their sacrifice. But the quality of the appeal steadily declined, until, by the time that America entered the war, the very objects for which we had engaged had become cant phrases of recruiting campaigns. Perhaps they appealed to some of the Americans, and evoked a similar response to that which came from the English at first; but the moral appeal lost its freshness when it was discovered that it was only made ad hoc, that morality was only a technical word in the art of politics. It was a disinterested war only so long as we were not winning it, after that it became a war just like any other war, but on a much larger scale. It became a Pepys war, in short, without imagination or any glimmer of a prospect of a reconstructed world. It had declined from a war for freedom to a war for victory, and from a war for victory to a war for vengeance.

But of all this there is no trace in the diary of Samuel Pepys, Junior. His sham antique style and mind would not permit of any handling of ideas. With Europe tumbling about his ears, with the class-war (very imperfectly suspended during the actual period of hostilities) flaming again into activity in every direction, Samuel Pepys can still thank God that he is alive, with his "estate encreased beyond my best expectation of four yeares' war [how much did he expect to make?]; my body coming again to its former weighing, to my yesterday turning 12 st. at the club." The war, which was to have brought blessings to the world, has only brought blessings to the Pepys family—except in Russia and in other places where they revile the bourgeoisie. Jeshuma waxeth fat again, and kicketh—this time against taxation (but, in spite of all that, "thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

It is possible to regard this book as a quaint literary exercise; but only if we accept the principle of "art for art's sake," which Samuel Pepys, if he could understand it, would be the first to repudiate. It reproduces the form and spirit of Pepys' Diary for no other purpose than that of reproduction, and that purpose is a superfluous one—for we have the original, and need no copy. Samuel Pepys strays into twentieth-century England not as its interpreter, not even as its critic, but as a mere mummer in costume, saying quaintly what we already know clearly and by sound motives of sympathy saying nothing of the most characteristic qualities of the time. He endures, as Pepys could not have borne to endure, as a curiosity, as a man out of touch with his time, playing the sedulous ape to his model in everything but the pure expression of himself. He has written a diary of a seventeenth-century war with the addition of twentieth-century figures; and his book will be found wherever the "artistic temperament" is not equal to the appreciation of art.

Reviews.

**Heritage.** By V. Sackville-West. (Collins. 6s. net.)

Miss Sackville-West has attempted to show the effect of a strain of Spanish blood on a stock of Sussex farmers, as shown in the persons of a young woman and her cousin, whom she marries. It is a first novel, and bears on the face of it the author's fear of direct handling of such a powerful subject. Part of the story is told by an onlooker, with a genius for psychological analysis that only describes, but does not express, the tragic struggle of passion. Then his friend takes up the task of observer, and once again, we get only description instead of direct expression. The rest of the story is told in correspondence; and the total effect is that Miss Sackville-West was afraid of her subject, and had to keep it at arm's length lest it should overwhelm her. Seen thus at two removes, the stress of the story is slackened; and we get only a descriptive reporter's account of an unhappy marriage, with a long interlude of excavation at Ephesus. In spite of its loose construction, and remote treatment, the story does manage to interest the reader; but the figures are imperfectly projected, and the motives of their being remain obscure.

**Two Months.** By Herbert Tremaine. (Daniel. 7s. 6d.)

Mr. Herbert Tremaine has written a curiously vague study of a small group of people during two months of the war. It is indeterminate in aim and indeterminate in treatment, and over all there hangs the mental haze of a minor Russian fiction that passes in this country for psychology. The reader gets an impression of vignettes that have sequence certainly, but apparently have no structural significance; there is a multiplicity of pictures that are not focussed into a design. There is a pacifist who shoots himself to escape military service, there is another pacifist who joins the Red Cross after seeing the results of an air-raid, there is another pacifist who perhaps for love, perhaps for the pleasure that some people obtain by acting contrary to their desires) "always wanted to do striking things," but decided for some unknown reason that "I've got to be against it all—not to tolerate anything connected with it, not to touch it or think of it except to destroy it."

This is not propaganda, certainly, but also it is not art even of his intended actions. All that we know certainly is that he intends to go on loving a writer of novels that sell (eighteenth century fustian called "Fortune's Fan") is the last of them) while she intends to go on loving his soul, presumably while he is in jail. Intermingled with these children of the mist are various
members of the Tribunal, one of whom, a doctor, begins to develop the faculty of introspection, and feels vaguely responsible for the death of the pacifist who shot himself, while at the same time he is contriving to deceive the pacifist who joins the Red Cross concerning the money held in trust for him by the doctor. The whole crowd of people seem to moan about thinking of themselves, or of what people may be thinking of them, or of the "reality of things"; and we have never seen a clearer demonstration of the thesis that thought is continuous activity beyond the bounds of Space and Time than is provided by this book. But what they think still remains a mystery to us; they seem to have monopolised the ineffable and to be engaged in rendering it into terms of the incomprehensible. Perhaps they communicate with each other by nods and winks unseen by us, and to the meaning of which we have not been admitted. The Problem Club.

Admit Mr. Barry Pain's incredible assumption, that clubmen will not only use their brains, but will form a club for the purpose, and this series of short stories may serve to pass the time while travelling. The problems were set by the head waiter (who later became a lord and a member of the Problem Club) and include questions such as: "It is required to induce a woman who is unaware of your intention to say to you, 'You ought to have been a giraffe'"; "It is required within the space of one hour to kiss ten females," etc.; "It is required to steal as many handkerchiefs as possible from a member of the club;" and "It is required to discover the identity of the head waiter." In all cases there are conditions attached which add to the difficulty, and what amusement these stories afford is derived from the attempts to fulfil the conditions. The device of giving a prize for each solution keeps the whole scheme well on the level of a weekly paper trying to secure or increase its circulation; and the humour is as dry as a mummy. Perhaps one would have to be a club-man (of a really exclusive club) to appreciate it properly.

Cocktails. By Lieut. C. Patrick Thompson. (Collins. 7s. ed. net.)

Lombroso once demonstrated that no work of genius had ever been produced at a greater elevation than three thousand feet above sea-level; and it is a common experience that imaginative work, although performed with apparently greater ease on the heights, is as disappointing as fairy gold when reviewed under more normal conditions. We wonder whether this is the explanation of the failure of flying men to render properly the spirit of the air. Lieut. Patrick Thompson, in this series of short stories, makes a gallant attempt to deal with the subtler experiences of flying; but even in "The Cloud Girl" he achieves no more than sexual illusion, and, for the rest, rises only to the height of the higher cinematographers. The melodramatic tendency is, of course, natural to healthy youth, particularly when it is over-stimulated by extreme activity under abnormal conditions; and the story of the patrol man who used to descend to make love to a woman who was a German spy, and thereby left a gap in our aerial defences, is a natural expression of that tendency. The other story of the "tester" who used to come over from France and do "stunts" over the estate of his beloved, and was chased and brought to earth as a suspected enemy, is a similar lapse into the all-too-probable. The man who rides in a "bus" may very well "annihilate Space and Time" to call his beloved "old thing"—but the experiences of the new dimension are not adequately expressed by the incident. Possibly the conditions of service-flying act as an effective counter-check to the exercise of creative imagination, with the consequence that we get from airmen only the symbols of the magazine-story with an aeroplane added. We may say that Lieut. Thompson does his work very well; he is so vigorously assured that the conventions of the magazine-story are the real data of experience that he convinces us that even flying is only an extension of their range. "There are nice girls everywhere," even in the clouds, and the young Deus ex machina may soon cease to discover the familiar in the unknown, and give us, as simply as Herodotus did of earth-dwellers, particulars of the native beings and things that inhabit the upper regions. The poetry and natural history of the air have yet to be written.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

PRIZE-FIGHTING.

Sir,—The bare-fisted prize-fighter of the past descended in spirit in a direct line from the gladiator of ancient Rome, and both were put up with and patronised by a debased people, who loved to witness the brutal animal in man coming out in all its degrading ugliness, and calling it sport. Is that spirit still alive? Yes, very much so. A few days ago, in The Times, it was stated that people assembled, in a fearful best of brazen sunshine, to see one Dempsey pit himself against another, Willard, for a bag of gold and so-called honour. It was a fearful smashing fight. Dempsey boasted he would lay his man out in one round and did so, after inflicting terrible punishment. Will any fair-minded real sportsman call this sport? Boxing in its proper form is a manly game, as is football, cricket, running, rowing, etc., and vastly improve the race, but these ugly bashing matches should be shunned by decent people, for it is a lie to call them sport. Why should these performances be arranged for the rough-minded patrons? Real sport never looks for the money element in big figures. No; a cup or medal brings out the very best efforts of real sports for the sheer love of it. Boxing helped to win the war, not prize-fighting; the world fought to put it down. Now we are informed that some enterprising manager is trying to arrange in the country a prize-fight between the winner of the Beckett-Carpentier fight and the celebrated smasher, Dempsey, for a mighty fortune of £25,000. Then the victor will make yet a larger sum by exhibiting himself in Vaudeville shows. Dempsey is a gentleman who loves to exhibit science and skill, but these slogging matches, degrade all noble and manly games. To see clearly the peculiar twist in the mental make-up of a section of the public we must remember the recent incident of the mayor of a certain town meeting the winner of a fight for a big prize with all the civic honours and a band, while the real heroes of to-day, the men who stood between us and utter damnation, creep home unnoticed to commence their hard task of finding a job and a house.

E. FRANCIS HAMMOND.

A CORRECTION.

Sir,—I regret that there are some errors in my versions of Anacreon, published in your issue of July 31. I have this excuse—that I made the translations in France, " O.A.S.," and had no grammar with me and only a wretched little dictionary. My corrections are:

(1) For "The earth drinks the darkness" read "The dark earth drinks." 
(2) For "A man of Cythera" read "The husband of Cythera."
(3) For "strong" read "heavy" (in "Love's Dart").
(4) For "He is three times old" read "He is old in grey hair." (A very bad blunder!) I hasten to make these corrections to forestall the many kind friends who will no doubt charitably attribute them to a failing intelligence.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.
Pastiche.

THE REGIONAL.

V.

They have it, the French; one does not escape it by crossing the Channel—"romances" at two ha'pence the cup. I have not—let the philologists and professors of thoroughness blame me to their livers' content—yet, conftter, I have not read all the bad literature in French, or even all the cheap current fiction.

Here follows but a scaffolding of opinions based on some four dozen volumes. I have been resting only in a state of relaxation, with the mind as near as a mind human and, in its better moments, intelligent, can approach to the state of the type "tired business man after dinner" for whom the alleged British drama has been resting only in a state of relaxation, with the mind as near as a mind human and, in its better moments, intelligent, can approach to the state of the type "tired business man after dinner" for whom the alleged British drama

In the cheap reprints I doubt if one finds a "serious" effort as well made as even Mrs. Bellloc-Lowndes' "The Lodger," or in a comedy a grand duke so well done as Hugger's.

TROUBLE.

She lay and thought of the dead;
Night's hours dragged by;
Dusk grew to dim grey
With her wondering, Where? Why?

At the dark dawn a bird cried.
It seemed from out of space
The cry of a child waking
In a strange place.

It came twice out of stillness;
That call, and no reply:
And the thought cruelly swept through her
How lonely it is to die.

This was so like the dead searching, searching
And finding no heaven's door,
Her worn spirit dared not suffer it
Any more.

And then—some other bird called,
Answering, not the same;
And another, and others, others,
The wakened carollers came

Breaking through the silence,
Till all heaven seemed one crowd
Of wakeful, bustling, happy songsters!

Giving praise, she laughed aloud.

Then as the dawn came slowly
Out of the grey
She slept; and the carol ended
In broad day.

RONALD READ.

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ERZA POUND.

Trouble.