THE
NEW AGE
A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, AND ART.

No. 1405] New Series. Vol. XXV. No. 16. Thursday, August 14, 1919. [Registered at G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] SEVENPENCE

CONTENTS.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

People whose memory can go back to five years ago may recall how slow the nation was to realise the fact that we were at war with Prussia. For months after the outbreak of a war that was to try the nation and to find it wanting, our capitalist classes, aided by their valets of the Press, continued to advocate and to carry on "Business as usual." It appeared to be their conviction that the war was a passing storm, a troublesome incident at worst, at best an opportunity for making money, and that the wisest thing to be done with it was to hand over its conduct to the Army and for the rest of us to ignore it. Quite a year and, in many instances, much more than a year passed before the bulk of the nation, and particularly the business-classes, began to understand that the war was not going to allow itself to be treated as a mere passing intruder. It had come to stay; and its immediate consequences, considerable as they were, were to be as nothing in comparison with the permanent transformation the war was destined to effect. Would anybody who could have foreseen the world's present situation have thought that Business as Usual could be carried on through the revolutionary epoch of the war? Had they realised even a fraction of the significance of the events then occurring, could they have believed for a moment that the pre-war conditions would ever be restored? The presence in the world of the phenomenon of Prussianism and the decision of the world to remove it were not facts of only an incidental significance; they challenged the very foundations of modern society and nothing, we can now clearly see, will ever be the same as it was before the Great War.

* * *

In many respects the present phenomenon of High Prices is of the same character as the phenomenon of Prussianism. Price, like Prussianism, aims at exercising an oligarchic (ultimately an autocratic) control over the democratic world of Wages and Salaries. It is maintained in the interests of the few at the expense of the many; and its menace is to be seen in the fact that everywhere its sway extends, the purchasing-power (that is to say, the economic liberty) of Wages and Salaries begins at once to undergo decline. Prussianism, as we know, had as its object—or, rather, the object was implied in its method—the concentration of all initiative in the few who exercised the supreme control. *They* were to be as gods, while all the rest of the world was to consist of something less than slaves. But Price, it will be seen, is of exactly the same nature. Whoever ultimately fixes Prices controls thereby the distribution of the wealth of the world; and inevitably in such a manner as to concentrate it more and more in the hands of the few who exercise the supreme control. But what is liberty that does not include a corresponding measure of economic independence? What is it to be free from the menace of militarist Prussianism if, at the same time, we remain at the mercy of economic Prussianism? The present war between Prices and Income is, we repeat, the war between Prussianism and Democracy carried into the economic sphere. At bottom they are one and the same; and precisely as political democracy was found to be incompatible with the continuance of militarist Prussianism, economic democracy will prove to be inconsistent with the Prussianism that now aims, by fixing Prices beyond the reach of Wages and Salaries, at establishing the world-rule of economic Capitalism. Unfortunately, this second phase of the Great War is even more difficult of realisation than was the first phase of it. If the nation could continue to think that Business as Usual was possible while the Prussians were in Belgium; if, while the Prussians were near Arras, our commercial classes could still believe that once the war was over, the old pre-war system could be restored—what excuses have they not for believing that the war of Prices upon Wages and Salaries will end somehow or other and without involving society in any radical and permanent change? The excuses, indeed, are many. Nevertheless, the illusion in the one case is no less than the illusion in the other. As surely as the military war was bound sooner or later to draw into its net every living soul and to insist upon a decision, the present phase of the same war is destined to be no less universal and no less critical. The problem of Price stands to-day exactly where the problem of Prussianism stood yesterday. It must be solved or the world will perish.

* * *

We shall expect to be regarded as fanciful for holding, as we do, that behind the phenomenon of Price, as

behind the phenomenon of Prussianism, are to be found, not merely laws and a system, but minds and men. In due course, however, we have no doubt that the little oligarchy now engaged in acquiring world-power by means of Price will cease to be anonymous. They will be dragged into the light of day as was the little oligarchy that developed the menace of Prussian militarism. In the meantime it must be admitted that they keep themselves well concealed; so well, in fact, that few even of the most acute social observers so much as suspect their existence. Whoever they are, they appear to love to work through agents of an innocent character, agents, that is to say, who disarm suspicion by reason of their patent honesty and ignorance. Take the case, for example, of Mr. Austen Chamberlain, our present Chancellor of the Exchequer. On the face of it, a Budgetary situation, such as ours, would appear to call for the control of nothing less than the finest financial ability the nation can provide. If, as Mr. Chamberlain says, and says quite truthfully, we are on the road to national bankruptcy, the retention of the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer by a politician of Mr. Chamberlain's parts would certainly appear to be "treason to the nation," since by no conceivable accident can Mr. Chamberlain be imagined to be designed to save the nation from ruin. Nevertheless, not only is Mr. Chamberlain retained in this office, but he is permitted to confess to "blunders" which would get a junior clerk dismissed from a branch bank. Hear him on the miscalculations of his recent Budget. The conditions prevailing to-day, he says, are "distinctly and seriously less favourable" than he foresaw only a few months ago that they would be; he told the House "bluntly" that not only was expenditure greater than he had forecast, but "the anticipated receipts were not being realised." The present high cost of living was likewise "not anticipated"; things altogether were "worse than he had foreseen"; and they were worse "not only temporarily but permanently."

* * *

If the problems set to the Chancellor of the Exchequer some months ago had been by their very nature insoluble, a confession such as that which Mr. Chamberlain has now made would have passed our judgment without arousing any other feeling than that of pity. But it happens that we, though we claim no particular inspiration, were able at the time of the introduction of the Budget to foresee and to anticipate everything which Mr. Chamberlain, on his own admission, failed to take into account. Anybody not preternaturally ignorant might have foreseen that the clearing up of the war would involve an enormous expenditure scarcely less than that of the war itself; anybody not utterly blind could have foretold that prices would remain high while the currency continued to be diluted; and anybody with only a smattering of economics could have calculated that the receipts from an industrial system still in process of running down would be less than before. Eight thousand millions of debt cannot be incurred and then treated as if it did not exist; and a tax on industry of over four hundred millions a year cannot be without consequences on the national Budget. The youngest partner in an ordinary business would have known upon which side of the ledger the resultant figures would have to be placed; and a competent directorate would, without doubt, have set about writing down the capital without a moment's delay. Mr. Chamberlain, as everybody knows, was strongly advised to follow that course. A levy on Capital, designed to write down the national debt, was advocated even in such journals as the "Statist" and the "Economist." The warnings uttered in these columns against the optimistic assumption that the nation would pull through without radical measures were even being repeated. What excuse had Mr. Chamberlain, in fact, for the blunders he now confesses he committed? That, however, is scarcely the question under discussion; for it is absurd to suppose that Mr. Chamberlain's abilities were not known to the people who appointed him or that his blunders have taken them by surprise. On the contrary, what if it be the case that precisely such a blunderer as Mr. Chamberlain was made Chancellor of the Exchequer precisely because he was certain to commit these blunders without being suspected of double-dealing? The design of the plot may not be immediately credible; it took a long time to persuade the world that the other Prussianism was intending what the rest of the world would regard as evil. But the design may become apparent by the aid of Paley's watch. Who profits by the blunders that have been made? What class is strengthened in economic power as the economic power of the masses is weakened? There can be little doubt about the answer. It is axiomatic that Capital values increase with the cost of living—in other words, with the depreciation of the value of Labour; and it follows, as a practical consequence, that even if there has been no plot to bring about this effect, the effect has been brought about exactly as if a plot had existed. Putting two and two together, it appears to us probable that Mr. Chamberlain is an instrument of high finance and that his "blunders" have been calculated upon.

* * *

Mr. Roberts' evidence before the Select Committee on High Prices would have destroyed any confidence in the intentions of the Committee even if Sir Auckland Geddes had not interrupted its second sitting with a Cromwellian jackboot. No friend of the Labour movement can have much respect for the character of Mr. Roberts, who notoriously preferred office to Labour; but it is impossible not to accord respect to his information. We may take it as established upon an unquestionable authority, therefore, that high prices are *not* due in the main or even largely to excessive profiteering; and equally that they are *not* due to scarcity. Moreover, it is significant that the arch-Controller of commodities entering into the cost of living has no very high opinion of control as a means of bringing down prices. Control, he says, is most successful when it is absolutely complete; that is to say, when it is exercised over commodities from source to mouth. But partial control, and particularly as exercised over retail prices, is, Mr. Roberts assures us, both "useless and dangerous." These authoritative statements, however, not only knock the bottom out of the Committee before which they were made—since the Committee, as we observed last week, are restricted to an inquiry into the relation of high prices to profiteering and control—but they condemn in advance the Profiteering Bill which has been introduced into the House of Commons. Plainer proof of the existence of a "plot" to *avoid* the discovery of the cause of high prices could scarcely be demanded than the introduction of a Bill actually based on the revelation of Mr. Roberts that it cannot possibly affect its declared intention. Control, says Mr. Roberts, is useless and dangerous when applied only to retail prices. The Bill proposes to confine its operations to the retail market. Profiteering in the popular sense, says Mr. Roberts, is only a minor cause of high prices. The Bill proposes to confine its attentions to profiteers. Guillotining of profiteers would have no great effect on prices, Mr. Roberts says. The Bill proposes penalties of fining and imprisonment. Stupidity is too flattering a charge to bring against a Government so miraculously wrong. We are compelled to assume another explanation.

* * *

However, it is not probable that this Bill or any series of such Bills, including the measures taken by President Wilson in America, will exorcise high prices or, indeed, prevent prices rising still higher. Food-prices in particular, Mr. Roberts tells us, "are now tending to rise, and will continue to do so, whether

control is continued or not." And we may add, on our own authority, that the same upward movement will tend to characterise the prices of all the common commodities of life. If the proof of science is prophecy, we are prepared to risk our analysis of the cause of high prices on the forecast that prices will tend to increase among necessities at the same time that they decrease among luxuries; and that, in consequence, we are only at the beginning of our troubles in the matter of distribution. Profiteering, scarcity, and the other alleged causes of high prices are insignificant in our opinion in comparison with the cause upon which Mr. Roberts again laid his finger all too lightly—"the increased cost of production *as measured in money*"; and since, as it appears, the Government with the consent of the nation is determined to pay no attention to this cause, all the partial remedies based on a partial analysis are doomed to fail. It will not, however, be an academic failure only; the failure will be apparent in every corner of our social life; for the problem to be solved is a universal problem which nobody living can escape. Infallibly as the winter approaches and the money now in the pockets of the working classes is spent, the pressure of rising prices upon a reduced purchasing power will have consequences in strikes and every sort of unrest and, probably, of disorder. The winter before us may be compared to the Prussian campaign that begun on a day in March eighteen months ago. It is the greatest fling which the Prussianism of Prices can make against civilisation; and to attempt to meet it by popgun expedients like that of the Profiteering Bill is equivalent to opposing the Prussian forces at their maximum strength by a blare of Chinese drums. Nothing less than a complete plan of campaign and an army of intelligence is necessary to defend civilisation against the greatest enemy we have ever encountered. Either, during the coming winter, we shall find the effective remedy for high prices or this country will be on the road to Russia. The nation is in peril of its life.

* * *

In these circumstances it is grotesque of the Government to pretend to have discovered that "the present strikes, accompanied by disorder, are part of a definite conspiracy, which has its roots abroad, to subvert the existing system of government in this country." If our analysis comes within hailing distance of the truth, no conspiracy, rooted here or abroad, is necessary to subvert the existing system. To spend a penny of money on it would be as extravagant as to pay somebody to knock down a building already rapidly falling to pieces. The plain indictment of the present system is that it has ceased to produce, and that it has ceased, either as cause or consequence, to distribute; and the practical deduction to be drawn from this fact is that it has already been subverted. So far from any conspiracy being necessary to subvert it, all the conspiracy that exists, exists, and is needed, to maintain it in being after its practical collapse. And the very terms of the alleged foreign conspiracy are a proof of it. Are we to suppose that a sum of £6,000 and a few crackbrained agitators are sufficient to overturn a system which spends daily 4½ millions on its own maintenance? Can Lenin through Bela Kun through a Norwegian boy through one or two romantic British Socialists threaten a system which has the support, we are told, of the masses of the nation, and, of course, of all the governing classes? If, indeed, there were a word of truth in the allegations of the Government, the case against the system is complete. A system that is "threatened" by the machinations of the alleged "conspiracy" is plainly a system in the last stage of disease. It remains to be seen whether the British public will be content to starve in the belief that wicked foreign agitators are alone attempting to subvert the system against the heroic efforts of Mr. Lloyd George's Government. For ourselves, in spite of our experience of the gullibility of the British Press-fed public, we confess to doubts of the infinity of the possibility. Newspapers and Government mendacities are a sufficient substitute perhaps for butter; but will they prove equal to taking the place of bread? Can people live on lies in winter-time?

* * *

In the event that a diet of lies should be found unequal to sustaining life, it is barely possible that opinion, even public opinion, may turn to re-examine the problem of prices and, perhaps, to question the conclusions to which our statesmen have, of course, so reluctantly come. It appears obvious to our over-logical minds that since two elements enter into the definition of price, if an explanation for the swollen dimensions of price is not discoverable in the commodity element, it may, perhaps, be discoverable in the money element; in other words, that if neither profiteering nor scarcity is mainly responsible for high prices, the cause may possibly be found to exist in the only remaining unexplored factor, that of money. And from this it would follow, if public opinion were not afraid of being thought intellectual, that the factor of money should be explored. Many prejudices, however, must be overcome before this path is opened to the public. A kind of tabu has been laid on the discussion of the subject of money, so that, though everybody thinks of money, dreams of money, and lives money, any discussion of money is regarded as something equivalent to a breach of good manners. We have already experienced in our own small circle the difficulties to be encountered in any attempt to reduce prices by the only available means, namely, by diverting credit from possession to production. Whether by active or passive collusion with the financial oligarchy, whose interest lies in maintaining the tabu on the discussion of money, people, and perhaps some of our readers among them, undoubtedly find themselves indisposed to pursue the subject with their attention. For in spite of the fact, which we repeat again, that we believe we possess the key to open the problem, and that it is at the disposal of anybody who cares to ask for it and will use it, the interest displayed is without any obvious evidence. The problem, however, is one that, in the familiar cliché, will not brook postponement. It is quite as real, quite as menacing and quite as imminent as ever was the Prussian peril. As little as Lord Roberts and others could imagine that the nation could be blind to the menace of Prussianism, we find it hard to believe that the nation can allow itself to drift into the disaster of continuing High Prices without at least inquiring into every remedy that is offered to them.

* * *

We are prepared to meet the charge that we have not published our proposals in detail. There are many good reasons against publishing for the whole world to see the precise means by which, let us say, the present Coal problem might be solved, we believe, to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned. There are both reasons of foreign and reasons of domestic policy. What would our own nation gain from the adoption by a foreign competitor of a social invention designed to favour enormously the nation that adopts it? We may recall the frequent fate of British inventions rejected at home but taken up abroad. And similarly in domestic policy it would surely be unwise to inform the social enemy—the oligarchy that controls prices—of the exact means we propose for dealing with him. At the same time we need make no concealment of the fundamentals of our proposals; our readers will shortly be, if they are not already, in a position to understand them. And further than this, we are willing—indeed, we are anxious—to put our plan to the test of examination by any party to the Coal dispute that cares to ask for it; first and foremost, to the Miners' Federation.

Foreign Affairs.

By S. Verdad.

It is not my business to discuss the party politics of America, except in so far as the issues are likely to affect America's foreign policy; but I cannot be silent when I find that sections of the Press in this country are siding with American Republicans in bitter criticism of President Wilson. It is a case, no doubt, of disillusionment; and the story is the familiar story of the devotees stoning their late idol; but the evil of this conduct is not likely to be less because the example is prehistoric. Not only my estimate of President Wilson, but my estimate of the value of the League of Nations, was formed and enunciated long before a word of criticism of either began to appear in this country; and I see no reason to change my opinions. President Wilson, to my mind, is one of the greatest idealists that ever exercised commanding power in the world. He is absolutely sincere and perfectly well-intentioned. Unfortunately, his sincerity and good intentions have never been accompanied by anything more profound than a politically *Liberal* view of the world. He is, in fact, a Gladstonian Liberal adapted to the conditions of the twentieth century. The League of Nations is a typical product of the school, and was, indeed, implied in the general doctrines of the speculative Liberals of the nineteenth century. Its defect, like that of the whole school, is that it assumes political power to be paramount over economic power; or, as this error has been "adapted" by President Wilson, that economic power can be employed as a mere "instrument" of political power. The error, however, should be axiomatic to readers of this journal. So far from economic power being only an instrument of political power, to be taken up or laid down at the discretion of politicians, it is the politicians who are the instruments of economic power; in the case of "idealist" politicians, the unwitting instruments. And thus it comes about that President Wilson, because rather than in spite of his wisdom, has made himself the instrument of the economic forces in America whose intentions from their very nature are anything but idealistic.

It is all very well for us, however, to make this criticism; we have every right to do it. But it is a different matter for Liberals in this country to take up the cudgels against President Wilson. For they share his faith and were, indeed, his aiders and abettors. What is more, I doubt whether from their own point of view any man in President Wilson's situation could have done more than he has done to carry the Liberal programme. It is their complaint that President Wilson "compromised" on many matters at the Peace Conference; that he swallowed quite a lot of his earlier protestations; and that, altogether, the Peace was anything but a Wilson Peace of the Fourteen Points. Quite true; and there is no doubt about it. But, in fairness to President Wilson, we must ask why he did so. To begin with, Compromise itself is not a sin in the sight of Liberals, but a virtue. See Lord Morley on the subject, not to mention the lesser lights. In the second place, there were the Secret Treaties signed and sealed by English Liberal politicians. Would English Liberals have had President Wilson command these Treaties to be torn up? Finally, it must be remembered—if must really be remembered and kept constantly in mind—that President Wilson's paramount object at the Peace Conference was *not* the settlement of the actual terms of peace, but the realisation of the Liberal conception of a permanent League of Nations for the avoidance of war. In other words, it was less as peacemaker than as a pacifist that President Wilson was a plenipotentiary at the Conference. It is obvious, on a little reflection, how President Wilson's mind must have worked. Taking quite seriously in the typical Liberal fashion the universal *sentiment* in favour of ending war for ever, and being, as he was, the most popular man in the world (and particularly in Liberal quarters) on this very account, he could not but say to himself that, provided he brought from the Peace Conference a League of Nations, designed to maintain peace and to avoid war, everything else would be forgiven him. What (he probably said to himself) does any detail of the present peace settlement really matter in comparison with the setting up of an instrument for the perpetual avoidance of war? A little temporary injustice, more or less, would be regarded as of small account by the side of the major achievement—the institution of a permanent means of justice and peace; and even this present settlement would be subject to revision by the League of Nations if once the latter were formed. With this major and (I repeat) Liberal notion in his mind, President Wilson, it appears to me, subordinated everything else to it, in the reasonable expectation that the masses who had originally supported the idea of the League would thank him for carrying it through. That they have turned upon him—Liberals foremost—is, no doubt, a great surprise to him; but I cannot say that it has been a great surprise to me. It is only another illustration of the inadequacy of political idealism to satisfy even the political idealists.

At the back of the mind of many Englishmen, however, there is another reason for disappointment with President Wilson. In America certain parties are attacking President Wilson because, they say, he has "sold out" to British interests. They ask what this country has "sacrificed" in the peace settlement. We have acquired fresh territory; an additional Imperial population of some twenty millions of people; we rule a quarter of the globe and a third of the world's population; and we have had waived in our favour the question of the supremacy of the seas. President Wilson, in short (so the indictment runs), has committed America to the maintenance and aggrandisement of an already bloated Empire. This kind of talk probably goes down well with a certain type of mind in America; but I fancy that even President Wilson knows how to smile at it. At any rate, it is the very reverse of the view held by many people in this country, and, once again, by Liberal opinion first and foremost. For here, in addition to the disappointment at the failure of President Wilson's idealism, there is disappointment of an aggravated kind at the success of American realism. Not only, it is said, has President Wilson compromised on Liberal principles in the matter of the peace itself, but, far, far worse, America, by his means, has somehow or other extracted material advantages from the situation. The British Empire, all American assertions to the contrary, is definitely weaker, absolutely and relatively, in consequence of the war and the settlement.

Without either attributing it to the same cause or drawing the same deductions from this view, I must confess that it is mine as well as that of Liberals. To me the most significant and, indeed, terrifying consequence of the war is the disproportion, the increasing disproportion, between the apparent and the real power of England and between the apparent and the real power of America. The utmost sobriety allows us to state that, as a consequence of the war, this country has lost to America its former financial, mercantile, naval, commercial and industrial supremacy, if not in immediate actuality, in a potentiality that may at any moment be realised in fact. Sections of American politicians, as I have said, are or profess to be of another opinion; the masses of our own people are likewise convinced or take it for granted that this country is both relatively and absolutely more powerful than ever. But the truth of the matter is probably not concealed from President Wilson any more than it is concealed from the serious and thoughtful minority at home. It is, indeed, precisely this fact, in so far as it is realised, that galls the disappointment felt by Liberals at the

failure of President Wilson's idealism; for, while failing in one respect, he has succeeded in another all too well. If this diagnosis, however, is even approximately correct, we cannot afford to wallow in disappointment. Something must be done. The relations of England and America will dominate, openly or secretly, the whole policy of this country for the next hundred years.

Towards National Guilds.

[In the present 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.]

KRUGER used to say, according to Mr. Dooley, that anybody might have votes if only he might do the counting. Similarly, we may say that anybody may produce, if only we have the fixing of the price of the product. The Socialist movement has hitherto concentrated its attention on acquiring control of production; but if, instead of concerning itself with production, the Socialist movement had acquired control of *prices*, the effect on distribution would have been far greater. Interference by amateurs with the processes of production is certain to be damaging to production; but interference with the distribution of the product is the proper duty of the community. *You* produce—the community should say—but *we* will distribute. We will *pay* you to produce; but, when you have produced, we shall dispose of the product as the community chooses.

Price has nothing to do with Cost of production. Price is simply a means of distribution. Cost of production is the concern of the community in its rôle of producer: Price is the concern of the community in its rôle of distributor. The father of the family produces; but it is the mother who distributes the product according to needs. A male society (a society run chiefly by men) tends to produce, without regard to the subsequent distribution; a female society would tend to neglect production and to consider only distribution. A balanced society would leave production to the producers and distribution to the consumers. The men would organise for production; the women for distribution. Men would be concerned with maximum production at minimum costs; women with the most effective and equitable distribution—in other words, with Price. Men stock the market; women buy in it.

There is really no need for a Bolshevist revolution in this country. Leave production alone, and let us aim at a communal fixing of prices. Whoever fixes prices really controls production. Better—let anybody control production, provided the community controls the product by means of price.

Who fixes prices to-day? Not the community, but the Capitalists, by virtue of their control of production. Wanted: the control of prices by the community. And this is possible without the direct communal control of production.

Nothing is more obvious to-day than the fact that Production is miles ahead of Distribution. We have applied science and energy to the processes of Production to such a degree that our own national production is capable of meeting the needs of our population ten times over. There is nothing wrong with our system of production considered only in its technical aspect; and private enterprise has every cause to flatter itself with the result. But in *Distribution* almost everything is wrong. We produce like gods; but we distribute like brutes. No science and no energy has been applied to distribution—with the consequence that while as producers we are better than we need to be, as distributors we are worse than savages. The reason is plain: we have left distribution to the producers; we have allowed distribution to occur as an accident of production; we have made the process of distribution a subordinate by-product of the process of production. But if the reason for the discrepancy is plain, the remedy is also plain. It is *not* to tamper with production directly. We repeat, there is nothing much the matter with production. The remedy is to control distribution, to apply to distribution the science and the energy we have applied to production, to bring distribution up to the level of production. This can be done by means of price-fixing.

Sir Auckland Geddes: "You cannot take an old country like this and suddenly profoundly change the conditions under which the majority of its people live and work without risking disaster." True; but we do not propose to do it. We propose to leave things very much as they are *productively*, and to change only the process of *distribution*. The introduction of this new principle would, it is true, profoundly affect the organisation of production, but only by indirect means. A Guild organisation would be its natural outcome. But, in the initial stages, the change would be easy and gradual; for desperate diseases require *gentle* remedies.

The party politicians are not the only people who think that the war has necessitated no permanent reorientation of outlook. Many Socialists are equally conservative. They act as if the war had been only an interruption of their methods of propaganda, and not a final and complete discrediting of them. It is necessary to say, however, that the war has changed things radically. As well might the German Empire attempt to carry on as before the war, as the Socialist movement attempt to resume its former propaganda where the war cut it off. "Finis" was written to Marxism when the war broke out; and an entirely new Socialism is necessary if we are to adapt ourselves to the new conditions.

Do you want to get things done or to continue only talking about them? The fact to recognise is that Socialist propaganda has hitherto not lightened the burden of the proletariat by a single ounce. In relation to Production, the distribution of commodities among the proletariat has been constantly declining. The working-classes owe no thanks to the Socialist movement, save thanks for its good intentions.

But are the intentions so really good? Can good intentions exist without effective consequences—consequences, that is to say, which are congruous with the intentions? Suppose it to be the case that the Socialist movement has hitherto failed to effect better distribution among the masses, while, at the same time, it has provided an outlet for the energies and ambitions of its chief members, is there any reason for concluding that its real object has not been effected; in other words, that its real object all this while has been, not better distribution, but precisely the satisfaction of its chief members? Anyhow, it is a fact of observation that a reflection cast upon the work achieved for the masses is tolerated by the Socialist leaders with equanimity; but a reflection cast upon their own ability or prestige is always resented. Let the Socialist movement in future measure its work by the things it gets done; and let the measure be of meal and malt. How much more have you distributed; how much more equitably have you distributed it; is distribution beginning to make up its leeway with production; are we getting the goods from the producers to the consumers? These are the acid tests of the value of a Socialist movement.

The day for "grand attacks on the citadel of Capitalism" (vide Mr. Frank Hodges) has gone by with the defeat of Prussianism. Outflanking is altogether more effective and less extravagant of life and happiness. The citadel is to be taken not by assault, but by counsel; not by force, but by strategy; not by numbers, but by ideas. The rank and file of the army of Labour are "magnificent"; and they deserve to be

well led. The best leader, however, is he who wins his battles without loss, or with the fewest possible losses. Violence is spent force, or force inadequate to the occasion. NATIONAL GUILDSMEN.

In Germany.

By Dr. Oscar Levy.

II.

BERLIN, June 19. Walk in the Tiergarten. I have been warned against going down side streets, where assaults are said to be common, even in broad daylight; but my preference for the less frequented ways is too strong. I meet with no misfortune, and I am stopped only by some poor women who beg me for bread-cards for their children. Money they have or can get, but tickets entitling them to buy food are all too rare.

I lunch with my friend S., the literary editor of one of the big Berlin dailies. He confesses that he had never attached any importance to the literature of the pan-German school, and that books like the "German Rembrandt" of Langbelow, and "The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century," by Stewart Chamberlain, had only made him smile. It was the war that revealed to him the intoxication of the German people. "We have been exclusively occupied with ideas," he said, "and not at all with real politics." When I remarked that the pan-Germans also occupied themselves with ideas, and even with ideas that had come straight from German philosophy, he replied that it was when war broke out that he realised it. "We Germans," he said, "never knew ourselves; and the vast majority of us, even to-day, are not at all aware of our mental characteristics."

The conversation I had in the evening with K., a Counsellor of Justice, fully confirmed the judgment of my friend S. A man of wide culture, a little cynical, perhaps, he gave me a good deal of information concerning the difficult conditions which German trade would now have to face. "Formerly," he said, "we were people who kept our word, but war and poverty has made rascals of us all. I divide men to-day into two classes: those who never keep their promise and those who deny having ever made a promise. But all this private disloyalty has nothing to do with politics. In politics, Germany has been too honest—unfortunately so." K. would hear nothing of the "atrocities" of Germany during the war, which, he said, moreover had certainly not been provoked by Germany. It was Germany's enemies who had skilfully manœuvred Germany into a position from which a declaration of war was the only escape; and they had thereafter exploited this purely formal gesture in order to create the myth of the "war of aggression." This opinion, I find, is pretty general. The books written by Fernau, Grelling, Stilgebauer, Krause, and published in Switzerland, are still completely unknown in Germany. They are not to be seen in any bookshop; and the few libraries that have them do not circulate them. A bookseller complained to me not only of the poverty of German "war literature," but of the collapse of all German culture. Indicating a row of well-filled bookshelves he said: "All that stuff is dead to-day; it was all written before August 1, 1914." When I asked him if he was not too pessimistic, and whether nothing of it all would survive the catastrophe, he said: "Only Nietzsche, who was a great prophet, and who constantly warned Germany to look out. We refused to listen to him, and what he predicted has come to pass. His books are to-day more in demand than ever before."

BERLIN, June 22. I spent the evening at a house where the host read to us a few pages from Bethmann-Hollweg's book, which has just been published. The "gesture" of the ex-Chancellor in offering himself as a substitute for the Emperor was highly praised. What I heard, however, did not make a good impression on me. The same jesuitical pudding which our statesmen have always served out to the German people; and for want of anything better, it continues to be greedily swallowed. The chivalrous character and loyalty of Bethmann are loudly acclaimed. "The loyalty of Loyola!" I thought; but I kept my thoughts to myself, having decided to listen rather than to argue. Discussion would in any case have been quite useless; it would be like running your head against a brick wall.

BERLIN, June 24. I have been unfair. I have at last met in Berlin somebody who is quite clear on the question of the guilt of Germany. She was my neighbour at a dinner given in honour of S. This lady was one of the friends of my childhood, and I remember having played at sand-castles with her on the beach at Heringsdorf. She translated for the Foreign Minister the English Blue-book on the origin of the war, and the doubt was sown in her mind—Did not the main responsibility for the war rest, after all, upon Germany? In my amazement, I said to her: "But, madame, you are the only person present who has the smallest suspicion of it." She replied naïvely: "Yes, that is true, people haven't troubled their heads about it." "But why not?" I asked. "You see," she said, "everybody was so busy winning the war, and all their energies were so fully employed to this end. There was no time for thinking. Everything had to be directed to something immediate, something positive. That is how I explain the ignorance of our people." I agreed, and added: "The Germans usually work too hard!" My neighbour replied: "You are right. The German is above everything else a specialist; he is always trying to be the best in his profession; anybody who thinks outside his profession is despised as a poor dilettante. And, for the same reason, he considers German specialists to be very superior to all the rest of the world. This explains the unshakable confidence which Germans continued to have in their politicians, their diplomats and their professors. And when all these had failed them, there still remained their confidence in their generals, who also were excellent specialists—devoid unfortunately of any general knowledge of men and things, above all, of psychological understanding. Really, the specialist has been the ruin of Germany."

The conversation with my left-hand neighbour, the wife of the Privy Councillor B, and a woman of considerable intelligence, was rather more cheerful. In spite of the terrible situation of Germany, this lady had managed to preserve her sense of humour. "What do you think," she said, "a burglar broke into my house last night and stole some jewels worth about twenty thousand marks. Luckily I had taken care to hide the rest in a place where the thieves couldn't find them. However, we live in very interesting times. Life used to be so monotonous. Think of the dull conversations you had to listen to at table when you were a boy. Did a lady ever amuse you at dinner by telling you that she had met thieves and murderers in the night? It is as exciting as a story of the Abruzzi!" She was an old acquaintance of the Emperor. "He was a very fascinating man, a man of great charm. Marvellously blue eyes which were simply bewitching. He was amiability itself. Sometimes, when he caught sight of me at some show or other, he would come and talk to me for half and hour at a time, leaving his staff to kick their heels. He was interested in everything; he had an open mind upon every subject. And he never made you feel that you were talking to a Majesty."

The opinion of the diplomat, v.Z., with whom I talked over coffee and liqueur, was very different. "Nobody has a good word to say of the Emperor in Germany to-day. At the bottom of the popular mind, above all, he lost all sympathy from the moment when it was discovered that behind the military façade and martial bearing there was nothing but a poor neurasthete and vain comedian. The real character of the

Emperor had escaped the knowledge of the middle classes, and still more completely, of course, of the masses. He was regarded by them as the most gifted of the Hohenzollerns who had ever adorned the throne. We diplomats, and the statesmen as well as the higher military officers, were, of course, better instructed. We knew, as Bismarck knew, that the Emperor was only a very poor thing. We used to compare him to a horse which, as soon as it is near the fence, starts trembling and tries to bolt. We laughed at his pacifism. You remember that we once proposed him for the Nobel prize—precisely because he had a positive dread of war. We shared the opinion of Bismarck, who one day said of the Emperor: '*He* will never make war; he hasn't nerve enough.' We forgot, however, that a weak man can, in a moment of excitement, play the strong man, and that, as a rule, such a moment is bound to be very badly chosen. You remember the remark of William II, 'This time I shall do it.' The day came when he no longer boggled at the fence. He jumped and broke his neck—and Germany's with him. We are to blame for our fate. We ought not to have spurred him on. The wisest heads amongst us always said that with William II and Bethmann-Hollweg we could *never* carry out either a great or a safe policy. We refused to listen to them. Besides, there were only about half a dozen of them. What is wanting in Germany is civic courage. Why, for example, did nobody in Germany realise the stupidity of William after he had published a book of his observations and reflections? It was the simple duty of all those who knew to say so. But no, they all conspired with him, and they are all to-day jointly and severally answerable with him for the consequences. You would have thought that someone would have refused to publish the book, or that, when published, someone would have ignored it, passed it over in silence, and that he would then have been compelled to fly the country? Very likely. Certainly the man who had then borne witness to the truth would at this moment be the saviour of Germany. But, as things are, we are without a saviour. Our choice is between Jesuits and fanatics, humbugs and Socialists. Personally I prefer the Jesuits, since I am not a Socialist, and have no wish to see Germany follow Russia. However, I do think that the worst is behind us. Berlin will not present the world with a repetition of either Budapest or Petrograd. The Germans are not revolutionaries. We are a people of order, and I have ground for hoping that we shall remain so." (TRANSLATED BY R. H. C.)

Some Remarks on Psycho-Analysis.

FIVE years ago, when the war with Germany was just beginning, I disputed in these columns the right of Freud to attach to the Great Idea of Sex which pervades the universe the small, and at the present time, unclean views of human sex, and to postulate that they were identical and undifferentiable. Since then much progress has been made, but it is only a first step.

The constructive views on psycho-analysis to-day bear to the proper understanding of the matter the same relation as the analytic views of Freud did to the present constructive one. The first step was easy, the second is far harder; and those who will be able to take it are probably much fewer. To follow the analogy which Dr. Maurice Nicoll employs, and which I also used, Freud was concerned only with the pigments; the later school is concerned with the figures and drama of the picture. What we now need is the meaning of the picture as a whole.

To take a simple example: the Œdipus "tragedy" is to the analytic the sign of a personal delinquency; to the constructive school it is the sign of an age-long tendency. But is it nothing more than this?

In all mythologies and religions we find the female who is both mother and spouse. Are these, then, only "sublimated from erotic impressions"? I think not. It is a relationship which we find wherever we can look, in Logic and Mathematics and Physics as well as in the more subtle activities of the mind. In its crudest statement it is $2\times3=6$, $2\times6=12$; it is the history of all evolution. In a more complex form we may see it in our mind processes. Through the action of our senses on the environment is born a consciousness of the world around us. This we again cast forth into our environment and our conception of an externalised world is born. And this has happened not once but often; and at each birth the offspring is the same, but different, more and more complex, with the infinite potentialities of the Great Mother more and more displayed. For She is the Eternal Femininity, our mother and nurse, eternally drawing us forth by her charms, that we may beget a son greater than ourselves. With the defiling of the Sacrament comes the Tragedy.

The difficulties which we encounter in possessing ourselves of this point of view are great, but they are really due only to our present attitude of mind regarding the universe. Man is man, and things are—heaven knows!—perhaps only concepts!—maybe with no reason inherent in them. Why should we figure them as we do? It seems, however, fairly obvious, if we draw our observations from where we will, that no thing can contact, or sense, or act on another except by reason of some community of "structure" or "substance" which is in each of them. That we use for this purpose the community of that structureless substance or undifferentiated multiplicity which our limitations force us to accept as the figure for the something which underlies the wholeness of the everywhere, may clearly be rejected. If this were so, we should be aware that we were co-extensive with cosmos. We know that the hand feels and the eye sees, but *we* both feel through our hand and see through our eye.

Our hand and eye may transform the incoming modes of energy, but in so doing they do not confuse them. There is the trail of "hardness" or "greenness" all the way from the leaf to our innermost centre. What, then, is the limit of a man? Where does he meet the not-man? How far does he insinuate himself into the not-self? If we believe cogito ergo sum the problem is not very difficult (when once we have given a solid meaning to cogito), but such a simple answer is not to be accepted with the knowledge of these later years at our disposal. Indeed, as we look, we find ourselves drawn more and more to the ancient belief in the Illusion of Personality. At least personality is only the point at which various modes of nature, themselves but distantly related, intersect and produce a unity, a crossways at which normally we sit. Mind is the least common measure of all the stimuli. It exists perhaps because of the God-spark in us which can respond to all possible modes.

Man is either all or he is nothing. But this is true only of the Perfect man. The "normal man," whatever the conditions at the crossways may be, only touches the universe by five roads of his senses. Abnormal men are beginning to do so by more roads. Psycho-analysis seems to be proving that many others also do this unconsciously, but its present tendency is to assume that the clearest results are not thus obtained, but are only sublimations of normal sense impressions, either recent or not. Morphology suggests, at any rate, that there has been in the past a sequence from material touch to etheric sight, and the senses of the psyche which are daily becoming more common at least agree with this sequence.

Psycho-analysts tell us that an expansion of consciousness is observable as the attention is relaxed. If this is so it would mean that as a man ceases to hold himself together at the "crossways" his consciousness "diffuses itself" into the not-self, and it is not impos-

sible that if this diffusion is sufficient for him to lose touch with the crossways where he sits in normal life, the result is a dream, or, at any rate, the substratum of a dream, for as I pointed out on a previous occasion, the *form* of a dream is due to the "stage property" available as we wake, with which we strengthen the rather intangible essence of our dream so that it may not all evaporate away. I think that I may now be even more certain that this is the case, since Nicoll appears to have arrived at the same conclusion. But the action is not really so personal, utilitarian and arbitrary as the above might suggest, for it is as inevitable as is the line of passage of a stroke of lightning along a tree or a building. The "greenness" (to make use of the adjective which I used before in this connection) follows the line of "maximum greenness" (otherwise, least resistance), and the "choice" is inevitable.

If "man" thus wanders or diffuses into the various layers of "structure" he must contact not only basal non-human stimuli, but also what has been superimposed by human thought and action in the past and even, as it were, "join up" with other men who are similarly engaged.

As a statement in physics this is fairly comprehensible; the only reason why it is not equally obvious in psychics is that we have not yet postulated a medium in which psychic phenomena take place. That this has not been done is strange, since telepathy is now so common, for without it the old difficulty of action at a distance is clearly revived. Science still inclines, it is true, to the belief that there is no consciousness without a gross physical body, but I do not think that the ether is postulated as the stuff of which thoughts are built, so it presumably demands that "thought energy" shall be "stepped down" till it can travel by light-ether, after which it is "stepped up" again, but even for this we are without a sense organ to do the transformation, as the various parts of the body which have been allocated to the job by occult writers have not yet been accepted by science.

The choice therefore remains whether we will take the common-sense view that the psychic world is constructed on lines comparable with the physical world, and that our impressions of it are a composite result made up from an external stimulus and our comprehension of it, or the view at present accepted that it is all due to us, and that there are no external stimuli, except those which we already know under other names. For such a scheme, professors are quite necessary, for the difficulties to be surmounted are obvious in any book on psycho-analysis, and the gymnastics to be performed are worthy of a better cause.

But, it may be said, the basal fact remains unassailable that cures are effected. It must, however, be borne in mind that a similar amount of mind-education and straightening of beliefs and values would obviously go a long way in relieving patients without any reference to definite occurrences. The disease is, so to speak, a disorder of our conscious and subconscious "thinking," and can be cured by re-ordering this. How it is re-ordered is of comparatively little importance; men get along well enough with very different ideas as to the structure of the universe, and all that this demands. The main point is to prove to the patient that his "logic," which is working the harm, is wrong, and there must be few who can withstand the elaborate evolutions of the doctor in whom they trust.

The difficulty in displaying the false attitude of the times is due, as I said in a previous controversy, to the fact that many of the correlations are true, but that being misused they lead to many others which are quite untrue, so that we get a tangled skein which can scarcely be unravelled. In short, if we say that a phallus is the symbol of—anything you like, as long as it is true—well and good, it is a proper analogy. But if we say that the cross on the altar is a symbol of the phallus it is only childish and dirty. Man is one of the latest products of the universe, and the few thousands, or hundreds of thousands, of years since his legitimate goal of progress was bodily sex are but a twinkling as compared with the ages through which the "formula" which (*with certain constants*) represents bodily sex has been in operation.

The fundamental idea in psycho-analysis is a very valuable one. It is leading us to many truths long laid aside. Applied to what is pathological the results can, in the main, be hardly other than good, though they would be no worse were the premisses not inverted. But with this its professors are not content, and are piling again a Pelion on Ossa in the vain hope of reaching Olympus. In this ignorant pursuit there is no small repute to be gained them. But they will have little honour in the ages, except as the sacrilegious miscreants in a greater tragedy than any with which they are now dabbling.

Few have any views worth consideration on mythology and heavens, and the important thing is that they should be led to such ideas as will carry them forward to something greater than themselves, and not doom them to a future constructed from the dregs of animal passions collected since the infancy of the race.

It has so long been a platitude that man is God and Beast combined that some may be prepared to accept the idea as worthy of consideration. Viewing things thus the choice before us is whether we will look towards the hills where the gods live, or resolutely turn back again to the wilderness of beasts.

M. B. OXON.

Public Opinion and Majority Rule

THE right of the majority is the worst conception of Democracy. Unfortunately, the minds of most Democrats, in their weakest moments, are liable to its influence. There is a false appearance of safety in the idea that majorities, as such, have rights: but this is the negative pole of social idealism.

In fact, this conception is the obverse of a truly human and democratic doctrine; the unavoidable danger of it, and its own special liability to error. Every quality of character involves the likelihood of a certain corresponding defect: by any method of philosophic thought you are led to a pure truth or lapse into its related absurdity. So the democratic ideal, which is something founded upon the ideas of co-operation and free consent, degenerates to a belief in the right of the majority. And the will of the greater number, as such, has no right at all. No will can possess rights, except so far as it *is* right.

This is not to disparage decision by vote. Voting is the natural and necessary custom of all democracies. But it involves no craven capitulation to greater numbers. The true foundation of voting is a certain chivalry of spirit, an agreement that even when most of us lack wisdom for the right decision we will accept the ruling of the greater number, for the sake of unity and brotherhood. This spirit is essential to democracy: it feigns no right for the majority but allows it the privilege. It rejects the idea of the vote as the citizen's weapon to defend his own or any interests, holding that it should be the expression of his clearest and most disinterested thought.

Forms of government throughout the world are indeed growing more democratic: but the force of thought by which they grow seems to be the opposite of that which conceived them. And seems so, because it is so. Votes are advocated to obtain disinterested judgments, but they are multiplied to defend interests. Democratic idealists desire that all men equally should be kings, because all are potential kings in spirit: but the dominant belief, which has worked for democratic forms in modern times, has been no such hope for men, but fear and distrust of them. Political power has

been more widely allowed with the growth of this cynical conviction—that no oligarchy, minority or aristocracy of any kind may be trusted to govern honestly, that all kinds of men are knaves enough to act chiefly for themselves in any place of trust: and that it is perhaps a remedy to extend the franchise further, finally to give every man a vote, as a pistol to shoot at his Government. Kings were the first victims of this modern scepticism: next, aristocracies were destroyed by it. Now even Parliaments are disbelieved in. It is quite possible that we shall come to government by instantaneous and telegraphic referendum to all citizens: when it will at last be proved, beyond a doubt, that, in a profiteering society, the totality is no honester than a sample, and that people can govern themselves as badly as any rulers can do it for them.

Let it come to this, however. Majority rule is an inevitable means to human democracy—its negative force and most necessary to it. Only let this force be known for what it is; so much inertia, so much dead weight for energetic minorities to lift. What is it, for all who think or work in worthy causes, but a sphere empty of thought and gaping to be filled by it? There is no public "opinion." What goes by that name is a reverberation of thoughts and phrases in a vast vacuity of unoccupied mind. Concerning matters centred and focussed in his attention no man is unintelligent. In any subject of his earnest work or thought, each one can make individual and significant opinion. But upon problems of the world and the State, but a few score of minds, at most, are ever centred with a superior purpose: these things exist but on the far periphery of the minds of the multitude—in the outer world of half-heeded things, the "marginal consciousness" of the psychologists. And public "opinion" is the sum of these margins, the undifferentiated, impressionable consciousness common to all men. It is the chaos outside of thought, chaos of words and things that drift around by chance while the intellect is at rest or fixed on other things.

Opinions appear to arise in it—why? Because it is the nature of mind, in urgent need of an opinion, to use whatever chance has given it. Watch how people take ideas from each other, from newspapers, advertisements and things seen half-asleep—use and repeat them as original judgments. But few can afford to despise humanity for it. It would be an uncommon man who, on reflection, could not see himself in past experience, thinking, acting and speaking from thoughts thus dropped by chance in the margin of his mind, using them without any work upon them—and yet arguing for them with love and conceit as if they were his own!

Yet democracy is essential to the development of humanity, and self-government and the franchise must be extended to the uttermost. For even if men have not the energy of thought to create the world of civilisation, it must be created through them, so that they feel and know themselves as creators, responsible for all that happens in it. And the greatest democracy will surely be that which will know how negative is its part in creation, that its function is to respond to its thinkers; to be passive to the inspiration of the true and voluntary aristocracy, of those who think for truth's sake, without egotism, or who work for causes, without ambition. In such a democracy men will know what they know, and what knowledge they have worked for, in which their power is positive: and, in other and more distant problems, they will not be led by those who flatter them that their common sense is sounder than another's serious study: here they will be nobly negative and follow those who are worthiest of belief. Practically, they will accept the power of public "opinion," but intellectually they will hold it in merciless contempt, as the sphere of no-thought, of mere unfocussed mind.

Here, then, is the first lesson of Democracy; to realise that majority rule is its negative power. Its positive power is individual work and inspiration. When the negative empties itself of conceit, and the positive keeps itself pure, harmony is established, and from their union proceeds the spirit of civilisation, the renovation of life.

P. A. MAIRET.

Drama,

By John Francis Hope.

A VISIT to "Business before Pleasure," now transferred to the Princes' Theatre, serves to remind us that sequels are always unsatisfactory. Their very existence implies some failure in the original, either in intention or execution; "Rupert of Hentzau," for example, implicitly confesses that "The Prisoner of Zenda" was incomplete, that it had not finally disposed of its subject. It is only in epic, which has sequence but no form, that the artist can elaborate or embroider the subject; the epic is, indeed, the chronicle of the man's activities, much more than it is the revelation of his character. But more formal art concentrates on the man rather than on his activities, chooses typical incidents, crucial moments, to acquaint us with the man's character; and the more perfectly this synthetic knowledge is conveyed, the more surely we do not need any further elaboration of incidents. The work is complete in itself, and Philistinism is nothing else but the assumption that it is not complete. If anyone were to ask, for example, what happened to Rosalind or to Beatrice after she was married, to demand a sequel to "As You Like It" or "Much Ado about Nothing," that person would betray the fact that he was confused concerning the relative reality of art and life. Life, for the purposes of this discussion, may be defined as continuous, detailed activity, art as perfect, complete, essential activity. There is nothing more to know concerning the person than the work of art reveals, and to ask how he or she would behave in another set of circumstances only betrays the fact that we have not grasped the essentials of the character portrayed. If we have failed when that character was exhibited in a crisis, we shall certainly not succeed when it declines from the dramatic to the epic level; and the usual excuse for sequels, that they enable us to renew acquaintance with the original characters, is inaccurate, because their very existence implies that we never knew, never understood, the original characters.

Potash and Perlmutter present very little difficulty to the ordinary playgoer. In its own way, the original was a classic of clear exposition; we saw then, beneath the exterior semblance of difference, the essential similarity of character. These two Jews were as alike as two Jews; they had the same external egoism, the same internal altruism, they were united in spirit but divided in expression. There was eternal agreement about ends, eternal difference about means, between them; and it is possible for any person of ordinary intelligence to "imagine their whole range and stretch of tether twenty years to come." They will go quarrelling about means, agreeing about ends; up to the very gates of Heaven, have a final altercation about the best way of slipping past St. Peter, and there, where all accidental difference is abolished, will subside into the enjoyment of their essential identity. The original work was complete in itself; we know them, and it matters nothing to us whether they exhibit their qualities in the wholesale clothing trade, or in that other machine industry of the cinematograph film making—we know that they can never show us any qualities that they have not already exhibited.

But "Business before Pleasure" has been written, produced, and successfully played since Easter; and

bids fair to rival its predecessor in longevity. This merits some attention at a time when the theatres are no longer Providentially protected against failure, when we have reverted, to some extent, to the pre-war tradition that not every play is sure of a long run (has not Mr. Brighouse recently achieved a failure with a farce that ran for ten nights?), and the theatrical world, like the world in general, is at cross purposes, capitalism trying to destroy art as it is also destroying industry. There is, it would seem, a public demand for sequels, or, more accurately, for another presentation of the same characters in a different setting. Just as Queen Elizabeth wanted to see Falstaff in love, and forced Shakespeare to the hack-work of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," so the public want to see Potash and Perlmutter doing something else. There is a declension of taste here which was not so obviously manifested by Elizabeth; she wanted Falstaff to be someone else, to exhibit different qualities, to be what he was not, a lover; the public wants Potash and Perlmutter just to be themselves, but to do something different. The public, accepting Potash and Perlmutter as a good thing, straightway converts it into a bad thing by repetition and duplication. It descends from art to industry, from creation to reproduction, expresses that preference for stereotypes that is, in its psychological significance, the greatest danger to civilisation.

For such a people is abnormally sensitive to suggestion, which is another way of saying that it is abnormally incapable of original thought. For all common purposes, with their infinite division of labour, it is efficient; for all individual purposes, with their almost infinite variety of expression, it becomes increasingly incapable. So long as such a people is efficiently led, so long it may survive; but there is admittedly in industry a difficulty in obtaining from the mass a sufficient number of individuals capable of controlling the activities of the mass, and in politics, the paucity of men of the first class has been apparent for years. Potash and Perlmutter, both in the original and in "Business before Pleasure," only illustrate the problem; for here are men whose very work is the choice of the models that will be reproduced to infinity, whose activity will result, in the one case, in clothing a percentage of the population in garments of identical pattern, and, in the other, of impressing on the minds of a much larger percentage an identical treatment of a trivial subject, yet these men betray at every turn an incapability of reason even concerning their own subjects that is, in its implications, alarming. They are as incompetent as Cabinet Ministers in the performance of all that they think is necessary to civilisation; they ought to be laughed out of existence; instead of which, they are laughed into it.

It is as easy to despise popularity as it is to court it; but the artist will recognise that popularity is power, and strive to use it for the benefit of the public. Potash and Perlmutter are popular, but it does not follow that the public is incapable of responding to any other suggestion, and therefore that the artist is justified in appealing to a coterie public. The broad simplicities of character, the natural morality of melodrama, are capable of more refined treatment than they get in this play; the fault of the authors is that they address themselves to grosser estimators than they need to, appeal for an easier verdict of success than they are capable of obtaining. They aim at a public evolving from the cinema to the melodrama, and as perversely use the cinema in the play as did Barrie in his horror, "Rosy Rapture." They alternate between farce and melodrama, prostituting their gift of dramatic dialogue to the development of a subject that is beneath contempt. They have done more than secure a popular success, they have repeated it; now it only remains for them to deserve it.

In School.

XIV.—PRETENTIOUSNESS.

LET us assume that the form has begun to observe carefully, and that their productions are beginning to contain material worth putting down. Under the general principle that style follows thought-substance most of the boys will begin to write creditably and show signs of promise. But there are exceptions. As I have already explained, some unconscious stylists may remain in the background for a long time; others will only emerge intermittently and for short periods. There is still to be considered the case of the stylist who has already appeared, too soon, in fact, and who dresses up his substance in a vulgar and pretentious guise. All teachers of English must be familiar with a certain fatal facility of writing which about one child in every ten seems to possess. It is in a sense comparable to the faculty of playing the piano rapidly without sufficient regard to expression. The comparison, however, is not entirely accurate, for these facile writers generally have something interesting to say, though if they were not carried along so easily by their technical powers what they write would be still more interesting. The real trouble is that their literary productions are full of insincerity of thought and vulgarity of expression. (There must, of course, be some real geniuses with a natural facility for good writing, but I have encountered none myself and, in any case, they would not need to be taught to write and are therefore beyond the province of education.)

It cannot be denied that the actual accomplishment of these facile writers is intrinsically superior to that of their struggling, inarticulate companions, and the teacher working in the shadow of marks and examinations is prone to regard actual fulfilment as something more valuable and important than vague future promise. The conscientious teacher must, however, bring himself to realise that their literary attainment leads at best to a mere cul de sac, and at the cost of causing a temporary regression in their achievements he should do his utmost to make them retrace their steps until they are on the right path.

One of the worst offenders of this class I have had to deal with was a boy who suffered from having been brought up (out of school) on a lavish diet of Charles Dickens—dangerous food for a literarily impressionable child. Here are two typical passages from his earlier work, written when he was not quite thirteen. A very few lines would suffice to illustrate his criminal style, but I will quote them at greater length to show that he had at times distinctly good ideas, the conscious expression of which I have no compunction in claiming as largely the result of my methods.

SHYNESS.

As I stand outside the house where the party is to take place I am filled with apprehension which is accompanied by a tingling of the spine. I wonder, as I am standing on the doorstep, who will open the door. Will it be the hostess? Oh, no, it won't be her! She will be entertaining the grown-ups in the drawing-room. I am startled out of my reverie by the bell, which seems to echo in the depths of the house.

A maid, spotless in cap and apron, opens the door, and we walk in. Let me state that I had never been in this house before, nor did I know a single person there. I walked in behind my mother, cowering in the shadows. We are the last to arrive; that makes it worse. Alas! the inevitable has come; we have arrived at the drawing-room door.

We are ushered in. My mother exchanges cordial greetings with the hostess, whom I have never seen. The hostess then turns to me, scrutinising me carefully.

"Is this your little boy?" she asks my mother.

Oh, how I burn with rage at the word "little"! Then after a short "parley" which I did not understand, "John!" shrieks the hostess.

Then down the stairs comes rushing a horrible little boy about a year older than I am.

"This is—what is your name, little man?" says the hostess. I inform her in an affrighted voice.

"Take him to the nursery," says the hostess.

We go off, no attempt being made at conversation.

This is the real beginning of shyness. Once away from my mother I feel a sick terror. Into the nursery we go. Oh, how awful! All the other children are playing games, and there is a general hush as we enter. I absolutely don't know what to do; I am just about to burst into a flood of tears when a nursemaid comes to the rescue.

"Come along, dear; won't you play 'Hunt-the-slipper'?"

I sit down, but I take no interest in the game. No one talks to me, and I sit aloof, all the time longing for my mother. Through tea I sit solemnly, eating hardly anything. However, a meal always seems to have some psychological effect on one, as, after tea, I warmed up to the games, and when six o'clock came I was unwilling to leave.

A COUNTRY STATION.

The day is sunny, and everything is bright and happy as you approach the local railway station. Here and there you see a sleepy horse trailing a cart with a sleepy old farmer in it. Then a most imposing sight meets your gaze, for rounding the bend, with clicking of hoofs and rattle of wheels, comes the station 'bus. The driver seems quite in another and more superior world; he sits on the box, gazing haughtily about, considerably more splendid than the farmers and yokels. In the shafts is a miserable horse. It amuses you greatly to see this ancient quadruped trying to look as imposing as possible.

You enter the booking-office. The tick-tick of a clock greets your entry, and you look up at it expectantly, hopefully. Your hopes are shattered in a moment, for the clock informs you that there is half an hour until your train arrives. You turn to the place where you are to book your ticket; the official the other side of the pigeon-hole-like aperture, wildly excited at having something to do, absolutely jumps at you and treats you with a familiar civility and unconcealed interest. Having taken your ticket, you amble gently forth on to the platform. There you are met by the official who acts as the station-master and also as the porter. He is full of righteous pomp, for is it not he who is ruler of this tidy little station? His uniform betokens many years of service. The buttons show signs of constant and vigorous polishing, but nevertheless they have the dusky hue of age.* Obviously he has nothing whatever to do, but his chief aim in life seems to be that you shall think he is the busiest man in the world. He bustles about up and down the platform, shouting orders at invisible subordinates. Suddenly he comes in violent contact with one of the milk-cans standing upon the platform. With a sharp ring and a loud crash the milk-can falls on to the line. This is indeed a diversion. The clerk comes rushing out of the booking-office, and the rotund signalman precipitates himself down the stairs of his cabin, for he also is idle, and this is a much-needed excitement. Together they hoist it up with much puffing and panting, and then all is quiet again.

The station-master, seeing a friend outside the station, hurries out, and they start off together in a straight line for the local hostelry across the road, and with a knowing grin the signalman returns to his cabin.

You look up at the advertisements, hoping to see one that you have not seen countless times before. There is the old Pears' Soap one and numerous others with which you are equally familiar. The only one which you have not seen is an advertisement of Mr. Briggs' watches. (Mr. Briggs is the local watchmaker.) . . .

On the far side of the line is a meadow, glistening yellow with buttercups, and far away a little wood lies tucked away, very self-containing, in a park. The station-master has come back, and everything is bustle and excitement. Milk-cans are being hustled about, and there down the line comes the train, winding snake-like through a cutting,* the fleecy white steam going up like breath on a frosty morning. It draws up with clanging of pistons and hiss of steam, and you select a carriage smelling strongly of stale tobacco.

* Condemned by the form as insincere.

I have already endeavoured to explain the futility of attempting to teach style consciously, and the mere fact of pointing out each vulgarity to the individual offender is not enough to prevent their recurrence in the writings of a hardened criminal. A method which I have adopted with distinct success, however, is to inoculate the form against clichés. Perhaps a better figure would be to compare the process with that said to be in use in sweetshops and restaurants, by which the assistants become effectively satiated with sweet-stuff through being allowed to eat what they like from the counters.

The actual method employed is for the form occasionally to make a list of words and phrases to be avoided in writing on some given subject. This is, for instance, one boy's "Nature" Black List.

1. Velvety carpet of mossy-green.
2. Shady greenwood paths.
3. Sward.

Here are a dozen taken from several boys' Black Lists entitled "An Inspection of Boy Scouts."

The band struck up a regal air.
Momentary confusion reigned as the boy slipped.
Silence was restored as he came forward.
A broad smile illumined his countenance.
Juvenile upholders of the British tradition.
The future defenders of the Empire.
Boys of the bulldog breed.
A line of strapping youths.
General ——, accompanied by a score of time-worn veterans.
All eyes were glued on that commanding figure.
The brigadier-general, a martinet at drill.
A ringing cheer rent the air as the general departed.

These lists can be dealt with on the same lines as the more general ones; but, unlike the others, as literary exercises they are, of course, of no importance. Some of the Black Lists were grotesquely inept; others were just blank sheets of paper. But so long as these ineffective lists are the product of unconvicted offenders—and they will always be found so in practice—a negative result is wholly immaterial; in fact, rather to be welcomed.

The method may seem puerile at first sight, but it has proved so effective in practice that I would suggest to the thoughtful teacher that it might be applied with advantage, mutatis mutandis, to the teaching of other subjects.

It involves, moreover, certain important psychological principles. When once the harmful literary complex, or affect (to use what is, I believe, the correct psycho-analytic term) can be brought subjectively into consciousness its evil effect is rendered nugatory. As I have said before, this healing process is not effected by objective admonition on the part of the teacher.

To make my meaning still clearer, I will give an illustration which has just come to hand during the writing of this chapter, in the form of a letter from an old pupil now at a Public School, whose productions have adorned several of my recent articles. Speaking of an essay he had written on the Peace Treaty, he says, "I am sorry to say I let myself go and filled it with clichés, which I could not resist, as I judged rightly that they would please my English master." Probably he judged quite wrongly, but the point is that so long as he was conscious of his offence no (literary) harm could be done. I am not concerned here with morals.

T. R. COXON.

DEATH.

The quiet clouds of Heaven have wrapped my love in sleep,
And over him the grasses creep and creep and creep;
The little toy stars tinkle in the winds above his head—
They will never waken him—he is very dead.

PHYLLIS MORRIS.

Homage to Sextus Propertius.

By Ezra Pound.

V.

1.

Now if ever, it is time to cleanse Helicon;
to lead Emathian horses afield,
And to name over the census of my chiefs in the Roman camp.
If I have not the faculty "the bare attempt would be praiseworthy."
"In things of similar magnitude
the mere will to act is sufficient."

The primitive ages sang Venus,
the last sings of a tumult,
And I also will sing war when this matter of a girl is exhausted.
I with my beak hauled ashore would proceed in a more stately manner,
My Muse is eager to instruct me in a new gamut, or gambetto,
Up, up my soul, from your lowly cantilation,
put on a timely vigour.

Oh august Pierides! Now for a large-mouthed product.
Thus:
"The Euphrates denies its protection to the Parthian
and apologises for Crassus,"
And "It is, I think, India which now gives necks
to your triumph."
And so forth, Augustus. "Virgin Arabia shakes in her inmost dwelling."
If any land shrink into a distant seacoast,
it is a mere postponement of your domination,
And I shall follow the camp, I shall be duly celebrated,
for singing the affairs of your cavalry.
May the fates watch over my day.

2.

Yet you ask on what account I write so many love-lyrics
And whence this soft book comes into my mouth.
Neither Calliope nor Apollo sung these things into my ear,
My genius is no more than a girl.

If she with ivory fingers drive a tune through the lyre,
We look at the process
How easy the moving fingers; if hair is mussed on her forehead;
If she goes in a gleam of Cos, in a slither of dyed stuff,
There is a volume in the matter; If her eyelids sink into sleep,
There are new jobs for the author,
And if she plays with me with her shirt off
We shall construct many Iliads.
And whatever she does or says, we shall spin long yarns out of nothing.

Thus much the fates have allotted me, and if, Maecenas,
I were able to lead heroes into armour, I would not,
Neither would I warble of Titans, nor of Ossa spiked onto Olympus,
Nor of causeways over Pelion,
Nor of Thebes in its ancient respectability,
nor of Homer's reputation in Pergamus,
Nor of Xerxes two barrelled kingdom, nor of Remus and his royal family,
Nor of dignified Carthagenian characters,
Nor of Welsh mines and the profit Marus had out of them.
I should remember Caesar's affairs . . . .
for a background.
Although Callimachus did without them,
and without Theseus,
Without an inferno, without Achilles attended of gods,
Without Ixion and without the sons of Moenetus and the Argo,
and without Jove's grave and the Titans.

And my ventricles do not palpitate to Caesarial ore rotundos,
Nor to the tune of the Phrygian fathers.

Sailor, of winds; a plowman, concerning his oxen;
Soldier, the enumeration of wounds; the sheep-feeder, of ewes;
We in our narrow bed, turning aside from battles:
Each man where he can, wearing out the day in his manner.

3.

It is noble to die of love, and honourable to remain
uncuckolded for a season.
And she speaks ill of light women,
and will not praise Homer
Because Helen's conduct is "unsuitable."

Views and Reviews.

THE CANT OF CATHOLICISM.*

A BOOK of essays, unlike a novel, usually inspires the hope that it will be worth reading; unlike a novel, it usually disappoints that hope. Novelists, really good novelists, are fairly common; I could count, I suppose, twenty such among the writers of to-day; but essayists are rare. If they have style, as so few of them have, they lack ideas; if they have ideas, they do not write essays but monographs, the scientific tradition is so much more powerful than the literary. If they have personalities to exploit, they either shout at us, as Miss Marie Corelli does in "My Little Bit," or take to politics, where nothing, not even government, matters. Of the so-called essays of to-day, most are either book-reviews, or newspaper articles, or the last drivel of the deadly dull, after-dinner speeches unfortified by the dinner. Of the real essay style, the "No more wine? Then we'll push back chairs and talk" attitude, there is none that I know of in this generation; our essayists are either too young or too old to be good company.

I am not going to pretend that Mr. Theodore Maynard has succeeded where so many others have failed; he suffers, as so many others suffer, from the disability of having to express sincerity in cant. He responds to what he calls "the mystical note in poetry" (it is a quality, not a note), and that is a sincere response; but when he expresses that response in the terms of life, he drops into the cant of the Catholic school of writers. Belloc and Chesterton have windily rhapsodised Beer and Wine, have hiccuped Hallelujahs to John Barleycorn, have had their fling at hygiene in various forms, and in the sacred name of Religion have taken the sacred name of Science in vain. This cant Mr. Theodore Maynard solemnly repeats (because he also is a Catholic, and Catholics can only live in literature by taking in one another's dirty linen), and, without the humour of Chesterton or the bluster of Belloc, gibes at George Cadbury and a clean shirt.

This cult of cleanliness, he says, "is quite modern, coming to us by our contact with the heathen East." The Christian religion also came to us by our contact with the heathen East, and even the Catholic form of it retains a memory of its nature in the sacrament of baptism. Mary Magdalene is, I suppose, a human figure even to the neo-Catholics, but she began to wash the feet of Jesus with tears, we are told. Mr. Theodore Maynard denounces the religion of cleanli-

* "Carven from the Laurel Tree." By Theodore Maynard. (Blackwell. 3s. 6d. net.)

ness as being Pharisaic; "against them," he says, "was the Divine anger kindled and the awful 'woes!' hurled." So be it; but also to a Pharisee did Jesus say: "I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for My feet; but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head." The awful woes hurled against the Pharisees were not condemnations of their outward cleanliness, but of their inward filthiness; Jesus demanded more, not less, washing, was on the side of the angels, white as snow, and not on the side of the dirty devils. "Sanctity and the Sanitary Inspector," in Mr. Maynard's phrase, were identical in Jesus; he declared that the Pharisees were insanitary, that the whited sepulchre was a danger so long as it was not lime-washed inside, and free from corruption. Of all the cant that calls itself Christian, this cant of dirtiness is the most loathsome; and if, as Mr. Maynard hopes, a protest against hygiene "will come in the person of some fierce and spotless St. Simon Stylites, raised high upon a pillar of filth as a sign before the world," he will be dragged to the casual ward and scrubbed with yellow soap. That cock will not crow from that dunghill again.

It is this perversity, this glorification of dirt and disease, that betrays the fatal distinction between Catholicism and Christianity. For if Jesus was one thing more than another, he was a doctor—what is now called a quack doctor, because He performed cures. The one thing that He did not say was that we should endure disease, and bear with pain; His positive doctrine was that we should love one another, and perfect love demands perfect health. To bear with pain may be noble, but it is Stoicism, not Christianity; and Stoicism lacks love. At best, it is only a discipline; but love, in the sense that Jesus taught it, is a miraculous creative generosity. It is a giving of life, and only those who have life can give it. So when Mr. Maynard, writing of "Michael Field" (a pseudonym that concealed the identity of two women) tells us that when Edith Cooper suffered from cancer, "she steadfastly rejected the mercy of morphia in order to miss no step of her Via Crucis," no one but a Catholic can applaud such perversity. "Love must be heroic," says Mr. Maynard; but heroism that consists in enduring the unnecessary belies itself. Heroism has more than enough to do to cope with the necessary evils of this world, without enduring the unnecessary ones; and such women as these two (for the other who nursed her also had cancer, and concealed it) deny, by their heroism, the efficacy of the ministry of the very Man they worship.

This Catholic perversity endures even when Mr. Maynard writes about the Guild idea. I speak with no authority concerning the Guilds; but anyone acquainted with the history of the Guilds, and with the propaganda of National Guilds, can see that Mr. Maynard is advocating a revival of Catholicism (with its preference for dirt and disease) rather than a change in the economic system of the country. "The Reformation," he tells us, "was the parent of Capitalism." If we admit it (we need not), we have also to admit that Catholicism was the parent of the Reformation, and, therefore, that Capitalism is the grandchild of Catholicism. The Reformation did not create Capitalism (that existed long before the Catholic Church); it transferred the revenues and property of the Church to the Crown, and capitalised Monarchy at the expense of theocracy. Unfortunately, what Mr. Maynard calls "the Faith" endured; the Reformation was not only political, but religious. The most horrible epidemic of slaughter that perhaps the world had ever known followed, because the Protestants took the religious teaching and practice of the Catholics seriously; the heresy-hunts, the witch-findings, deluged Europe and America with blood. "The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction," said Shylock; and we owe the ferocity of the Reformation to the Catholics, to the fact that "new Presbyter is but old Priest writ large."

When, therefore, Mr. Maynard prophesies that the Guilds will not return "until the world again accepts the Faith," he is less of a friend to the Guild propaganda than he is to the Catholic Church. But the National Guild propaganda has nothing to do with Catholicism, for Catholicism claims to be universal, not national, and the Guilds it advocates are local, not national, Guilds. "Had the Faith endured in England and the Guilds with it," says Mr. Maynard, "the crafts would unquestionably have adjusted themselves to new needs, using all that invention has introduced, not for mercenary profit, but for human good." But, unquestionably the Catholic Faith of Luther adapted itself to the new needs of sincerity, and the Guilds were adapted by being abolished. They acted in restraint of trade at a time when enterprise was most necessary. That the tide has now turned, that a revival of communal property and discipline is now necessary to consolidate and make common the gains of civilisation, does not alter the fact that then the most necessary thing was to break the bonds of custom and set free the creative spirit. National Guilds belong to another sphere of thought altogether than the delusions of the "merrie England" school, and the only faith they require is faith in humanity.

A. E. R.

Reviews.

The Trial Stone. By John Gower. (Allen and Unwin. 6s. 6d. net.)

Mr. Gower has various grievances, against Government officers, against Canada, against the Staff; and he pours them out in a series of caricatures that certainly bite, but still are only caricatures. Even the English middle-class family from which his hero emerges is caricatured with such ferocity that Mr. Gower's temper becomes amusing; even the vicar, announcing the last hymn from the pulpit, is bitten in with the acid touch. "'There is a book who runs,' he barked, and gathering up his library and his watch, he swept back to his original seat." The result is that Mr. Gower keeps his reader in a state of amused protest; in Mr. Henry Arthur Jones' phrase: "We Can't Be As Bad As All That." Even "The Butterfly Corps" probably got something done properly, which Mr. Gower will remember when he simmers down; and even Canada is not all land speculation, and promotion of companies like the "City Utilitarian Mausoleums, Ltd." The book is easily read, and is very amusing, the more so because Mr. Gower is so deadly serious; he is out to kill, but he thirsts for blood like a man in a farce. He will exercise his undoubted gifts to better advantage when he has recovered from his rage with incompetence.

The Man with the Lamp. By Janet Laing. (Dent. 6s. 6d. net.)

This is not a biography of Florence Nightingale's husband or orderly, but a novel—with the war in it. It is far too long, and not too interesting; the author works with symbols instead of characters, and only hammers them out flat. There is a character in the story, reminiscent of Kipling's "The Finest Story in the World," that is worth development; but the author's patriotic determination to bring even a good German to a bad end does not permit her to do the work that she might do well. This young musical genius, cast up from a submarine, and renewing acquaintance with his tutor (unfortunately not a patriot, but a scholar), is appalled by all the stories of German atrocities that were circulated as propaganda; and be-

comes obsessed with the idea that as his nationality had branded him as an outcast among civilised people, the only thing that he could do was to go back to Germany and die. There is a somewhat imperfectly rendered account of a love affair with an English girl, also a musical genius; but he dies on British soil, shot by a jealous soldier, and illegally buried in the presence of a patriotic lady whose patriotism evidently did not extend to the maintenance of the law relating to inquiry into the cause of sudden death. Passages from "Adonais" conclude the story.

The Leopard's Leap. By "Boxwallah." (Melrose. 6s. net.)

"The Leopard's Leap" does not begin to be fiction; "Boxwallah" has not the novelist's touch. The story, or most of it, is probably true, too true; and it is written in the literal style of the affidavit. "Boxwallah" remembers that he is on his oath, and produces his shorthand notes; no other explanation that we can think of will explain the painfully exact transcript of the conversation of these people. There is not throughout the book one of those literary effects for which we have only French names; there is no bon-mot, no mot juste, no jeu d'esprit, no flair, no nuance—above all, no nuance. When they are jolly, these people say things like this: "Rangoon is like a bad habit—it is quite enjoyable as long as you stick to it, but once you get rid of it you feel what a burden you are relieved from." When they are not jolly, they say the same sort of thing, presumably to conceal their feelings. But there is a seduction in the story, told in the style of a court-martial, and two deaths by falling over a cliff told in the style of an inquest; "Boxwallah" also offers a few comments on life and love and human nature—we wish that he did not.

The Shining Road. By George A. Chamberlain. (Collins. 7s. net.)

Mr. Chamberlain has pleasantly assumed that no one wants to believe a work of fiction, and has discarded everything that savours of reality in this story. An aeroplane is real, certainly, but not when it whisks a society lady from a ball (with a marriage of convenience in prospect) to a native kraal in the heart of Africa. There, after much sparring and a few adventures, the lady is introduced to the marriage for love, which she finds agreeably to her taste. There is not much entertainment, though, in the portrayal of the means and manner in which her domestic difficulties are solved, and the performance of her toilet accomplished. One passage descriptive of an elephant hunt rises above the general level of very tame temerariousness; but the vivid picture of the black tracker spread-eagled on tip-toe, and sniffing the wind, does not survive the subsequent development. The best that can be said for the story is that, although it is sentimental slush, Mr. Chamberlain does not wallow in it; but of such material, the enduring monuments of literature are not built, and the craft of the workman is wasted on it. Central Africa is worth something better than a Mayfair heroine, with or without "crêpe de chine lovelies."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

NATIONAL PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION.

Sir,—In your issue of June 26 it is maintained by the writer of "Notes of the Week" that increased consumption of manufactured goods within the United Kingdom would overcome the difficulties arising from the struggle for foreign markets. That might be true of a self-sustaining country, capable of producing its own food and raw materials. Unfortunately the United Kingdom is not such a country.

All the efforts to increase the food supply only make it ever plainer that the people of the United Kingdom cannot grow more than half their own food. Even that half can only be grown by heavy manuring, and the manures must be imported from abroad. The only way in which the United Kingdom can pay for food and manure is by exporting manufactured goods. But manufactured goods can only be made from raw materials, and most raw materials used in the United Kingdom come from abroad. But the only way in which the United Kingdom can buy raw materials from abroad is by exporting manufactured goods.

Thus the only conceivable method by which the people of the United Kingdom can escape starvation is by enormous exports of manufactured goods. They must export manufactured goods to buy half their food, most of their manure, and most of their raw materials. It is now proposed that the people of the United Kingdom should become greater consumers of manufactured goods. To do so they must buy still further raw materials from abroad, and to enable them to do so they must export still more manufactured articles to foreign countries.

The United Kingdom must therefore do one or other of two things: it must reduce its population, or it must fight harder than ever for foreign markets.

R. B. KERR.

[The Writer of the Notes replies: The dilemma is of Mr. Kerr's own making. The alternative to reducing the population is not necessarily a harder fight than ever for foreign markets; it may be a more intelligent policy. It cannot be denied that *if* this country had a virtual monopoly of any given product in world-demand; or, equally, of any given quality of product in world-demand, the assumed "fight" for foreign markets would be unnecessary; and we can now add that if this country, by a transformation of its financial system, discovered a means of selling products much more cheaply than its competitors, the "fight" for foreign markets would really be a walk-over. I am confident that this means has been discovered.]

* * *

"THE NEW AGE."

Sir,—It is not often that one reads in your correspondence columns any expressed opinion on the part of your readers as to what they owe to your various contributors, any thanks for what the latter have done for them, any regrets when they are "remarkable by their absence." Perhaps such communications do take place, but are only permitted to be seen by the individuals concerned. And the rest of us, your readers, know nothing of them.

I am urged to write myself mainly on two accounts. The first is because Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall has finished his valuable series of articles on the Turkish question. In making his bow to all of us, I trust that his retirement is only temporary; that he has merely brought to its conclusion this particular series, and may long continue to delight us with his sketches of Oriental life and manners, and to inform us regarding the politics and the philosophy of that Near East which he knows and loves so well. I desire to tender my own thanks—poor as the offering may be—to Mr. Pickthall for his articles. It is so refreshing nowadays to find a writer in the columns of any journal—always, of course, excepting THE NEW AGE—who not only thoroughly understands his subject, but also knows how to write about it in literary English. The question with which Mr. Pickthall has dealt is one which needs illumination. It is a thorny question, and a difficult one for the average stay-at-home individual to decide clearly to his own mind. There are so many pros and cons. There are so many interests involved, so many persons with axes of their own to grind. So little reliance can be placed upon the utterances either of our Press or our politicians. Mr. Pickthall, it seems to me, has done well to insist, and to continue to insist, upon two phases of the problem: first, that it is upon Czardom, with all its subterranean machinery, its chicanery, its duplicity, its methods of terrorism, that the chief responsibility rests for the part which the Turkish Empire has been compelled to play of recent years; and, secondly, that now, and for the future, it is upon the British Empire—or its rulers and directors—that the responsibility rests and will rest for seeing some measure of justice done to Turkey; failing which, this country will be faced with the hostility, open or concealed, of the Moslem population everywhere, leading eventually, it may be, via local outbreaks in Egypt, Asia Minor, India, and other places, to a general uprising throughout the oldest Continent, with the battle-cry of "Asia for the Asiatics." There seems to

be a writing on the wall: we are not all Daniels, and may not be able to read it aright. But I think Mr. Pickthall has interpreted it wisely. It remains to be seen whether our Belshazzars will accept his rendering and act accordingly. Once again I thank your contributor for his exposition of the problem, and express my sense of indebtedness to him for much valuable information and stimulus to further thought.

The second reason for this letter is regret at the prolonged absence of "R. H. C." from the columns of THE NEW AGE, and the desire to express my hope that his reappearance will not be long delayed. He has disappeared too often during the last year. Some time ago he gave an explanation of this himself, marked by modesty on his own part and a kindly tribute to younger, or at least newer, contributors. It is doubtless a fact that the expenses of producing the journal, united with the stupidity of the great British Public, which prevents them from buying it, render it impossible to find space for every contributor whom one could wish to read every week. But occasional intermission is one thing, continued absence is another. THE NEW AGE has been in the habit of providing the best for its few readers; its readers have come to expect the best from it. It would be invidious to assign this position to any one of your contributors, even though there is such a thing as being *primus inter pares;* but it is at least a fact that from the very nature of the task allotted to him, apart from the way in which he deals with it, "R. H. C." stands alone. THE NEW AGE is doubtless perused by readers of varying tastes, who are especially attracted by particular features of the paper. But no one who has for years looked forward each week—as has the writer—to the page or so of literary (both in what one may term the active and the passive sense) criticism, with its keen insight, delicate sense of perception in the matter of style, and that I don't-know-what which has done so much to establish a sort of personal tie between this writer and his readers—no one, I say, can be other than disappointed at the prolonged absence of the well-known initials "R. H. C." from the weekly contents bill. "Please, Mr. Editor," send him back to us soon.

JOS. NELSON.

* * *

THIS AND THAT.

Sir,—The following extracts appeared side by side in last Sunday's "Observer," without, of course, the talics, which are mine:—

> (1) The following Special Police Order was issued yesterday:—"During the last two days the force has passed through a crisis from which it has emerged with credit to itself, and with an established position in the confidence of the public. That confidence was shaken by the events of August, 1918, *since when grievances have been rectified, and measures have been taken by the Government to ensure that the conditions of pay, of pensions, of redress of grievances, and of the welfare of all ranks shall be in every way commensurate to the importance and responsibilities of the service.*"
>
> (2) Speaking to a Press representative yesterday, Sir Nevil Macready said the whole position was very satisfactory, and the tone of the men who had remained loyal was excellent. He thought the strike was ending. On no account would any man who had absented himself from duty be reinstated. Recruits were simply tumbling over each other to get into the force. Sixty men were sworn in yesterday morning, and would go on duty, while seven hundred others were waiting to be sworn.
>
> Upwards of 400 Metropolitan Police pensioners have applied to be reinstated in their old jobs in the police force. *The reason given is that they have difficulties in making both ends meet on their pensions.* The applications have been forwarded to the Commissioner of Police through the hon. secretary of the Retired Police Officers' Association *which has been agitating for an increase of the pre-war pensions.*

T. C.

* * *

NO GENERAL WILL.

Sir,—I am sorry to encroach upon your space, but, if Mr. Penty misunderstands me, where can I hope for a good reader? Mr. Penty said (NEW AGE, July 24): "Mr. de Maeztu 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." Not at all, precisely because I do not believe in any grouping of individual wills. Let us make things clear. Mr. Penty and myself are united in believing that Guilds are good. We are united in a thing, the Guilds, which happens to be an ideal, as we might have been united in a shop owned by both. But no "group-will" arises from our union. Mr. Penty remains Mr. Penty and I myself, and from the fact that we love some things in common we are good friends.

Bilbao, Spain. RAMIRO DE MAEZTU.

* * *

A SYMPOSIUM.

Sir,—In his examination of the introduction to my book, "A. E. R." makes a wrong observation which I trust he will allow me to correct. His words are, "There is no guarantee that the original sense of a word is its truth." He is arguing that it is not necessary to restore original truth to words, seeing that the present-day sense that is in them may be trusted to purge away their transgressions. But what does "A. E. R." mean by the "sense of a word"? There is no such thing. There is the sense in which a word is used, which is quite a different affair. This sense depends, as "A. E. R." suggests it does in the case of Mr. Wilson and his democracy, on certain things belonging to it, such as the set of immediate circumstances, a particular state of mind, the reference, and so on. But because a word is used in a particular sense it does not prove it is used in a true sense. It only proves that it is used in the particular sense that Mr. Wilson wants democracy to be used. According to "A. E. R.," this sense is accommodation, seeing that the democratic alliance is to accommodate Japan, "which has an Imperial Constitution deliberately modelled on that of the German Empire," and shows no intention of having any other.

Sense, I would say, is extremely sensitive to immediate belongings. For this reason it sets up a kind of ambiguity which fertilises the field of conjecture and enriches confusion, but brings us no nearer to the birthplace of words. Essential words were, I maintain, born in truth. They came originally in response to the needs of experience. "But," "A. E. R." inquires, "what is truth?" The answer is implicit in my introduction. Truth is unchangeableness. Experiences, like laws and principles that do not change, are, I contend, true experiences. When the first man held up a finger in response to need, it was true at that moment that he held up a finger. What was true at that moment was true for all time. It was in those early days that words found no difficulty in being born directly of such experiences. But in later days, Greek, Elizabethan, and especially to-day, words betray a disastrous disinclination to be born at all. They prefer to be adapted. There would be no great harm in this if men only possessed the power rightly to adapt them to the growing needs of experience. Even then it might puzzle them to adapt the word God to the new experiences of God—Mr. H. G. Wells' experience, for instance. Otherwise first-born words should have their birthright restored to them. Natural aristocrat, for instance, should be restored to "gentleman." I think this was the birthright conferred upon it in the Garden of Eden, the noble qualities of which are sung by Psalm xv. Nowadays, as we know, the word "gentleman" is bestowed upon a person who wears a top-hat and sings "Rool Breetan-yuh" on the slightest provocation. Many worthy persons who use the word in this sense maintain they are justified out of its present-day belongings in doing so. Do they despise their own birthright in the same manner?

HUNTLY CARTER.

* * *

MUSIC.

Sir,—Mr. Atheling does not quite explain his strange paragraph on the concert he mentions. I wish your readers to know that I did *not* play at that concert (as he said), also that I am "*not* a possible pianist," but a very fine one! Also, that I have no hand in concerts where my work is heard, so I cannot guarantee any special kind of performance. If *I* give the concert, that is another matter. Either Mr. Atheling did not go to the concert he wrote about, or he is a very poor authority on any kind of music. JOSEF HOLBROOKE.

Pastiche.

THE REGIONAL.

VI.

"Willy" is a second-rate writer who almost produces the impression that he could do the real thing if he tried. He has never written anything that the "Smart Set" would have refused on grounds other than a well-grounded terror of the American postal authorities; that is his lower limit. Or to put it differently, he has long flourished the style which has more recently been exploited by Kahler, Mencken, "Hatteras," and other "Smart Set" celebrities; also George Cole and the American baseball reporters. In Willy there is the vigour of origin and a greater breadth of reference. The work is the work of a man who turns out three volumes a year besides his heterogeneous journalism; of a man bored with his stuff; working in season and out, and with no illusions; placing himself as "of no great talent, but of large circulation."

"I sketched a heroine . . . Trouvaille, only remains to invent two or three principal characters (besides, what does it matter? what do they matter? principal characters, any old thing will do) and a plot (also of no importance, one imagines any old thing). The main cheese is the accessories, the characters resolutely episodic." This followed by untranslatable argot implying that author's knowledge of humanity extends from the French equivalent of Jack Johnson's white friends and the French equivalents of Gosse and Pemberton Billing. The average novel of Willy is, in fact, a comment on certain phases of modern life, carelessly fabricated by an intelligent man of very considerable culture; thrown on to paper in a mixture of slang and mixed erudition, a baroque style full of puns, bon mots, bad mots, consonantal syzogies, quirks, twists, squeaks, etc., but amusing and supported by a real eye and a weariness with French pretentiousness, French fuss, French and Scandinavian symbolism, etc. All of which is very refreshing. Put it that no cheap effect is left out; that Willy tired is very tired indeed; that Colette did no good to his style; that he is better in dealing with Maugis and his generation than in the shorter analysis of the utterly rotten members of Colette's generation. Take it that no work of Willy's will be published in English in our time. It is still the work of a moralist expressing a very real hatred of meanness and a boredom with stupidities, in perhaps the only readable prose that will help the foreigner to converse in the French of our generation.

Willy would be a blessing if only for his *sans gene* in the presence of the French fuss over the classic French language. You will still find this going on. Here in Toulouse I have found a young man of the province who lives on his income (*de ses rentes*) and who complains that the people in Paris, where his four-act play in verse has been accepted, but not produced, do not write French.

De Gourmont is more than right in pointing out the extent to which unexpected phrases upset the French reader. If full attention were paid to the number of things which a well-schooled French person of no more than average intelligence will tell you "cannot be done" in French, the language would soon be as dead as Latin, as incapable of holding new content. English will presumably outlast it, simply because of its greater freedom, despite the laziness of English writers and their neglect of the technical resources of English.

Other points in Willy's favour are his psychology and his ability to present the incidental personage, completely and unforgetably. The colonel who tells us that in the cavalry, young man, in the cavalry, horses that turn are called turners, is done, toasted, and roasted with hyper-Dickensian finish, and Willy is without Dickensian gush.

Favourite plot, given with various characters, is that of unfortunate male saved by bosom friend from liaison wherein female of superabundant temperament or other exigeancy is conducting main male character to *gâtisme définitif*. Plot being excellent for author's purpose, providing ample opportunity for analysis of different nuances of physical equation, and for comment on all things under heaven. Author less amusing in analysis of *souteneur*, or in more elaborate warnings against gambling touts. Maugis and Smiley remain his best "creations," his Sherlocks, his serviceable mechanisms.

Note that this charivari does not go on, like W. W. Jacobs' larks, in a milieu unconscious of literature and of all the elements of "our" life; neither does the other ever try to pass off his work as the "real thing." This is his distinction, and by this constant and implied deference to fine literature, to great art, Willy lifts himself above every English second-rate writer of our time. There is Rabelaism flaying of every pomposity; there is never one instant's unconscionness of the place of masterwork in ratio to false literature. That is to say, Willy is an excellent guide-book to life, to the French language, and never would the reading of him, as would the reading of our elder British pseudo-literati, lead merely to bad taste. There comes the saving gleam of intelligence even amid his worst rubbish; and this almightily distinguishes him from the horde of filibusters whose fundamental stupidity is always venomously latent, Damocleanly imminent even in their "highest" achievement; their most careful paragraphs conveying an almost undetectable and often unindicatable monoxide of ennui.

Maurice Donnay's well-known "Education de Prince" is built on a couple of *bon mots*, "untranslatable," and one amusing paragraph. I am not joking; I remember the exposition of '89, for I had at that time a mistress who "deceived" me successively with an ass-driver from the streets of Cairo, an actor from the Annamite Theatre, an Indian from Buffalo Bill's, a Javanese danseuse, a Morocco yellow boy, a Spanish girl, etc. . . .

"And you suffered. . . ."

"Not at all . . . charming exposition . . . she had such faculties of assimilation . . . I found a new woman beside me . . . after each of her exotic encounters."

However, it requires 76 pages, double column, to convey this bit of psychology to the reader. One is lucky to find so much, and a like quantity cannot be guaranteed in each humorous volume.

The translated volumes run to Conan Doyle, Wells, Hitchens, Tolstoi, Sienkiewicz. The passionels are a sort of glorified Gertie-de-S. Wentworth-Jamesism, with additional variants boring in increase because one has already undergone the identical boredoms in English.

Once in the dead days I got through a Lavedan, was even amused; I was very new to French humour. Lavedan has since been elected to the Academy. His collected feuilletons are as vacuous as Gide's gathered essays.

If these notes are to save the next pilgrim from wandering in the same barren places where I have yawned, let him try *ut oute dictum*. "Famille Cardinal," "Transatlantiques," if he is feeling more serious "Poil de Carotte," and Willy, more or less at random, knowing that he may strike a poor number. "Roman d'un jeune homme beau" is perhaps the best-built of those I have read. Bel Ami in weaker version. "Tournée du petit duc"; "Maitresse des Esthetes"; "Retour d'Age" have their moments. Even at his weakest he has moments.

EZRA POUND.

On high reconstruction by ferment
The Professor he preached us a serment;
He has an obsession
Of cure by procession;
May we shortly attend his interment.

P. T. K.

Published by the Proprietors, THE NEW AGE (A. R. ORAGE), 38, Cursitor Street, E.C.4, and printed for them by BONNER & Co., The Chancery Lane Press, 1, 2, and 3, Rolls Passage, E.C.4.