NOTES OF THE WEEK

We have not had long to wait for the fulfilment of our forecast that the price of necessities, that is to say, of articles entering into the common cost of living, would continue to rise. In spite of the retention of the subsidy of sixty millions annually, bread has now gone up a halfpenny a loaf; and the price of milk, it is announced, will be three times this winter what it was during the winter of 1913-14. But neither with these items, nor with these particular increases, will the upward tendency of prices cease; for the same causes that have produced these effects are still in operation, nor has any means been officially or popularly discovered for counteracting them; while, at the same time, so blinded by greed or ignorance or lust of power are our governing classes that actually the existing causes of high prices are being every day reinforced. The question of prices, however, cannot be regarded as an academic problem, or even as a problem susceptible of clever political management. It is the most formidable force for disorder that civilisation can encounter. Prices and the cost of living have only to rise a little higher to submerge the existing rates of wages and therewith to involve the country in a fresh series of wage-demands. It might be supposed that with this economic Attila at our gates, our political leaders, Labour Members and men in authority generally, would be thinking of nothing else than how to meet it. Any effective means of safety, moreover, such as we claim to possess, would at least, it might be supposed, be sought out and considered. That, however, is not our experience; and in the meanwhile we are forced to contemplate a procession of proposals, emanating from our official and party guides, which reveal either a complete ignorance of the nature of the problem of price or such a superficial treatment of it that silence would be less of a mockery. As an example, let us take the recommendations of Mr. Clynes as set out in the "Daily News" of Friday. Mr. Clynes, it is commonly supposed, is a man of good-will and a man of experience; he is said to be, moreover, one of the coming statesmen of the Labour Party; a man, therefore, from whom the country and the working classes in particular have the right to expect a serious and a well-considered programme. But what advice has he to enable us to meet a winter of unprecedented menace? To put the crucial question in its simplest form, what is his remedy for high prices? Briefly his recommendations are as follows: drastic reductions in Army, Navy, and Air expenditure; a less costly Government policy in general; an Irish settlement; the demobilisation of Government staffs; a Capital Levy; and the resumption of Parliament at the beginning instead of at the end of October. Now even supposing that these suggestions were as practicable as Mr. Clynes knows they are not, would any or all of them have the effect of bringing down the prices of necessities? Is there one, in fact, that is directed to the true cause of high prices? It will be seen, on examination, that the assumption underlying Mr. Clynes’ programme is that Government expenditure is the main if not the sole cause of high prices; and his conclusion logically follows from it that all we have to do is to control Government expenditure in order to repair our position. But the fact is that not only is not Government expenditure in itself the sole or the main cause of high prices, but, admirable in the abstract, the “drastic reductions” in the staffing and expenditure of the Government which Mr. Clynes calls for would and will infallibly, in the present circumstances, have the effect of adding to the existing difficulties. What is to become of the tens of thousands of Government servants whom Mr. Clynes would now ruthlessly have dismissed, “their services being no longer required”? What orders for work, moreover, are to take the place of the Government orders which Mr. Clynes now proposes to suspend? If, indeed, there were an expanding and insatiable demand in private industry for the services of the men and women now in Government offices; or if, again, our factories could be kept running on the expanding purchasing-power of an increasing demand, then something might come of Mr. Clynes’ proposal to clear out the Government staffs and shut down Government orders. But the facts, as everybody ought to know, are the very opposite. There is a great deal of unemployment already; and the “orders for goods” are enormously short of our ability to produce.
Mr. Clynes' proposals would result, it is clear, in an aggravation of the evils against which they are presumably designed as a remedy: they would, in a word, intensify unemployment and reduce the effective demand for production. So much for the recipe of our Labour "statesman."

When the "Spectator" describes a letter written by a Labour leader as "noble," we may be sure that it is dirty work in the belfry; and an examination of the letter addressed by Mr. Brownlie, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the A.S.E., to Mr. Bowerman, the Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress, amply confirms the suspicion. No "ordinary courage," says the "Times," was required to write the letter; and no "ordinary courage," we may add, is required to enable Mr. Brownlie to continue to draw his salary as an official of Labour. Insolence corresponding to his ignorance will certainly be necessary to persuade Mr. Brownlie that he is entitled to be regarded as a Labour leader while discharging the function of a propagandist of the Federation of British Industries. For his letter is, in truth, nothing more than a servile echo of the demand, everywhere being propagated in capitalist circles, for increased production. The mere raising of nominal wages, he correctly states, is no solution of the difficulty in which we find ourselves. Something more is necessary to alleviate the situation; something, he says, of which the condition precedent is accurate and reliable information. In a word, what is necessary is just—increased production! What a happy coincidence it is, to be sure, that men like Mr. Clynes and Mr. Brownlie should quite independently arrive at conclusions identical with those of the capitalist classes. How straight it points to an O.B.E. for each of our Labour statesmen. Just when Capitalism is concerned to reduce State expenditure, Mr. Clynes discovers, in the very nick of time, that State officials "must go"—to swell the ranks of the competitive private employment; and just when Capitalism has decided that more production is necessary in the interest of more profit, Mr. Brownlie, meditating these "rich," whose numbers have prodigiously increased in consequence of increased expenditure, is going to yield the increased production? Upon whom, in actual fact, will the burden of the work fall? We naturally expect Mr. Brownlie to continue to draw his salary as an official of Labour. Insolence corresponding to his ignorance will certainly be necessary to persuade Mr. Brownlie that he is entitled to be regarded as a Labour leader while discharging the function of a propagandist of the Federation of British Industries.

These are only elementary questions and answers, being such as we might expect Mr. Brownlie to understand. There are others, however, connected with the same subject of which he would require the disinterested brain of a schoolboy to grasp; and we naturally expect him to deal with them in his capacity as a Labour leader and as a statesman.***

Capitalism. Let us next ask what it is that they are going to produce in greater abundance: which are the commodities whose production is to be increased? For, as even the "Daily Herald" has learned to say (though its memory is treacherous): "the whole point, after all, is what sort of production" is to be increased. Is it to be in houses and furniture, in clothing and in food; that is to say, in the prime necessities of life? Or is it to be in goods which are either luxuries or only means to further production? The answer, we suggest, is that it will quite certainly be in the latter— in motor-cars and machinery; and for the simple reason that the purchasing power of the working classes, after the cost of living has been met, does not provide an economic demand for the proposed increased production. Production, it is clear, is useless without a market; and a market, it is equally clear, cannot exist without purchasing power. Assuming, therefore, what is actually the case, that the purchasing power of the working classes is exhausted when they have bought their necessities of life, the only remaining market for production lies in the surplus wealth of the rich. It follows inevitably that increased production must cater for the rich; in other words, must apply in the main to articles outside the purchasing power of the poor. On another occasion we shall show that this has the further consequence of raising still higher the cost of living.
The acracy with which Mr. Bowerman replied to Mr. Brownlie's appeal, however, is a proof that he, too, had recognised "his master's voice." Under ordinary circumstances, when, that is to say, an appeal is made to the public opinion by the Trade Union Congress on behalf of Labour and not of Capital, Mr. Bowerman, like most of the other Labour leaders, knows how to dilly and dally as well as the Government officials of the comic Press. Nobody can be more circumspect than Mr. Bowerman when the invitation to the Parliamentary Committee is initiated from some accredited Labour source; but when it can be surmised that the literature of National Guilds, to which he is so much as called us "noble." Via America and Germany (in which latter country, we learn, National Guilds are also being practically discussed), it is barely possible that the ideas may eventually reach our own Labour leaders; by which time, however, the clock of the world will indicate that the hour is too late for what before would have been most opportune. The short steps to National Guilds which would have been easy ten or even five years ago are, we believe, no longer short enough. Other and much shorter steps are necessary; and we, unfortunately, know what they are. Would Mr. Bowerman, however, be as punctual in reply to our letter of appeal for a better distribution as he has been to lap up the suggestion for increased production? He may even allow him to reply to such impudence? We have seen no evidence yet that English Labour leaders desire to solve any question save that of standing well in with their jobs and jobbers.

One resolution only at the forthcoming Trade Union Congress can have any interest for us—or anybody else: the resolution set down to be moved by the Locomotive Engineers. It instructs the Executive (our punctual friend, Mr. Bowerman, to wit) "to draft a practical and effective policy for the control of industry whereby the Trade Union movement can secure for democracy complete emancipation from wage-slavery."

This proposed resolution interests us for the personal reason that we have an answer to it. There is, we believe, a means by which, without revolution, but also without delay, the Trade Union movement can be put in the way of securing for democracy complete emancipation from wage-slavery. It is our misfortune that we should be able to think no otherwise: the "Spectator" will never call us noble.

On another page will be found reprinted the explanation recently circulated by the "Railwaymen" in America of what is known as the Plumb scheme for the future control and management of the American railways. It will be seen, without our help, that the proposals bear a striking resemblance to the earlier proposals of National Guildsmen; and that, in fact, they are everywhere interpreted in America as owing their origin to the doctrines of this journal. When we add that the literature of National Guilds has been before American Labour only for some two or three years, that the present Plumb scheme was only drafted, after consultation with English Guildsmen, a few months ago, and that it has already been endorsed by all the American Railwaymen's Unions and presented to Congress as their official programme, it may be concluded what we are likely to think of the contrast between the intelligence of American and the intelligence of English Labour leaders. It appears to be the old, old story, and as true of English Labour leaders as of the English governing classes. Whatever is English is wrong—in England; and of course a favourable or, indeed, any kind of reception, abroad. The National Guilds proposals have now been offered—freely and at our own expense!—to English Labour leaders during the last ten years; and during all that period not a single Labour leader, in Parliament or out of it, has made any personal knowledge so much as called us "noble."
saving the country the coming winter of misery—might not our Labour leaders decline in importance with the rise of public prosperity? Would Mr. Brownlie be "noble" or Mr. Clynes saving the country the coming winter of misery might the nation be saved in spite of them?

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.] One of the most difficult propositions to understand is that you can sell below cost and still make a profit. It becomes less difficult, however, if it is approached the right way; for, in fact, on examination of the case, we find illustrations of the proposition at every turn. We no longer charge the cost of elementary education, for example, on its immediate recipients; in other words, we sell education not merely at a price below cost, but at no price whatever. And we do this in the belief that the provision of free education is a good investment; and that the price below cost at which we sell it will be more than compensated in the superior skill of an educated proletariat. To "free" education, we can add many other so-called public services which are distributed either below cost or freely provided. These also are examples of investment arising from the provision of services without money and without price. Note, however, that the cost is defrayed, be the price something or nothing. "Free" public services are not given by the persons who render them: their costs are, in fact, fully met. It is only the price charged goes to the consumer that is in question; and it clearly appears, in the cases cited, that the consumer may be supplied with goods and services at less than cost price, to the profit of the community at large.

Let us take another, and, this time, an imaginary case. Suppose of two men, A and B, A has a machine by means of which, with the aid of coal, he could produce commodities sufficient for himself and B, and, perhaps, for others as well. And suppose that B is in a position to supply coal. B, it is clear, can provide the coal for A on several different sets of terms. He can (a) advance it to A in exchange for an I O U promising B a defined share in the output of the machine; (b) he can take payment in two forms, as a sum on account plus a share in the product; (c) he can demand the full price of his coal—that is, a price plus a promise from A to sell to B the machine-made goods at a price lower than their cost. Operation (c) is the common custom of commerce of demanding for commodities their cost-price—with additions! Operation (d) amounts to selling the coal at less than cost in the expectation of recompense by a share in the product. Operation (c) amounts to B giving A credit for the coal. Operation (b) amounts to selling the coal at less than cost in the expectation of recompense by a share in the product. Operation (d) amounts to selling at less than cost in return for a promise on the part of A also to sell at less than cost. In all save one of these operations, the same essential fact is to be observed, namely, that the coal changes hands at an immediate price less than cost, and it is assumed, in each of these operations, that more will ultimately be gained by selling below cost than by demanding compensations by not selling at all.

We are not proposing that everything should be sold below cost to everybody. We are simply saying that the operation is possible, and may, in some cases, be highly desirable. We say further that, in many cases, selling below cost would actually pay the community. Let us consider the theoretical possibility that there were the case that hundreds of our manufacturers, each with an elaborate plant at his disposal, and a market awaiting his products, could not get on with his work owing to the high price of coal. It is conceivable, under these circumstances, that a wise public policy would provide these manufacturers with coal below cost if not for nothing. Certainly, if the manufacturers had no "money" in hand and no means of raising it, to set the going by providing them with cheap or free coal would be a commercially profitable undertaking. The miners would obtain their costs, but these costs would not be defrayed out of the price of coal, but out of commodities in general. The low price of coal would be reflected in the lower price of other commodities. We hasten to say that the foregoing illustration is unreal; and that it does not represent our view of what should be done. Coal, like every other raw material, must be sold to the manufacturer at cost price, if only as a safeguard against his use of it for his own personal profit. But the operation of selling below cost is clearly seen to be possible; and, in the case of the ultimate, if not of the intermediate, consumer, the policy is wise, and, indeed, necessary.

Price, we repeat, is simply a means of distribution. Suppose you have an entertainment-hall, whose seating accommodation is a thousand; but suppose you know that, on a particular occasion, ten thousand people will wish to get into it. You can limit the company to the accommodation in several ways: by issuing only a thousand tickets (free or not, as you please); or by putting up the price of the seats beyond the reach of nine thousand of the prospective applicants. You have, in the second case, accomplished your distribution of seats by means of price. Against this method, however, there is much to be said. In the first place, you have been tempted to make a profit out of the mere fact that ten thousand people want what is only enough for one thousand people. And, secondly, you have made admission to your hall depend, not on the needs of the applicants, nor upon their deserts, but merely upon their ability to find the money. This, therefore, is the method of distribution adopted by the price-fixers of modern society. They raise prices for the sole purpose of excluding the many from possible purchase. By controlling price-fixing they do, in fact, determine the distribution of commodities and choose who shall have or not have.

But if Price can be employed to distribute goods cheaply among the rich, it can equally well be employed to distribute goods cheaply among the poor. If Price can be raised as a class-barrier to divide the goods of the community into two unequal halves—one and the greater half going to the rich, the other and the lesser half going to the poor—it can be reduced to make the distribution of goods equitable over the whole community. Whoever fixes prices determines the lines of the distribution; and if, as we have seen, high prices tend to distribute all the goods to the rich, then low prices would tend to distribute goods equitably. Observe that word, equitably. High prices rob the poor of their fair share of the communal production; but low prices do not rob the rich. The rich are not prevented from buying because prices are low; but the poor are prevented from buying when prices are high. The welfare of the poor is thus seen once more to be not at the cost of the rich; it is only at the cost of the injustice of the rich.

Clearly, if Price-fixing has this power over distribution that whoever controls Prices controls society, it is important to know, in the first place, who it is that fixes prices to-day; and, in the second place, who ought to fix prices; and, in the third place, how we ought to proceed to displace the present authority, and to set up the right authority. As we have said before, it is Distribution rather than Production that is defective in modern society; and it is, therefore, with Distribution that we must deal primarily. And if we have now seen that Price is the means of distribution, we must be prepared to deal with Price as a means to better distribution.

NATIONAL GUILDSMEN.
Letters from Russia
By P. D. Ouspensky

Ekaterinodar, July 25, 1919.

It is now two years since I last saw The New Age, and I do not know what is being said and thought and written in England and what you know. I can only guess. During this period we here have lived through so many marvels that I honestly pity everybody who has not been here, everybody who is living in the old way, everybody who is ignorant of what we now know. You do not even know the significance of the words, "living in the old way." You have not the necessary perspective; you cannot get away from yourselves and look at yourselves from another point of view. But we have done so long ago. To understand what "living in the old way" means, you would need to be here, and to hear people saying, and yourself, too, from time to time, "Shall we ever live again in the old way? . . ." For you this phrase is written in a quite unintelligible language—do not try to understand it! You will surely begin to think that it is something to do with the re-establishment of the old régime or the oppression of the working classes, and so on. But in actual fact it means something very simple. It means, for example: When shall we be able to buy shoe-leather again, or shaving-soap, or a box of matches?

But, no, it is no use. I feel sure you will not understand me.

You are used to consider questions on a much wider basis; the question of the box of matches will seem to you excessively trivial and uninteresting. I see perfectly clearly that we have lost utterly and for ever the ability to understand one another.

A lady of my acquaintance, whose husband has been abroad all this time, while she has been here with her little son, said to me recently: "I am frightened of the moment when my husband and I will meet again. He won't understand. Perhaps he will ask me why Alex hasn't been learning English; and I—I shall not know what to say. Indeed, we shall both of us be silent the whole time. Every trifle will create a gulf between us. In the old days we understood one another very well. But now we shall be distant from each other, strangers. . . ."

I understood. We know too much to be able to speak to you on equal terms. We know the true relation of history and words to facts. We know what such words as "civilisation" and "culture" mean; we know what "revolution" means, and "a Socialist State," and "winter," and "bread," and "stove," and "soap," and many, many more of the same kind. You have no sort of idea of them.

We know that "war," and "politics," and "economic life"—in a word, all those things about which one reads in the papers, and in which those big two-dimensional creatures called Nations and States live and move and have their being—are contrary to what people intend to bring about and striving for. And, on the other hand, their opponents—not the Bolsheviks, but those others who favour the idea of a federation of separate and independent States, instead of a single Russia—are destroying every chance of such a division, and are strengthening the idea of unity.

This side of our own life is very curious and characteristic from the point of view of this same Law. The idea of self-governing units is in itself very alluring. The evils of centralisation have long been demonstrated. But none of the people in the Territories is made difficult, as is likewise the taking in of out of articles, and then the local politicians start making speeches about the wicked schemes and general depravity of the neighboring State, about the necessity of getting rid of its evil influence upon local conditions, etc., etc. And at once the dull rattling of weapons begins in one direction or the other.

The Russia of to-day presents an interesting picture. To travel from Mineralny Vody to Rostov and thence to Novorossisk, you pass through four States, each with different laws, different prices, different sorts of police, united only by a single common quality, namely, that without bribes (and such enormous bribes as were never even dreamed of in the old Russia) you cannot go far. For example, for a railway-ticket that costs 100 roubles, you have to pay a bribe of 200 or 300, or even 500 roubles. Of course, this is not the case always or everywhere; but, wherever there are any prohibitions, bribes are essential. If you want something more important than a railway-ticket, you have to pay correspondingly more. Everybody knows about it. Everybody talks about it. And everybody accepts it as permissible and inevitable. But it is understood that it is a point of contact between historical events and the life of individual men and women.

If you want to see what Russia now is really like, try to imagine the following as happening in England, then you will see how much more interesting and varied our life is than yours.

The scene is Rostov station about a month ago. The night train for Ekaterinodar is about to leave. There are no tickets to be had. This means that you must pay a porter 140 or more roubles for a third-class ticket costing 40 roubles. For this you get a ticket for a struggling forces; and through this fight we are somehow able to steer a course.

If we begin, in what is left of Russia to-day, to examine this life of the great forces, we observe primarily that everything in it acts according to one general rule, which I may call the Law of Opposite Aims and Results. In other words, everything leads to results that are contrary to what people intend to bring about and towards which they strive.

The people who started the war with Germany and pointed out the necessity of destroying Germany and militarism, and so on, did not in the least intend to overthrow the monarchy in Russia and create the Revolution. And the dream of those who were gathering results very little resembling what they are striving for. And, on the other hand, their opponents—not the Bolsheviks, but those others who favour the idea of a federation of separate and independent States, instead of a single Russia—are destroying every chance of such a division, and are strengthening the idea of unity.
numbered seat. But when the passengers get into the train it appears that for every seat four tickets have been sold. Then even we begin to be irritated. An official appears, something like an old-time gendarme, and invites anyone who wishes it to remain behind and make a complaint. When he is given the number of the porters who sold the tickets, and is told to fetch the stationmaster and the booking-clerk, he merely smiles at the naivety of the questions, and says that these gentlemen are busy.

And now if we turn to the life of individuals and see how it develops "points of contact" with history, we observe that the pre-eminent subject of conversation is the strangeness of our all being alive (not all, of course, but who survive), and the reflection that we may all perhaps be alive for a little time longer. The next favourite topic is the high price of everything, generally how much such and such a thing costs.

The prices of all products and necessaries have risen by 20, 50, 100, or 600 times. Workmen's wages have risen 20, 50, or even 100 times. But the salary of an ordinary "brain-worker"—a teacher, journalist or doctor—has risen in the best cases by no more than £10; ordinary "brain-workers"—a teacher, journalist or masses—rush to take part in the general looting, the conditions. And this is the most occult aspect of the favourite topic is the high price of everything, generally considered the cheapest place in Russia to-day, the actually decreased. If you earn make a complaint. When he is given the number of these prices. With some people they create panic, with others complete prostration, with others, again, a kind of thirst for profits, because never in any place were these gentlemen are busy.

In general, to realise these prices, you must imagine that the psychological side of the whole question. I will answer for myself: I personally am still alive only because my boots and my trousers and other articles of clothing—all "old campaigners"—are still holding together. When they end their existence, I shall evidently end mine.

You will ask how it is possible to live under such conditions. And this is the most occult aspect of the lives.

When two or more political aims run counter to one another, said Mr. Verdad, speaking as an Englishman, recently treated of the conflicting desires of England, Ireland, and "Ulster" as they stand in this year of general rearrangement. May I say something on the subject from an Irish view-point?

While admitting the difficulty of naming the parties and though it be harping on an old string, one must protest against the use of the term "Ulster" without inverted commas. Ulster is an Irish province, more Irish than Alsace or Lorraine is French; almost half its people, and these the older or what may be called the basic portion of its population, are at one politically with the rest of Ireland. One of the most Gaelic parts of the country is the Ulster county Donegal. Ireland has swallowed and absorbed hundreds of thousands of planters. Unless THE NEW AGE wishes to help to prolong the State-aided North-Eastern indigestion, and to spread the Carsonian propaganda that seeks to create a recognised "small nationality," let it not refer to the followers of Sir Edward Carson by the name of this province.

Ah, but I forgot! The Bolsheviks, I said. I quite forgot that you do not know what this word means. Even if you have seen Bolsheviks in England, believe me, they are not the real thing. In my next letter I hope to tell you what Bolsheviks are.

(Translated by C. E. BECHOFER.)

England and the Irish

Under the significant heading "Foreign Affairs," Mr. S. Verdad, speaking as an Englishman, recently treated of the conflicting desires of England, Ireland, and "Ulster" as they stand in this year of general rearrangement. May I say something on the subject from an Irish view-point?

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When two or more political aims run counter to one another, said Mr. Verdad, as long as they are held to be vital a war must result, or at least one party must submit to force. He then went on to the problem, and summed it up thus:—"Ireland desires independence, absolutely complete independence; Ulster desires continued union with this country as a means to keeping the rest of Ireland in dependence, or, at any rate, as a means to preserving Ulster's own independence of the rest of Ireland; finally, England desires insular security, in other words, the safety of Great Britain against attack of any kind (military, naval, economic, or what not) via Ireland." The question is whether these desires are or can be made compatible with each other. To the first part his answer was in the negative; with regard to the second, he said: "The first condition of a solution is that the three parties shall desire, not only their particular aims, but the reconciliation of their aims. The only party which desires reconciliation is England; accordingly the problem is at present insoluble—Ireland must submit to force.

Even if it be granted that Ireland and the Ulster party are quite callous as to the effect of their aims on others, and England is the only one desiring reconciliation according to Mr. Verdad himself, the English desire is a pious abstract wish or hope. "The political question at issue is thus not the moral issue, but the practical issue whether, in fact, Ireland's demand for independence is reconcilable, or can be modified by action on either side to become reconcilable, with the satisfaction of the demands of both Ulster and England." (The italics in the second and third instances are mine.) And, again:—"Give us security, or rather, do not actually diminish our security—and English
opinion is not only willing, but anxious, to see Ireland free.

England wants us to reconcile our demand with that of England and even with that of "Ulster." Is it not true to say that the Irish desire that the aims of England and even with that of "Ulster." Is it not, it is a preposterous demand. The term "insular security" is a euphemism; it does not mean that Great Britain shall be "a right little, tight little island"; it means that nothing preventible is to be tolerated which may in any possibility lessen or detract from Great Britain's being the rightest and tightest of all islands big or little. The English are not only willing, but anxious, and their wishes have already taken practical form, to see every people free and prosperous except where there is a possibility of interference with themselves. In England as in Prussia (fortunately, and in a great measure due to England, the past tense can be used) "might is right" with these differences. German thinkers and a large number of the German people held it to be a general political principle, while in England it is merely held that their own principle, while in England it is merely held that their own "colonists" are to be considered paramount, falls to the ground.

The people of England seem quite satisfied that their insistence on insular security is a minor demand. It is not; it is a preposterous demand. The term "insular security" is a euphemism; it does not mean that nothing preventible is to be tolerated which may in any possibility lessen or detract from Great Britain's being the rightest and tightest of all islands big or little. The English are not only willing, but anxious, and their wishes have already taken practical form, to see every people free and prosperous except where there is a possibility of interference with themselves. In England as in Prussia (fortunately, and in a great measure due to England, the past tense can be used) "might is right" with these differences. German thinkers and a large number of the German people held it to be a general political principle, while in England it is merely held that their own "colonists" are to be considered paramount, falls to the ground.

Here comes a 'bus; it is stopping
And is now being bombardied by people.
The would-be passengers are the attackers;
The people on the 'bus are the conductor, the defenders.
Old ladies fight as hard and even harder than men,
And everyone is pushing and fighting as usual.
At last a treaty is made and the 'bus proceeds... look at that small car; it is also fighting, fighting its way through the traffic.
What a brave little thing it is!
Ah! It has won
And is racing away, leaving its enemies far behind...
What a dreadful noise! A mixture of shouts, car-horns, and a sort of mumbling which never stops.
Why don't people get run over more than they do? A strange noise approaches; what is it?
It is also fighting, fighting its way through the traffic.
What a brave little thing it is!
A. HATHAWAY (aged 17).

I make my way along the shiny pavements,
Glistening wet with the rain that only London knows.
I hear no sound save the sound of the traffic passing,
And the timeless cry of the lingering paper-boy.
The shop-windows are glazed with the freezing breath of the night.
I hear no sound save the sound of the traffic passing,
And the timeless cry of the lingering paper-boy.

A. HATHAWAY (aged 17).

For Hathaway this was probably a most valuable exercise in composition. His writing invariably suffered from windiness. Here, for instance, are his thoughts on "The Psychological Atmosphere of Rooms," a subject which was treated much more successfully by Wilkinson in a discursive and concrete manner.

Everything, or rather everything that comes into contact with human beings, has a kind of ethical
atmosphere surrounding it that seems to strike us at once upon our first contact with it. Such is the case with rooms.

On entering a deserted hall where a large dinner has just been in progress and all upon the table is still in the wildest disorder, and the chairs, turned towards each other in rows and threes, seem still to bear the people joined in conversation, we enter not into the room, but into the spirits, as it were, of the departed guests. A sad atmosphere of departed gaiety seems to bear down upon us in overwhelming force, leaving behind an impression we have never felt before, something utterly intangible. . . .

Another typical example of his abstract wanderings can be found in his account of the housemaid, Emma, quoted in a previous chapter.

To what extent the practice of writing free verse would have affected his prose I cannot say, since the lines on London Streets were written only a week before he left the form; but it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that it would have a healthy restraining influence on any young writer with a tendency to flatulence. And, if the crude metaphor may be pursued, it would seem, like some panacea, to have an equally salutary effect on verbal anaemia, as in Lamb’s case.

The third and last experiment, made three months later, produced several promising results. Here is a first attempt by More O‘Ferrall (aged 13), which shows a fair sense of rhythm. I have transcribed it as it stands, but must add that the first three lines were actually crossed out.

THE RETURN OF THE SHIPS FROM BATTLE.

Silently the great ships sailed into the harbour.

The smoke coming slowly from their torn and jagged funnels

And drifting away into the cold white clouds.

Silently the great ships sailed into the harbour

Victorious, but torn and battered,

Huge holes in their sides, looking like open-mouthed fish,

And mocking them as they glided along in stately process.

The second attempt of Lamb (aged 12) showed great improvement upon his "Bicycle Ride!" quoted last week. I think the ending only just fails to achieve a considerable amount of power.

What is that cloud over there?

Ah! It’s the smoke of returning vessels.

People crowd round, pushing and elbowing so as to get to the front.

The crowd heaves with excitement;

This is indeed a time for joy or sadness.

Anxiety shows itself on many motherly faces,

Faces that are wrinkled because the dear one has gone away,

Nor can the woe find the housemaid, Emma,

Who set that awesome silence on her breath.

They are but tears;

Nor can the woe of their salt kindness through atmosphere surrounding it that seems to strike us at once upon our first contact with it. Such is the case with rooms.

such in modern English. Subordinate clauses and all the machinery devised for the creation of a well-turned prose sentence are instruments of language applicable to a more elaborate and conscious medium.

The literary education of a child cannot be advantageously proceeded with in the absence of self-expression. If, then, the youthful mind remains inarticulate in prose it does not seem unreasonable to offer it the more primitive medium of vers libre. This is only an application of my main principle: Teach the child to release his best thought. The particular form which the thoughts take (whether of "Lists," vers libre, prose or verse) is at first of relatively little consequence; but it is important that the child should acquire the habit of expressing his best thoughts. There is, of course, no such thing as self-expression in writing untrammelled by technique of any sort; my contention is that to many youthful minds the technicalities of vers libre are of a less hampering nature than those of prose.

If, therefore, the teacher feels that his form is persistently failing to achieve reasonably sincere self-expression in prose he would be well advised to give the unconscious minds of his pupils more freedom by allowing the encumbrances of prose construction occasionally to be discarded.

The words in italics are purposely stated in rather wide terms so that it shall not be thought that the method is meant to apply solely to the inarticulate child. I have little data to go upon, but would suggest that it is no less applicable to the too facile writer (e.g., Hathaway) who has become falsely articulate, and needs to be diverted from the cul de sac of Talent to the highroad of Truth and Genius.

How far the efforts, when completed, should be regarded as ends in themselves is, of course, a matter for the teacher’s individual taste. Personally, I am not a great lover of vers libre and, as I explained before, only happened on this method by a series of accidents. I have called these productions vers libre, but I feel that a worbiur description of them would be prose libre, or, in plain English, "primitive prose." In essence they are infantile and, furthermore, amount to an admission of technical incompetence, but if the thoughts they contain were worthy writing—and I think many of them were—they justify their medium because it is obvious (to me, at least) that many of them would not have been produced in any other form. Take these lines as an example:—

Little children cling to their mothers’ hands

And feel the excitement through them.

Now the foremost ship is in sight: someone shouts "The Neptune!"

A cheer, weakened by anxiety, but still hearty, rises.

Shawled mothers and wives leave the crowd; they are going to the docks.

Knocked and broken by Fortune, but still alive,

"Neptune" comes on, the Union Jack hanging at the masthead.

All the ships in the harbour raise their flags, and the men cheer,

But as "Neptune," with smoke covering the decks behind the fore-funnel, glides in,

The masts drop their heads in silence

For those under the big flag in front of the funnels.

In a purely technical sense it is not unnatural to regard vers libre as occupying an intermediate stage between prose and verse, but as a spontaneous expression of the unconscious mind I am inclined to think that it ranks before either. I do not wish to advance any fanciful theory on the point; it seems to me only natural that one’s unuttered thoughts should take the semi-staccato form of vers libre, or of what passes for.
Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

If we were to judge by their plays, we should conclude that the Americans were a nation of Peter Pans. They retain a vivid faith not in human nature, but in the adolescent imaginings of it; their values, both sentimental and dramatic, are those of incipient manhood, and they appeal to the boy that we all are, or were, with a confidence that is pleasing. They have a gift of quaint phrasing that serves them well in the construction of humorous dialogue; they have the youthful desire to shock by the use of vulgar expletives, and the no less youthful desire to believe in the soul of good in things apparently evil. The boy naturally accepts the crude and vivid conventions of melodrama as "life"; in the experimental stages of experience, the distinction of a type is a real discovery, and the logic that is the soul of romanticism infers causes for, or deduces consequences from, the existence of the type or the single quality that it embodies. Youth generalises to infinity; it is only as we grow older that the infinite is the finite, and turn from the universe and they appeal to the boy that we all are, or were, with qualities, excludes that touch of divinity that is really humanity—the boy, or the melodramatist, cannot see the person for his qualities.

I am prompted to these reflections by "Three Wise Fools," now being played at the Comedy Theatre. The play interested me in many ways; Mr. Charles Glenny is an actor who is always worth seeing (I shall not soon forget his Christopher Sly in Martin Harvey's production of "The Taming of the Shrew"), and he made one of the old fools a really humorous character. I was particularly interested, "to see if Mr. Pat Somerset secure an emphasis in a novel manner; yelling at the old men that they were "three damned old fools," he beat his legs with his fists to emphasise the rhythm. It was a characteristic, although not a graceful, gesture, and its appropriateness to the mood justified it according to the "natural" tradition of action. I could only wish that that same tradition gave its sanction to clear speaking even of furiously delivered speeches; Mr. Pat Somerset talked, in this passage, with more speed than precision, and expressed the minimum of emphatic meaning in the cadences of his voice.

But the play interested me still more. Here we have the theme of disappointed love mingled with that of the brotherhood of man, and decorated with literary and operatic allusions. For long years ago (in the pre-glacial period, I think), these three men had all been in love with the same woman, had all thought the same of her (that she was an angel with the usual appurtenances), was obviously a novice at it, and as obviously suffered from a shortage of water. I have seen an Indian jujuger make a man feel more than she did from both eyes—hers was the driest flood of tears on record. Apparently, the author felt the need of stiffening this sluice with some stronger material—still true to adolescence, he turned, as so many American authors turn, to crime and criminals. The "crook" drama, with hookey voices gasping in the dark, the ever-ready revolver with various original ways of taking aim, the "sleuths" on the doorstep who do not recognise the man they have been tracking for a month, the forced entry, the exciting "get-away," "et hoc genus omne, every schoolboy will recognise that this is life. Buffalo Bill went up the hill To get a pail of water—this belongs to the nursery; but Benny Suratt, escaped from jail, determined to "shoot up" the judge who convinced him, cursing and nearly swearing; and re-sitting the pleadings of gentle innocence—a fellow's a man when he enjoys this sort of thing.

But although there are bold, bad men among criminals, there are also tiad, good men among them—and they are always related to the heroine. According to tradition, how can a man who had gone to school with one of the three musketeers, who had married the woman of sacred memory, and was therefore the father of the heroine, be really a forger? It would spoil the heroine's chances of marriage; so, although he was convinced, he was not guilty. But if the heroine had confessed the relationship at first, would the "three wise fools" have lavished on her all the affection they had for her mother, or would her father's apparent guilt (he was not proved innocent until the third act) have mitigated the pleasure with which they fulfilled the first and last request of the woman of sacred memory? In spite of his interest in psycho-analysis, Mr. Austin Strong has not grasped the point of seeing that here is a dramatic problem. But melodrama is easier; the heroine's very virtues of filial love and loyalty to her father's friends (even if that friend was innocent of any complicity in crime) must subject her to suspicion so that the love of the youth may have an opportunity of expressing itself in a supreme act of faith. She undoubtedly lied about Benny Suratt, and was detected in the lie; but the hero had looked into her eyes, and knew that she was innocent of any complicity in crime.

It is all very sweet and wholesome; it "thinks pink" in the American fashion, and gives the young lover a fortune as well as a job. Money and love are the objects of life; it is easier to make love than money, but the man who can do both is sure of a welcome. Did not Tennyson say that "every door is barred with gold, and opens but to the rich boy's thought of thoughtfulness as indigestible as salmon; the incalculable boyishness of American conceptions of life, as revealed in American plays, leaves us lamenting. They are one of the most literary people in the world, but they produce no literature because they do not assimilate experience, but chronicle it with appropriate references to European models. They excel in the humour that is a deliberate breach of good manners or style, in the unexpected simile, and in the provincial exaggeration of details; but they cannot treat serious emotions seriously,
nor write the words that will be true for ever of common experiences. They lay either into a convention for a casual treatment so soon as they touch the realities of life; and their women are as devoid of character as the angels of conventional theology. The classic heroines were the creation of men; but the hosts of American heroines are born of the imagination of adolescence, and are immemorable.

Readers and Writers.

It is very doubtful whether anybody reads Fielding nowadays; nevertheless, like all the eighteenth century writers, he is more than worth all the time we waste on certain contemporaries. There is nothing of the "dismal literary about Fielding; but also there is nothing of what usually goes with the absence of letters—sentimentality. Fielding's letters, one feels, were absorbed into his blood; they did not remain like crumbs on the lips after a barbarian repast. In a word, Fielding could carry his letters as his contemporaries boasted they could carry their names—without showing them off. And it was no less the case that he carried his feelings with the same well-bred ease, without displaying them and, even more, without permitting them to rule his intelligence. Richardson seems born to have prepared Fielding to write. He incarnated everything that Fielding thought worth a negative. By Richard Richardson, Fielding would possibly have never found his true métier; Richardson, in fact, was his twin opposite. Fielding, however, must always pay the penalty of being a reactionary, of requiring a stimulant: he is no creator, for the stuff of creation was not native to him. He is an amusing causeur with his eyes always upon Richardson; a man of the world telling a story à la Richardson, but with the explanations common to the class of English gentlemen.

Nietzsche is among the English "Men of Letters" in the series edited by Lord Morley; and now he is receiving attention, I am glad to say, in America. America needs Fielding; for what is (or was) America in danger of becoming but a kind of Richardson continent? The eighteenth century writers, in fact, are a school to which American literature must go as a means of escape from the Roundhead tradition which otherwise America will scarcely succeed in overpassing. I cannot conceive, however, that "Tom Jones" will be popular in America yet awhile. He has more resistance to being a reactionary, of requiring a stimulant: he is no creator, for the stuff of creation was not native to him. He is an amusing causeur with his eyes always upon Richardson; a man of the world telling a story à la Richardson, but with the explanations common to the class of English gentlemen.

Sir Charles Wade's "Australia: Problems and Prospects" (Oxford Press, 4s. net) has no literary interest, but it can serve to reprint out a sentence that may be useful to some of my colleagues. On the subject of Compulsory Industrial Arbitration, which many people in this country regard as highly desirable, Sir Charles Wade, writing from the fullest possible experience, reports that "The general opinion in Australia to-day is that it must be moral authority rather than legal compulsion which is to enforce obedience to the industrial tribunals of the future." This confession ought to be registered on the social maps as indicating that there is no route to peace via compulsory arbitration; and every man who be reformer or be obliged to acquaint himself with it. It has always seemed to me a matter for regret that social discoveries should not be incorporated with knowledge as are geographical and scientific discoveries. Why should we have to rediscover truths already discovered? Why make all the old mis-takes over again? Assuming that such a map as I have in mind were constructed and were published, nobody in future (not even Mr. Harold Cox) would dare to recommend Compulsory Arbitration. At any rate, he could not do so without exposing himself to ridicule.

I have still no wish to re-open the Shakespearean controversy; but it certainly appears to me that the present tendency of research is to establish my contention that "Shakespeare" was chiefly an inspired editor. In recent issues of the "Times Literary Supplement" those two dragons of learning, Mr. Dover Wilson and Mr. A. W. Pollard, have been recording the results of their examination of the earliest Shakespeare Quartos; and this is what they say of the first: "It seems to us clear that 'Roméo and Juliet' in the First Quarto was derived from a MS., which had been partly worked over by Shakespeare, though still retaining many fragments of an earlier pre-Shakespearian play." It is much the same with the rest of the plays. On examination they one and all prove to be Shakespearean "editions" of previous works. Of the "Merry Wives of Windsor," for instance, no less an authority than Mr. J. M. Robertson says: "The original play was edited by Shakespeare"; and that "Shakespeare did but insert the best of the comic matter." Messrs. Dover Wilson and Pollard are even more precise concerning this particular play, for they assert that it was based upon a play, The Jealous Comedie, which existed before 1592, and was hastily worked over by Shakespeare and "one or more collaborators" when the request came from Elizabeth to show Falstaff in love. The amount "Shakespeare" himself put into it is probably very small. A good editor does as little as possible! Whatever they sought, their bones lie here in the desert." This sentence, taken, I believe, from a contemporary writer, deserves to be traced to its source, for it is in the grand style. The man who wrote it is capable of doing much more.

Ex pede Herculem.

It is interesting to learn from Dr. Oscar Levy (who, I hope, will shortly be returning to this country) that Nietzsche is being read as never before in Germany. It is clear that Nietzsche was taken, if at all, in the wrong sense in Germany before the war. The Germans did with him precisely what the mob everywhere does with the satirist: they swallowed his praise and ignored his warnings. He is still the most dangerous of men, more of a danger than a saviour to post-war Germany, since his vocabulary is for the most part militarist. Culture for him is usually presented in the terms of combat; and the still small voice of perfection is only heard in the silence of his musical sentences. It is probable that new Germany, now that it has begun to re-read Nietzsche, will read him any more intelligently than before? Is not a critique of Nietzsche a necessary condition of safely reading him—in Germany?

There are undoubtedly authors who are most dangerous to the nation in which they appear. Rousseau, for instance, was particularly dangerous in France. Whitman, I am convinced, is inimical to American culture.

Dr. Johnson has been a blight upon English thought. And Nietzsche, it may well be, is only a blessing outside of Germany. Art and thought, it is commonly said, are beyond nationality and race; and from this it follows that it is only a happy accident when a great writer or thinker is peculiarly suited to the nation in which he happens to be born. He is, so to say, addressed to the world—why should his message, therefore, be specially adapted to the language and people of his parentage? A nation, it appears to me, runs risks in accepting as its own the doctrines of the great men who chance to appear among it. On the other hand, a nation runs the risk of missing its real chosen unless it examines all the great men of the world. Chauvinism, in other words, either by choice or by exclusion, is always dangerous. We must take the good where we find it.

R. H. C.
On the Translation of Poetry.

I.

In the following chapters I propose to discuss a few of the more striking problems which themselves to the translator of modern poetry. The word "modern" is used merely to indicate that I shall exclude the special difficulties which arise in the case of ancient, especially Latin and Greek, poetry. For although I was translating fragments of Horace and Aeschylus at a time when I have been making up my arrears of impositions, I do not on that account feel qualified to approach a subject which has received suggestive but unconvincing treatment from Matthew Arnold.

And, first, a word or two about translation in general. I do not know whether it is generally realised that scarcely a single word can be said to have an exact equivalent in another language. True, it is rarely impossible, and often quite easy, to give the meaning of a French word in English, for instance. But to do this involves nothing more than taking words at their face value, so to speak, and those who use language for other than the bare purposes of communication regard words with a much ampler view than this. Any individual word possesses, as a matter of course, a number of associations—due to its sound, its derived meanings, its possible share in building up idioms—and it is obvious that, although two words may stand for the same object, or express the same idea, these secondary functions, which are often highly important for artistic purposes, cannot possibly be identical in two languages. A simple but interesting example of these divergencies is presented by the titles of newspapers and periodicals. Thus, in French a journal may appropriately be called "La Victoire," while "Victory" would somehow sound wrong in English. Or, again, "translate "Le Petit Journal," "Le Petit Parisien" into English and you will see that the more subtle aspects of the word "petit" and its English equivalents are by no means identical. And an excursion through the European Press will provide dozens of such instances.

My object in pointing this out is to emphasise the approximate character of all translation. The translator can only supply a series of substitutes, and the height of his achievement is to find the best substitutes. This problem, which even in the translation of prose is frequently quite difficult, becomes compounded by a number of additional factors in the translation of poetry. So we observe that even the most superficial critics are aware that it is difficult to translate poetry well, although they have no very clear notion of what the process implies. The result is that they are lavish with a number of axiomatic platitudes such as: "It takes a poet to translate a poet; or Poetry cannot be translated at all; or A translation must read like an original."

Critics of this type are particularly puzzled and concerned about the question of rhyme and poetical form generally. If someone has brought out a volume of translated poetry, and it falls into their hands, they will perhaps agree that it is very nice, and so on, but what a pity that the translator has allowed himself to be tied down by these troublesome rhymes. There are some who advocate a cutting of this Gordian knot by translating poetry into prose, on what they wrongly assume to be the universal French principle. (To this I must add certain other of the controversial matters referred to I shall return later.) Now language so delicate an instrument, and poetry so delicate a use of language, that such critics might be justified in their assumptions but for one thing which they, perhaps not surprisingly, overlook, and that one thing is intuition.

This is an important matter, and I must be allowed to elaborate it slightly further with my argument. I have already drawn attention to the way in which the "flavour" of words is affected by a number of influences which cannot entirely correspond in two different languages, and which, in fact, are often completely divergent. These tangles of association are so intricate that I doubt whether any man can be said to master them in more than one language to that degree which is implied by the word "literary."

I can think of few men in the records of literature who have employed two languages as a really artistic medium even for prose. And if we consider cases of bilingual poets we shall find that their work in at least one of their languages is nothing more than a testimony to their skill as versifiers, or their accomplishment as linguists.

And here I may add the curious fact that even the combination of complete mastery over one language, with poetical attainments in another, will not necessarily result in adequate poetical translation.

I recall instances where poets have translated their own works into what was virtually their second native language, and have failed in their object. Without intuition the thing cannot be done. I do not think I need enlarge upon this aspect of the question. It is roughly indicated by such a phrase as "entering the spirit of a poem," although I prefer to think of the process as happening in the reverse order, and to represent intuition as enabling the spirit of the poem to enter into the translator. Elsewhere I have enunciated the following principle of poetry. The translation of a creative art, the impulse to which is the emotional effect of the original poem. Hence, in order that the emotion, already derivative, may be adequately conveyed, the medium must be exceptionally sensitive. I think that for my present purpose nothing more can profitably be said on the purely abstract side of the problem. Let us now consider its more concrete aspects.

II.

What tests should be applied in order to estimate the value of a poetical translation? I propose the following, which are arranged in the descending order of their importance:

(1) It should possess value and interest, irrespective of any comparison with its original;

(2) It should be free from inaccuracies due either to misunderstanding of the original, or to wilful interpolations and suppressions;

(3) It should reproduce the form, style, and diction of the original.

A poetical translation cannot be considered really satisfactory unless it fulfils all these conditions to a reasonable degree, but the first one is absolutely indispensable. I think it will help us in our inquiry if we examine each of these requirements in greater detail.

(i) This is practically the same as Rossetti's dictum in the preface to his "Early Italian Poets": "The life-blood of rhymed translation is this—that a good poem shall not be turned into a bad one. The only true motive for putting poetry into a fresh language must be to endow a fresh nation, as far as possible, with one more possession of beauty." We might also compare a poetical translation to a portrait which we may well admire for its qualities as a painting, even though we are not acquainted with the person it represents. It is, of course, clear that such knowledge will tend to increase our interest in the portrait, or, rather, it will give us a different interest: Need I labour the application of this to the subject under discussion?

This first requirement I have formulated is the principal one because it supplies the only standard by which the majority of readers will want to judge the merits of the translation. They need no acquaintance with the original to decide whether it is, in itself, a work of art, and its fidelity and accuracy thus becomes of secondary importance. If the translation is really the product of a creative impulse there is every probability that it will satisfy this essential requirement. I must again insist upon the artistic character of poetical trans-
lation regarded as a branch of literary activity. In this connection it is worth while to refer once more to the reason assigned by Rossetti for putting poetry into a fresh language. There is often a tendency to look upon it as a scholar's pastime, or a feat of verbal ingenuity, and although it may incidentally involve both these things they form no organic part of its nature.

We must also (especially if we ourselves are translators) guard against the intrusion of false or adventitious values to influence our judgment of purely artistic merits. Thus, the fact that a translation is made from an obscure literature will not justify it if it is a poor piece of work. If, for instance, someone were to translate a poem from the Basque or the Albanian, it would be to stand or fall solely on account of its literary qualities, and not because of its unusual origin.

Here I may comment upon the remark that a translation should read like an original. It is a favourite observation of certain critics, and although it sounds plausible, it proves on closer examination to be devoid of any profound wisdom. For if it implies that a translation should not contain gross blunders in the use of language such as would naturally be avoided in original composition, it is an obvious platitude. If this is not the interpretation, the statement conveys nothing to me, since I am at a loss to imagine what can be the distinguishing marks of an original as opposed to a translation.

The following will serve as an example of a translation which, I think, reasonably fulfils my first requirements:—

O Cup-bearer! fill up the goblet, and hand it around to us all!

For to Love that seemed easy at first these unforeseen troubles befall.

In the hope that the breeze of the South will blow your dark tresses apart,

And diffuse their sweet perfume around,

I yielded me up to delight, and it brought me ill-fame

That he is capable of avoiding such precarious interpolations, which are often excused as being inevitable for technical reasons. Shelley's translations from Goethe's Faust, which are admirable from many points of view, offer instructive examples, and are therefore worth examining in some detail. In the famous Prologue Shelley adopts the regrettably unusual course among translators of supplementing his poetical version by a plain prose translation of the same passage. By means of this, the careful reader, without the need of reference to the German text, will discover that quite a number of phrases which occur in the translation cannot be traced in the original. Shelley speaks of "the world's unwithered countenance" and "spheres which never sleep," while the italicised insertions are due either to a misplaced desire for elaborating Goethe or to the prosaic exigencies of rhyme. That he is capable of avoiding such precarious patchwork is shown by the following quatrain:—

A flashing desolation there,

Flames before the thunder's way;

But Thy servants, Lord, revere

The gentle changes of Thy day

which are sufficiently near—

Da flammn ein blitzendes Verheeren
Dem Pfade vor des Donnerschlags;
Doch Deine Boten, Herr, verehren
Das sanfte Wandeln Deines Tags.
views from the "Walpurgis Night" resulted in such admirable lines as these:

To-whoo! to-whoo! near, nearer now
The sound of song, the rushing throng!
Are the screech, the lapwing and the joy
All awakèd too?'

See, with long legs and belly wide,
A salamander in the brake!
Jvery root is like a snake,
And along the loose grassy isle,
With strange contortions through the night,
Curls, to seize or to affright;
And, animated, strong, and many,
They sprout forth polyphem-antennea,
To blister with their poison spine.
The wanderer, Through the dazzling gloom
The many-coloured mice, that thread
The dewy turf beneath our tread,
In troops each other's motions cross,
Through the heath and through the moss;
And, legions intermingling,
The fire-flies fit, and swarm, and throng,
Till all the mountain depths are spangled.

This is still mainly Goethe, both in sense and style, for the translator's additions are relatively few. If Shelley had throughout kept as close to the original as this, and had completed the work, we should have had a "Faust" in English which would have rendered any further attempts unnecessary. But later on we find the spirit of Shelley conquering the spirit of Goethe, and in such lines as—

Ay
And strangely through the solid depth below
A melancholy light, like the red dawn,
Shoots from the lowest gorge of the abyss
Of mountains, lightning hitherward: there rise
Pillars of smoke, here clouds float gently by;
Here the light burns soft as the enflected air,
Or the illumined dust of golden flowers;
And now it glides like tender colours spreading;
And now bursts forth in fountains from the earth;
And now it winds, one torrent of broad light,
Through the far valley with a hundred veins;
And now once more within that narrow corner
Masses itself into intense splendour.
And near us, see, spars spring out of the ground,
Like golden sand scattered upon the darkness;
The pinnacles of that black wall of mountains
That hems us in are kindled.

The original, although few deviations have been made from its actual meaning, is disguised by the change from a rhymed four-stressed metre into blank verse and by the corresponding transformation of style. It is magnificent, but it is not Goethe. We may regard this as a typical instance of what is likely to happen when a great poet turns translator. The remark made on this subject by Max Nordau, and quoted by me in THE NEW AGE for July 2, 1914, is so much to the point here that it is worthy of being quoted again: "In the case of such great poets as these there is an obvious danger that their mighty EMC; will destroy the object of it, even as Jupiter's love did to Semele."—P. SELVER.

ECHO
(After François Coppée.)

In solitude I cried aloud:
"When my love's to her avowed
Will she dispel my secret woe?"
And mocking Echo answered, "No!"

"As a shroud about the dead,
She envelops heart and head;
How shall I live a life forlorn?"
And Echo answered me, "Alone!"

"Thanks! That were lot severe now:
My heart is in revolt; but how
Can I stifle the rebellious sigh?"
And Echo, mocking, answered, "Die!"

C. GRANVILLE.
genuine admiration, and he recognises the sincerity of nearly all the objectors examined by his Board. He suggests various amendments to his method of inquiry into conscientious objection (the method is that of our own much-abused local tribunals); and has, in the short space of 141 pages, covered the whole ground of practical description and suggestion.

He has delimited his treatment of the subject to the study of the conscientious objectors to military service, but the doctrine has a wider signification than this. Dicey remarked, in the Introduction to his last edition of "The Law of the Constitution" that "many of the English clergy (a class of men well entitled to respect) have themselves shown no great hesitation in thwarting and breaking laws which they held to be opposed to the law of the Church. Passive resisters do not scruple to resist taxes imposed for some object which they condemn. Conscientious objectors are doing a good deal to render ineffective the vaccination laws. The militant suffragettes glory in lawlessness; the nobleness of their aim justifies in their eyes the hopeless and perverse illegality of the means by which they hope to obtain votes for women." Until we get a working definition of conscience, the sincerity of the objector is its only proof; and there can be no doubt that most of these people are sincere, and are generically related to the more restricted type of conscientious opposition, namely a refusal (politically, at least) whether a man bases his refusal to obey the law on his "conscience," or "the Word of God," or the teachings of Mrs. Pankhurst; all alike are refusing to perform the political duty of obedience to the law while claiming a personal right, which, so far as it has any reality, is guaranteed by the law.

It is on this question of duty to the body politic that the whole problem turns; the phrase, "The King's Government must go on," is only a grandiloquent way of saying that the community has the right to command our services and our obedience. Why? The answer was given as long ago and every other citizen a share in every good that we have been shown no great hesitation in thwarting and breaking laws which they held to be opposed to the law of the Church. Passive resisters do not scruple to resist taxes imposed for some object which they condemn. Conscientious objectors are doing a good deal to render ineffective the vaccination laws. The militant suffragettes glory in lawlessness; the nobleness of their aim justifies in their eyes the hopeless and perverse illegality of the means by which they hope to obtain votes for women." Until we get a working definition of conscience, the sincerity of the objector is its only proof; and there can be no doubt that most of these people are sincere, and are generically related to the more restricted type of conscientious opposition, namely a refusal (politically, at least) whether a man bases his refusal to obey the law on his "conscience," or "the Word of God," or the teachings of Mrs. Pankhurst; all alike are refusing to perform the political duty of obedience to the law while claiming a personal right, which, so far as it has any reality, is guaranteed by the law.

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Karma. By Lafcadio Hearn. (Bonni and Liveright. $1.25 net.)

We do not know whether Lafcadio Hearn still has a vogue in America, but these four sketches are not likely to revive interest in his work in England. They are now collected in book form for the first time, we are told, which is certainly a tribute to the industry of the editor without being a guarantee of enjoyment to the reader. "Karma," "A Ghost," "The First Muezzin, Bilâd," "China and the Western World," of these the first two are windy periphrases that express nothing in a forlorn hope of achieving eloquence. "Bilâd" has some historical basis, while "China and the Western World" is a serious attempt to interpret an ancient civilization and its reactions on a modern one. That Hearn's vision of the future is a cosmopolitan one, based on miscegenation, will surprise no one, although he admits that it may not be agreeable to all. But even if we admit the reality of the Yellow Peril (and it is not less imminent than in Hearn's time), it has yet to be shown that we can avert it by marrying it. If the Malthusian explanation of world-movements has any truth at all, it will be as true of a community of half-breeds as of a community of more established racial characteristics. It is a quantitative, not a qualitative, hypothesis, and miscegenation does not rebut it.

An Anthology of Modern Slav Literature. By P. Selver. (Kegan Paul.)

Mr. Selver's anthology is not only a work well done, but one which needed doing; but for his great knowledge of Slavonic languages and love of their letters, few of us could have any idea of the genius of South and Western Slavdom; we might never know the quality and temper of so supreme a littérateur—such a culture-creator—as Verchilsky, nor of so lofty and passionate a poet as Bjezina. Whereas now, thanks to Mr. Selver's discrimination and power in a difficult work, something of the individuality of these and other writers will certainly be divined by all who have the intuition to feel a great author through a translator. How many of us know that Poles, Czechs and Serbs have all translated Tennyson, Browning, Whitman, Swinburne, and lesser English literature into their own languages—even while they were but half-accepted in their own country? And why are their poets so unknown to us? We are told that a new translation and ours is "—would be the prompt and natural thought of honest prejudice and total ignorance. And, indeed, Mr. Selver's reviewer in the "Daily News" did devote nearly half his allotted column to innocent mirth at the strangeness of Slav names! There is some real excuse in the more limited currency of their languages; but this anthology reminds us, and
doubtless some others, that there may be a less pala-
table reason why the Slavs translate our authors and
we ignore theirs. It may be simply that they have more
literary love and knowledge.

The Southern and Western Slavs are all of martyred
nations; and have lived for generations forcibly
denied. Thus Father Nicolas Velimirovic in "The
Soul of Serbia" reveals himself as a man of the highest
religious type, also of a wide and humane culture and
universal vision but he is still a pleader. He makes a
dignified speech in a dignified cause. and should be read
by all true students of the work of the League of Na-
tions. Almost all these writers of the oppressed Slavs
bear witness to the truth that endurance gives inspira-
tion, but longing only pathos. Let us acclaim the
one, for who is competent to rebuke the other? Not,
in any decency, any of the citizens of a great empire,
sated since ever with their own national freedom—and
that of several other peoples to boot!

Rezanor. By Gertrude Atherton. Anatol and
Other Plays. By Arthur Schnitzler. (The
Modern Library. Boni and Liveright. 70
cents each.)

We do not quite understand why Gertrude Ath-
ton’s "Rezanor" should be reproduced in this library,
which is a selection of modern classics. Mrs. Atherton
is a completely undistinguished writer, with neither the
significance nor the style of such people as Shaw,
Wells, Maeterlinck, Dostoievsky, Meredith, Nietzsche,
and the rest who are published in this library. Schnitz-
ler, of course, deserves translation, but we could wish
that he had been better translated. The dialogue of
this translation is dreadfully dull, lacking all the quali-
ties that are attributed to Schnitzler in an introduction.
Without any of the graces of style. Schnitzler’s sketches
become mere debates on the art of making love, the
sensuality is argumentative and graceless instead of
being illuminative and spiritual. These were translated
by a woman, a fatal mistake, for women never can
render the amoral man’s point of view sympathetically.
Their whole tradition is against any but the most prac-
tical and serious treatment of sex relations, and a
phantast and a wit like Schnitzler becomes lenden-
footed and tiresome in this translation of his everlasting
intrigues.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS.

Sir,—I am glad "M.B., Oxon’s," article? Why, and
"tragedy" in "M.B., Oxon’s," article? And how
is it that he omitted "tragedy" in his reply to me?

J. A. M. ALOUCK.

CATHERISM.

Sir,—Were I not accustomed to seeing compositors
wildly misread my somewhat difficult script, I might
ascibe the misprints in my letter in your last week’s
issue to evil. The tales have been sown among the
wheat; but instead of crying out, "An enemy hath done
this!" I merely write to correct what, without a correc-
tion, is hopeless nonsense.

I quote the verse about making clean the outside of
the platter, and let "platter" become "features." That
is had enough, but the reader will probably mentally
alter the printer’s version. Who, however, is to know
that "service" stands for "science"? Or who can
make head or tail of the sentence in which the word
occurs?

As I have suffered from your compositor, I trust, sir,
that you will make amends for leaving out the last para-
graph of my letter (no doubt left out because the space
was exhausted), and allow me to add that "A. E. R.,"
who is fond of the word "cant," is also guilty of the
thing "cant" in drawing a distinction between Christi-
anity and Catholicism.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

Pastiche.

IN MEMORIAM B.C.

Love none too well; nor friends, nor household ties;
Nor life—nor virtue even: for what breath
Of virtue can inspire a world of lies
Of which the end is death?

Nay, never love, for what thou lov’st will fade;
Nor worship aught, for what thou worshippest
Soon, by its own weak treachery betrayed,
Will make thy faith a jest.

Nay, never hope, for how can burnt-out fire
Dream of the past, unlock futurity?
(Unless with the limp corpse of thy desire
Perchance Fate mock at thee.)

Yet Hope, Faith, Love—a trinity of good,
Which, though thy disillusioned spirit rue—
Then still should’st hold, that out of life’s falsehood
Thy soul at last prove true.

Quetta, October, 1918.

A. M. SAYERS.

AN ODE ON THE TWILIGHT HOUR.

A silence more harmonious than the sound
Of music dim remembered in a dream
Surrounds me here upon this holy ground
And stills the fretful murmur of this stream.

A wand’ring wind is sobbing in my ear,
A breathing soundless sigh from every flower
Two lovers stand entranced who never meet
At what is left unspoken; yet we both

Two lovers stand entranced who never meet
A land forever bathed in twilight haze,
Who hammers his patient is not analysing him, whatever
else he may be doing.

Now, it follows from this that the doctor draws facts
from the unconscious, and does not put anything there
himself. "M.B., Oxon," will agree with this after his reply
to my letter. "M.B., Oxon," was to make more alterations to
his article, it follows also that he cannot well apply the word "dirty"
to the psycho-analyst for his descriptions either of the dreams
of the individual unconscious or the myths of the col-
lective unconscious. I am afraid I am reduced to asking
again, "What are the applications of the words ‘dirty’

and "tragedy" in "M.B., Oxon’s," article? And how
is it that he omits "tragedy" in his reply to me?

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Of music dim remembered in a dream
Surrounds me here upon this holy ground
And stills the fretful murmur of this stream.

A wand’ring wind is sobbing in my ear,
A breathing soundless sigh from every flower
Two lovers stand entranced who never meet
And all the languorous air is incense sweet.

A! Day is dreaming in the arms of Night.
Immortal maiden! melancholy swain!

Eternal sentinels that find no rest.
Your age-long vigil, can it be in vain?

The dew is falling cold upon my hand,
The ling’ring lovers now no longer stand,

For Day must go,
A wand’ring wind is sobbing in my ear,
The ling’ring lovers now no longer stand,

Am gazing where one farewell-waving hand

Who knows? Beneath some everlasting bough
Beneath some everlasting bough

Pencells forever silent as the earth is now,
Where ye shall make your home and take your ease,
And at your feet a thousand blooms shall blaze.

The dew is falling cold upon my hand,
And all the languorous air is incense sweet.

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PRESS CUTTINGS.

THE A. B. C. OF THE PLUMB PLAN.

What is the Plumb Plan?—It is a plan for the public ownership and the democracy in the control of the railroads.

Who has endorsed it?—The two million organised railroad employees of America; and the American Federation of Labour, approving the principle of government ownership, has instructed its executive committee to co-operate with the officers of the railroad internationals in their effort. It also has been endorsed by several farmers' organisations.

How does it propose to buy the roads?—By issuing Government bonds with which to pay for the legitimate private interests in the railroad property. The Government also uses its purchasing power of money to add to the volume of business, and thus to its own benefit.

How does it propose to operate the roads?—By a board of fifteen directors, five named by the President, to represent the public; five elected by the operating officers; five elected by the classified employees.

Does this mean Government control?—No; it is operation by a board in which those having the responsibility have also the authority. It is superior to Government control because it prevents control by an inefficient bureau. And it is superior to board of direction, since it gives the men engaged in the industry a voice in its management.

What becomes of the surplus?—After operating expenses are paid and fixed charges are met, including the interest on outstanding Government securities, the surplus is divided equally between the Government and the men. The employees' portion is to be divided between the managerial and classified employees, the former receiving double the rate received by the latter class. This is not a profit, since the corporation has no capital. What the men receive is a dividend on efficiency. Is this a bad system?—No; for giving those who increase production a share of the results their increased effort has produced; and this share is theirs for as long as they are actually in the service, and is not forfeitable. Why do operating officials receive the larger rate of dividend?—Because it serves as a greater stimulus to the group with the most responsibility. And since the operating officials would lose dividends if wages were increased, it acts automatically to prevent the probability of increased wages and reduced dividends.

Is the new arrangement fair to the public?—No; the public will probably pay less than two-thirds of what the railroads claim as their value.

Are there other savings?—Yes; the public can obtain the money to purchase the lines at a fixed interest rate.

Does the plan assure a decrease in rates?—It provides that when the Government's share of the surplus is 5 per cent., or more of the gross operating revenue, rates shall be reduced accordingly to absorb the amount the Government receives. For instance, if the entire surplus of the year be $250,000,000, and the Government receives 1½ per cent. of the gross operating revenue, the Government receives $250,000,000. And because this is 5 per cent., rates are decreased 5 per cent. See what follows. Without new economies in new business, the profits from the next year would be only $250,000, and the employees and the Government would receive only half the amount of the year before. But decreased rates mean more business, and also the reduction in dividends would stimulate the employees to improve their operation by applying better methods. So the tendency is to the reduction of costs and the decrease in rates, to add to the volume of business, and to give the most efficient service human ingenuity and devotion can provide.