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CONTENTS.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

We hope we are not wrong in detecting a changed tone in Mr. Smillie's references to Nationalisation. It is true that the Miners' Executive passed a unanimous resolution in favour of Fabianising the mining industry, that Mr. Smillie professed himself "genuinely convinced" that nationalisation was "essential," not only in the interests of the miners, but in the interests of the nation, the industry and the poorer consumers, and that the resolution was commended to the support and the subsequent active assistance of the Trade Union Congress. But such steps, after all, may be only measures of strategy designed rather to make the Government proposals impossible than Nationalisation inevitable. Both the "Times" and the "Daily News," moreover, are of our opinion concerning the change of tone. The "Times" says that the speakers at the Delegate meeting "seemed on the whole to be anxious to rely rather on argument than threats"; and the "Daily News" (with what inside knowledge we do not know) specifically asserted that the Miners were no longer committed irrevocably to Nationalisation; "there was room for discussion"; "there might be more ways than one of satisfying the Miners' demands." And, finally, there are Mr. Smillie's own words, in which he announced that if the Prime Minister [or anybody else?] could prove that the Miners' proposals were "wrong" or "unnecessary," the Miners' Federation would withdraw them; and "it was their duty to the nation that there should be time for consideration before drastic action was taken."

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So far as this goes it is, of course, all to the good, for until Nationalisation has become a fact we may entertain the hope that this wearisome misadventure is not inevitable. On the other hand, it is somewhat alarming to discover how elementary a conception the Miners have yet formed of the significance and value of time. For twenty years in succession, they say, they have passed resolutions in favour of Nationalisation; and even now, such is their patience, they are prepared to give the public a further period for consideration. Very tolerant and easy-going, but all problems are not in space; some of them, indeed, are altogether in time; and we are probably not far wrong in thinking that Nationalisation as a policy has become discredited just by the lapse of time. Twenty years ago, that is to say, Nationalisation might have been the proper policy to apply to the Mining industry; the clock of the world may then have definitely called for it. Likewise ten years ago, we have no doubt, the time-conditions of the problem indicated a measure of joint-control as the appropriate policy. But policies, like other modes of adaptation to a perpetually changing reality, lose their virtue with the passing of their moment; and what would have been good twenty or ten years ago may be inadequate to-day. It is certainly the case, we think, with Nationalisation that it has lost its virtue. Nobody really any longer believes in it—not even, we imagine, Mr. Smillie himself. It has been too long in coming; all its original potencies have been worn off in the course of its delay; the world has experienced too many examples of it to look forward with any hope to its general application; so that at this moment Nationalisation would appear to be a regression to the past rather than a step towards the future—a return, in short, to the empty husks of the Fabian nineteenth century. This psychological condition of the problem is certainly one to be taken into account, for obviously the solution of a problem depends to a considerable extent upon the state of mind brought to bear on it. If Nationalisation were to-day the adventure it would have been twenty years ago, the resultant psychological circumstances of its adoption might possibly provide the conditions of its difficult success; but, as it is, Nationalisation, we repeat, has lost its glamour; if adopted, it will be adopted in cold blood and from despair. Its failure under these circumstances is as inevitable as anything can be.

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In addition to its failure to realise the importance of the time-element in policy, Labour appears to have a

most pathetic belief, or rather superstition, in the magic of mere numbers. We have seen that the Miners have referred their resolution to the Trade Union Congress which is meeting at Glasgow this week; and now Mr. Bowerman has announced to the world, as if they were an argument in themselves, the statistics of the delegations and their constituencies. Over eight hundred delegates, he informs us, will be present at the Glasgow Congress; and they represent between them no fewer than five and a quarter million organised workers, men and women. Wonderful past all whooping! But without being so unkind as to remind the Trade Union Congress that the sum of five and a half million ciphers is only a cipher, we may put our criticism upon the ground that a *system* is indifferent to the mere numbers involved in it. Given a system guaranteed to produce certain specific economic effects, and it is quite irrelevant how many people are engaged in it; it is even a matter of small importance how many of its victims are dissatisfied with it. The only question of any practical concern is whether anybody has a notion of how the *system* can be changed. Now is it the fact that among the $5\frac{1}{2}$ million constituents of the eight or nine hundred delegates of the Glasgow Congress, so many as two persons have such a notion? We have yet to hear their names or to see any signs of their appreciation of the problem. But in the absence of any such idea it is impossible that the Congress should add anything to the solution of the problems before it. All it can do is to mass force in one position or another, and, perhaps, to persuade that force to move in the direction of its instincts. What, however, it cannot do is to direct that force; since the *idea* of direction is lacking.

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There is a congruity between the particular problem of the Miners and the general problem of the Trade Union Congress which, moreover, adds to the incongruity of the reference of the one to the other; for it is unmistakably a reference of the blind to the blind. The particular problem of the Miners, it is clear, is the reconciliation of the claims of Labour with the claims of the public. How, in practice, are the higher wages and better conditions of the Miners to be obtained without reducing the income and worsening the circumstances of the community in general? And this, it will be seen, is only an illustration of the generic problem before the Trade Union Congress, that of reconciling high wages with low prices. But if, as certainly appears to be the case, the Congress itself has no conception of the answer to the problem, how is it to assist the Miners in *their* solution? Can the Congress give what it has not got? Too great emphasis cannot be laid upon what may be called the intellectual kernel of the Trade Union movement considered as a movement of ideas. Its specific task, its primary problem, is to discover and to apply the economics underlying the relation of Cost to Price; and only by its successful attempt to reconcile these two phenomena can it ever be admitted to justify itself. Where, however, we ask once more, is even the beginning of such a solution to be discovered in the Trade Union movement? We have no doubt that, taken singly, every Trade Union leader would admit our diagnosis of the problem: in other words, would agree that the crux of the problem is how to raise wages while reducing prices. Nevertheless, both singly and in bulk, they either take the problem for granted or take it for granted that it is insoluble. In any case, neither from any previous Congress nor from the present Congress has issued or is likely to issue any real attempt to supply an answer to this fundamental question; and in this absence of ideas, as we say, the present system will inevitably continue.

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The situation is all the more deplorable from the fact that, thanks partly to National Guildsmen, and, more recently, to the analytic and synthetic work of Major C. H. Douglas, the specific problem of Labour and of the Trade Union Movement *has been solved.* It is no longer a matter of hope with us, or of demands for a Utopian "transformation of heart"—the solution of the particular problem of the reconciliation of high wages with low prices has been found and could, given reasonably favourable circumstances, be applied in any industry in which Labour is already organising with immediate results. Take the case of the Mining industry, for example. On the face of it, the Miners are in the presence of two irreconcilable sets of claims: the claims of the Miners to a considerable betterment of their conditions, and the claims of the community to a considerable amelioration in the supply and price of the commodity of coal. How do the Miners' Federation propose to attempt to reconcile them? As far as we have seen, by the roundabout and, at best, uncertain means of nationalising the industry, at the cost of an enormous addition to the public debt, and at the risk of permanently subjecting the Miners to a bureaucratic management and the community to an increased cost of coal. But all this, we assure our readers and the Miners' Federation and the Trade Union Congress, is quite unnecessary. There is not the least reason why the Mining industry should be nationalised, why the Miners should be made State officials, why the powers of the bureaucracy should be enlarged; or, again, why the Miners' Federation should not obtain a share in real control at the same time that wages are being steadily increased and the cost of coal to the consumer steadily and considerably reduced. All that is wanting to make these things possible, here and now, before the winter has set in, is a willingness on the part of the Miners' Federation leaders to give as much attention and consideration to this solution as they have over and over again given to suggestions from other quarters. It is the tragedy of the situation, however, that such consideration is not forthcoming. We sit here like people bound hand and foot, and gagged into the bargain, while our national house is burning. We have the key of the water-supply while all the rest of the world professes to be looking for it.

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The "Spectator" has discovered another "noble" Labour leader in the person of Mr. Barnes, whose speech at the recent International Conference on Labour and Religion it declares to be "fine." The upshot of Mr. Barnes' speech, however, does not appear to be so fine when it is examined from any other point of view than that of immediate Capitalist prejudice; for what was it, in effect, but a plea for the rigours of the class-war and a defence of the Bolshevik doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat? The "Times" and the "Spectator," equally with Mr. Barnes himself, may be surprised to learn that his speech in denunciation of the "intellectuals" was, in fact, a piece of Bolshevik propaganda; but the slightest examination of the practical deductions to be drawn from Mr. Barnes' utterance makes its affiliation by caricature with Trotsky's perfectly plain. He resented the presence in the Labour movement of middle-class and educated theorists, "Oxford and Cambridge" men whose doctrines were "having a bad effect on the simple-minded workers." The movement, the "Times" paraphrased him, was being "led by the nose" by intellectuals "not of its own class"; and Mr. Barnes warned his fellow-workmen that they must no longer submit to intellectual patronage, but insist upon expelling middle-class intruders from a province which they only meant to exploit. Is not this Jacobinism and the class-war stripped and naked? Suppose it should have the least effect—and fortunately nothing that Mr. Barnes can say is likely to be more than ridiculous—would not its effect be to intensify the worst aspects of the worst form of the class-war—the war of intelligence with brute-strength?

But in that case also the issue is a foregone conclusion. Labour without brains is a lost cause; and Labour with only Mr. Barnes' brains is hopeless.

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The amusing circumstance that Mr. Barnes left Lord Curzon in order to deliver this warning against intellectuals, and afterwards returned to a conference with him when his message to Labour had been got off his chest, ought not to obscure the significant fact that Mr. Barnes is typical of Labour leaders in a certain phase of "successful" decadence. Time was when Mr. Barnes, as the Secretary of the A.S.E., found himself concerned about the wages and conditions of the working classes; but to-day, in the security of £5,000 a year and the office of a Cabinet Minister, he is convinced that the Labour problem is no longer a wages problem, but a "religious problem." We should say it is—for Mr. Barnes, who can now indulge himself, his economic problem being happily solved, in aspirations after still another world—but for the mass of his late fellows, and for society as a whole, the lesser mysteries of economic justice are religion enough. The vulgar notion that it is "materialistic" to be concerned about the means of life and only "religious" to be concerned about the object of life would have come better from Mr. Barnes if, instead of a Cabinet Minister, he had been content to remain a Congregational Minister, or if, instead of aspiring to £5,000 a year (and keeping it), he had been content with £150. He would have some title to talk with contempt of "wages and stomach" if, in fact, he himself had ever revealed in action any of that contempt. As it is, however, his attitude is not only hypocritical, his message of religion is a lie. An unpretending atheist must be more pleasing to God than a plump sycophant of the type of Mr. Barnes. No wonder he wants no Labour "intellectuals" near him, but only intellectuals of Lord Curzon's "class," who can be trusted never to tell him what they think of him. No wonder he wishes the Labour movement to subordinate its demand for wages and better material conditions—has he not all that one of Epicurus' sty can desire? No wonder, finally, that he asks the Labour movement to be religious and brotherly—its acquiescence in his betrayal requires a good deal of charity to sustain.

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Turning to a less repellent subject, we observe that several Labour leaders and journals have now begun to advance their recipes for the cure of high prices. Mr. Adamson, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, does not agree, we are glad to say, with the inspired counsel of Mr. Brownlie to produce, produce, produce, and let who will have the product; but, unfortunately, his own ideas are of little more value. He would have "a complete re-organisation of industry" and the installation in our workshops of more and more "up-to-date machinery." Here we see once more the old Labour and Socialist fallacy that what is really wrong with modern industry is Production, and, hence, that what Society has to do (and Labour in particular) is both to produce more and to create more machinery for still more production. The real problem, however, is not how to produce more, but how to get it distributed. At least one half the Labour employed to-day is engaged not in producing, but in finding a market for what is produced; and since, as we know, that market is perpetually shrinking by reason of the maldistribution of purchasing-power, the congestion of production is becoming less and less susceptible of relief by consumption. The "Daily Herald" and the "Labour Leader" are of a slightly different opinion from that of Mr. Adamson, but their opinion is still of little relevance to the situation as given. Both now affirm that what is needed is to "direct employment into productive channels"—in other words, to divert production from luxuries and waste to necessities and economy. What, however, is the value of repeating one of our phrases unless, at the same time, the whole of our analysis is understood? Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring. The question to ask is *why* employment is increasingly being directed to the production of luxurious services and goods and away from the production of necessary things; and how and by what precise means the diversion of this energy is to be effected. It is useless to protest that cinemas ought not to be built while houses are needed; or that motor-cars ought not to be multiplied before kitchen-ranges—for unless it is realised that industry is directed from the pockets of the prospective consumers, and, hence, that it will only produce what consumers have the money to pay for—the protests will remain on the level of "religious" rodomontade, they will actually effect nothing. In general, once more, the problem is one primarily of the distribution of purchasing-power. Give to our forty millions of people a regular purchasing-power of, let us say, £1,000 a year (and it is not too much to provide), and the problem of Production is technical merely. Socialists, as such, have no concern with it; it is the business of engineers, inventors, scientists and the like. Our own concern—and that, we should like to believe, of the "Daily Herald"—is with distribution—with the distribution of purchasing-power.

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If anything were necessary to convince us that we are justified in withholding the details of our scheme until they have seriously been considered by the only people who could, if they chose, make practical use of them, the publication in the "Dial" and elsewhere of the underlying conceptions of the Plumb Plan would be sufficent. We can say at once that as between America and this country it is a neck-and-neck race which of the two is to have the honour (and the honours) of pioneering the new age of human society. Miss Helen Marot is properly satirical in the "Dial" of England's boast to be always twenty years ahead of America; for by the adoption of the Plumb Plan, as we anticipated her in saying last week, official Labour in America has placed that country in considerable advance of official Labour in England. But that is by no means the worst that can be said. It would be bad enough (from a patriotic point of view) if American Labour were to "Plumb" our Guild policy and carry it into effect before more than one in ten of our own Labour leaders had even heard of it; but it would be worse (from the same point of view) if American Labour, with the aid of its intellectuals, were to anticipate the fundamentals of our short-circuiting plan, and to proceed to adopt it before our own Labour people have so much as heard of it. Nevertheless, this appears to be quite possible; for, to quote Miss Helen Marot once more, the Plumb Plan, as conceived by its authors, "transcends all others which have been advanced" [published, let us say!] in that it enables Labour to "jump the whole period of State Capitalism and State Socialism" by setting up Labour as a claimant to the capital values inherent in "operating ability." It will be gathered by attentive readers how nearly in one respect the idea here suggested approaches the ideas recently put forward in these columns—the idea of Labour credit. And when we add that Miss Helen Marot realises on behalf of American Labour that "further dependence on the present system of credit means industrial suicide"—it will also be gathered how closely American Labour thought has been following the thought of Mr. Barnes' bugbears—ourselves! We shall say no more, for the present, either of the Plumb Plan or of our own. Our loudest shouts, unfortunately, do not penetrate the walls of the nearest Trade Union office in England; but our whispers are heard in America and Germany.

Foreign Affairs.

By S. Verdad.

THE following letter has been received from Mr. R. B. Kerr, of British Columbia. It is, perhaps, of more than sufficient interest to publish, for I am not at all sure that the effect of gloomy prognostications—especially when they are plausible—is always that which is intended. Sometimes, indeed—so great is the strain of masochism in modern industrialised humanity—the prospect of trouble acts as an incentive to hasten or, at any rate, not to prevent its realisation. Again, I am struck by the fact that the problem of what is called the Pacific (surely, ironically) is similar in kind, though infinitely greater in degree, to the problem recently discussed in this column—the problem of Ireland: that is to say, it is insoluble by direct means. And, by the way, in reply to Mr. Spain's courteous and temperate article of last week, may I ask how much nearer he has brought the solution of the Irish problem—has he really contributed to the solution by his affirmation that the English people's demand for "insular security" is "a preposterous demand"? I am afraid that it stands where it did. Mr. Kerr's suggestion that Australia should open a considerable part of her territory to Asiatic settlement appears to me to be one of those ultra-rational expectations or demands which everybody knows instinctively will never be conceded or realised *through reason*. It is conceivable that the same end could be obtained indirectly and as an unforeseen consequence of some policy not ostensibly related to this particular problem; but never, I believe, will it be realised by direct propaganda. If it should really come to the clash predicted by Mr. Kerr, then it appears to me that the Western world would be quite content to risk the threatened Armageddon rather than acquiesce *rationally* in the policy directly designed to avert it. A sentence in last week's "Notes of the Week" sums up tersely the relation between foreign policy and what is there called domestic policy. "Foreign policy," it was said, "is only the extension of domestic policy; and a domestic policy directed to squeezing the maximum surplus of production out of our own population ends by forcing that surplus down the throats of foreign countries even at the cost of war." The officials responsible for the conduct of foreign policy really have no responsibility for its direction. They are given the practical problem of (a) safeguarding the supply of raw materials for domestic policy; and (b) controlling the markets for the profitable disposal of the surplus. It is a purely practical *capitalist* problem, and has, as such, no concern (save for the sake of prestige and appearances) with any other consideration. While the capitalist system continues to control domestic policy it must be expected to set this same problem to its conductors of foreign policy; and, be the personnel of the Foreign Office what it may, no great change in foreign policy can be effected unless it is preceded by a change in domestic policy. It may sound absurd, but it appears to me to be true that Mr. Kerr's problem of the Pacific can only be solved *at home*. A distributive system that ceased to depend upon export would certainly bring about a re-orientation of foreign policy; as nothing else, in my judgment, can. Here, however, is Mr. Kerr's letter:—

Sir,—As the result of Lord Jellicoe's visit to Australia, it is announced in Press despatches that the Australian fleet is to be greatly enlarged, and that the British fleet in Chinese waters is also to be made strong enough to be ready for all eventualities. Every person who has lived anywhere on the shores of the Pacific Ocean immediately understands such an announcement when he reads it. As it means nothing at all to most people in Great Britain, it is perhaps as well that it should be explained through your columns.

Probably many of your readers do know that the people of Japan, China, and India are beginning to desire a place in the sun. These three countries, together with Cochin China, contain more than one half the human race, but the whole of this population is confined to one half of Asia. Hitherto they have been so confined because they did not possess strength to break out. Now, however, Japan has become the third or fourth Power in the world, China is awakening to industrial life, and even India is showing signs of unrest.

The great obstacle to these three peoples getting a place in the sun is the British Empire, and, above all, Australia. Australia is the emptiest of countries, and is nearer than any other empty country to one half of the human race. Australia, however, absolutely refuses to admit any immigrant from Japan, China, or India. On the other hand, owing to the geographical proximity of Australia, the people of Japan and China, if not of India, are more anxious to get there than anywhere else.

Australia is nearly as large as Europe. Owing to the low rainfall, most of Australia is a desert, and much of the remainder is fit only for grazing. It is supposed, moreover, that Australia is almost destitute of coal and iron. Nevertheless, much of the continent is good for agriculture, and there can be little doubt that Australia could be made to support a hundred million people in comfort. Australia has, however, only four million people, and, owing to its great distance from Europe and the unwillingness of continental Europeans to migrate to a British colony, there is hardly any immigration. In about two hundred years, even with a low birth-rate, Australia would be likely to be well populated; but there is not the slightest chance that within fifty years its white population will be more than negligible.

Japan proper has probably now got nearly sixty million people. An educated Japanese friend tells me that the empire, including Korea and Formosa, now has over eighty millions. That does not include Southern Manchuria, a province of many millions which is occupied by the Japanese, and is rapidly being assimilated. Shantung, which to all intents becomes Japanese under the Peace Treaty, has nearly forty million inhabitants. It may therefore safely be said that the Japanese Empire is getting well on towards one hundred and forty million people. The whole of this population is close together, and will constitute a unit for military and naval purposes. China, without the parts that are being absorbed by Japan, has three hundred and fifty millions; India has well over three hundred millions; and Cochin China has twenty millions.

Why do the four millions of Australia object to the eight hundred millions who demand the right to migrate to Australia? Some months ago I was at a British Columbian meeting called to prevent Asiatics from owning land, and the English farmer who moved the resolution said that one word summed up his whole case: "Fear." The same word sums up the Australian case. The labourer is afraid that the Asiatic will work cheaper. The storekeeper is afraid that he will sell goods cheaper. The farmer is afraid that he will sell produce cheaper, and is also afraid that, if an Asiatic buys the next farm, nobody will buy his own. Moreover, all who have daughters are afraid that one of them might marry some prosperous Jap, and be treated by the whites as an outcast.

In my opinion the English-speaking people will have to get over these fears, or be wiped off the earth. In South America there is no colour line, nor is there any in the French colonies. Alexander Dumas the elder was one quarter negro, and the younger was one eighth. What the French, Spanish, and Portuguese peoples have done the English can do. The change will not come fast enough to settle the Australian question, however.

Japan has hitherto been considered safe because she has no coal or iron, and consequently no means of making munitions. She is now, however, annexing territories which are enormously rich in coal and iron. Manchuria is fairly well endowed in these respects, while Shantung has plenty of mines and every facility for a great steel industry. Anyone who knows the Japanese will realise that these opportunities will be developed with phenomenal speed. China has more coal than all Europe, and there is no doubt that modern industry is arising in China. Whether China is virtually annexed by Japan or becomes an independent Republic, she will soon be able to produce abundant munitions. I need not say that a Jap or a Chinaman will fight just as well as any white man provided he has the weapons.

If the British Empire ever attempts to fight the yellow race over Australia, it is manifest what the result will be. The Channel Islands would have the same chance against Great Britain as Britain would have against China and Japan after their steel industry is developed.

What, then, is the alternative? Australia will certainly not pass a law to allow Asiatics to immigrate freely. It would be possible, however, to sell three quarters of Australia to Japan without causing anybody much real inconvenience. The north half is low land in the tropics, and can never be inhabited by whites. The south-west quarter is also nearly empty. Some of the money might be used to compensate the few white people living in the parts handed over to Japan, in case they should desire to move. The people of Australia will be well advised to consider some such scheme without further delay, and the peoples of other English-speaking countries will be wise if they make it their business to see that this is done. Now is certainly the accepted time. I do not for a moment believe that the rest of the English-speaking race will be willing to face annihilation for the benefit of four millions. It is best that they should say so frankly, and at once, as I am under the impression that the four millions of Australia are far from having a firm grip of the realities of the situation.

Kelowna, B.C. R. B. KERR.

Production and Prices.

[Notes of a lecture by Major C. H. Douglas at a meeting of the National Guilds League, September 10.]

BEFORE dealing with subject of lecture I propose to comment on method by which conclusions are arrived at: Explanation likely to cause intense irritation! It is admitted by most persons that there is something seriously wrong in the world to-day—wars, strikes, etc., general disgruntlement; various prescriptions for the disease.

(1) Super-productionists, the "Capitalist" party, who refuse to admit any fault in the system. The keynote of their remedy is harder work and more of it.

(2) What may be called the ecclesiastical party; keynote of their policy is "a change of heart." Their attention is concentrated in hierarchical problems, administration, etc. The legal, military, bureaucratic mind is essentially of this type, and the Whitley Council, the Sankey Report, and the various committee schemes of the Fabian Society in this country, the Plumb scheme in America, etc., are examples of it. All these schemes are *deductive* in character; they start with a theory of a different sort of society to the one we know and assume that the problem is to change the world into that form. In consequence, all the solutions demand centralisation of administration; they involve a machinery by which individuals can be forced to do something—work, fight, etc.; the machine must be stronger than the man.

Practically all Socialist schemes, as well as Trust, Capitalist, militarist, etc., schemes, are of this character, e.g., the League of Nations, which is essentially ecclesiastical in origin, is probably the final instance of this.

It may be observed, however, that in the world in which things are actually done, not talked about, where bridges are built, engines are made, armies fight, we do not work that way. We do not sit down in London and say the Forth Bridge ought to be 500 yards long and 50 ft. high, and then make such a bridge and narrow down the Firth of Forth by about 75 per cent. and cut off the masts of every steamer 45 ft. above sea level in order to make them pass under it. We measure the Firth, observe the ships, and make our structure fit our facts. Successful generals do not say "the proper place to fight the battle is at X, I am not interested in what the other fellow is doing, I shall move all my troops there."

The attempt to deal with one of the industrial and social difficulties existing at this time, which is embodied in these remarks, starts from this position therefore.

It does not attempt to suggest what people ought to want, but rather what they do want, and is arrived at not so much from any theory of political economy as from a fairly close acquaintance with what is actually happening in those spheres where production takes place and prices are fixed.

If we look at the problem of production from this point of view, the first thing we ask ourselves is why do we produce now. The answer to this is vital—it is to make money. Why do we want to make money? The answer is twofold. First, to get goods and services afterwards, to give expression, often perverted, to the creative instinct through power. Please note that these two are quite separate—whether a man has any recognisable creative instinct or not, he absolutely requires goods and services of some sort. We then have our problem stated; we have to inquire whether our present mechanism satisfies it, and if not, why not, and how can it be altered so that it does satisfy it.

Emphasising the fact that it is only half the problem, the only half I propose to deal with to-night, let us inquire to what extent we succeed in our primary object—that of obtaining goods and services when we produce for money under the existing economic system.

Production only takes place at present when at least two conditions are met, when the article produced meets with an effective demand, that is to say, when people with the means to pay are willing to buy, and when the price at which they are willing to buy is one at which the producers are willing to sell.

Now, under the private capitalistic system the price at which the producer is willing to sell is the sum of all the expenses to which he has been put plus all the remuneration he can get called profit. *The essential point to notice, however, is not the profit, but that he cannot and will not produce unless his expenses on the average are more than covered.* These expenses may be of various descriptions, but they can all be resolved ultimately into labour charges of some sort (a fact which incidentally is responsible for the fallacy that labour, by which is meant the labour of the present population of the world, produces all wealth). Consider what this means. All past labour, represented by money charges, goes into cost and so into price. But a greater part of the product of this labour—that part which represents consumption and depreciation—has become useless, and disappeared. Its money equivalent has also disappeared from the hand of the general public—a fact which is easily verifiable by comparing the wages paid in Industry with the sums deposited in the Savings Banks and elsewhere—but it still remains in price. So that if everyone had equal remuneration and equal purchasing power, and there were no other elements, the position would be one of absolute stagnation—it would be impossible to buy at any price at which it is possible to produce, and there would be no production. I may say that in spite of enormously modifying circumstances I believe that to be very much the case at present.

But there is a profound modifying factor, the factor of credit. Basing their operations fundamentally on faith—that faith which in sober truth moves mountains—the banks manufacture purchasing power by allowing overdrafts, and by other devices, to the entrepreneur-class: in common phrase, the Capitalist. Now, consider the position of this person. He has large purchasing power, but his personal consuming power is like that of any other human being: he requires food, clothes, lodging, etc.

If, as is increasingly the case, the personal Capitalist is replaced by a Trust, there is a somewhat larger personal consuming power, represented by the stockholders, but it is still incomparably below the purchasing power. What happens? After exhausting the possibilities of luxuries, the organisation itself exercises

the purchasing power and buys the goods and services which it itself consumes—machinery, raw material, etc. In consequence, the production which is stimulated—the production which we are asked to increase—is that which is required by the industrial machine, intermediate products or semi-manufactures, not that required by humanity. It is perfectly true that money is distributed in this process, but the ratio of this money to the price-value of human necessities—ultimate products—is constantly decreasing for the reasons shown, and the cost of living is therefore constantly rising.

Before turning to the examination of the remedy built upon this diagnosis it is necessary to emphasise a feature of our economic system which is vital to the condition in which we find ourselves, i.e., that the wages, etc., system distributes goods and services through the same agency by which it produces goods and services—the productive system. In other words, it is quite immaterial how many commodities there are in the world, the general public cannot touch them without doing more work and producing more commodities. It is my own opinion, not lightly arrived at, that that is the condition of affairs in the world to-day—that there is little if any real shortage, but that production is hampered by prices, and the Capitalists cannot drop prices without losing control. However that may be, this feature, in conjunction with those previously examined, has many far-reaching consequences—amongst others the feverish struggle for markets, which, in turn, has an overwhelmingly important bearing on Foreign Policy. To sum the whole matter up, the existing economic arrangements—

(a) Make credit the most important factor in effective demand;

(b) Base credit on the pursuit of a financial objective, and centralise it;

(c) This involves constantly expanding production;

(d) This must find an effective demand, which means export and more credit;

(e) Makes price a linear function of cost, and so limits distribution, largely to those with large credits;

(f) Therefore directs production into channels desired by those with the largest credits.

A careful consideration of these factors will lead to the conclusion that loan-credit is the form of effective demand most suitable for stimulating semi-manufactures, plant, intermediate products, etc., and that "cash"-credit is required for ultimate products for real personal consumption. The control of production, therefore, is a problem of the control of loan-credit, while the distribution of ultimate products is a problem of the adjustment of prices to cash-credits. It is only with this latter that we are at present concerned.

We have already seen that the cash-credits provided by the whole of the money distributed by the industrial system, so far as it concerns the wage-earner, is only sufficient to provide a small surplus over the cost of the present standard of living, and that only by conditions of employment which the workers repudiate, and rightly repudiate. We cannot create a greater surplus by increasing wages, because the increase is reflected in a compound rise in prices. Keeping, for the moment, wages constant, we have to inquire what prices ought to be to ensure proper distribution.

Now the *cost of this problem is the fact that money, which is distributed in respect of articles which do not come into the buying range of the persons to whom the money is distributed, is not real money*—it is simply inflation of currency so far as those persons are concerned. The public does not buy machinery, industrial buildings, etc., for personal consumption at all. So that, as we have to distribute wages in respect of all these things, and we want to make these wages real money, we have to establish a relation between total production, represented by total wages, salaries, etc., and total ultimate consumption, so that whatever money a man receives it is real purchasing power. This relation is the ratio which total production of all descriptions bears to *total* consumption and depreciation.

The total money distributed represents total production. If prices are arranged as at present, so that this total will only buy a portion of the supply of ultimate products, then all intermediate products must be paid for in some other way. They are; they are paid for by internal and external (export) loan-credit.

If prices are arranged so that they bear the same relation to cost that consumption does to depreciation, then every man's money will buy him his average share of the total consumption, leaving him with a balance which represents his credit in respect of his share in the production of intermediate products (semi-manufactures)—a share to which he is entitled, but which is now almost entirely controlled by the financier in partnership with the industries' price-fixer.

It is a little difficult to state with any accuracy what proportion of cost prices ought to be because of the distorting effect of waste, sabotage, and aimless luxury.

I am making some rather tedious investigations into this, and I can only say that I am convinced that even now prices are twenty times too high, and that with proper direction of production this figure would be greatly exceeded.

A Guildsman's Interpretation of History.

By Arthur J. Penty.

XV.—POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC THEORY AFTER THE REFORMATION.

DURING the Middle Ages the theory obtained that national prosperity and well-being had its foundation in agriculture rather than commerce. Work and not wealth or property was the bestower of all worth and dignity. Mediæval economists deprecated any politico-economic movement that encouraged the people to give up the pursuit of agriculture for trade and commerce. Thus we read:—

"Among manual industries none stood higher in the estimation of the Canon Law than agriculture. It was looked upon as the mother and producer of all social organisation and all culture, as the fosterer of all other industries, and consequently as the basis of national well-being. The Canon Law exacted special consideration for agriculture, and partly for this reason, that it tended in a higher degree than any other branch of labour to teach those who practised it godly fear and uprightness. 'The farmer,' so it is written in 'A Christian Admonition,' 'must in all things be protected and encouraged, for all depends on his labour, from the Emperor to the humblest of mankind, and his handiwork is in particular honourable and well-pleasing to God.' Therefore both the spiritual and the secular law protect him."

"Next to agriculture came handiwork. 'This is praiseworthy in the sight of God, especially in so far as it represents necessary and useful things.' And when the articles are made with care and art, then both God and men take pleasure in them; and it is good and true work when artistic men, by the skill and cunning of their hands, in beautiful building and sculpture, spread the glory of God and make men gentle in their spirits, so that they find delight in beautiful things, and look reverently on all art and handicraft as a gift of God for use, enjoyment, and edification of mankind."

"Trade and commerce were held in lower esteem. 'An honourable merchant,' says Trithemius, 'who does not only think of large profits, and who is guided in all his dealings by the laws of God and man, and

who gladly gives to the needy of his wealth and earnings, deserves the same esteem as any other worker. But it is no easy matter to be always honourable in mercantile dealings, and with the increase of gain not to become avaricious. Without commerce no community, of course, can exist, but immoderate commerce is rather hurtful than beneficial, because it fosters greed of gain and gold, and enervates and emasculates the nation through love of pleasure and luxury.' "

The Canonical writers did not think it was conducive to the well-being of the people that the merchants "like spiders should everywhere collect together and draw everything into their webs." With the ever-increasing growth and predominance of the mercantile spirit before their eyes they were sufficiently justified in their condemnation of the tyranny and iniquity of trade which, as St. Thomas Aquinas had already said, "made all civic life corrupt, and by the casting aside of good faith and honesty opened the door wide to fraudulence; while each one thought only of his personal profit without regard to the public good."*

This attitude towards social questions came to an end at the Reformation, when, with the destruction of the power of the Church, power passed entirely into the hands of the capitalists, who came to dominate the State. The political philosophy which gradually came into existence under their auspices looked at things from a very different angle. It makes no attempt to interpret society in the light of the principle of Function, to conceive of society as a whole the parts of which are organically related to each. There is little or no attempt on the part of Government to protect the interest of the labourer, to take measures to see that the fruits of his labour are secured for him. On the contrary, regard is paid only to the interest of the merchant, while the labourer is left to shift for himself as best he can, with only such doubtful protection as the Statute of Apprentices gave to the town workers. Though the claims of agriculture were not altogether neglected, yet the tendency in the long run was for statesmen and theorists to exalt manufactures above agriculture and exchange above production. This came about because it was through foreign trade that the money was made which was the main source of revenue to the State, and because there was a general tendency in the thought of the governing and merchant classes to identify money with wealth. The governing class of capitalists with their henchmen, the lawyers, consisted no longer of men capable of taking large and comprehensive views of society, but of men whose minds were entirely pre-occupied with its material aspects. They concentrated all their attention upon finding ways and means to increase the wealth of the nation, but for reasons perhaps best known to themselves they chose to ignore the problem as to how it was to be distributed.

External circumstances favoured the growth of this point of view in the governing class. The suppression of the monasteries had been followed by a period of great economic depression when the people felt the pressure of poverty. There was great dislocation of industry everywhere and a debased coinage had not improved matters. The low-water mark was reached during the reign of Edward VI. Under Elizabeth things were lifted out of the mire, and the country rescued from economic stagnation and depression by the encouragement given to manufacturers and foreign trade. The popularity of Elizabeth—for in spite of her religious persecutions she was popular—was due to the fact that the support she gave to the policy of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, had the effect towards the close of her reign of restoring the national prosperity. Immediately the policy of Burghley was prompted by the likelihood of a war with Spain. England had become Protestant. and as she had hitherto been dependent for war material both as regards gunpowder and the metals necessary for the making of ordnance upon supplies that came from ports controlled by the Roman Catholic Powers, it was urgent if she was to retain her independence for her to have a supply of her own. Every means, therefore, was taken to foster the manufacture of munitions of war at home, and to such an extent was the effort successful that when at last the storm burst and the Spanish Armada sailed for England it was found that the leeway had been entirely made up, and that English guns were as good, if not better, than those of Spain.

But the new policy did not end here. Agriculture was encouraged for military as well as for economic reasons. Measures were taken to make tillage as profitable as pasturage by removing the embargo upon the export of grain, while enclosures were stopped. The fishing trades were supported not merely for the wealth they produced but as a school of seamanship to train men for the mercantile and naval marine. This thing did much to mitigate the evil of unemployment which had become so chronic under previous reigns, but further measures were taken to definitely deal with it and to diffuse a general prosperity by the establishment of a great number of new industries that made goods in England which only hitherto had been obtainable from abroad. Industries for the manufacture of hardware, sailcloth, glass, paper, starch, soap, and other commodities of common consumption were successfully established. Mines also were opened. The assistance of German engineers was called in for this. A new method of pumping, which they had invented, made mining a more practicable and commercial proposition.

The circumstances of the age were particularly favourable to these new developments. The religious wars in the Netherlands and elsewhere led to the emigration of great numbers of skilled workmen who found a haven of refuge in England, and brought a technical knowledge of new industries with them. Moreover, there was the change of trade routes so favourable to English industry. During the Middle Ages these routes had been overland, and it was this circumstance that brought such prosperity to the Hanseatic towns of Germany, whose central European position was then so enviable. But with the invention of the mariner's compass, the discovery of America and the sea route to India overland trade routes gave place to sea routes, and thus took prosperity away from the Hanseatic and other inland towns and countries and transferred it to seaports and countries with a good seaboard. This transformation, which occupied the space of about fifty years, was very profitable to English merchants and manufacturers, who now began to secure a larger and larger share of the commerce of the world, and helped enormously to restore the national prosperity.

It would have been a fortunate thing for England if the political speculation which accompanied these changes had kept its mental balance and reconciled in their true proportions the old with the new. But, unfortunately, such was not the case. Prosperity had been restored not by efforts to re-establish justice in the internal ordering of Society, but by seizing the opportunities which a period of economic transition afforded for the making of money. And so faith in the old order tended to decline, while confidence in the new increased. Capitalism had been able to restore prosperity, and so the opinions of Capitalists came to weigh more and more in the counsels of the State. Success in the new order depended upon adaptability, and so the opinion grew that a country lived not by its wisdom or its justice, but by its wits. The State, which during the Middle Ages had concerned itself exclusively with the functions of military protection and the administration of the law, and since the reign of Henry VIII had made itself responsible for the religious life of the people, now began to concern itself with the promotion of industry and commerce. Accord-

* "History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages." By Johannes Janssen. Vol. II, pp. 97-98.

ing to the new dispensation, wealth, or to be more strictly correct, bullion, was the great alchemy. Success in the race for wealth was the precursor of all other desirable things. Hence, it was the first concern of the State to see to it that there was always a large store of the precious metal on hand. To achieve this end, considered of such vital importance, every expedient was considered legitimate. The Government might prohibit the import or export of certain commodities. This industry was to be encouraged to export by subsidising it with bounties, that was to be discouraged by the imposition of duties. Charters were granted giving private monopolies to certain companies. The test of success was to show a balance of trade in favour of the nation, and an increase in the gold reserve. This system of the control of production and exchange by the State is known as Mercantilism. It is, as its name implies, the interpretation of national policy in the terms of the counting-house. Its defect was that it placed the State at the mercy of vested interests, and was a source of political corruption, while it became a fruitful source of wars. In the Middle Ages wars had been territorial and dynastic. Now they became economic and were fought over tariffs, concessions and privileges. It was the inevitable consequence of the defeat of the Guilds, which, changing the ideal of industry from a qualitative to a quantitative one, necessarily brought those who pursued it in collision with economic interests beyond the seas. The wars with the Dutch were deliberately provoked by the Navigation Act, which prohibited the importation in foreign vessels of any but the products of the countries to which they belonged. It was intended to strike a fatal blow at the carrying trade of the Dutch from which they drew their wealth and to secure our supremacy on the seas; and it was successful. The Mercantilists clearly grasped the fundamental economic fact, that under competitive conditions of industry the commercial advantage of one country is often only to be obtained at the expense of another, and that "Trade follows the flag," as Conservatives believe to this day. Mercantilism is not dead, it is the living faith of the commercial classes to-day in all countries of the world. Free Traders in these days are unwilling to face the unpleasant fact that the terms of the economic struggle are laid down by law and maintained by force. Though Adam Smith did say "As defence is of much more importance than opulence, the Act of Navigation is, perhaps, the wisest of all the regulations of England." People who believe in commercialism ought to believe in militarism. If one of these is to be deprecated, then the other is. To believe in commercialism and reject militarism is to live in a world of unrealities, as Free Traders in these days are finding out.

Mercantilism was not a social theory but a commercial policy evolved by men who were satisfied to assume that a policy which suited their own immediate interests must be good for Society. It began its career during the reign of James I, when Gerard Malynes, a specialist in currency, whose advice on mercantile affairs was often sought by the Privy Council, set forth his views in a series of pamphlets, in which he urged the Government to forbid the export of bullion. The idea was a Mediæval one, and is altogether unintelligible, apart from the Mediæval system of thought, which, refusing to divorce economics from normal considerations, placed the maintenance of the social order before the interests of capital and trade. Viewing the social and economic evils which accompanied the growth of foreign trade, it was but natural that the Mediævalists, like Aristotle, should regard its increase with alarm and suspicion, and seek to put obstructions in the path of its advance, and that the support of the State should be secured for obstructionist tactics by the convenient theory that armies and fleets could only be maintained in distant countries if there is money to pay for them, and that such money would not be forthcoming when wanted if bullion were exported from the country. But Malynes, writing at a later date, urged his case upon other grounds—that an exchange implied value for value—the operation of the exchanges defrauded the revenue.

Taking his stand upon such purely technical grounds the first Mercantilist found no difficulty in refuting him. If the increase of foreign trade was a good and desirable thing quite apart from how the increased wealth was distributed—and in official quarters this assumption was taken for granted—then the Mercantilists were easily able to show that restrictions on the export of bullion impeded the growth of foreign trade. "They represented, first, that the exportation of gold and silver in order to purchase foreign goods, did not always diminish the quantity of those metals in the kingdom. That, on the contrary, it might frequently increase that quantity; because if the consumption of foreign goods was not thereby increased in the country, those goods might be re-exported to foreign countries, and, being there sold for a large profit, might bring back much more treasure than was originally sent out to purchase them."* Thomas Mun, who is sometimes described as the founder of Mercantilism, and whose treatise, "England's Treasure in Foreign Trade," which, often reprinted during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, retained almost canonical authority until it was displaced by "The Wealth of Nations," declared that "Money begets trade and trade increaseth money." He compared the operations of foreign trade to the seedtime and harvest of agriculture. "If we only behold," he says, "the actions of the husbandman in the seedtime, when he casteth away much good corn into the ground, we shall account him rather a madman than a husbandman. But when we consider his labours in the harvest, which is the end of his endeavours, we shall find the worth and plentiful increase of his actions."

The sub-title of the treatise declares that "the balance of our foreign trade is the rule of our treasury," and the object is declared to be to exhibit the means by which a kingdom may be enriched. "The ordinary means to increase our wealth and treasure is by foreign trade, wherein we must ever observe this rule—to sell more to strangers yearly than we consume of theirs in value. For that part of our stock which is not returned to us in wares must necessarily be brought home in treasure; every effort must, therefore, be devoted to increase our exports and to decrease our consumption of foreign commodities. Waste land should be used to grow hemp, flax and other articles which are now imported. We might also diminish our imports if we would lessen our demand for foreign ware in diet and raiment. The vagaries and excesses of fashion might be corrected by adopting sumptuary laws prevailing in other countries. "If in our raiment we will be prodigal, let this be done by our own manufactures, where the success of the rich may be the employment of the poor, whose labours, notwithstanding, would be more profitable if they were done to the use of strangers." We may charge a high price for articles which our neighbours need, and which no other country can supply; but those of which we do not possess the monopoly must be sold as cheap as possible. Foreign materials worked up in England for export should be duty free. Our exports should be carried in our own ships, and our fisheries should be developed. Writing as a Director of the East India Company, Mun pronounces our trade with the East Indies the most profitable of our commercial activities, not only because we obtain its products cheaply for ourselves, but because we sell the surplus at a high price to our neighbours. This "may well stir up our utmost endeavours to maintain and enlarge this great and

* "Wealth of Nations." By Adam Smith. Book IX. Chapter I.

noble business, so much importing the public wealth, strength and happiness."†

Such was the faith of Mercantilism as it was most widely accepted. Apart from what he has to say about sumptuary laws, which has a fifteenth century ring about it, it is the same faith as that of the average commercial man to-day. Subsequent writers sought to widen out the mercantile theory. They deprecated the exaggerated importance given to foreign trade and emphasised the importance of home markets and agriculture. Rejecting the notion that the national wealth depended on cash, they maintained that goods paid for goods and that nature and labour were the ultimate source of wealth. To this extent their thought showed a reversion towards the Mediæval point of view. But, on the other hand, they were modernist, being the forerunners of the Free Traders. They attacked the elaborate system of prohibitions, duties, bounties and monopolies as an impediment rather than an encouragement to trade. Dudley North anticipated Adam Smith when he declared, "The world as to trade is but as one nation, and nations are but as persons. No trade is unprofitable to the public; for if any prove so, men leave it off; and wherever the trader thrives the public thrives also." Chas. Davanent, another of the school, maintained that loss by balance in one trade may cause profit in another. "Trade," he says, "is in its own nature free, finds its own channel, and best directeth its own course." But he forgets that the same arguments may be turned against him. For while it is true that trade, when untrammelled, will find its own channel, it does not follow that the channel is a socially desirable one, and that while the loss in one trade may cause profit in another, one man is called to bear the loss while another gets the profits, and that the unequal distribution of wealth that follows such a policy is anything but socially advantageous.

The next development of Mercantilism is associated with the name of Adam Smith. I call it the next development because, though it is true the Manchester school reversed the economic maxims of the mercantilists, yet finally they only differed from them to the extent of carrying their ideas to their logical conclusion. The mercantile theory of Mun was a theory of business, of making money by foreign trade. As such it provided a theory or policy for a group of interests which it assumed was in the public interest, but it took no particular pains to explain how and why. The Free Traders who followed him attempted to give the theory a wider application, demanding the abolition of privileges in trade. But they went little further than making this demand. To secure acceptance of such proposals something more was needed. Free Trade would remain unacceptable as an administrative proposal so long as political and economic thought was dominated largely by Mediæval preconceptions, and it became necessary therefore to secure acceptation for the Free Trade policy by undermining what remained of Mediæval political and economic thought. This was the work of Adam Smith. To the Mediæval idea of privileges for all he opposed the idea of the abolition of all privileges and unfettered individual competition, which he associated with the gospel of Free Trade. To the Mediæval idea of the Just Price he opposed the idea that prices were best settled by competition. "To buy in the cheapest market and to sell in the dearest was a policy calculated to secure the greatest good of the greatest number. But such economic principles were incompatible with the Mediæval and Christian ideal of human unselfishness. Then, concluded Adam Smith, such principles had no relevance in economics. Not unselfishness, but enlightened self-interest was the ideal to be aimed at.

In his "Theory of Moral Sentiments" Adam Smith postulates the doctrine of sympathy as the real bond between human beings in their ethical relations. But in the "Wealth of Nations" he makes it clear that human sympathy has no place in economic relationships. "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker," he tells us, "that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity, but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our necessities, but of their advantage." This perverted attitude of mind permeates the whole of Adam Smith's writings. According to him the public well-being was secured not by the assertion of communal interests, by the subordination of individual interests to those of the community, but by the deliberate removal of all economic restraints in order that each individual might be at liberty to pursue his own selfish ends without let or hindrance. *Laissez faire, laissez passer* was the key to unlock all economic problems, the sole panacea for all human ills, the only hope of social regeneration. Give free play to enlightened self-interest and natural liberty, and prosperity would soon shine in all its splendour on every department of the national life, for the effect of urging each individual to pursue his interests under a system of unfettered individual competition would so stimulate trade and cheapen production that there would soon be plenty for all and to spare.

That Adam Smith should have been hailed as a prophet can only be explained on the hypothesis that the moral tone of society had reached its nadir ere he wrote. Ruskin's allusion to him as "the half-bred and half-witted Scotchman who taught the deliberate blasphemy: Thou shalt hate the Lord thy God, damn His laws and covet thy neighbour's goods," was well deserved, and is not the less true because he was sufficiently cunning to wrap up his devilish advice in language of plausible sophistry instead of presenting it in the raw. The apology of all who act as Adam Smith would have them do is that they take the world as they find it, but they conceal the fact that they are content to leave it worse than they found it. Of no one is this truer than of Adam Smith. He was the pioneer of that economic fatalism which during its fifty years of power paralysed society. In the hands of his followers all his half-hearted qualifications were torn away, and political economy became the rigid soul-less doctrine of every man for himself and the devil take the hindermost, and all sympathy for the exploited was strangled by the Ricardian "iron law of wages." That Ruskin entirely annihilated the brazen doctrine in the first three pages of "Unto this Last," published in 1862, by exposing the fallacy underlying the method of reasoning of the Manchester economists, anyone with an ounce of logic in his composition is well aware. Yet in spite of this it showed no signs of weakening until its most distinguished adherent, John Stuart Mill, disowned the superstition seven years afterwards, in 1869.

Apologists of Adam Smith urge in his defence that the governing class took only so much from his teaching as suited them and ignored the rest, and he is therefore not to be blamed for the misinterpretation or misapplication of his principles. While this plea may be urged in defence of other men it cannot be urged in the case of Adam Smith. Most pioneers of thought have to complain that their followers have been true to the letter of their advice while their spirit has been neglected, but the governing class were true to the spirit of Adam Smith's gospel, if not to the letter. If Adam Smith really thought that he could on the one hand urge individuals to pursue their own selfish interests and at the same time forgo in the public interest any privileges they might possess, he is to be regarded as a fool of the first order, half-witted as Ruskin called him, entirely destitute of any understanding of the human psychology, for the heartless competition to which he condemned those without privileges made those who possessed privileges cling to them more tenaciously than ever.

† "Political Thought from Bacon to Halifax." By G. P. Gooch. Pp. 232-4.

An Open Reply to an Agitated Agitator.*

DEAR BILL,—Your Open Letter calls the more for a reply because it is one of several letters I've received on the subject of those articles in the "Times." But I can't help wondering why it is that you and other agitators are so horribly upset by those articles and curse me so heartily for them. To begin with, you're wrong in saying that therein I was "lecturing Labour" —which you always so carefully separate from Capital. If you read those articles again, you'll see that they were addressed to the Employers. Moreover, the whole aim of the articles was to point out to employers how much better it would be if they took their workers into their counsels, if they told them everything, or as much as possible, about the business they worked in, if they interested their people by letting them know what happened to the goods they made, and so on. All this side of my articles you ignore, and you rise in your wrath to denounce me for daring to "lecture Labour," and for urging the employers to use propaganda to refute the false arguments of men like yourself. I urged the employers to tell the workers the truth and plenty of it. Why should you resent that? To put it bluntly, Bill, what you and your like appear most to resent is any attempt to bring about amicable relations between Labour and Capital, any attempt to show the workers that it pays them not to waste so much energy and cripple industry by quarrels and fights. I know you'll tell me this is a mere argument to persuade the worker to work for the good of Capital. I don't believe it need pay Labour any less to work for the good of Industry, including Capital and Labour.

By the way, let me return the compliment you pay my writing—that I am not writing against my convictions, that I believe what I write, etc. I believe the same of you personally, although I don't of all your class; and I also believe that all you say of the added crime due to my sincerity is doubly a crime in your case, because you are devoting a greater energy and greater skill than mine to the task of breeding class war, setting Labour against Capital, ruining Industry and the workers with it. If I link the moral fervour of a saint with the mentality of a Boy Scout, you link the fervour of a fanatic with the mentality of a fiend. You chide me for such writing as you think may bring about a Peterloo, whereas all your work is more likely to bring about another Liverpool, 1918, and a good deal worse. Perhaps it won't come to that; perhaps British Labour can never be led to all the excesses of Bolshevism—those excesses of murder, rape, theft and the rest you so vigorously describe, and which I wish you would describe and denounce oftener—but it will be small thanks to you and your like if they don't come to it. Your fervent and unremitting labour to depict Capital as a loathsome monster and every Capitalist as a foul brute worthy only of sudden and violent death can hardly fail to rouse the worst passions in the class you address. You may recommend killing and destroying Capitalism, but this is so easily translatable in action to killing Capitalists and burning buildings.

You may scoff at the bogey of Bolshevism. But if you don't know that there are men who openly advocate "following the example of Russia," and who have urged our adoption of Soviets, and Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, and the rest of the governing system the Bolshevists began, I can only say you are further out of touch with Labour than I am. I admit these advocates of Bolshevism, or Sovietism, or whatever you choose to call it, don't advocate all its resulting atrocities; but then neither did the men who started the Russian revolution expect such an orgy of crime as did result. You may bring Labour to a point of smashing windows and burning buildings; you may not find it easy to stop it going further. And, honestly, Bill, don't you think you've too many windows about your house to start chucking bricks around about me and my like "inciting the middle classes to violence." What on earth else are you inciting people to?

It is rather a joke, too, that you should be irritated by my assumption that any theory of mine is right, while you flatly and dogmatically assert that I am, and every other man is, a congenital idiot, or worse, if we don't agree with you and your creeds. You won't even allow that men who have been workers all their lives, and who are in constant touch with workers, can possibly be right in their theories and arguments if these differ one iota from yours. You declare them "out of touch with Labour," or, in your words, sneer at them as "Labour leaders who prove they are as well able to govern as the governing classes by being willing to copy all the vices of the governing classes." You arrogate to yourselves even the right to write on industrial matters, and scoff at any but yourselves being able even to think. I can only "re-write the nauseating bilge." I can't think, because, you tell me, "this excitation of the glib surface of things that gives you the pleasant sensation of intellectual exertion is not thought." But, on the other hand, every "Labour agitator in gaol or out of it" is "sincerely trying" and "sincerely doing good." You have a sense of humour, Bill; or have you drowned it in "nauseating bilge"? If so, go out and beg, borrow, or steal somebody else's. It might allow you to laugh at yourself and your impudent assumption that you and yours only are right, that anyone who disagrees is a knave and a fool; that you and yours hold the sole right, title, and patent of Truth; that yours is the only genuine hall-marked, stamped-on-every-link brand, and all others are spurious imitations. I admire your cheek, Bill.

Why do you rave so against the "English caste system" which you struggle so desperately to foster and breed into a hatred between the castes? And why do you blame the unfortunate "middle classes" for all the misfortunes and sins of the country? I deny your dogmatic assertion that the middle class "provided the most incompetent officer class" in the war, or even that ours was the most incompetent. But since this is a matter largely of opinion, and we might find as many believers as disbelievers of the statement, we can't argue it to any conclusion. I'd rather ask why you pick the middle class as providing the officer class. Do you not know that there were thousands of officers provided from the Labour classes? Have you not known, personally, many non-coms. of the old Regular Army who became officers? And mainly those privates and non-coms. of the old Army were Labour class. Have you not read in your papers of policemen and plasterers and workers of all sorts retiring with various ranks from Colonel down, and going back to their work? If you don't know these facts, you ought to before you so freely fling charges of ignorance at others. If you do know them, and misstate them, isn't it coming dangerously near that charge of foul and tainted wells of information you bring against the Capitalist Press? The middle class, too, according to you, are solely the cause of all the hostile criticism we can bring against "civilian control," by which I take it you mean all the present scandals of reckless expenditure and waste, and so on. But have there been no Labour men concerned in this "civilian control"? Are there no Labour Members in Parliament? And if the workers believe that only Labour members—members chosen and elected by Labour—can be honest and businesslike and efficient, why don't they elect more of them? I am not trying to deny or justify, if anyone could even attempt it, the misrule of our "civilian control," but I do not believe (if you will allow me even to believe, or not be-

* For instance, Will Dyson, who lectures me for "lecturing Labour."

lieve, anything) that the middle class alone is responsible for it. And I also think (so far as you'll allow me to think) that this and other consistent attempts of your class to make Labour believe so is another criminal attempt to set class against class. You are one of the few agitators I know who have seen real war. I should have thought you'd seen enough to sicken you of blood and killing, instead of rousing you to inflame the worse passions in men and bring about more killings. You may tell me, as I know many agitators do, that you'd rather see blood run in our streets than have the present "system" continue. If so, you are all working on the right lines.

I believe, rather, that the evils of the "system" may be altered, or removed, or improved away, that they are improving, by methods of reason and conciliation instead of throat-cutting.

I won't begin to argue here the questions of "super-production" and under-production, because, for one reason, there is little good in arguing with you who so firmly believe everyone but yourself mad. I'd rather address my arguments to some who are a little less conceited and cocksure of themselves and their beliefs. But it satisfies me to note that workmen—workers, Bill, who are earning their bread by the sweat of their brows—are also, in some instances, and in whole batches and blocks, becoming what you will call mad, and are coming to see that greater production may be a good thing for themselves. That, no doubt, riles you and all the professional agitators immensely, and explains why you are reduced to invective instead of argument.

I thank you sincerely for your letter, and others for somewhat similar letters (although they, to be sure, fall short of your "nauseating bilge," "bechewed morsels wet with the saliva," "reckless prodigality of the ruling rich," "vile and poisonous growth" style of writing). It all encourages me, and leads me to believe that you and your class fear my writings may have some result on the lines I wish, and the lines you bitterly oppose. It is, in fact, almost the only encouragement I've had to continue my writings on this subject. And, by the way, do let me disabuse your mind on one point. You believe I am "not bought or even consciously influenced by the money that is in the exploitation of the querulous fears of the middle classes." True, I'm not, and I couldn't be if I would, because there is no money in it so far as I know. Some day when next we meet I'll tell you the rate paid for such writings. I only hope for your sake that you find it pay better to exploit the Labour classes—not you, personally, because I know you've renounced a good deal of profit for the sake of your convictions. But you're the sole exception I know amongst agitators. You refer, too, to "the statistics a grateful Ministry has evolved for me." It hasn't. I haven't found yet a grateful Ministry or one that would or could evolve anything useful to me. And, finally, I am "a professional writing man and interested primarily in subjects capable of attractive statement." Wrong again, as you ought to know. I take it a professional writing man makes his living by writing. I never have done. I've earned my living in most ways, but never by writing. And if ever I do, I won't try to make it by such writings as you object to so strongly. They don't pay.

I explain all this at length because I am not sure whether you write in ignorance, or whether the points I mention are a clever attempt to discredit my writings amongst workers by making them believe I'm doing it to make money out of them, the workers. I wouldn't believe you capable of such an attempt on your own; but we all know that dodge for an accepted practice amongst agitators, and you can't shake hands with pitchy ones without defilement. And we believe that your sources as just as tainted as you can call any of mine.

Yours, BOYD CABLE.

Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

THE British Drama League, of which I wrote recently, has attracted the attention of the dramatic critic of the "Times," and before settling down to the work of the autumn season we shall do well to consider what the wittiest and probably the wisest of the dramatic critics has to say. The fact that the article bore the initials of Mr. A. B. Walkley effected a breach of the tradition of the "Times"; but as Viscount Rothermere is one of the vice-presidents of the League it is easy to understand why the "Times" did not accept editorial responsibility for the views of its critic. Let brotherly love continue, so long as "A. B. W." is permitted to talk sense in French. Perhaps it was hardly fair to talk French to the *British* Drama League; but "A. B. W." is as French as—as camouflage, and as dazzling; and the British Drama League, with its Bishop in the chair, may more thoroughly appreciate the solemnity of its proceedings by contrast with the *esprit* of its critic. It is a serious thing to educate the artistic taste of the British public, so serious that we sometimes allow Parliament to do it. Marylebone was built by Act of Parliament, said Disraeli; Parliament prescribed even a façade; and "the power that produced Baker Street as a model for street architecture in its celebrated Building Act is the power that prevented Whitehall from being completed, and which sold to foreigners all the pictures which the King of England had collected to civilise his people." The British Drama League may well take itself seriously with such a precedent for its activities.

The retort is obvious, and the dramatic critic of the "Daily News" made it. Although it is admitted that these movements have "a notorious attraction for pedants and prigs," this danger is fully realised by the British Drama League, "which is not in any sense a combination of 'high-brows,'" says Mr. Baughan. The worst that can be said of Viscount Rothermere is that he has more intelligence than his brother; but of the rest of the officials of the League there is hardly one who has more than a doctrinaire idea of humanity or an exotic interest in its peculiarities. Is not Lord Howard de Walden, the President, an "intellectual"; are not Miss Lena Ashwell and Mr. Arnold Bennett, both Vice-Presidents, identified with the "intellectual" drama; is not Mr. Granville Barker, Chairman of the Council, the most jejune of intellectualists in this country? Among the members of the Council we find the well-known names of the "uplifters" names that have been familiar for years in the production of coterie drama. Penelope Wheeler, Norman Wilkinson, the Hon. Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, Laurence Binyon, Edith Craig, R. H. Tawney, John Drinkwater—why, these are old friends who have, in a generation, increased the grey substance of the national brain by a considerable percentage. The "ricketty" state of drama at the present time may well be credited to their efforts.

But Mr. Baughan throws a real brick at "A. B. W." "The prospectus of the Everyman Theatre, to be erected at Golder's Green, answers Mr. Walkley's criticism. 'The play selection,' it states, 'will be as catholic as possible. Sincerity will not be confused with solemnity, and comedy will be given its due place in the repertoire.'" There is no better recognised method of improving the drama, or anything else, than by prospectus; did not the Futurists effect a revolution by manifesto; does not even Mr. Lloyd George govern the country by the same means? But phrases do sometimes reveal the spirit of their author, and the man who wrote: "Comedy will be given its due place in the repertoire" would not recognise a comedy if he saw one. Mr. Baughan triumphantly declares that "Mr. William Archer, Mr. John Masefield, Mr. John Galsworthy, Mr. Gilbert Cannan, and Mr. St. John

Ervine have promised their help in the selection of plays, and none of these writers is either a prig or a pedant." I salute the Old Guard; but when did Mr. Galsworthy, for example, see a joke, or Mr. St. John Ervine write a sincere play, or Mr. Gilbert Cannan feel a human emotion, or Mr. John Masefield write poetry? Mr. William Archer is in a category by himself; but his name is becoming so familiar as a judge or selector of plays that I expect to see him soon at the Lord Chamberlain's Office, giving "comedy its due place in the repertoire." Mr. St. John Ervine's most famous feat was the destruction of the Abbey Theatre Company; he took Belfast (or was it Londonderry?) to Dublin, and provoked the Irish Revolution.

The study of the personalities of the new movement reveals no new influence; on the contrary, with perhaps the single exception of Mr. Arnold Bennett (whose dramatic skill has developed with his commercial genius), it is a collection of played-out men who never were original, and who, now that Shaw is developing urbanity, do not even know where to look for an idea. Besides, ideas are only tolerable behind the scenes; on the stage we want drama, and not Le Penseur sprawling in various attitudes. The "great thinker" drama, wherein "sincerity will not be confused with solemnity," is simply dead—as dead as the mystery drama of Miss A. M. Buckton, which has now, I believe, been added to the Church service. At the best, these people are only moralists, interested in the problem even more than they are interested in the milieu; they have acclimatised the genre play of the provinces, and have mistaken the self-satisfaction and local patriotism of their audiences for good taste in drama. But at worst (and so many of them reach this point), they are tractarians, not perhaps of the "Times," but certainly of the "Labour Leader," and in the name of Art carefully avoid the production of anything like it. John Smith of Oldham with his bloater is the one touch of Nature with which they make the whole world kin.

"A. B. W." and Mr. E. A. Baughan are, of course, arguing at cross-purposes. "A. B. W." talks of taste, meaning artistic taste, and says very truly that "the slaves of categories, they do not see that a bad Shakespearean performance—and our contemporary Shakespearean performances have a way of not being good—may be a less important thing in art than some live piece of wit in a *revue*, that typical product of the commercial theatre." Mr. Baughan, instead of replying to the challenge of taste, retorts with the serious, reformative purpose of his friends (did I mention that Mr. Baughan is a member of the Council of the British Drama League?), with the "sincerity" that will not be confused with solemnity (as it is in Mr. Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln"), and the comedy that will be given "its due place in the repertoire"—as curtain-raisers, I suppose. The one talks of drama as an art, the other thinks of it as a social movement with social reactions. It is, in effect, the old dispute between the Restoration comedians who had no morals to enforce in the theatre, and the followers of Jeremy Collier, who had nothing else. The painter may rave about the execution of a study of the nude but the moralist can see nothing but the picture of a naked woman, and is only dubious in decision of the fact whether the sex or the nakedness of the figure is the more sinful. There is no possible basis of agreement between the two; they speak different languages, have different values—the one asks æsthetic enjoyment from art, the other demands moral improvement. The British Drama League may succeed in "impressing upon the Schools and Universities of the country the great importance of the drama as an educational force," but those of us who want the drama to be a great dramatic force may well smile at the schoolmasterly intention. The Church, too, has had its eye on the theatre for some time; it is a fact that more people go to hear George Robey than the Bishop of London, and (who knows?) we may yet see curates filling their churches with the help of refined versions of the illustrious George—after the British Drama League has impressed upon the country the great importance of drama as an educational force.

What's What and What Is.

MODERN metaphysics before Kant have been summarily described as the attempt to discover that which is always subject and never predicate, and thus to determine what is ultimately real. The description is at least sufficient to indicate, by contrast, what is, as I think, a fair representation of Mr. Slesser's metaphysical effort to establish "being beyond knowledge."* He seeks to find the real in that which is always predicate and never subject. The knowable, the subjects of predication, are found in sense-data, and again in the "things" of experience in so far as these exhibit definite qualities and relations. But sense-data and "things" are not in any case all that is, and so metaphysics, in the procedure in which all reality is to be by it "comprehended" (p. 13—an almost intentional reliance seeming to be put upon the ambiguity of this word), makes statements implying an order of reals which can only figure therein as predicate. As the realities in question are predicated only, these statements do not constitute knowledge of or about them, and as this their character as predicates is intrinsic, they are unknowable. But the fact that they are contained in metaphysical propositions is simply evidence that the real is not explicable in terms of sense-data or of the other objects of knowledge.

Have we here, then, a new evangel of that Unknowable which Spencer proclaimed as the proper object of human worship—that deity who regularly gave us the slip whenever a scientific discovery was made? Or does the "metaphysical ghost," the "Thing-in-Itself" again walk? The author's indebtedness to the Kantian phenomenalism is, indeed, obvious throughout. But the proper issue of his argument is not so readily to be found in the consideration of the relation of knowledge, as of phenomena only, to any presumed entities which, themselves hidden, "underlie," "correspond to" or "cause" them. Indeed, he rejects, on grounds of scientific economy, any such reference to "disparate noumena," and seems to consider he has thus made up his final account with the Critical philosophy. In these circumstances it is all the more striking that in establishing the "being beyond knowledge" of one of his unknowables, Substance—and the general consideration would equally well apply to the case of the other two, Will and The Knower—Mr. Slesser should stress the analogy with his own procedure of the "cosmological" argument and the "argument from design" in natural theology. The true point of reference of his work to the Kantian criticism is, in fact, Kant's classic discussion of the traditional arguments for the existence of God. As Mr. Slesser says, "Our final conclusion upon this matter cannot be more clearly put than in using the analogy of God to explain Substance. . . . The assertion of the Being of God, predicated from known creation, is an assertion of a kind not dissimilar to the assertion of the Being of unknown Substance from known sense-data. So far from such an idea of unknown Being being an unusual or eccentric doctrine, as some philosophers may assert, such a conviction is common to practically every theistic religion, and is one of the actions of mind more widespread than any other sentiment which transcends Experience. . . . In this matter of the predication of Being of the Unknowable we find ourselves on the side of the vulgar" (p. 141).

* "The Nature of Being: An Essay in Ontology." By Henry H. Slesser. (George Allen & Unwin. 10s. 6d. net.)

The cosmological argument, which is the more relevant here, contains, as Kant pointed out, two distinct arguments. The first purports to establish the existence of an absolutely necessary being, from the mere fact of contingent existence. "If something exists, an absolutely necessary being must likewise exist. Now I, at least, exist. Consequently, there exists an absolutely necessary being." But what is the nature of this absolutely necessary being? The answer to this question requires a second argument. To say that anything existent is *absolutely* necessary is to imply that its existence, as well as its other properties, must be contained in the very idea of it. Have we any *idea* which contains the existence of its object as well as its other properties? Yes, we have one, though only one, the idea of (God as) the subject of all positive predicates, of which existence is one. Combine the two arguments and it follows that God exists.

Kant rejects both arguments. The *necessity* concluded in the first is a necessity of thought, not a necessity of being. We are certainly obliged to refer back and back from effect to cause. But in experience we can never reach a last term in the series. The second, which is the only properly *theological* part of the contention, is just the "ontological" argument, whose fundamental fallacy is that it identifies the idea of a thing's existence (however intellectually necessary the idea) with its existence. Further, if this second argument were valid, the first would be superfluous.

Now, though Mr. Slesser, from the quotation given above, appears to confine his own doctrine to the non-theological part of the contention, his reasoning to "Being" really contains both types—he has his "ontological" as well as his "cosmological" argument. The former appears in his doctrine of what he calls "Words of Being," the latter in his analysis of sense-data and of the more or less generalised entities which are invoked in scientific explanation of events. In all this he seeks to get quite back behind the modern metaphysics which is typically a theory of knowledge.

A phrase like "Words of Being" suggests something daring and mysterious—the old "conceptions implying of themselves the existence of their objects" are utterly put in the shade. Have we but to utter the words "substance," "will," "the knower," and, ipso facto, reveal the existence of entities beyond our ken? Perhaps it is the prevalence of such linguistic achievements that has led the publishers to announce on the wrapper that the conclusions of the treatise are mystical. But the obscurities seem to follow mainly from the special sort of analysis—or rather parsing—on which the author founds his metaphysical procedure. Some analysis is enjoined by the fact that metaphysics consists of *statements,* but what is possible in the way of statement is discovered by Mr. Slesser principally through a consideration of the "parts of speech." He makes, on the other hand, practically no use of the analysis of *judgment* offered by the traditional formal logic, or even by a recent theory of knowledge. The problem "What are words, and what are the limitations which their use involves? . . . which is fully discussed in Logic, is here only considered in so far as it is necessary for our purpose" (p. 14), and it is a pity that that purpose excludes so much, otherwise in Mr. Slesser's own case the task of the expositor might not draw so largely on the equipment of the translator. For metaphysics this point is quite vital. In what follows there is certainly a useful and important discussion of the different purposes of language, and the distinction between the rational and the emotional connotations and effects of words is constantly urged. Nevertheless, it appears throughout the argument that (to take one instance) the word "Event"—one of the author's basic conceptions—is as portentous, as greatly abounding in edification and teleological significance for Mr. Slesser as it was for Shibli Bagarag.

It emerges that, as the result of science is to "predicate knowledge of sense-data," so the problem of metaphysics is to "predicate being of knowledge." Now, for ordinary logic, to "predicate knowledge of sense-data" would be simply to say that sense-data are known. To "predicate being of knowledge" would, in like manner, be no more than to assert that knowledge exists, or that there *are* people who know. There is nothing particularly metaphysical, or even mystical, about that. But Mr. Slesser has for predication a meaning of his own, derived, one is almost tempted to believe, from the uncritical uses of the more verbose types of oratory. It manages to contain, in addition to the logical meaning, the notions of prediction, of development, and of revelation, "inextricably mixed up together." Any statement whatever not merely implies, but is predication.

We may find the various meanings, however, differently distributed over the field of knowledge. *Prediction* comes out most prominently when we are dealing with sense-data. These are given in a series of continuous changes. But we can correlate them so as to predict the occurrence of certain of them from that of others, a prediction verified in the "event." Generalisation develops, graduating in language. But generalisation is possible below the level of language, because its elementary basis, the *types* imposed on sense-data by the fact that we have just such and so many senses, is not confined to human experience—some of the "higher animals" can correlate and "predict." (Thus, so far, there are natural or "real" kinds in Mill's sense.) With the appearance of language, however, *statement* becomes possible. The chief contributions of language to knowledge are the noun, the verb and the adjective. The noun represents the stabilised expectation of event, the verb its actual eventuation. With the adjective we come by the definite concept implied by the noun. All these enable us to describe Event—to our good—but even in their terms our description is contingent; its verification depends on the actual event. The mutual relations of sense-data are alogical (surely Mr. Belfort Bax, epistemologist as he is, is come into his own), and while their existence, indeed, presents the natural classification above remarked, the classification itself is contingent. Still, there is other work for a man than just waiting to see. Possessed now of the concept, we are empowered to make two sorts of statement. (1) We can assert the relations of concepts to one another—in words that are fully conceptual, of course. (2) We can assert the conceptual relation of things, or, rather, of nouns, which, again, symbolise sense-data. (1) and (2) are grouped by Mr. Slesser under the head of "formal statement," and here predication has rather its normal logical meaning. The truth of statements of class (1) is *necessary* (a). Statements of class (2) are still only contingently true; they can only be verified when we desymbolise them into terms of sense-data and observe the event. But statements of class (2), in order that they may cover the ground, require the inclusion of certain very general concepts—space, time, and causation—which are formal, being based rather on the "things" of descriptive statement, as such, than on the nature of the sense-data. Being thus required, these concepts, too, are *necessary* (b). Here I may remark that this has had to be largely a paraphrase of Mr. Slesser's extended argument, and that he himself does not distinguish the two necessities just signalised, but seems to consider them identical; still, I should contend that this identification is now clearly a confusion and vitiates his final position. In these necessities, whose is the need or want? In the former, that of one concept for another. In the latter, a need of our thought, or,

rather, of ourselves for the purposes for which we think. To proceed—in all this there is comprised a further predication, exhibiting now the character of development. The whole process just described is, we gather, itself a sort of statement; it "predicates knowledge of sense-data." But just here are difficulties, for Mr. Slesser nowhere makes clear whether by knowledge is to be understood the act or process of knowing, or that which is known. The citation of the thought-necessity of space, time and causation suggests that it is the process that is meant. On the other hand, the formal "necessary truths" of logic and mathematics would seem to deal with what is objectively known and has being, even if of a different order from that of sense-data.

Mr. Slesser now proceeds to metaphysical statement, which "predicates being of knowledge," and now predication is evidently a sort of revelation. Such statement is not adequately represented by contingent truth. "Metaphysical bases can none of them be the subject of Event, and, therefore, mere predication of properties or of truth by mere correspondence of idea and event cannot satisfy the demands which metaphysical explanation makes upon us" (p. 80). On the other hand, the coherence theory (which would make all truth necessary) does not cover the ground. What, then, is the criterion of metaphysical truth? This demand, I confess, I can only find supplied by the author in a statement of *what* it is that true propositions in metaphysics assert—they "must predicate the Known in terms of Being beyond Knowledge" (p. 98). We are also told, on the same page, that metaphysical truth must be "both contingent and necessary, contingent in that it must account for and include all sensual Event, necessary in that it must include all truth in which such events can be intellectually presented."

Thus, in place of the "idea of most real and absolutely necessary being" dealt with by Kant, we have now a "being beyond knowledge predicated of knowledge both contingently and necessarily." I do not think that this special combination of necessity and contingency has been made out. I can imagine the contingency coming in somehow like this—we may be observing and predicting the course of some natural process like the growth of a plant, and be able in addition to make the *metaphysical* statement that the process we are observing is really going on in something that our empirical observation need not take into account. The metaphysical statement, then, *and* the formal-empirical will both stand to be verified in the event, the same event. But how should we prove the metaphysical reference of the event to the "something beyond" as its locus? It is, I suppose, a "truth in which such events can be intellectually presented," and here, no doubt, the element of necessity enters. Mr. Slesser, as a metaphysician, tells me that the process is something happening to "Substance," and consists in the "penetration" of the latter by "Will." In what does the necessity of this statement consist? It may mean that growth does not occur without a certain relation holding between the ultimates just mentioned. In this case it has being, when it does take place, in precisely the same sense that they have. Or, I may be unable to understand the world in which growth (say) occurs without representing it in terms of these ultimates. But, then, *they* have exactly the status of time, space or causation. And the statement containing them will have to be "desymbolised" into contingent elements, like other "formal" statements, and verified only in the event. Necessity and contingency have in this metaphysical statement precisely the place in which they are found by analysis in "knowledge"—they are not a whit more intimately combined or fused. We are still in the region of the "what" of things. The "words of being" are just words of description.

In the matter of necessity *in* statements (e.g., logical and mathematical principles), a necessity which we distinguished from our presumed need in thought for certain conceptions, we can see that it is quite possible for a thing which we do not know to be necessarily related to something we do not know. For the need is here not ours. Mr. Slesser certainly reproduces Mr. Russell's rejection ("Problems of Philosophy," p. 70) of the statement that we can never truly judge that something with which we are acquainted exists—to which Russell reduces the "idealist" principle that we cannot know that anything exists which we do not know. But our author, in any case, restricts *acquaintance* to sense-data, and ignores acquaintance with universals. This only confirms the fact, otherwise plain, that for him any such true judgments would fall entirely within the class of statements to be verified in event. The rejection gives no ground whatever for metaphysical statement of the sort he contends for.

We seem to be left with this, that the reference of metaphysical statement to being beyond knowledge must be guaranteed by the mere use of the "words of being" themselves. Nothing that the author has shown us of the function of these words as predicates establishes the existence of such being. Is a *word*, then, a proof of existence? Something like this appears to be at the back of Mr. Slesser's mind. In his account of metaphysical truth he puts great emphasis on the analogy of religion, and seems to argue that we get in religion, if we trace the history of its affirmations, the essence of metaphysical assertion. But nothing more seems to be required in order to get a valid system of metaphysics than to take the characteristic words which figure in religious assertions and purge away their emotional reactions. When their effect on the hearers has thus been changed from edification to the production of simple intellectual belief in some existence we have metaphysical truth. Mr. Slesser, in short, follows the modern custom, which finds some encouragement in Kant, of basing the validity of assertions on the fact that it is possible to make them. Only, it is one thing to show how the possibility of a statement follows from an analysis of certain fundamental principles of knowledge, and this is what Kant tried to do. It is another to base the possibility on mere history.

W. ANDERSON.

In School.

XVIII.—APPRECIATION OF MODERN LITERATURE.

My experiences of school-teaching, which began soon after the war, ended some few months ago, and though I learnt many things concerning the mentality of children during that period I always felt that no amount of experience would lessen the frequent surprises afforded me by their eccentricities of literary taste.

I could seldom foretell with any hope of accuracy the appeal which any particular passage of English literature would make to the form. Of course its opinion would not always be unanimous, but when the collective mind did manifest itself its literary taste seemed at times surprisingly mature, and at others remarkably deficient. It is, however, difficult, if not impossible, for anyone to affirm positively the failure of *unconscious* appreciation. More than once I have been asked quite spontaneously by my form to read again to them some passage for which they had expressed positive dislike on hearing it for the first time. It may be that certain works of art strike the unconscious too deeply for the appeal to rise immediately to the conscious surface. Or it may be that certain psychological resistances will operate consciously at first, and until these resistances are broken down or worn out appreciation will remain in the unconscious, simultaneously perhaps with conscious indifference or dislike. And it must be

remembered that until appreciation does become conscious it is practically speaking worthless.

One term I chose Le Morte d'Arthur to be read in class, but decided to abandon it after the form had read about fifty pages with apparently little enjoyment. However, at the end of term, as an exercise in English prose I asked them to describe one of the school football matches after the manner of Malory, and was rewarded with several excellent versions showing a wonderful knowledge and appreciation of his vocabulary and style.

The literary taste of the form was harder to determine in respect of poetry than of prose. Amongst a heterogeneous collection of English lyrics read to the form during a period of three years the one that roused much the greatest enthusiasm was the purely decorative "Cargoes," by Mr. John Masefield—

Quinquireme of Nineveh, sailing from distant Ophir.

Verbal sound, apart altogether from substance, generally made a fairly strong appeal to the form. They appreciated lyrics by Walter de la Mare, H. Belloc (especially those from "The Four Men," but not his Nonsense Rhymes, which are possibly too sophisticated for the child-mind), and even some by W. B. Yeats, the meaning of which I confessed to the form was quite unintelligible to me. And yet, though I tried my hardest on more than one occasion, the music of Swinburne's well-known Chorus from Atalanta—

The Hounds of Spring are on Winter's traces

seemed to make no appeal at all.

Towards the end of last year I happened to read "The Rainbow," by Mr. D. H. Lawrence, and it occurred to me that the form would derive moral and literary benefit from the chapter describing the experiences of one of the principal characters, Ursula Whatshername, as a teacher in a provincial Board School. Accordingly, one morning, after an injunction to the form to be patient and listen carefully to what might seem very dull, I began reading the chapter, but the lesson came to an end when I was less than half-way through it. I had arranged something else for the following day, but found to my surprise that the whole form had been enthralled with the extract, and practically refused to do anything until I had finished reading the chapter, a task which occupied nearly an hour. Those who have read "The Rainbow" will perhaps remember the appalling drabness of this chapter, which is, indeed, only relieved from the most utter sordidness by its reality to life and psychological insight. It was quite the most successful lesson I have ever given to the form, and had an excellent effect on the subsequent compositions of those who heard it. I asked the form to write a criticism of the chapter, explaining why they thought it so good, but of the eight results only one possessed any merit at all. This was by Dickens (aged 12), and is perhaps worth transcribing in part:—

. . . The description is very good of the way Ursula goes to the school determined to show kindness to her pupils, but she finds that everything there is done in a bullying way, and that the children are used to having things forced into their heads. She found that they had become like machines, and that it was useless to be at all personal. D. H. Lawrence seems to have probed the very soul of Ursula, bringing out her inmost thoughts. She finds it is no use to treat the children with kindness, but that they must go on having things forced into them. Gradually her heart hardened, and she became like all the other teachers.

Perhaps Mr. Harby is a little over-rated (sic); it is hardly likely that he would treat one of his teachers as badly as he treated Ursula. Mr. Brunt's warning, although delivered in a casual way, was really the only thing that saved Ursula from being dismissed by Mr. Harby. Perhaps Mr. Harby hated Ursula because she was just one station in life above him.

It is curious that of the whole form Dickens was the one who seemed to derive the least literary stimulus from the chapter. The fact that he was also the only one able to express any definite opinion of it on paper may illustrate significantly the different workings of the conscious and the unconscious. On the other hand, the coincidence may be explicable by other causes: I am unwilling to draw any definite conclusions.

To those unacquainted with the pristine dulness of these youthful productions it is impossible by means of quotations to give any clear idea of their improvement. Moreover, it is difficult to select any particular passage and say that it is the effect of such and such a cause; but I have reason to believe that the following extracts, which were written soon after the chapter from "The Rainbow" was read aloud, owe chiefly to its influence what merit they may possess.

. . . A train comes into sight. It draws nearer and nearer, and then in a second it has gone, leaving the station behind in contempt and disgust, and not even seeming to notice the little thing. . . .

You hear a noise in the distance, and a great black thing appears, and at the same time a door opens on the opposite platform, and a porter, who is very old and bent, starts to cross the line. The train is very near now, and you are rather afraid that the old man will not get over in time, but you are wrong. He gets over without quickening his speed at all, and you think that he is very plucky. . . .—H. SILO (aged 13), from "A Country Station."

. . . After the church service is over most of the labourers go into the "Red Lion" to have a talk and a drink before going in, for they go to bed fairly early. Soon the room is the centre of muddled, low-toned talking. On the walls hang advertisements for Mackay's Scotch Whisky and Martell's Brandy and others. The room soon gets full of strong tobacco smoke. Behind the counter, dealing out mugs of beer and ale, stands the innkeeper—a short, stout, red-faced man with a very bald head. . . .—F. STENSON (aged 13), from "A Summer Sunday Evening in a Country Village."

. . . All the clouds look like great masses of reddish-gold wool, and the sun makes all the brown, dead leaves look gold. The birds fly back to their nests slowly, and the sparrows swell themselves out and sit on the side of their nests with their eyes half-shut. . . .—R. THROCKMORTON (aged 11), from "Sunsets."

Another modern writer who has had a marked literary influence on the form is Mr. Hugh Walpole. I have already referred to his recently published study of a child mind, "Jeremy." Here are two extracts from imaginary accounts of "The Brown Family at the Pantomime," containing a certain amount of introspective effort, doubtless inspired by two of the earlier chapters. (I ought to mention that the book does contain a chapter describing Jeremy's visit to the pantomime, but this one I had not read to the form.)

Ah! this is the day; we are going to the pantomime to-day. It is "Peter Pan" we are going to see. It is the first time we have ever been. It starts at half-past two. It is a lovely day; the sun is shining, and to make it best of all we are having sausages. . . .

The curtain is a great green thing with a picture of the theatre surrounded by a ring in the middle. I stare at it; when will it go up? My heart stops me talking by sticking in my throat. Suddenly the lights go out, and the curtain slowly rises. First you see a few pairs of feet, then trousers and skirts. I wonder who they are. Ah! they are Jack, Wendy, and their mother. Jack and Wendy are in their night-suits, and the mother is watching them get into bed. I was fascinated; I watched every movement.

The first and second scenes pass; not a thing escaped me. I could watch it for ever. I feel as if I had been here in a heaven all my life. All I remembered was the pantomime. The third scene discloses itself. There is the underground house. Oh! here's Captain Hook; he pours the poison into the glass with an evil smile on his face. I turn round and cry and refuse to look at him. . . .

The last scene comes; it is very sad. . . . You take a longing look at Wendy, and go with a feeling of great regret. The pantomime is finished.—W. J. LAMB (aged 12).

. . . There was only one part which Willie was not

looking forward to; that was the dressing-up. His mother had just bought him an atrocious Eton suit, with a hard collar, which was the sort that dug into your shoulders when you attempted to get away from the stickiness of the melting starch round the neck. . . .

After looking at the brightness of the scenes for about five minutes Willie began to feel drowsy, but yet did not go to sleep. It was a very nice feeling, Willie thought, and he wished he always had it, but then there would have to be pantomimes all the time. He was hypnotised by the scenery, the fairies, the princesses, and that awful terrifying one-eyed giant in his damp-looking stone castle. Then after the pantomime there came the harlequinade, and Willie wondered how they kept the poker red-hot for such a long time, and why it did not burn holes in the people's trousers. After that a clown and a pierrette came on with a huge cracker which they pulled, and out tumbled lots and lots of crackers. The clown threw the crackers at the audience, and Willie, to his great delight, caught two of them. Then came "God Save the King," and everyone began to put on hats and coats. Willie felt dizzy; he was getting rid of the drowsy feeling, and his legs felt weak just above the knees. Oh! how cold it was outside, and how he wished he was at home!

Directly he woke up on the next morning he knew that it was all over and only the crackers were left to be pulled, and the Brown family settled down to every-day life.—C. RUSSELL (aged 11).

T. R. COXON.

(To be concluded.)

Views and Reviews.

CATHOLICISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

My recent review of Mr. Theodore Maynard's essays, "Carven from the Laurel Tree," has elicited a reply from him in THE NEW AGE and an article from "G. K. C." in "The New Witness." Stripped of irrelevancies, and of those personal pleasantries that delight an audience, these two rejoinders do make clear the fundamental difference between us. They declare that what they absurdly call "the religion of cleanliness" (it has singularly few regular worshippers in this country, where a bathroom is still regarded as a luxury which ought not to be supplied in working-class houses) is un-Christian, undemocratic, and I know not what; "he that is filthy, let him be filthy still," they say in effect. "G. K. C." particularly becomes almost lyrical in praise of dunghills, forgetting that, although a dunghill may be a very good thing (I doubt it; it is a breeding-place for flies, among other things), it is really not a suitable seat for any but a Catholic saint. When Jesus wished to draw the attention of people to their sins He usually ascended a mountain, not a dunghill; but if the Catholic saints were to follow the example of Jesus they would be Christians and not Catholics.

The conception that underlies this defence of filthiness, or attack on cleanliness (I am not sure which it is), is a very common one, and takes many forms. I can remember hearing the "religious" argument against Socialism, for example, stated to this effect: That if you did justice to everybody there would be no scope for the exercise of the Christian virtue of charity. In like manner "G. K. C." assumes that "the religion of cleanliness" is a barrier to human intercourse and an inhibition of saintly virtues; in his own words, "They [*i.e.*, myself and Mr. Bumble] may be unable to look at a dirty man without being maddened into bodily assault and battery. But I think that a saint, whose charity would enable him to live with lepers, might be at least a healthy corrective to men thus unable to endure even the sight of tramps."

The example is particularly well chosen, for leprosy is a Biblical disease, and we can see at once what is the Christian way of dealing with it. Jesus was no Catholic saint; His "charity" did not permit Him "to live with lepers"; He cured them and told them to do as Moses commanded. After prescribing the ceremony of purification, Moses commanded that "he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean." This insistence on cleanliness is perhaps the one point on which Jew and Greek agree; and if the degree of cleanliness achieved were not equal to what we now call "surgical cleanliness," it was enormously greater than what Mr. Maynard calls the "sacramental cleanliness" attained by "the pious Catholic who dips his hand into the probably dirty font and crosses himself."

My chief point is that Christianity has no use for the virtues of the Catholic saint, which in the main consist of the endurance of intolerable conditions. It is true that Jesus did not turn away from the dirty man; but He said to the leper: "Wash, and be clean"; to the paralytic: "Thy sins be forgiven thee"; to the ophthalmic: "Be healed"; and so on. He would not endure a dirty man, no, not for an hour; and He began His own ministry with baptism by John. Indeed, the most frequent verbal symbols of religion are symbols of purification; the one thing that we are not asked to do is to tolerate dirt. If we think of it, this is a natural development of the commandment that we should "love one another"; the very gutter-scrub washes his face and cleans his boots when he goes to meet his girl, obeying an instinct that has not been perverted by Catholic teaching. Accept the Christian teaching, that love is the summum bonum, that God is Love, and the obligation to be clean becomes imperative. For you cannot love a person who offends your every sense as heartily as you can a person whom it is a pleasure to behold; nor can that person do to you the full good that he may desire. The spiritual forces themselves do not emanate so freely from a body that is clogged with dirt as from one which is clean; indeed, it is common religious teaching that those spiritual forces are dangerous to the impure body. If the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, we may find in the well-nigh universal uncleanliness of the race an explanation of the obvious rarity of Its presence; there are few places fit for Its abiding.

The democracy of dirtiness is no more apparent than its religion; "the great unwashed" want to be "the great washed," and the miners demanded bath-rooms, not dunghills, in each of their houses. Indeed, when we think of the commonest term of abuse among working people it becomes clear that "G. K. C." is right when he says: "This extreme sensibility about dirt does act as a great force of social division, very destructive of democracy." The ordinary workman is not satisfied with naming a man's nationality; he commonly adds to it the opprobrious epithet "dirty"; and thus we hear of the "dirty German," the "dirty Pole," or Frenchman, as the case may be—we even hear of the "dirty Jew," a man whose very religion is a ritual of cleanliness! "This extreme sensibility about dirt" is undoubtedly a great divider; but the remedy is to abolish the dirt, and not deaden the sensibility to its deleterious effects. The only classes of people of whom I can think at the moment who find dirt tolerable are saints, tramps (these two are mentioned by "G. K. C."), drunkards, and the mentally defective or deranged; all the rest would be clean if they could, and demand "facilities" for washing. Democracy and dirt do not agree.

So, if I had to choose between Pharisaism and Catholicism, I should choose Pharisaism; for a "whited sepulchre" is at least more æsthetically agreeable than a dirty one. But the choice is between Catholicism and Christianity, and, once again, the verdict is against Catholicism. For the Catholic admiration of the Stoic virtues of patience, endurance, and so forth, is part and parcel of its general denial of progress; the assumption is that things always will be so, and the only admirable thing to do is to endure them, gladly if

possible, but at least with patience and long-suffering. Mr. Maynard, as I remarked in my previous article, admired the "heroism" of a woman who endured the agony of cancer and refused what he himself called "the mercy of morphia." But to the Christian, pain is not a sanctifier; it is a mere signal of distress that may indicate the nature or the location of something that has to be removed or cured. Christ Himself could not have cured a woman who was determined "to miss no step of her Via Crucis"; it was of such people that He said: "And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." Such people make the Word of God of none effect by their traditions of endurance of unnecessary evils.

But Christianity is heresy; the "Divine Deposit" was made with the Catholic Church, which has lived on the interest derived from it ever since. We have never had another Jesus, and shall not if the Catholic Church can prevent it; the sufferings, not the performances, of Jesus are elevated for our admiration and for our example, and if we could live on one another's sufferings, the Catholic Church would be justified. But the Divine Deposit, wherever and whenever it was made (and it is made in every age and clime, is as universal as the Catholic Church only claims to be), included a technique of healing that is slowly being recovered, a standard of values that does not exalt disciplines to the rank of virtues, and a determination to abolish everything that the Catholic so hardily endures. It was "a new heaven and a new earth" that Jesus promised, and the necessary condition of entering it was that we should be born again. A. E. R.

Reviews.

The Moon of the Caribbees, and Six Other Plays of the Sea. By Eugene O'Neill. (Boni and Liveright. $1.35 net.)

There is singularly little of the sea in these seven one-act plays, and far too much of the sailors. We doubt whether they could be performed with any success; most of them are incidents without any dramatic interest, contrived more to reveal the actual or probable circumstances of the sailor's life than to bring to an issue a conflict of character. But unsuitability for the stage does not necessarily imply suitability for the study; a bad play is not necessarily good literature, and the altercations of the crew of the "Glencairn" do not repay us even with new swear-words. Nor do the novelties of spelling much interest us—one does not create a character by putting the word "impashunt" into his mouth, or by taking out most of the aspirates. Still, those who find "reality" in drink, women, fighting, and bad language may prefer Mr. O'Neill's sketches to the literature of Conrad or the humour of Jacobs; but for us the incurable vulgarity of these sketches is not redeemed by a single quality that makes literature. They are "life," of course, but life selected for its grossness; and we prefer less crude subjects and treatment.

Free, and Other Stories. **Twelve Men.** By Theodore Dreiser. (Boni and Liveright. $1.75 net each.)

Mr. Theodore Dreiser is not immediately interesting; he wastes an extraordinary amount of space in telling us what any ordinarily intelligent person takes for granted, and telling us in a style that has not yet become personal. It is only as we read on (and somehow we do read on) that we become aware of his peculiarly vital curiosity; he says it almost as a compliment of various of his characters that they are "avid of life," and his undoubted prolixity derives from the same hunger. He not only wants to know everything, but he wants to tell his readers all that he knows; and this freshness of interest and vigour of impulse do at last secure him a hearing. Unfortunately, he has nothing to tell us then other than what So-and-so did, thought, felt, or said; he never rises above narrative to style, nor justifies his insatiable curiosity by creation. He is a journalist with artistic predilections; indeed, he never distinguishes the artist from the journalist, but gives the title to any reporter capable of writing a purple patch. But, apart from his rather pathetic desire to be regarded as an artist (he seems to fall into the fallacy that what is popular is not art), he is interesting because he writes of Americans as he knows them, without reference to European standards. He admires most the men who do things, and the more things they do the more he admires them; he is another Thoreau in his worship of the handy man, although he develops no social criticism from the fact of his existence. There are several studies of journalists, some of municipal politicians, some of what he will call artists, and some of mere human beings in various phases of inhumanity. He even descends to the study of the girl who nearly lost her virtue, and by the introduction of an "awful example" warns parents against bolting out their daughters. He is, as might be expected, most personal in "Twelve Men," for these sketches have, or claim to have, an autobiographical basis; and although he says nothing remarkable, he keeps our interest engaged by the sheer vigour of his interest. He tells his tale to the end; we do not hear it, we do not remember it, but we rise from it refreshed by contact with his amazing vitality. If only he could learn to write he would be worth reading.

The Curious Republic of Gondour, and Other Whimsical Sketches. By Samuel L. Clemens. (Boni and Liveright. $1.25 net.)

There is no particular reason for the publication of these sketches; Mark Twain, like the rest of us, was young once, and did things that (as he did not republish them himself) he apparently preferred to leave in the decent obscurity of journalism. These sketches reveal him in that callow stage where the "joker" is just beginning to develop a sense of humour. The letters of a Chinaman to his friend are the only things in this volume that reveal the deadly simplicity of the stylist; the indictment of the methods of the Irish police and of the judiciary of the period is done with a fine skill in the matter-of-fact phrases of a man who apparently assumes that political phrases can be literally interpreted. "The land of the free" did not convey to the American the specific meaning attached to it by the Chinaman, although the Chinaman innocently supposed that he was the unfortunate victim of a series of accidents. But for the rest these sketches reveal an insensitiveness that is merely youthful; the new-fledged joker is mainly concerned to show that he can make jokes about anything, and bad jokes delight him perhaps even more than good ones. There is no necessary error of taste in choosing the last words of great men, for example, as the subject of a whimsical sketch; what they do say, what they are reported to say, and what they ought to say may legitimately be treated by the essayist. But to tell us that Joan of Arc, for example, said "Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching," is to fall from the graciousness of humour into unqualified irreverence. It is not funny; it is simply scurvy treatment of one of the most dignified figures in history. There is a monologue by an undertaker concerning a corpse which, in spite of a few whimsical turns of phrase, revolts by its sheer insensibility to the mystery of death. These things are done, we know, by all young humorists; they are the first missings of the mark that reveal the aim of the man, but they are better forgotten. The readers of "The Buffalo Express" fifty years ago may have found them amusing, but Mark Twain is better known to us by better work than this, and these sketches, with their insensibility of feeling and crudeness of handling, their mere tomboy spirit, seem like a defamation of his memory.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY.

Sir,—I should like to ask Major Douglas where the "money" would come from to "run" and staff the Clearing House, which, I take it, would replace the banks in his financial scheme. It seems to me that it would have to come out of taxes, and that what we should be saving in prices we should be spending in additional taxation.

The idea of price being less than cost is so revolutionary that one cannot help feeling there is a "catch" in it somewhere. In the example given (Chapter X), where boots are sold for two-fifths of the cost, the whole argument would seem to fall to the ground if all the boots produced in a month were consumed in a month—if, in other words, production and consumption were equal. In short, the cheapening of the boots is brought about by producing more than twice as many of them as are required, which, on the face of it, seems to be a very extravagant and wasteful proceeding.

One would also like to know whence Messrs. Jones and Co. (Chapter X) got the £500 to pay their out-of-pocket expenses before being recouped by the Clearing House cheque.

These various firms are presumably financed initially by the Clearing House (the State?), and there would be many bad debts arising out of firms that did not "make good."

Whatever view your readers may take of Major Douglas's theories, they cannot, I think, fail to have found his articles immensely interesting and stimulating.

J. C. GRAHAM.

[Major Douglas replies:—While I appreciate both the interest and the criticism of the writer, I must point out that he has not quite grasped the subject-matter of Chapter X.

The object of the sketch in that chapter is to emphasise the fact that money is not a real commodity; it is simply a mechanism which has to be adjusted to produce certain distributive results. In the earlier examination of the fallacy of the super-production propaganda now in full blast, it was shown (partly as a result of a mathematical analysis and partly by examination of many actual cost and time records) that the necessary distribution was not attainable by distributing money over a variable period of time in the form of wages—i.e., cost—and at a subsequent date collecting all this money in the form of price.

Further analysis showed that it was necessary to distribute more money than you collected, in the ratio of production to consumption.

Mr. Graham suggests that the method fails to cheapen if consumption is equal to production.

Certainly it does, but it never is in a civilised country. There is always a preponderance of production of the comparatively permanent class—houses, tools, railways, ships, etc.—which take incomparably less time to produce than they do to consume—i.e., to depreciate—and it is the ratio of the whole production of the community to the whole consumption which fixes the ratio to be applied to cost, into which cost, of course, goes the cost of the bank and Clearing House. I think a perusal of the above further explanation will enable Mr. Graham to answer his own question.]

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"FREELAND."

Sir,—In the article on "Towards National Guilds," August 21, 1919, p. 273, is stated:

"Each of us at birth enters by right into the common inheritance of the productive machinery of society. It is an inalienable right—a right, in other words, which is normal to human society. Each of us is, therefore, entitled to a proportionate share of whatever is produced out of the said social machine by the application of labour, even though we should be unable, for any reason, to operate the machine ourselves. The actual operators, it is clear, are entitled to more than the rest of us; they are entitled to receive the cost of their labour plus a proportionate share with us in the remaining product after that cost has been defrayed; but they are not entitled to the whole of the product, nor can the whole of the product be said to be their exclusive handiwork."

In Professor Hertzka's "Freeland," Ransom's translation, p. 138, may be found;

". . . as a corollary from the truth that the wealth of the civilised man is not the product of his own individual capabilities, but is the result of the intellectual labour of numberless previous generations, *whose bequest belongs as much to the weak and helpless as to the strong and capable.* All that we enjoy we owe in an infinitely small degree to our own intelligence and strength; thrown upon these as our only resources, we should be poor savages vegetating in the deepest, most brutish misery; it is to the rich inheritance received from our ancestors that we owe ninety-nine per cent. of our enjoyments. If this is so—and no sane person has ever questioned it—then all our brothers and sisters have a right to share in the common heritage. That this heritage would be unproductive without the labour of us who are strong is true, and it would be unfair—nay, foolish and impracticable—for our weaker brethren to claim an equal share. But they have a right to claim a fraternal participation—not merely a charitable one, but one based upon their right of inheritance—in the rich profits won from the common heritage, even though it be by our labour solely."

Excepting a slight reference in Professor Nicholson's "Strikes and Social Problems," p. 206, I do not remember seeing any account of the "Freeland" expedition.

Has a critical examination of the book or an account of the expedition been published? W. H. A.

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CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION.

Sir,—The passage quoted from Plato by Major Kellogg and "A. E. R." seems rather a beginning than an end to the problem of political citizenship and conscientious objection. It is absurd to say that anyone is free to leave his community and his citizenship. If he is not prevented by poverty or kept back by other obligations that are no whit less binding than that to prepare for, assist in, or take part in "contention with manslaughter," it is impossible to escape citizenship of one State without becoming citizen of another that is probably equally objectionable. This will be so, I suppose, until we get such a neutralisation of citizenship as is advocated, for example, in Veblen's "Nature of Peace and the Terms of its Perpetuation."

Further, the alleged obligation cannot be based on the benefits received. The recipient had them and the presumed "contract" thrust upon him willy-nilly, unless we accept some such hazardous theory as is propounded in Butler's "Erewhon." On the other hand, he can rest a claim for immunity and compensation on the harm done him by bringing him and keeping him in such insanitary (physical, moral, and mental) surroundings.

Finally, to be brief, it is useless to talk of community and political citizenship in the same breath. Communities don't coincide with political frontiers or suzerainty, and the State is but a piece of scaffolding that tries, with too much success, to conceal its limited usefulness under arrogant and pretentious bunting.

It seems probable that conscientious objection to war, taxation, and other political institutions should be treated apart from various other social recalcitrancies of the same appearance. HILDERIC COUSENS.

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CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM.

Sir,—In your issue of July 10 Mr. Edward Moore makes an interesting comparison between Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Bernard Shaw. I agree with Mr. Moore that they have much in common. Both are deficient in æsthetic feeling and in the sense of form. Each has a meagre vocabulary and a lack of stateliness in his style. In fact these two men, together with Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. H. G. Wells, and Miss Christabel Pankhurst, are the most representative figures in what posterity will probably remember as "the age of Lord Northcliffe."

I differ from Mr. Moore, however, in the relative influence he ascribes to the two men. He considers Mr. Chesterton "a national force." I fear Mr. Moore has not quite grasped the distinction between a national force and a popular figure. There is only one test of force, viz., the amount of movement produced by it. Judged by this test, Mr. Shaw is without doubt a far greater force than Mr. Chesterton. Mr. Shaw has been wonderfully successful in carrying the world with him, while Mr. Chesterton is leaving no mark on history.

Beyond question the two great things that are happening in our time are the dying out of superstitious fears

and the fall of the birth-rate. Not long ago "the fear of the gods and of death" was still as terrible as in the days of Epicurus. "Frightful to all men is death, from of old named King of Terrors," said Carlyle. We all remember the fear of death in which Dr. Johnson passed his life. When I was a boy, children lay awake for hours trying to imagine what eternal punishment was like. A large fraction of the community is still in this mental condition, but it is now a diminished fraction. Next to the misery of superstitious fears was the misery of perpetual child-bearing and burying of children. This evil also is vanishing everywhere.

Mr. Chesterton has no sympathy whatever with either of these movements of the age. He laments the decay of faith, and is a refuter of Malthus. Nevertheless, the churches are emptier than ever, and the birth-rate of nearly all countries declines every year. Evidently the force exerted by Mr. Chesterton is not very great. Mr. Shaw, on the other hand, has always supported these movements, and has helped them much. He is a force.

Unquestionably, however, Mr. Chesterton is by far the more popular, although the less powerful, of the two men. The kind of work done by Mr. Shaw, however efficacious, is not popular in England. This curious fact is worth inquiring into.

I think the reason is that the English are a very reverent people; they are always ready to cringe before power. "An Englishman is all right if you kick him," said Mark Twain. Even titles and money-bags are reverenced by the English. What, then, must be the reverence felt for Divine power? The might which can kick unbaptised infants into hell is indeed something to be venerated. Thus the tendency to revile and flout the gods which has been so characteristic of many peoples has never been understood in England. "Curse God and die" was the advice natural to the Semitic mind, but horrible to the English. Dante introduces us to a spirit in hell whose contempt for God is so great that he does not feel the pains of hell at all. That was an Italian spirit, not an English one. The pagans of antiquity never hesitated to resent the injustice of the gods.

"Fuimus Troës, fuit Ilium, et ingens Gloria Teucrorum. Ferus omnia Jupiter Argos Transtulit."

The English, however, have always been a "god-fearing" people, as they take a strange pride in telling the world. "If such a being can condemn me to hell, to hell I will go!" cried John Stuart Mill; but Mill was not a typical Englishman, and the English are ashamed of that utterance. "I hate both bawd and blasphemy," said Mr. Birrell in a recent number of the "Nation." The limitations of the English mind were never stated more concisely.

It is thus obvious that an irreverent writer like Mr. Shaw must be unpopular in England. Greece admired Lucian; Rome adored Ennius, Lucretius, and Ovid; France is proud of Voltaire and Fontenelle. The English do not follow these examples. That is why Mr. Chesterton is popular without being powerful, and Mr. Shaw is powerful without being popular. R. B. KERR.

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CANARDS.

Sir,—The following may interest your readers. In the "Daily Telegraph" of August 15, 1919, appeared the following:—

"Reuter's agent learns from Greek official sources in London that telegrams have been received reporting the brutal murder by Turks at Aïdin of Nicholas Angerides, scoutmaster of the Greek boy scouts in Aïdin, together with twenty boy scouts. In his report from Lausanne, Mr. Constantine Melas, the chief of the Greek boy scouts, states: 'The Greek boy scouts' headquarters in Athens has informed me that among the victims of the massacres in Aïdin are M. Nicholas Angerides and twenty boy scouts. Before being put to death, Monsieur Angerides was subjected to torture of the most terrible nature, both his eyes being torn out of the sockets. M. Angerides was a wealthy inhabitant of Aïdin who consistently abstained from taking any part in politics, but devoted his time exclusively to the development of the boy scout movement. Both he and his scouts could have escaped in time, but the heroic scoutmaster refused to leave the Christian population in the hour of danger, and met his death, thus proving his loyalty to the chivalrous traditions of the Greek boy scouts. His twenty brave little followers perished at his side in a vain attempt to save their beloved chief.'"

What a pathetic incident, and how well calculated to appeal to us in England, where boy scouts are known and Greek boy scouts in Asia Minor appear incredible!

In the "Daily Telegraph" (September 2, 1919) we have this message from Constantinople:—

"Nothing is known here regarding the alleged brutal murder by the Turks of a Greek scoutmaster and twenty Greek boy scouts at Aïdin, nor is there any confirmation of the Greek report of the murder by Turkish soldiers of the head of the Greek Red Cross Mission at Makri, on the Ægean, which, be it said, is not a Turkish but a Bulgarian port."

Of course, there never was a Greek boy scout movement at Aïdin. There was a Turkish boy scout movement in most parts of Asia Minor. Yet many people, including Sir Arthur Crosfield, in the "Westminster Gazette," believe these Greek reports implicitly!

MARMADUKE PICKTHALL.

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"READERS AND WRITERS."

Sir,—The quotation which "R. H. C." is anxious to track is the last line of a poem, "The Dead in the Desert," by W. P. R. Kerr. It was published in the July number of the "Monthly Chapbook" (Poetry Bookshop). The context is:

"No man remembers them, no man weeps for them:
The years drift quietly over them like sand.
For the end of all their journeying and their seeking,
Whatever they sought, their bones lie here in the desert."

R. L. FRASER.

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ON THE TRANSLATION OF POETRY.

Sir,—Mr. Selver will not have to look very far afield for an example in English of a "downright verbal blunder of the grosser kind." In the "Homage to Propertius" of two or three weeks ago Mr. Ezra Pound represented "Cimbrorumque minas et benefacta Mari" by "the Welsh mines and the profits Marus made out of them" (I may have forgotten the exact words) instead of "the threats of the Cimbrians and the benefits conferred by Marius" in conquering them; or, perhaps a little more imagistically, "the German gibes and the jackboot of Marius." The Cimbri have nothing to do with the Cymry, nor "minas" with mines; while "Marus" is merely a ghost raised by Mr. Pound. I admit that "et" is correctly translated "and."

If the line is meant as a joke, I beg Mr. Pound's pardon, the more readily as I have a great admiration for the "Homage to Propertius." But is it worth while to spoil the reception of a vital piece of work for want of a blue pencil here and there before it is published? There is no reason why Mr. Pound should make free gifts to the pedants, who in any case would not understand his jokes. ADRIAN COLLINS.

* * *

FIELDING.

Sir,—"R. H. C." is mistaken when he says there is no sentimentality in Fielding. It was lucky for Fielding that he was born at the beginning of the 18th century. A hundred years later he would have displayed his weaknesses almost as freely as Thackeray displayed his, and, conversely, had Thackeray been born in 1713 instead of 1813, he would have avoided such a scene as that in which Arthur Pendennis says the Lord's Prayer at his mother's knee.

Excellent as the humour of "Jonathan Wild" is, the morality of the book is sentimental. Does a Nietzschean like "R. H. C." approve of the Heartfrees? And, I may add, does an anti-humorist like "R. H. C." relish the scene where Wild calls his wife a ——?

It is necessary only to compare Allworthy with Matthew Bramble to realise that Fielding was potentially as great a sentimentalist as Thackeray.

"R. H. C.'s" view that Fielding was not a creator, because in his first novel he reacted against Richardson, is very fanciful. Was Cervantes also not a creator because he reacted against the romances of chivalry?

HUGH LUNN.

* * *

A CORRECTION.

Sir,—In the course of my article in last week's issue I wrote, "Mr. Lloyd George, but not Mr. de Valera," not, as was printed, "Mr. Lloyd George, but not de Valera." G. J. SPAIN.

Pastiche.

THE REGIONAL.

IX.

The Jew (wailing): Why are you beating me?

The Irishman (howling): Yeh killed moy Saavior!

The Jew (plaintive): It was two thousand years ago.

The Irishman (continuing his blows): Donth matther, bigob, Oi justh hearrd it!

This brief apochryphal dialogue summarises not only the history of the Church militant of the Crusades, of all religious incitements to action, but also of all other attempts to put single and untempered ideas into immediate and intemperate practice (prohibition, etc.).

The *idea*—that is to say, the author's personal addition in Meyer's summary, "The Dawn of History," is in his clear concept of states of stasis; conditions where it does not pay a man to hunt any harder, to carry more luggage, to plant more, etc.

This stasis you could have seen in Tangier before the arrival of the wireless telegraph; costume of the desert prescribed by the necessity to keep out dust, stasis of two thousand years; king's dinner music, dating supposedly from the year 700, etc.

Doughty's "Arabia Deserta" is, perhaps, the one full study of such a stasis; it is, at any rate, the classic study and the literary finality. It is the only book I know which in the least persuades one to endure the evils of accidental civilisation. It is written without propaganda.

The Indian caste system was presumably an attempt to anchor seven of these states of stasis one above the other; it lasted about as well as any social attempt ever has lasted, and ends only in our time because of its inelasticity. No system based on religious dogma can endure long after the perception that all dogma is pure bluff based upon inductable ignorance.

As Meyer points out, the discovery, the invention, the rise of a man of genius, let us add, the unloosing of even one idea (intelligent or untempered as the case may be) is enough to destroy any stasis.

The Machiavellian circle occurs; the man of goodwill may find himself first on one side and then on the other of any given dilemma, first for concentration, then for freedom or for decentralisation; but this is not merely the "swing of the pendulum" cliché of opportunism. The Roman Senate was presumably a set of woodenheads incapable of understanding Cæsar's imagination; village elders, provincials; there are always these obstructionists. They could bring no argument but that of daggers; only Cæsar's obvious and material successes and the clarity of his prose have prevented his inclusion in the sanctus exercitus nartorum with Jesus and Socrates; as possibly his military success is accountable for the slight attention history pays to his personal habits.

The Romans were too lazy to conserve their personal liberties, and too stupid to accommodate themselves to a necessary new order. There was no incompatibility between building roads into Thule, perfecting an international postal system, and conserving their freedom. The sole obstacles were laziness and stupidity.

The word "progress" implies too great an acquiescence in the Samuel Smiles—Victoria period; but there is less harm than is usually supposed in these unjust concentrations of power (read also: of wealth).

I repeat from my earlier article that I am not running counter to the policy of this paper, or sanctioning the "capitalist system" by this statement.

These concentrations will occur, and it is for the health of civilisation that they should occur; it is also for the health of civilisation that as soon as they occur, "society"—i.e., those who are "out" instead of "in"—should at once do everything in their power to purge them of attendant evils, or to prevent their recurrence, or at least their recurrence in certain modes.

Crassus made, I have heard, his money in fire insurance, but not on the present system of stockholding and mathematically minute computations. No, Crassus began with his slaves; there were no municipal fire-engines; Crassus trained his slaves to put out fires, presumably the chain-bucket cross-hands manner; when the house of Bassus, Nebo, or Scorpio caught fire Crassus received the information calmly, as calmly offered Bassus 4 per cent. of the value of the building, or even 24 per cent., but always a decreasing percentage, and when and only when Bassus or Scorpio had completed the sale of the property to Crassus, the latter ordered his slaves to put out the fire.

It is to be conceived that this system caused a certain amount of ill-feeling, and that Crassus was not deeply mourned.

He was both a hog and a social benefactor; he was a "practical man," and more use to the race than Bassus, Scorpio, and all the other stupid, indolent, and possibly amiable Romans whom he rooked.

The limits of private enterprise cannot be fixed once and for all. I take it that to-day no one would raise his voice in favour of private rather than municipal fire service.

As only one egotist concentrator in 5,000 has the wit to use his concentration for the general good, one should discourage concentration.

N.B.—This general good is not attained by immediate dispersal, it can probably be attained solely by employing it *as concentration*.

The "law" is that we should demand a just amount of "invention" from the concentrator. For what he *finds* he should be rewarded. This law is perhaps seldom violated; as long as an "aristocracy" or a fortune-acquirer is building, as long as the aristocracy is really setting up fine moulds of life, of art, of architecture; as long as the capitalist is really producing pro bono publico he is unlikely to be disturbed.

Atrophied, he is amputated. A mayor of the palace, or something with a different name, takes over his functions.

EZRA POUND.

THE CHALLENGE.

Is it then love to pull a solemn face
In the dull glass, a love-blown wench's eyes,
Or touch a proffered bosom in the dusk,
And hail the common gift with mazed alarm?

And is it love to whisper on the stairs
And crawl through passion's crevice on two knees,
Creeping across the creaking floor of dreams
With pent breath, forlorn gait, half-slink, half-jig?

If 'tis to mourn the times, or wordily
Expatiate the crimes that bore romance,
Make Dido's want the filling of new days
Or Tristan's gain—Tristan is mud and weeds!—

If 'tis to snuffle breezes from the crypt,
Blighting this year's yield with old rottenness,
Spying through blinds life's progress in the streets,
Then I have no love, and love has not me.

But standing on the eager crags of dawn,
Stricken, with steadfast foot and haunches set,
I look to you, and challenge you to wake
And shout your own inordinate laugh of joy.

Who have not found themselves, seek they the Gods!
Who have not mastered pain, let Heavens allure.
Death stands so near-afar, life eddies close,
And scorn and help and blame and this-to-do.

Straining avowal now and quick bestowal.
Caution's a seedy doorkeeper; and hark
The clangorous tumult at the portal! . . .
O the clangorous tumult!

H. R. BARBOR.

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