THE

NEW AGE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

The special Trade Union Congress which is holding its meetings this week is not only running up to time (and expense), but the resolutions it will pass are all cut and dried. It saves a good deal of thought to have your actions mapped out for you by a species of political astrology. Once a resolution to hold a meeting has been passed, the officials are put on to carry out all the consequences down to the last jot and syllable of the recorded indignation or the reverse. Why, in fact, delegates should be called upon to travel to London from all points of the country to perform the office of rubber stamps is something of a mystery. However, they appear to like it: things must be moving if they are constantly being requested to attend special conferences; and, in any case, the Union pays. On the other hand, what the advantage to Labour of all this automatic machinery may be we have yet to discover. The wage-system remains where it was—it is even becoming more firmly established. The control of Labour over industry is as invisible to-day as it was a quarter of a century ago. And though, it is true, quite a number of ex-wage-slaves are now public figures of some newspaper importance, actually the status of the working classes as expressed either in rank and standing or in relative income is, if not lower than ever, no higher than before. What Labour appears to lack is the ability to change its mind with events. Its spokesmen complain of the party politicians and of the Government in particular, expecting them, it would seem, to be perpetually re-adapting their ancient views to the modern mould of the world. But Labour, it appears, is never to make any re-adaptation. Events, not to say reason, may demonstrate Labour's old ideas to be impracticable, superficial, infantile, or disastrous; but, having once passed a resolution embodying them, Labour considers itself bound by them for all time. It is not in this way that progress is going to be made. Progress will be made by making mistakes, but never the same mistakes twice. Until Labour can free its mind from shibboleths, nothing of any value will be done

The two chief resolutions which the special Congress will be called upon to pass are worthy of notice only for their exceptional futility. The first proposes to defer decision on the subject of Coal to *another* special Congress or Conference to be held shortly after Parliament re-assembles next February. In the meanwhile, we are to suppose, the Miners' Federation will have set the country ablaze with the demand for Nationalisation. The second resolution affirms that "excessive profits" are "the primary cause of industrial unrest," and asks for "Government control of raw materials, and the nationalisation of land, mines, railways," etc. We are naturally not sorry, in a way, that this special Labour Conference, meeting at a moment when, after a year of peace, prices are within two points of the war maximum, should devote a whole resolution to the subject of the cost of living; but the value of the resolution must be looked for, if anywhere, in the accuracy of its analysis and in the adequacy of its constructive proposals to the given situation. From this point of view, it must be obvious to anybody that the resolution as scheduled to be passed is utterly useless. Its diagnosis is wrong, and its remedy is ludicrous. To begin with the diagnosis. The resolution "affirms" that "excessive profits" are the "primary cause" of "industrial unrest." Now, if anything has been made clear in the tangled discussion and observation of the last twelve months, it is that profiteering on either a large or a small scale is only a minor cause of the present high level of prices. Prices, as we have again and again observed, are composed of two factors—goods and money; and it is to the money factor that we must look for the main cause of the present tidal wave of prices. We are not saying, of course, that profiteering is not one of the factors in the high price of this or that article. Undoubtedly it is. What we are affirming is that the ratio of goods to money (including in money not only currency, but the far greater factor of credit) is less dependent upon profiteering than upon finance. Finance and the financial system are at the bottom of everything: the profiteers are only butterflies on the wheel. And the final proof of the truth of this statement will be found when "profits" are subtracted from industry, and the result in reduction of selling-price is examined. It will be found, we believe, that the diminution of price result-

ing from the complete abolition of "profits" would still leave the general level of prices beyond the reach of the general level of wages.

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It is inevitable, we suppose, that Labour should, while all the time professing concern for the nation, continue to resolve itself in terms of its own class; but the excuse, in the case of the resolution under discussion, is thin to transparency. Assuming for the sake of the argument that "excessive profits" are the primary cause of something or other, it is not true that their primary consequence is "*industrial* unrest." Quite an equal consequence is *popular* unrest, in which must be included the dissatisfaction with the present state of things, not only of the organised workers directly represented at the special Conference, but of the unorganised workers, the salariat, and, indeed, all that part of the public that has to live upon nominally fixed incomes. It is true, of course, that from the nature and circumstances of their case these classes and sections of the nation are without an effective voice in the determination of events; but precisely for this reason, we contend, and because, after all, they are in the same boat with organised Labour, it is the duty as well as the policy of Labour to act on their behalf. A complaint from the present special Conference that "industrial unrest" will certainly follow from the maintenance of the present high level of prices is, we do not deny, fully justified. As surely as the sun will rise to-morrow, we are now on the eve of the revival of the wage-demands and wage-strikes of a few months ago. But how much more "national" such a complaint would be if it embodied also the grievances of the classes of whom we are thinking. The relation of prices to income is not the concern of "Labour" alone; industrial unrest, as we have said, is not the only consequence to be apprehended from the continuance of the present level of prices. Nine out of ten of the whole population is intimately and even tragically concerned with the problem; and we must repeat that "Labour"—meaning organised Labour with its platform and conference and officials—is responsible for the whole nine as well as for the four or five whom it directly represents. It would scarcely be decent to stress the advantage of the policy herein indicated: the assumption of popular leadership by organised Labour. All we need say is that Labour can never become an important party until it becomes a popular party; and it can become a popular party only by putting itself at the head of a popular movement.

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The discussion of Nationalisation must be wearisome, but what are we to do? With the persistency of a block of moving matter "Labour" continues to demand nationalisation, though we honestly believe that not a single Labour leader any longer has the smallest confidence either in its practicability (which is a comparatively slight objection) or in its efficacy as regards the ends sought to be obtained. A certain amount of enthusiasm can be got up at a public meeting called for the express purpose of supporting Nationalisation. Local branches of trade unions and, of course, the marionette special Trade Union Congresses and Conferences can be engineered to appear to be in earnest about Nationalisation. But the rank and file everywhere and, at least, a good many of the leaders in private are as cold as stone on the subject, even when they are not explicitly hostile or sceptical. The difficulty, once again, is to adapt the policy to the change of opinion that has undoubtedly taken place. Who is going to be the first to take the plunge and to announce, publicly, that the Labour movement, in demanding Nationalisation, has been on the wrong tack? More of the moral courage they expect of their enemies will be necessary to the Labour leaders who first enter into that breach; and, in the meantime, they will continue piling Pelion upon Ossa and endeavouring to convince themselves that Nationalisation *must* be necessary since they continue to demand it. Nothing, in fact, can be more forcible-feeble than the resolution of the special Conference calling for the nationalisation of the land as well as of the mines and the railways. The impulse appears to have acted in this way: if we cannot nationalise the railways, let us demand the nationalisation of the mines; and if both are refused, let us add the nationalisation of the land. Having demanded the nationalisation of everything, Labour has done all that can be expected of it. Ways and means may be deferred to another special Conference.

* * *

Mr. Ordway Tead in a recent issue of the "American Inter-Collegiate Socialist" (now the American "Socialist Review") has summarised very neatly the difference between the new and the old points of view as regards Nationalisation. "The real problem of organised Labour," he says, "is rather the increasing control of Industry *by Labour* than the increasing control of industry *by the Government.*" We wish that our Labour leaders would take a minute or two from their journalistic work to consider the difference in policy here plainly defined. Assuming it to be the case that the ultimate aim of Labour is to obtain a share in the control of industry, it should clearly appear that the aim implicit in Nationalisation, namely, the Government's control of industry, is rather a long way round to it. Why, if Labour is aiming at control, should it be thought necessary or desirable to transfer the centre of present-day control from private capitalism to the State, in the shadowy hope that its subsequent transfer from the State to Labour would be easier than its immediate transfer from private capitalism? As a matter of fact, nothing is more certain than that the transfer of control from the State to Labour would be exceedingly difficult, if not forever impossible. There would be no available moral argument in its favour; the application of force would be out of the question; and the whole weight and tradition of the State would be on the side of increasing rather than decreasing centralisation. As a means to the control of industry by Labour, the control of industry by the State is not merely roundabout, it is a terminus. It may be said, however, that the alternative is no less impossible, namely, control through capitalism and without the intermediation of the State. Not at all. That there are difficulties we do not, of course, deny; but that they are comparatively easy to overcome, once Labour has its head turned in the right direction, we are prepared to show any day of the week. The fact is that Labour has never considered the advisability, let alone the practicability, of obtaining a share, an increasing and, finally, a predominant share in the control of industry by employing its own credit for the purpose; it has never, in other words, considered *how* to obtain for itself a share in the ultimate financial control of industry. All it has so far done—and the present resolution is only a repetition of it—is to ask the State to be so kind as to buy up the whole of private capital and afterwards to present it to Labour upon terms. There is a better policy than that.

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With an unconsidered policy such as the special Conference is about to re-affirm, the threat of Mr. Frank Hodges to "express the ideals of Labour in a more drastic manner," unless by February, let us say, "the political avenue to Nationalisation has been opened" is a trifle unreasonable. The attitude, in short, is as unreasonable as the policy. Threats, we may point out, are lost upon a world that has survived the greatest war in history only to find that things are worse than they were before; and in the present state of affairs, one calamity more or less cannot be expected to make

our blood run cold. Moreover, Mr. Hodges has the misfortune to be a day or two behind the fair and to be threatening what, in the first place, we doubt whether he can ever perform; in the second place, what nobody will believe in until it appears; and, in the third place, what Russia has proven to satisfaction would provide no remedy for any of Mr. Hodges' grievances. It is to be hoped that the British Labour leaders who toy with the notion of a forcible Revolution à la Russia have read the interview which M. Litvinoff has given to the "Daily Herald" representative. They will find M. Litvinoff confessing therein precisely what any common-sense Socialist might have foreseen the Russian revolutionaries would one day have to admit, namely, that in the absence of a really constructive proposal for the "morning after" the Revolution, the leaders of the Revolution would themselves have to turn reactionary and resume the "capitalist" evolution much where it was violently broken off. "Full Communism," says M. Litvinoff, "is only possible if other countries accept the same basis. . . They must follow Russia or Russia will have to revert to Capitalism." It is a pity, we cannot help thinking, that M. Litvinoff and others did not think of this before inaugurating their Revolution. Quite a number of people would now be alive who are now dead. Many more who are now unhappy would have been spared their unhappiness. Unfortunately, however, revolutionaries of the calibre of M. Litvinoff never think before the event, but only after it; and now, it appears, some of our own Labour leaders are going to Russia for lessons. Let us say again that the fat boys cannot curdle our blood; but they can make damned fools of themselves. And the acme of their foolishness is reached when they propose to "express their ideals in a more drastic manner"—the said ideals being, by demonstration, as contrary to Labour's own interests as to the interest of the people in general.

* * *

We defended Lord Gainford and the coal-owners last week against the proposed attempt to single out the coal industry for special treatment by the limitation of its profits. It is, of course, improbable that the attempt will be successful; and it is even more improbable that, if successful in a parliamentary sense, the plan will work out in practice. A parliament composed mainly of capitalists is not likely to penalise any form of capital; and even if should do so in form, the reality will be very different. Lest, however, our attitude should be misunderstood, we may say at once that what would be unfair if confined to the coal-owners, would be, in our opinion, perfectly fair if it were made applicable to every industry. What, in fact, is wrong with the proposal to limit the dividends of capital is not the proposal in general, but its application to a single industry. From this point of view, Lord Gainford has himself supplied us with an excellent argument. "If," he said in the House of Lords on Tuesday, "if the coal-owners are to sell below cost, with equal justice we could call on the tanner and bootmaker to make a reduction in the price of boots for the benefit of the public, and the farmer and the butcher in regard to meat, and the miller and the baker in relation to the price of bread." Undoubtedly; and why not? That, indeed, is exactly what we should propose to do "for the benefit of the public." The proposition is not nearly so nonsensical as, no doubt, Lord Gainford intended it to appear. On the contrary, it is the most comprehensive, scientific, and practical economic proposal known to us. It simply affirms that all production, being ultimately "for the benefit of the public," is useless unless, in fact, the public is actually benefited by it. And how can the public be benefited by a production which it is unable to purchase? We take Lord Gainford's point in the letter. It is unfair that the coal industry should provide cheap coal for the domestic consumer, while other industries are providing dear goods; but it is not unfair to require every industry, as a condition of national recognition of national service, to deliver its goods to the people for whom and by whom every industry exists. Production is the privilege of the producers; we would leave capitalists their capital (making provision for Labour to acquire Capital too); but the distribution of the consumable product is a communal responsibility. Capital might keep the tree, but society is entitled to the fruit.

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We confess that the "Daily News" startled us last Monday by announcing the forthcoming publication of a "scheme" for the building of homes for heroes. The scheme, we were told, "provided for a definite and limited payment to capitalists and for the practical and evolutionary application of the principle of self-government of the building industry." "It would simply involve revision in regard to finance" . . . . and would establish "a new relationship between organised master-builders and operatives." It appeared, however, from subsequent issues that Major Douglas (who is now, by the way, in America) had no reason to be recalled to discuss with us the steps to be taken in regard to the publication of our own scheme. The "Daily News" proposal was all in the shop-window; and there was nothing left in the "forthcoming" articles to carry out the promises made in the preliminary announcement. The Housing proposals of the Government are thus still in possession of the field; and their materialisation in bricks and mortar is likely to be as infrequent as materialisations at spiritualistic séances. Nor is the addition of the provision to provide the money by means of Local Bonds likely to prove effective. If houses cannot be built to pay at an "economic rent," for the simple reason that the classes for whom they are intended cannot pay an "economic rent," the difficulty of providing the initial capital is not evaded by throwing the onus upon municipal lenders even when "secured" by the municipal rates and taxes. Anybody with money, of course, is prepared to lend it to a municipality at a sufficient rate of interest and to accept the security of the rates and taxes as a guarantee of repayment; but is the municipality—in other words, the taxpayer—prepared to "subsidise" houses in this way after the State has declined to undertake the responsibility? The Municipal Treasury is no less on guard than the State Treasury when it comes to providing houses "below cost."

* * *

At Manchester, on Saturday, Mr. Lloyd George, with his usual ingenuity, contrived to make out a case for his Government unanswerable from the standpoint of any of his political critics. Had they any possible alternative Government to suggest? Could they claim that they would have passed more or more "Liberal" legislation than Mr. Lloyd George's Government? Was he not, in fact, with the help of the Unionist wing, actually passing "Liberal" legislation which would otherwise be impossible? We have always maintained that, in the present condition of politics, Mr. Lloyd George would be able to stay in office as long as he chooses; and the fact appears patent that until a party arises that will take Distribution instead of Production for its basis any change of Government is a change for change's sake and not for a real difference. It would, moreover, have been just as easy for Mr. Lloyd George to convince a Unionist audience that his Government was the best of all possible Governments. To the "Liberals" he said: Look at what we have done! But to the "Unionists" he might have said: Look at what we have not done! The "Times" complains that "the Government's autumn programme is a total wreck." But the war has proved that wrecks may be as profitable as safe arrivals; and Capitalism is much indebted to Mr. Lloyd George for sinking so many measures without a trace.

Towards National Guilds.

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

OUR considerations were cut short last week by the superior consideration of space. We now resume where we left off; but only after a brief résumé of the subject we are discussing. In our earlier notes we arrived at the definition of Credit as *belief* based on an estimate of potential production, and testified to by the provision of spending-power; we can "borrow" what we are "good for," that is to say, what we are believed to be able to repay. Later we inquired into the distribution of Credit, which we found to follow the lines of the distribution of Capital or producing-plant. Those people have most credit (or potential spending-power) who have control of most of the means of production: in other words, the capitalist class; and those people have least credit or none at all who have little or no control over Capital: in other words, the wage-earning classes. Finally, last week we were considering the origin of credit; and we found it to lie in the tout ensemble of society. Though the individual may create and improve capital to some extent, his contribution is almost negligible in comparison with the contribution of society; from which our first consideration arose, namely, the *right* of society to the ownership and control of the national credit.

* * *

Our second consideration refers to the "credit" existing in Labour, considered as a factor in production. We have seen that, as matters now stand, and assuming that credit is correctly defined (as it is) as the estimate of potential production, it is the *Capitalist*, the owner of the *plant* of industry, who appropriates the credit or the spending-power dependent on the estimate of his ability to produce. He has the tools, the plant, the equipment, the organisation, the knowledge of the markets, etc.; and he has also the control of Labour. He does not, it is true, *own* Labour in the same sense in which he owns the rest of his plant, or in the same sense in which a slave-owner owns slaves. Oh dear, no; for we live in a free country. Forgoing the dignity of owning labour, he is perfectly content to *control* Labour, which he does by the simple means of making it impossible for Labour to live except by working for him, almost exactly as if, in fact, Labour were his slave. By presenting Labour with the choice between starvation and wage-work, the Capitalist is naturally assured of the "co-operation" of Labour; and he is thus in a position to "answer for" the productivity of Labour equally with the productivity of the rest of his industrial plant. The co-operation of Labour, in other words, is *assumed* by Capitalism as a matter of course arising from the circumstances in which Labour is placed. And, in practice, Capitalism is entitled to make this assumption equally with the assumption that its machines, etc., will actually work.

* * *

It will be seen in what queer straits a Capitalist would find himself if Labour could not be counted upon in this confident fashion. Let us suppose, for instance, that a man owned a magnificent plant, but that he could get no Labour to run it for him. The estimate of his ability to produce would in that case be very small indeed; and the credit he could in consequence raise upon it would be no more than its price in the scrap-market. Equally, it is true, the real credit (or ability to produce) of Labour would be very small without the implied co-operation of "plant"; but that does not alter the fact that the credit-value of plant without the presumed co-operation of Labour would be ridiculously small. The point deserves to be stressed because it will ultimately lead us to an important practical conclusion. Let us, therefore, once more repeat it. The estimate of the capitalist's ability to produce—in other words, the basis of his credit—*includes* and implies at the present moment the co-operation of Labour with the plant that "belongs" to the capitalist. Labour does not "belong" to him as his plant does. Yet he is "credited with" the productivity of Labour *plus* the productivity of his plant, exactly as if Labour were as much his property as his own plant is. It will be seen, we hope, that Capital thus appropriates a double credit: it appropriates the credit of society, inherent in the very existence of an elaborate plant; and it appropriates the credit of Labour, inherent in the fact that Labour, like plant, is a factor in production. No wonder the capitalist classes grow "rich"—in other words, have oceans of spending-power. No wonder also that the community remains poor—in other words, has to "borrow" money of the capitalist classes—and that Labour is in the same plight. The potential productivity of society and the potential productivity of Labour are both of them coolly appropriated by the capitalist class, which *includes* them in its "property" and raises credit on the total amount.

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We saw last week how society might recover the use of the credit attaching to the social contribution to the improvement of Capital; how, in short, society might come by its own. Our present object is to consider how Labour may obtain credit for its share in the potential productivity which is the basis of credit. Let it be supposed that in a given industry (let us say the Mining industry) the Labour employed is under the control of the labourers themselves. No great stretch of fancy, since the Miners' Federation claim to have a monopoly of the manual labour employed in and about the mines. Now such a monopoly of Labour is as much a "property" as the plant, including the pits, of the mine-owners. No less than the mines and mining-plant, it is indispensable to the production of coal. Furthermore, being a monopoly and a necessary factor in production, and being, by implication, under the control or virtual ownership of the Miners' Federation, the labour-power of the miners is *potentially* upon equal terms with the plant of the mine-owners. At present, as we say, the mine-owners *assume* the co-operation of Labour and raise credit on the combined productivity of their plant *plus* the labour employed upon it. But, quite obviously, it is only for the Miners to claim their own, to *withdraw* from the mine-owners the credit attaching to the ability of Labour to produce. The credit (or spending-power) of the mine-owners now depends upon two factors: the control of plant and the control of Labour. In other words, their own credit derived from plant is supplemented and increased by the credit derived from Labour that does not belong to them. If, therefore, Labour is in a position to enforce its claim to its own possession—as the Miners' Federation undoubtedly is—it is equally in a position to withdraw the credit attaching to Labour's ability to produce from the present usurpers of that credit, namely, the mine-owners. The matter is really perfectly simple; no reader ought to be any longer puzzled by it. Credit or spending-power (let us say Money, and done with it) being based on an estimate of the ability to produce; the ability to produce coal being partly dependent on plant and partly upon Labour; the existing system being such that Capital as the owner of the plant only, nevertheless appropriates the credit attaching to the other equally necessary factor of Labour—all we say is that Labour, by exercising its monopoly to claim its own, can claim the credit inherent in itself—in short, a share, and a big share, in the "credit" of the mining industry.

Without going into the details of the actual scheme that has been drafted (and that will, at the proper moment, be published first in these columns), we can envisage the general procedure to be followed somewhat as follows. By virtue of their possession of the

plant of the mining industry, the present owners are in a position to "issue credit." In other words, their I O U's or cheques or other media of spending-power are "honoured" because they are "backed" by the ability to deliver the goods, which is implicit in their possession of plant. Well and good; we do not propose to challenge this property or the rights contained in it. What, however, we now ask is why the Miners' Federation does not follow suit, and "issue credit" on *its* property, namely, its labour-ability to produce. Plant and Labour are equally necessary to production. If the possessor of plant is competent to issue credit on the estimated productivity of his plant, the possessor of labour (in this case, the Miners' Federation) is equally competent to "issue credit" on the productivity of his labour. And if, by virtue of credit, the capitalist can acquire more capital, equally, by virtue of credit, Labour can acquire capital—and more capital. There is not the least reason, in short, why Labour should not acquire capital to the amount of Labour's ability to produce, and by the same means by which Capitalists have acquired capital, namely, by issuing credit on its ability. NATIONAL GUILDSMEN.

Letters from Russia—IV.

By P. Ouspensky

EKATERINODAR.

MY friend proved to be a true prophet. Very soon "sharing in the plunder for the whole time it had been going on" became the leading principle of Bolshevism. Meanwhile—i.e., autumn, 1917—the actual traits of Bolshevism began to reveal themselves. They form the very essence of the movement, and their application consisted in a struggle against culture, against the "intelligentsia," against freedom of any kind. People now began to realise the true meaning of Bolshevism; they began to lose the illusions which led them to confuse Bolshevism with a socialistic and revolutionary movement. These illusions, which we have lost, seem now to prevail among yourselves. Persons inclined to abstract modes of thinking persist in seeing in Bolshevism not what it actually is, but what it ought to be according to their theoretical deductions. These people will have a very sad awakening, and this awakening is not "beyond the mountains," as the Russian proverb says.

The causes of the success of Bolshevism in Russia, which came as a surprise to the Bolsheviks themselves, can be found in the complete destruction of the economical bases of Russian life brought about by the war, in the incredibly mixed political views prevailing among the Russian intelligentsia, varying between patriotic Chauvinism and anarchical pacifism, and chiefly in the instability of Russian political thought and the purely theoretical and demagogic character of the chief Russian political parties and tendencies. There was no party created by reality and resulting from actual existing conditions. All that was opposed to Bolshevism consisted of theories alone, theories and phrases very often the same as those employed by the Bolsheviks themselves.

The Bolsheviks knew what they were aiming at; nobody else knew. This is the reason for their success. Of course, their success is only temporary, as, speaking generally, nobody can be a Bolshevik for ever. It is a sickness from which either people recover or, if its germs have entered too deeply in the organism, they die.

Lately the comparison of Bolshevism with disease has become common. This is not sufficiently true. Bolshevism is not a disease only; it is death, and a very quick death, or it is not real Bolshevism.

Bolshevism in general is a catastrophe, a shipwreck.

This is what you do not realise, and you will be able to realise it only when you learn our history of the last three years.

All the political tendencies which existed before the Revolution may be divided into four groups. The first group was the monarchical—i.e., the group that supported the Government. It consisted of people who sympathised with the Government partly on grounds of principle, partly on those of personal interest. Theoretically, they desired a return to autocracy, but actually their wish was only to recover and retain their privileged position. These people did not form a strict political party. The latter was formed by various organisations of nobles and political groups like the "Union of the Russian People" or the "Union of Archangel Michael." Their programmes and tactics were very limited, and consisted chiefly in petitioning for and obtaining from the Government special grants and in the organisation of Jewish pogroms.

The second group was formed by the "Octobrists." This party emerged from the Revolution of 1905, and its official aim was the realisation of the principles included in the Manifesto of the Emperor of October 17, in which Russia was promised all sorts of freedoms. The actual activity of this group was the struggle against any kind of such realisation. This party was formed by wealthy bourgeois and members of the bureaucracy or of the intelligentsia who liked liberal sentiments without wishing to break away from the Government. A well-known anecdote relates how the Emperor Nicholas II, wishing to be very agreeable to somebody, said: "I am the first Octobrist in Russia." The comment made on it was "that was because he had signed the Manifesto but had not carried it out."

The third group embraced the so-called "Cadets," the word being a combination of the first letters of the Constitutional-Democratic party. Its programme was too theoretic; its origin was to be found in the political clubs gathered round the Moscow University. They wanted to remain "legal," and therefore did not publicly declare their real republican and socialistic tendencies. Its vital element was constituted by the members of the former Zemsky Sojous, who joined the party some time after its constitution. But they were bound by the programme of their party, whose principle had more platform significance than anything else—e.g., universal suffrage on the principle of the direct, secret, and equal ballot.

If the Octobrists were insincere in one way, the Cadets were in another way, and both were equally different from what they professed to be. They were hampered by the controversial character of several points in their programme and a certain "party discipline." Many of its members were highly respectable, esteemed, and energetic men, who formed a group somewhat outside the party proper. They were completely lost among the rank and file of the party, and the mass of the most important members who had actual vital political experience, who knew the country and the people, never played any leading rôle in the party. The lead was usually taken by theorists of the professional and barrister class. All this deprived the party of strength and actual value. Its left wing was too closely connected with the socialistic parties to be of real vitality and energy.

In the fourth group we can include all the socialistic parties, working on ready-made plans and differing very little from their colleagues abroad. Their division into different groups brought into prominence two chief divergent groups: the "Social-Revolutionaries" basing themselves chiefly on their "agrarian policy," and the "Social-Democrats"—orthodox Marxists. The latter party was itself subdivided into two groups —those who advocated the "minimum" programme, the Mensheviks, and those advocating the programme "maximum"—the Bolsheviks. The most

vital tendencies in the socialistic parties were the former "Narodniki," united to a certain extent with the Social-Revolutionaries, or the Narodnyie-Socialists (Socialists of the People), who were of a less extreme tendency. Their success was hampered, however, by the socialistic ballast of their programmes.

The revolution provoking the fall of the old régime brought to a natural end the activity of the Monarchists and Octobrists as political parties. There were left the "Cadets," who now openly embraced the republican faith, and the different kinds of Socialists. Neither the "Cadets" nor the Socialists were in a position to offer effective resistance against the activities of the Bolsheviks. The different groups of Socialists, however loud they protested against the means used by the Bolsheviks, did not cease to regard them as part of their own political group. They addressed them as "comrades" and found it possible to discuss terms of agreement with them. The attempts to arrive at real agreements were, of course, doomed to failure, for every agreement requires a certain amount of honesty or seriousness from both sides. But Bolsheviks never considered these agreements with seriousness. The chief aim of their game was to gain time and their chief object to obtain power. The rest of the Socialists did not venture to protest strongly enough or actively oppose people who repeated their own phrases about the labour system, about the struggle with capitalism, and the victory of the proletariat. The "comrade-Bolsheviks" only laughed at the sentimentality of the "comrade-Socialists," and using them as blind tools for their purposes worked for their aims and achieved what they wanted.

This was the extraordinary period of a "comrade-Premier" and Commander-in-Chief, the barrister Kerensky. The "Cadets" tried to save the last remnants of common sense, but found it impossible to work in common with the Socialists. The Socialists, on the other hand, were ready for an agreement with the Bolsheviks. The road to the victory of Bolshevism lay open.

Revolt of Intelligence.—II.

By Ezra Pound.

THE inconvenience, if any, caused to the Allied administrations by Senator Lodge's "torpedoing" of the Treaty is a perfectly just recompense. Each of the Allied administrations has seized a foreign figure-head; in France, Mr. Lloyd George is the Titan; here, Mr. Clemenceau is the Titan tiger, purged of all fierceness and felinity, and endowed only with moral greatness; President Wilson was an easy and convenient utensil. It was not for the Allies to examine Mr. Wilson's credentials.

Mr. Wilson, at the time of his first election to the Presidency, represented only the minority of a minority party. (I will put down some details later.) Few men having been once elected U.S. President have shown themselves so incompetent or so nonchalant as not to be re-elected. No Frenchman or Englishman could be expected to take note of these facts. They are "mere details of American politics."

The American constitution, regarded by some English writers as a "sport," or freak political growth, is an extremely interesting document; ancient Anglo-Saxon institutions were at its making tempered with eighteenth century French culture and caution.

The President is given certain executive powers, checked and balanced by the legislature and the judiciary. Mr. Wilson himself once wrote a book to show that with the lapse of over a century, and with the drift of things, succeeding Presidents would tend to engross their functions. Let us say, at once, that America likes enthusiasm for its own sake, and loathes all forms of discrimination, literary or political (corollaries to follow). It was not to be expected that the American electorate would read a professor's books on American institutions before deciding to elect him. The elector in that fateful year was too busy fleeing from the adipose tissue of Taft and the stark terror of "Teddy."

The American constitution was intended to preserve human liberties as conceived in the latter years of the eighteenth century; Senator Lodge has intended to conserve some vestiges of the constitution, and in the face of attack from a British capitalist paper, engineered by an ex-American editor with adumbrations of Dominion finance, one might do worse than point out that the verb "torpedo" is ill-applied. No political acts have ever been more open and above board than Lodge's opposition to Wilson.

The American constitution does not, and no human document could, foresee all the tricks that future functionaries might try to play, or include specific prohibitions against them. Thus the American constitution does not specifically forbid the American President to climb palm-trees in his night-shirt, or to plant pumpkins in the salons of the White House. But, apart from irrelevancies, the spirit of the constitution is clear enough for any man of good will. The President is an executive officer; his freedom in choosing his cabinet is given in the expectation that he will try to assemble the best brains in the country, and gather the most able council; the better Presidents have attempted to do this.

If any document was ever intended to *prevent* a country's becoming a one-man show, that document is the American Constitution. No President was ever intended to appoint himself his own representative in fear that his extreme views and his extreme bossiness should be modified by the intervention of even the most supple and obedient tool. Had anyone in the English or French Foreign Office taken the trouble to examine Mr. Wilson's credentials, or even to listen to the speeches made in the American Senate, the Powers might have whispered to Messrs. Wilson and House: "What about a representative delegation?" etc. And in view of the fact that the Republican Party would have brought America into the war much sooner than did Mr. Wilson, it is a little late to regard Wilson as the saviour of Europe now being back-bitten by provincials.

The size of America being what it is, it is, perhaps, better that some of the constitutional rights of her citizens, vested in their representatives, should be preserved, even if an instrument so hugely potential of tyranny as the League of Nations (to be administered by irresponsible deputies of Wilsonians) has to be shelved.

Wilson is the instinctive tyrant. Put aside the worn cliché about the "professor"; there are in American universities two types clearly demarked, the professor, who is often quite human and interested in his subject, and the "administrative educator," that is to say, a miniature Milner, bent upon crushing the students into a mould, and to show that the student is there for the college, not the college for the student. This type of

educator does not remain in the quiet professorial chair; he rises to be dean or college president; and he wields every scrap of authority not forbidden him.

Wilson left Princeton University because there was not in the university room for him and a party with a different opinion. The New Jersey politicians backed him for President because they wanted him out of State-politics. This was probably to his credit, but it does not imply administrative ability. The game is not infrequent in America. The New York politicians tried it on Roosevelt; they tucked him neatly into the Vice-Presidency, but Czolgosz' assassination of McKinley released him. These are details of "American politics." The British public could not be expected to know them, or the British administration to consider them.

Yet the writing was on the wall large enough; the warning was plain enough; and public heedlessness of the warning both in America and in Europe is sufficient indictment of the present state of democratic intelligence.

Le style c'est l'homme. The sound of groaning ascends. Wherever and whenever an intelligent man turns his attention to affairs of State he finds the same deplorable impoverishment in the *quality* of politicians. Europe wanted a saviour. Wilson's public utterance was before the peoples of Europe and they chose to find the saviour in the man who used language as it is used in Mr. Wilson's speeches.

Henry James is avenged. As the perspective is established, the rôles of these two men, men of so diverse an order that one can hardly conceive their being of the same biological category, will be seen in a fairer light. James after half a century of meticulous search for verity, half a century of careful comparison of the racial and national qualities of French, English, Hun and American; James, making his supreme protest against official America's indifference to the welfare of civilisation, by his renouncement of American citizenship; James naturally remained unconsulted: and yet when we consider that from the opening of the war until his death Henry James was engaged in vigorous private correspondence with America, and when we consider that Senator Lodge is a prolific writer of letters and has a leaning toward literature, we may allow fancy to wander; we may ask ourselves whether in the files of Senator Lodge's "letters received" there may not be one or two autographs from the one great American of his time. We may wonder whether the truth written carefully and in private may not in the end carry the victory over all the rhetoric of the megaphones; whether Lincoln had not some basis for his feeling that one cannot fool all the people all the time.

Mr. Wilson's account is overdrawn. From the purely practical standpoint: "God help France, if she gives up the Rhine bridgeheads." God help a lot of clichés that have flourished for a season. It is time for a little thought. "Whether the Rhine was not, by treaty, made international, or more or less so, a century ago?" "Whether on a basis of hate these matters are practical?" "Whether a belt of civilisation stretching from Paris to Freiburg, Munich and Vienna would not be desirable?" "Terre Latine!" "Whether it wouldn't be just as well if the Rhineland were not allowed to separate itself from Prussia and fall under the charm of Paris, even if it meant less indemnity."

This is bold speculation, and one cannot settle the map on one page. I ask indulgence to put down my facts one at a time.

Let us say, for the moment, that if the League of Nations is "torpedoed," it may still be possible for a border skirmish to occur in Afghanistan or in Galicia without its dragging on a world-war; or for the railwaymen to strike in Johannesburg without international "police" being called in.

Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

MR. F. J. NETTLEFOLD'S production of "Othello" has restored the precise meaning to the phrase, "playing to capacity." The Scala is a most capacious theatre; and when I saw the performance, the proportion of audience to capacity was infinitesimal. Nature may abhor a vacuum, but Mr. Nettlefold's Art creates one; at the very least, he may count himself king of relative space. But he is obviously akin to Hamlet in this respect, that he has bad dreams; he dreams that he is an actor, interpreting masterpieces to the applauding masses—and he certainly has the qualifications of a "walking-on gentleman." That is to say, he has the normal complement of a man, but he does not know what to do with it. Like Juliet, he "speaks, yet he says nothing," nothing audible or intelligible. "What of that?" The theatre is practically empty; only Echo and the other actors answer; he "struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more," and the box-office clerk wakes up to tell him that he has sold one stall for to-morrow's performance—to a man who imagines that he is going to see a kinemacolour film.

It is the first time that I have seen Mr. Nettlefold, and it will be the last. I have seen some bad acting on the West End stage; and there are few, except the old Bensonians and the new Ben Greet-ers, who can render Shakespeare intelligibly. But I confess that I was not prepared for the sheer incompetence of Mr. Nettlefold. Most bad actors have a box of stage tricks, which, however inappropriate, will put some theatrical sense into a part; but Iago had apparently made Othello "most egregiously an ass" before he came on the stage, and he played like a very unpromising candidate for the dramatic academy. The man simply has everything to learn in stage technique, deportment, gesture, elocution; it is well-nigh incredible that anyone so bereft of natural gifts or technical skill should expose himself even to the atmosphere. He shows his hands, and then wrings them—the only intelligent gesture in his performance; now if it had been his neck—but that would be justice, not drama.

He is certainly responsible for his own performance (I hope that there is a Day of Judgment for such actors); but he also seems to be responsible, with the assistance of Mr. Henry Bedford (who plays Brabantio) for the production. The scenery and dresses were satisfactory (they were supplied by people who know their business, and earn their living by it); but in all that makes an effective production, stage grouping, stage business, to say nothing of effective characterisation, Mr. Nettlefold revealed himself. His soldiers and torch-bearers slunk on, and got out of the way, without any sense of the dramatic value of a crowd; the duel between Cassio and Montano was so badly arranged that Iago, I hear, was injured at one performance; even the scene in which Othello strikes Desdemona lost all effect because of the awkward position of Othello when delivering it. In a good production, people are always just in the right position at the right moment; at the Scala, they seemed to wander about at will, and trusted to luck (which always failed them) to bring them into dramatic proximity with their fellow-players. Mr. Nettlefold's own absurd trick of rushing over to a little table, and burying his face in his hands, prevented him again and again from confronting Iago with even the best simulation of rage that Mr. Nettlefold could muster. Iago's resignation of his office, instead of being a vigorous protest against and defiance of injustice, was addressed to Othello's back, while he had another little weep at the table. He scurried about from sofa to table, wringing his hands on the sofa and weeping at the table, until one grew dizzy with watching his gyrations; while all the time, Iago strolled about

talking to anybody or nobody in the most casual manner. The very entrance to this scene was absurd, with Iago looking at a closed door, and saying: "Look, where he comes!" Whether Mr. Nettlefold or Mr. Bedford devised this weeping at the table, I do not know; but Brabantio did it in the council chamber, Cassio did it when he mourned his "reputation," and the table attracted Mr. Nettlefold like a magnet. "Here's a table; let us weep at it," seemed to be the guiding idea of this production.

Mr. H. A. Saintsbury frankly played Iago as though it were his duty to provide some much-needed comic relief. It is certainly a novel reading of the character, and it does not convey the essential quality of Iago—his infernal cleverness in playing upon the psychology of other people, and making them dance to his tune. But what of that? Anything will do with an Othello who listens to Iago's suggestions with a sort of "You don't say so" attitude and expression, and runs over to a table and weeps. But even Mr. Saintsbury, for some reason or other, had forgotten how to "make a scene"; he made Cassio drunk without either comedy or craft in the rendering of it, his handling of Rodrigo was pointless. We do not see the superior intelligence manipulating a lecherous impulse to folly; there is not, throughout the play, any of that play of character on character with which "Othello" abounds. I grant that with actors who just say their lines, and walk off, there is little to be done; but Mr. Saintsbury's casual strolling about, varied by the stance and posture of a smirking soubrette, did absolutely nothing to make the scenes effective.

If we turn to the women, we are no better satisfied. Desdemona should be a most gracious figure; "she is full of most blessed condition," said Roderigo, "she is, indeed, perfection," said Cassio. Shakespeare loved her so that he made that ridiculous blunder of stage-craft of reviving her after being smothered, because he could not bear to let her go without adding one more virtue to her character. Mrs. Nettlefold played Desdemona; "the riches of the ship is come on shore," with the bearing of a purse-proud lady. I feel sure that Mrs. Nettlefold has never tried, has never been obliged, to charm anybody; her perfunctory manner with Othello suggested an utter lack of practice in love-making, and she pleaded Cassio's cause with no more emotion than she would exhibit in giving a good character to a domestic servant. "She can weep," as Othello said; but her style of weeping ought to be made a ground of divorce. She snivelled and boo-hooed; and was so pleased to find that she could make a noise, that she did it on every possible occasion and for as long as she could. Her processional exits with Emilia, boo-hooing solemnly until she was off the stage, had the air of a joke that has fallen flat. All the poetry of the bedroom scene, that sense of tragedy brooding over the pure loveliness of an ideal character, was lost; Mrs. Nettlefold went to bed, and that was all.

Emilia, as played by Miss Ethel Griffies, would have been tolerable under another management; the difficulty in such a production as this is for anyone to begin to act, and not until Desdemona was dead did Miss Griffies realise that Emilia had a part to play—but that was too near the end of the play.

At a time when theatres are so scarce that actors like Robert Loraine have to take off successful productions like "Cyrano," and others are unable to produce plays, it is a scandal that a fine theatre like the Scala should be kept empty by such atrocious acting. I say nothing of the vandalism of such a production; after all, it is no worse for Mr. Nettlefold to play Othello than for Miss Doris Keene to play Juliet or Miss Mary Grey, Portia; and Shakespeare, luckily, will survive his interpreters. But that sheer incompetence and vanity, backed by money, should deprive the public of the opportunity of seeing good actors, should add another instance to the legend that "Shakespeare does not pay," is a fact that makes me so wroth that I must conclude this article before I begin to say things. Othello's occupation is as surely gone as Cassio's reputation is lost at the Scala; and we can only await some other production in which Othello will know how to do what he has to do.

Talkin'.

By Rowland Kenney.

"FLEMIN' 's got the sack," said Slanty Joe.

"What for?" someone asked.

"Talkin'."——

It may seem strange that a man should lose his job as a docker for talking, but to the whole gang Slanty's words were quite explicable. You see, Fleming had been educated on a Hull trawler, so his habits were peculiar and his vocabulary, though limited, weird and arresting. Take his habits first—though one couldn't say that the fishing-ground was entirely responsible for them, they were mostly the gift of nature, and could be borne with some degree of fortitude. Some of them he did not indulge in much; those were the good ones, and they were very few. The others, the ones he cultivated most, we grouped under the general heading of "Fleming's monthly." They were all linked together by indissoluble bonds—thus:—

At the beginning of the month he signed the pledge. He was then agonising through the aftermath of a very great drunk. For a week or so he would assiduously preach temperance and thrift, and, having no money, he would be consistent enough religiously to practise those much over-rated virtues. Then he became dull and low spirited, and was awkwardly quarrelsome when interfered with. He would continue in this state until the end of the third week, by which time he had accumulated wealth—or what passed for wealth on the Dalby docks—say, two pounds.

Early in the last week of the month he was neither quarrelsome nor preachy; he was just—mellow. He believed in toleration and the Brotherhood of Man. He had views—and aired them—on The Inn as the Workers' Home, and shook hands with his mates about forty times a day, called them all "Chummy," and forgot all old smouldering animosities.

The end of the month often found him in the police court on some charge or other. Once he was "up" for obstruction. Having carried a policeman to the middle of the bridge that spanned the river, he dropped his burden over the parapet, ran round to the bank, swam to the gasping struggler, and tried to haul him to safety in a given number of minutes. One of his prime diversions was juggling with policemen. He didn't believe in Law at all. It hurt him too much.

Afterwards, of course, came repentance and the pledge.

Now this general routine was followed, with occasional lapses when he was in prison, for quite a long time. It went on, as a matter of fact, for as long as Fleming's cousin was foreman, then he got the sack for "talkin'," as Slanty put it.

Some of the words Fleming used no one could understand, but they cut for all that. Most men can stand a few swear words that are familiar to them, but there is something sinister and ugly in bad language when you don't know what it means.

"They come fro' Hull, an' that explains it," Slanty Joe used to say. Though how that explained it no one quite gathered. According to Slanty, on the fishing-grounds men never refer to the dictionary, because only fifty per cent. of the words they use are to be found in that remarkable book. The other fifty per cent. no one will print, and it was in the use of this second fifty that Fleming excelled.

"'Tisn't as if Oi'd said annythin'—not really to say *annythin'*," said Fleming, when he was telling of the

affair later. "Oi just called the craythor a pot-bellied, skew-backed, splay-footed, bandy-legged, squint-eyed son of a cat-fish. Oi said that if Oi'd ever used such stuff as himsilf for bait, all the little fishes in the North Say would ha' been insulted an' would ha' emigrated to Ameriky. Oi just suggested, all kindly-ways, that he ought to"—— But why go on? I can only give Fleming's mildest and poorest tellings. The cream of his discourse would set this page on fire. . . So he was sacked and was, in a way, on our hands.

After walking round for some days looking for a job, Fleming became filled with the desire to return to Hull and the rough North Sea. "Oi'll be at home there," he said. "Oi know the place. Oi can undherstand what's what, and the bhoys undherstand me."

The problem was how to get him there. Money there was none, and tramping was too bad for Fleming; out of the question, in fact; there was a foot of snow in the country districts at that time of the year. At last the right idea struck Slanty Joe. Every night a wagon of goods left the docks for Hull. The load generally consisted of large cases or bales with a few oddments crammed in between. So one evening Fleming hoisted himself on the top of the load under the tarpaulin sheet. Slanty had taken the precaution of placing a large bale of woollens at either end, so Fleming had a sort of lair between the two.

Unfortunately, just before the train was made up, a few small boxes and barrels and hard little objects of various kinds were rushed through and shoved into the cavity where Fleming lay. There was no chance of keeping them back, so the wagon was sheeted up and then knocked down on to the waiting train.

Two days later Slanty Joe came rushing across from the Time-office to the men's cabin. "It's that damned Fleming," he explained, as he banged and bolted the door from the inside. "He's mad!"

Naturally everyone suggested that Slanty was the madman. Hadn't Fleming been safely packed away? And them came confirmation of Slanty's tale. It came through the window in the form of a brick. This brick struck the kettle, knocked it over on the fire, and, in the resulting smoke and steam and fluster, Fleming's hands tore down the window sash, and, in another second, Fleming's body launched itself like a torpedo into the huddled mass of men. "Shlanty!" he yelled.

"Where's that murdhering' divil Shlanty? Be the little fishes an' the big waves o' the sivin seas Oi'll—Oi'll shkin im'. Be the Cape blast an' the divil's buoy Oi'll—Oi'll have his blood." And so on—only much more so.

No wonder Slanty had rushed, frightened. Fleming was a sight to turn daylight to dark. Lumps and bruises covered his face. One eye was nearly lost to sight. His nose was swollen and all awry. After he had been jumped upon by four or five of the gang and quietened somewhat, it was seen that he limped. And when he was calm enough to tell his story his language was so choice that even the oldest timer in the gang could scarcely understand him.

The story ran something like this:—As soon as the train that was to take him to Hull was on the move, Fleming had scattered the small hard objects around and settled down in the midst of them. For a time he was comparatively comfortable. But he, and everyone else, had forgotten one important fact. Ten miles from Dalby dock was a junction where all goods trains had to be re-set, and where, consequently, a terrific amount of shunting took place. And Fleming's Hull wagon—he averred—came in for ten times more hitting up than any of the rest.

For the first bang or two Fleming grinned—he would grin in a case like that—but, when the shunters warmed up to their work and rattled him about like a dice in a box, he got first alarmed and then wildly angry. The small boxes and barrels and things made dead sets at him. As he warded off the sharp corners of a box on one side, the end of an iron roller jabbed him in the back, whilst a cog-wheel tried to climb up his face by hanging on to his nose. He was punched and poked and jabbed and struck in every conceivable manner by every object that shared his lair, until, despairing and frantic, he signified to the night and the stars that he had had enough. He signified in his usual manner, and the shunters and guards and enginemen listened in awe and so became aware that he had had enough, and that he intended to stand no more of it; but they were in the dark as to who, or what or where he was. So he enlightened them.

Pulling out his jack-knife, he slashed madly at his tarpaulin covering. No clean cutting for Fleming. He criss-crossed and curved and twisted mass of ribbons of the top of the sheet was a flowing mass of ribbons of insane patterns and all lengths and widths. Then he clambered forth on to one of the bales at the end of the load and informed both the animate and inanimate objects around him what he thought of them and the world.

There were a few houses near, and the inhabitants were partly awakened from sleep by Fleming's talk. They listened for a moment, shuddered, and resumed more pleasant and commonplace dreams. The enginemen were envious when once they had recovered from the first shock. *They* tried to make mental notes of some of Fleming's most choice expressions, but they soon gave it up in despair. It was impossible to hang on to any of his phrases for above a minute, because one's attention was always distracted by some more weird and effective effort that he was sure to put forth.

Luckily for Fleming, one of the shunters knew him, and so the railway police were not bidden to his feast of words. A new sheet was found and rapidly changed for the one he had cut up, and, half an hour later, the Hull wagon, minus Fleming, was bowling along to its destination. A week later the new foreman softened his heart, and Fleming, chastened in mind and still sore in body, returned to his work as a docker, and made strenuous efforts to cease "Talkin'."

Readers and Writers.

I SHALL have a sweet revenge on a correspondent who insists upon remaining anonymous: he shall write this page for me. The following are, in fact, extracts from "W.S.'s" recent letters, all of which have been received without a trace of their origin.

* * *

I was looking at Herbert Paul's introduction to a few of Hazlitt's essays. He remarks that "the faultlessness of Swift's style as apt to pall," and that "Hazlitt is not monotonous." But surely a style that palls in *not* faultless. Such loose thinking is now so common, however, that it is scarcely worth while to be annoyed at it. I have almost given up hope that the English language will ever possess again the glories that made seventeenth and eighteenth century prose a delight. But while THE NEW AGE exists it is too early to despair of the language. How well Hazlitt would have criticised modern poetry! I see that (referring to Thomas Campbell) he remarks that Campbell substituted the decomposition of prose for the composition of poetry.

In Lady Burghclere's "George Villiers, Second Duke of Buckingham," I have had some very amusing reading these holidays. Once again you are compelled to moralise on the ill-use to which men put the rarest gifts of the gods. What could not a zealous politician do with the fool multitude did he possess the beauty and charm that Buckingham so abused? It is hard to believe that he had the friendship of Cowley, the man who could write that faultless and wonderful elegy on Crashaw. But personal beauty seems to blind even the noblest of men. No doubt Milton was think-

ing of such characters when he asserted that only God could surely discern hypocrisy.

It is quoted of Robert Leighton that he was "liker a fair idea than a man set in flesh and blood." How aptly ironical is the title, "The Secretary of Nature," to Dr. Heydon, a friend of Buckingham's, who dabbled in astrology!

Buckingham could write a good love-letter. I think it would be a fair generalisation that the more devoted and constant the lover the less articulate. Words, as Maurice Hewlett remarks in "Love and Lucy," are very clumsy things for lovers to handle. I would go further and call them dangerous—nay, fatal—for any but a poet. "We all, and women especially, need to learn to love," to quote a NEW AGE reviewer. I think Maurice Hewlett knows more of the philosophy of the subject than most modern novelists, but how many would agree that men cannot love before forty and women before thirty-five?—("Love of Proserpine"). Unfortunately, most people have to marry before they realise the difference between sex-attraction and a real union; and no marriage should take place till both lovers are tested by separation. When each can say from their hearts that absence has strengthened their affection there is some hope of happiness in a permanent bond. But how many lovers, of either sex, will trouble to perform any mental or physical discipline for one another's sake? "A. E. R." has the root of the matter in his "Cant of Catholicism"—"Perfect love demands perfect health." I owe him many thanks for that article.

I do not care twopence for the mandarins' opinions of either Shakespeare or Blake. This generation is too sophisticated to understand them. Genius is rare—there are very few living men who can be said to have it in abundance; "flashes of genius" are fairly common. Say what you like of the limitations of genius—the *quality* of the energy involved was finer than we know of in contemporaries. Shakespeare wrote the "Sonnets" and "Venus and Adonis" (or did he merely edit them?—some wise fool will suggest that presently).

The "Sonnets" by themselves are enough for immortality. They are the touchstone by which you may test true lovers of poetry and true understanders of love.

As for the plays—have the word "edit" if you like; the fact remains that, had Shakespeare *not* edited them, they would be forgotten by all but bookworms. Ben Jonson's attitude to Shakespeare is worth all the modern ideas of his share in the plays put together. How do Heminge and Contell refer to him? Surely in terms applicable only to a creative mind.

As to Blake, I believe the "visionary heads" he drew to have been objective—the result of a capacity to see what I suppose can be seen only by God and angels. The physical body in general is blind to the phenomena of the spiritual world. The two ladies of "An Adventure" had, for a time, a similar extension of vision. Those who maintain that Blake's visions were subjective must explain his drawing a spirit against his will, because she got in his way. Besides, his whole life makes the possession on Blake's part of a faculty appropriate to a "spiritual body" the easiest explanation.

"As to Shakespeare, he is exactly like the *old* engraving—which is called a bad one. I think it very good." Why not believe it?

I have just finished a glorious book called "Tea-Districts of China and India," by Robert Fortune, 1852. It is a joy to go back to a time when China was scarcely influenced by our commercialised civilisation. Of course, the book is likely to be found only on second-hand book-shelves. I felt very elated to have got my copy for a shilling.

There is a description of the situation of a Buddhist temple that makes me homesick—I must have been a Chinaman in some earlier incarnation. I want to taste bamboo tips instead of cabbage, and see the strange rocks I as yet only know in the Chinese landscape-paintings exhibited once at the British Museum. As for Japan, we shall soon have to go to Mitford (Lord Redesdale) and Lafcadio Hearn to know what she was before she lost her soul to gain the world; and England, conquered by aeroplanes, will retreat to Borrow, Gilpin, Turner, Thomas Hardy, and W. H. Hudson. O, for some unsuspected isle in the far seas!

To turn to another subject discussed in THE NEW AGE recently, the translation of poetry. Ronsard's "Quand vous serez bien vieille" will be untranslatable until some Englishman masters the French hexameter as well as Sidney did. Sidney made the hexameter seem natural in our language. The first of the sonnets to Stella, "Loving in truth and fain in verse my love to show," is a fair example. Both the translations of Ronsard given by Mr. Selver are failures. The music, the exquisite charm, of the French has evaporated. Probably Ronsard, like Virgil, is untranslatable. Of course, I believe in experiments and in the possibility of some future translator overcoming, through a genius equal to his original, all the difficulties that *can* be overcome. The fact remains that to know a poet you must learn his language. Our own older poets, or dialect poets (Chaucer and William Barnes, for example), can only be appreciated by mastering their vocabulary.

So Fielding is not a creator. I doubt if he would agree with you. At any rate, he asserts that he is "the founder of a new province of writing," and so "at liberty to make what laws I please therein" ("Tom Jones," Book II, Chapter I). I have begun reading "Tom Jones" again. The style is admirable; as you say, the eighteenth century was the golden age of our culture, but then "enthusiasm" was discouraged in that age, and it is far easier for the man of the world, the reasonable man, to perfect his style than for the subtle, complex, introspective, world-burdened man of our day. The simpler the character (power of verbal expression being granted) the easier it is for that man to have an admirable style. Cobbett writes gloriously—Cobbett was, compared with De Quincey or Compton Mackenzie, a simple soul. Hence his advice to his nephew is easily explicable:—

"Sit down to write what you have thought, and not to think what you shall write. Use the first words that occur to you, and never attempt to alter a thought; for that which has come of itself into your mind is likely to pass into that of another more readily and with more effect than anything which you can, by reflection, invent. Never stop to make choice of words. Put down your thoughts in words just as they come," etc.

Men who, like Donne, are "subtle to plague themselves" have more failures, and yet more glorious triumphs, than men of less complex minds and hearts. Shakespeare's "Sonnets" are immortal, wonderful, yet nothing in them is so wonderful as Donne's "The Dream" or "The Good-Morrow." No marvel that Ben Jonson called Donne the first poet in the world for some things.

I know you like to hear of forgotten books if they contain anything worth quoting. This, from a poem by an artisan, W. Duthie, is, I think, well expressed. The poems were published in 1864, and I came across the book quite by accident:—

Then onward through the village lane
Of hovels dark, and cribbed, and low,
Where narrow door and knotted pane
Scant light and less of air bestow.
Seared men and women rested there,
And children swarmed and gambolled by;
Quoth he: "Among so many, where
May Modesty find room to lie?"

"The Pearl of the Rhone," etc.

Ignoto.

By Giovanni Papini.

(TRANSLATED BY R. M. HEWITT).

THE deplorable practice, now prevalent, of talking only about men we know, of whose existence we are absolutely certain, has brought it about that no one has troubled to write the life of Ignoto, the Unknown. And please observe that I do not mean just any unknown who at any moment may find a place in the familiar class of the known and recognised, but the particular one, the authentic Ignoto whom nobody knows.

All the pen-drivers write only of the celebrated, the illustrious, the distinguished, or, at any rate, of beings known to the police and duly inscribed on Government records. Who would condescend to waste ink on someone who is nameless? And not only, observe, someone destitute of what literary men call fame or distinction, but without even the trivial group of proper names that the printers only set up once, in the list of deaths.

Authors imagine themselves fully justified by saying: "How can we write the life of Ignoto, seeing that, by his very definition, we do not and cannot know anything about him?" An absurd excuse. The finest biographies are of men of whom we know nothing. They are the richest, and, at the same time, the most instructive. They tell us what to expect of men, our ideal of man, what man ought to be.

But that is not our position. We have no need of imagination. If it is true that men are known by their works, we know so many things about Ignoto! I would even say, if I could hope to be believed, that he has been the most important character in history, the supreme hero of humanity. If no one believes me, it is no matter, but let the votaries of notes and queries and the bigots of bibliography listen to me.

Ignoto is very old, a contemporary of the first men. In those days he concerned himself mainly with chemistry and mechanics. He invented the wheel and discovered the use of iron. Later, he evolved clothing, devised money and created agriculture. But very soon he wearied of these material occupations and turned poet. For many ages, wandering over the world, he imagined the myths of religion, composed the Vedas and the Orphic Hymns, devised the legends of the North, and improvised the eternal themes and wistful burdens of the folk-songs. Even in the Middle Ages he continued to have the same habits. He carved the innumerable statues of Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals, and covered with anonymous frescoes the walls of chapels and refectories. Then, too, it was that he created stories and legends, and his are the magnificent books without an author's name. Only at the approach of modern times, with the progress of the stupid mania for cataloguing and writing, Ignoto went into retirement and rested. A great crowd of vain, clever fellows, men who had a name, or were eager to make one, began to paint and invent and carve and write. They had not more ability than Ignoto, but they had much less modesty, and they took delight in announcing to all the winds of heaven that it was they themselves who had done such things and not somebody else. They did not work only for their own joy, or to give delight to others, but, above all, to let the world know that they had worked.

For all that, Ignoto did not remain for ever idle. With the approach of democracy he flung himself into politics. The great modern revolutions were his work. The English Puritans, the American rebels, the French sans-culottes, the Italian volunteers were his manifestations. Under the names of Mob and People he terrified kings, overthrew demagogues, and schemed to turn the world upside down. But these lofty ambitions did not prevent him from treading again the ways of blest antiquity; and many a time he strolls, deep in thought, on the eternal highways that he planned, and rejoices in the simple forms of the vases that he was the first to model, and takes a happy refuge in the houses he invented as a boy, drawing inspiration from the woods and caves.

He is still alive and he cannot die. His activity after the appalling progress of pride and advertisement will be always diminishing, but he will continue to be what silent men were for Carlyle, the salt of the earth. To tell the truth, I have an occasional suspicion that as a result of compulsory idleness and the dullness of these days he has slipped into ways of crime. Whenever I see the newspapers attribute burglaries or acts of violence to the "soliti ignoti" I have a certain fear lest it should concern him; only the plural reassures me.

Judging by the portraits I would not think him capable of such actions. Have you never observed in all the galleries of the world what is called by the catalogues and on the frames, "Portrait of Ignoto"? These portraits are all different from each other, and pedantic critics maintain that they represent various people, not yet identified, but I do not heed the critics and I have entire faith in my hero's multiplicity of countenance. And observe how mobile and how beautiful is the face of Ignoto! Often he is represented in the guise of a pensive gentleman; sometimes he is a pallid youth, seen in profile against the background of a window; sometimes again a wise and experienced man playing with a glove or a falcon. But one always finds in his face profundity and lordship of the mind, and that natural reserve which has prevented him from publishing his title through the obscene mouth of Fame.

. . . . . .

What precedes might perhaps be regarded as a jest imitated from Swift or Carlyle, but it was written to promote in all earnestness a serious thought. Men in general are apt to give too much importance to what bears a name, and is legitimised by a signature on an official coupon. They do not remember as often as they ought that the bulk of what we call "civilisation" was the work of people whose character is a blank to us, and of whom we know nothing at all. The unknown, the Anonymous, have done much more for us than all the illustrious who crowd the biographical dictionaries. The finest pictures, the simplest melodies, the greatest achievements of style, the fundamental inventions, are the work of this Ignoto, ignored by panegyrists and historians.

It is a case (why not admit it?) of ingratitude reinforced by laziness. We remember things more easily when they have a name, and we are the more ready to make a show of gratitude when there stands before us a definite person in whom we can find a goal of our praises and a source of our pride. Poor Ignoto, who thought and laboured without troubling to sign his work, and without sending communications to the Press, is too ephemeral a figure, too easily forgotten. All men, even Jews and Protestants, need images in order to worship anyone. When they do not know who and what the man was who did something, even something great, they never manage to fix their thought on him, to turn on him the current of sympathy or enthusiasm. This ineradicable laziness has brought it about that Ignoto, the great and secular benefactor of the human race, is forgotten by all.

How it grieves me to see in our public squares the countless statues, equestrian and pedestrian, of so many who have written at most a few dreary tragedies, or made some lucky stroke with a rapier! The Greeks had at any rate the profound or prudent idea of raising an altar to the Unknown God. Why should the careless moderns not set up a monument to the Unknown Genius?

Art Notes.

By B. H. Dias.

WYNDHAM LEWIS' portrait of Ezra Pound rises with the dignity of a classic *stele* to the god of gardens amid the bundles of market-garden produce at the Goupil Gallery "salon" (5, Regent Street).

Bond Street (148, The Fine Art Society) presents Russel Flint's most serious assault on our attention to date; he has some technique and an effective use of wet water-colour. "Lochaber" is good in the old way. Flint is flanked by some pictures by C. A. Hunt, whereof the archæology reaches back to the Turner mode; and by a stirring exhibit of William Walcot's mixed media. Walcot's larky and apparently swift embellished water-colour cum oil cum gouash, etc., is really very enjoyable. He is full of vivid contrasts. The "Venice Market" is clean and spirited; the style in "Loggia" is admirable; he comes near to pure form in "Bernini's Colonnade"; displays bravura in "Baths of Constantine," and, throughout the show, a very successful elimination of the unnecessary. Walcot is also a bold etcher, and the more conservative public can be safely recommended to inspect his pictures.

The stir and hullabaloo of the month is not, however, among painters, but among architects. Following their perturbation over the "Caliph's Design," and their natural defence—i.e., that the pamphlet was merely destructive—Mr. Wadsworth has had the temerity to exhibit a plaster model of a Vorticist building. To the trepidation of the "Daily Mirror" and the architectural trade, an idea has launched itself against British architecture, placid since Wren carefully placed his epitaph *inside* St. Paul's Cathedral for fear some literate person should look at the external "sculpture" and "ornaments" of that edifice (i.e., outside, where the light is better).

Apart from our natural horror that any man should think of designing a building unlike Messrs. Lyons' Corner House, or the dwellings in Observatory Gardens, or any other of the only too numerous monuments of the Albert Memorial era, we remain calm enough to observe that Mr. Wadsworth's model, presumably for an eight-storey building, is covered with curious ridges and excrescences; this is, we presume, an attempt to fit the architecture to our climate and to provide means for catching such light as there is; for catching much more of it than is possible by presenting all windows on a flat surface. This aim is commendable. For years intelligent people have, in vain, objected to the English use of an architecture designed for a warm and sunny climate. Even the fine-looking Italian, or Ferrarese, buildings in Jermyn Street suggest the exclusion rather than the invitation of light.

Wadsworth's model (at the Twenty-one Gallery, Adelphi) has likewise the virtue of considering the properties of his material; the structural laws of ferro-concrete differ from those of stone construction. We have before now commented on "architects" who use steel as if its chief virtue were to be the imitation of stone.

However, a break with building tradition should look farther ahead than to the construction of one building block. Paris has already its terraced house—i.e., a house of which each floor recedes successively from the street front and from the lower storeys. The loss of space in this construction is more than compensated by the gain in brightness of interior. Not only should London houses be terraced to admit light, but they should be oriented. How many dozens of corner houses have I not seen with blank walls to the west and windows facing north!

Also, for the crowded districts, for Piccadilly Circus, Ludgate Circus, the Bank, Liverpool Street, etc., we should seriously consider the traffic question. The sane solution lies in two levels; not an elevation of trams such as makes parts of New York and Chicago uninhabitable, but in the elevation of footway; cantilever side-walks; buses boarded at roof-level, not from underneath the spatter of mud and petroleum; bays for vans and goods delivery from the big stores; bridges for footway around the circuses. No one will *mount* a bridge to cross a road, but the continuation of elevated side-walk is a vastly different matter from a bridge over the gap between two street-level pavements. There should also be bays for females who wish to lose themselves in the ecstatic contemplation of Messrs. Selfridge's and Messrs Otherbody's front windows. A two-level system permits these innovations. It also permits the widening of streets without the tremendous expense of buying miles of private property in the most expensive districts of London. One would leave but a very narrow street-level kerb for entering taxis, etc., etc.

The Ovid Press (43, Belsize Park Gardens, N.W.3) again challenges our attention; following the excellent Gaudier-Brzeska portfolio with a still ampler Wyndham Lewis mounted portfolio. Given the "Timon," Mr. Lewis' exhibition of artillery drawings and the collection of his work at the South Kensington, the public has now a chance to judge Lewis as an artist, not merely as a volcanic and disturbing "figure."

The nudes I, II, and III of this portfolio give interesting points of comparison with the Matisse lithographs, or the Gaudier studies, or the John etchings now at the Chenil Gallery. We observed in the Matisse work a suavity and maturity in contrast with the youthful "attack" of the Gaudiers. In the second nude of the Lewis portfolio we find a very great vigour of design, a bolder treatment of the anatomy as design. And certainly qualities perhaps less analysable which neither Gaudier nor Matisse has presented.

In the "Group" (soldiers) we have Cezanne's structure made angular, and, I think, cleaner cut. The Pole Vault gives the transition from the Timon to the Gun Drawings. Lewis becomes increasingly more menacing to the earlier British standards of acceptability. This is no longer due to his accessory literary ability. The time is past when artists could refer to him as a "mere man of letters." He is, needless to deny, our most searching and active art critic. Few people noticed his serious analysis of art in 1914; the periphery disturbances of "Blast" were too numerous; but the pitiless analysis of Picasso and of contemporary fadism in the "Caliph's Design" ("Egoist," 3s. net) are worth very serious consideration.

Since Whistler's "Ten O'clock" no man actually a painter has been able to present thought about painting; and treatises from the actual workman have always an interest unattainable by æsthetes and men who analyse from the outside. The man who spends the whole or even the half of his life actually applying colours to paper and canvas must both know and care more for that process than the man who only looks at the final results.

When a critic is mere critic he is so for one or two reasons: either he cares more for ideas and discussion than for the art he criticises; or, secondly, he is so sensitive to excellence that he would rather not paint (or compose or sculp) than compose, paint or sculp like so-and-so. This second state is preferable to the state of the bad artist; but it implies a certain faintness of vitality. This second sort of critic *would* be a good artist *if* he had the energy, the patience of the good artist. And this very energy, this very patience, which inhere in the successful maker *are bound* to add something even to the critical side of his intellect.

The "Caliph's Design" is a fine curative and purgative against all the titter of Frys, Bells, Lhotes, etc., and as such it should be taken and administered in the cause of public health and morality.

The Ovid Press is to be complimented for the excel-

lent quality of its coloured lithographic reproductions, and, in the cases of both of the Gaudier-Brzeska and Lewis portfolios, for offering the public excellent value for its money.

The Chelsea Book Club Gallery, 65, Cheyne Walk, opens with an excellent show of French drawings and water-colours; notice to follow.

Views and Reviews.

WHENCE AND WHITHER?

THE coincidence of the publication of this book* with the first issue of Mr. H. G. Wells' "Outline of History" serves to remind us of some of the speculative reactions of the war. The outbreak of war surprised almost everybody into admissions of ignorance; the religious people felt that the ways of God were past all comprehension, the humanists discovered that there was something more in man than humanity. Both alike, if we may take Mr. Wells and Mr. Benton as types, have turned back to history for enlightenment; Mr. Wells declares that "a sense of history as the common adventure of all mankind is as necessary for peace within as it is for peace between the nations," his final object being "to estimate the quality and amount and range of the hopes with which [mankind] now faces its destiny." Mr. Benton has a similar intention; he essays "to portray the pattern to which humanity is being forged." He also goes back to the record of the rocks, surveys pre-historic, historic, and contemporary man, considers the impediments to human progress, defines what he regards as the promise of immortality, and looks forward to "post-mortem" and "eternal" man as the end towards which all creation moves. Mr. Wells, I suspect, will go no farther than making it intellectually possible for us to lead a civilised life on this earth, the necessary basis of such a life being a common understanding of our common history, nature, and possibilities; Mr. Benton shows us, to his own satisfaction, at least, that our destiny is not only post-mortem but spiritual, and has no necessary reference to this planet, or to life as we know it. Life, in his conspectus, apparently evolves from the so-called "material" to the so-called "spiritual" state of being, and his method changes from demonstration to assertion in the process. He relies on "science" for his knowledge of historic and contemporary man, and on "spiritualism" for his knowledge of post-mortem and eternal man.

I return to this question because, more than ever, our problem is: "How may we lead a civilised life here?" Unless speculation about the hereafter helps us to a solution, it is an encumbrance and a waste of time; as Browning's Bishop Blongram put it:—

> I act for, talk for, live for this world now,
> As this world calls for action, life, and talk—
> No prejudice to what next world may prove,
> Whose new laws and requirements my best pledge
> To observe then, is that I observe these now,
> Doing hereafter what I do meanwhile.
> Let us concede (gratuitously though)
> Next life relieves the soul of body, yields
> Pure spiritual enjoyments; well, my friend,
> Why lose this life in the meantime, since its use
> May be to make the next life more intense?

If, then, we grant Mr. Benton's argument, that evolution proceeds from the simple to the complex, and passes on from the complex to the simple, that life passes into matter and out of matter, that here we have senses and organs and there we have senses without organs, what of it? How does it help us to live a more civilised life here? If we grant his assertion that "Christianity is clearly the highest form of religion yet attained," our problem still is to stress what Paul disdained, and say: "If in that life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

Mr. Benton does not help us. He tells us instead that "we believe we are approaching in death a great metamorphosis; an entry into a new kingdom of life, wherein we start as its simplest creatures destined for unending expansion—a destiny we do not visualise, but which in ancient inspiration has been called the 'image of God.' We anticipate life in that kingdom will slowly bring to us new duties, new efforts, and new aims; an expansion of intellect; possession of a new and diseaseless ether plasmic body: an unceasing further removal from the beast; freedom from the struggles for and troubles of pabulum; disburdenment of reproduction; a recast of social emulations in the mould of the Beatitudes; an aim not for self; a pure passion for love; a war-less progression with the 'Prince of Peace' as our Over-Lord; increasing awareness of the Reality, Mystery, Majesty, and Fatherhood of God; an ever-onward way; and for all a varying degree of sorrow that we learned and achieved no more in earth life, a sorrow in its deepest degree becomes a hellish birth-mark of shame, effaceable however in penitence, new effort, and aid by Our Lord; a life of world to world and 'world without end' in ever-ascending gradation of ideal of perfection, to Infinity—Infinity being one of the features of God. We believe, verily, that 'God said, Let Us make man in Our Image.'" As a confession of faith that we shall be "better dead," the passage is admirable; as an aid to the process of better living it is simply useless.

If we try to discover the grounds of this belief, we are confronted only with such assertions as this: "Religion is not a decadent force. . . . It is the force most potent in differentiating man from all other life forms. It is the latest form of evolutionary force, a force Divine." If we ask what religion is, he quotes a dictionary definition that it is "a mode of thinking, dealing and acting, which respects, trusts in, and strives after the Divine or God." The sense of this "unseen, transcendent, external intelligence," as he also calls it, he declares "is a sense without an organ," a thing impossible of imagination. A sense without an organ could not function; there are definitely moral imbeciles who lack certain developments of the cortex, and there are many recorded cases of religious mania associated with injury to or inflammation of a region of the cortex corresponding to the anterior fontanelle. The religious sense is as demonstrably related to the brain as any other, and is as subject to hallucination, perversion, or destruction as any other. It has yet to be shown that its operations have any more validity than those of other senses, or are any more capable of persistence apart from the organic structure. Evolution, as we know it, does not proceed by discarding, but by developing, organs for the exercise of powers. The evolution of man may well be described as a development of the frontal lobes of the brain.

The next ground of Mr. Benton's belief is the existence of conscience, which he declares is a monopoly of man. If we ask what conscience is, we are told that "the nature of conscience is so well known that a brief and entirely comprehensive definition is as needless as a brief and comprehensive definition of any of the bodily senses." But as he tells us that "the insane are conscienceless during insanity" (although the melancholiac is more truly regarded as insanely conscientious), it would seem that we need either a definition of conscience or a definition of humanity. A sense of right and wrong that may be present or absent, or intermittent in its operations, that produces various moral codes with different races, that is obviously subject to all the vicissitudes of time, place, and circumstance, has all the stigmata of mortality, obviously has relevance to this world and affords no apparent promise of another.

His last ground is the "instinct of immortality." It is an instinct that he declares has operated in pre-

*"Man-Making from Out of the Mists to Beyond the Veil." By William E. Benton. (Watkins. 7s. 6d.)

historic, historic, and modern man. Its antiquity is unquestionable, its results are negligible; for Mr. Benton tells us that we know "almost nothing of the nature of our life hereafter." An "instinct" that knows "almost nothing" of the reality to which it is related, that, far from perfecting its acquaintance with that reality and developing itself into a conscious power, seems to weaken in intensity as man develops his faculties of reason, is very poor "evidence of things unseen." Pre-historic man believed that he would live hereafter; Hamlet, with speculative powers and subtle sensibilities that pre-historic man knew nothing of, was very dubious; the Christian Church itself says nothing in its creeds of immortality, but believes instead in "the resurrection of the body." The Gospels are no more clear on the subject than are the first two centuries of Christian history; "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," tells us nothing of a life hereafter. Even the petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven": is probably no more than a hope that the activities of men may be as harmoniously regulated as those of the stars. These "beliefs" in immortality are nothing but abstract mental pictures of human life apart from the organism and environment in which it functions; they are escapes from the difficulties of living by the imagination of living without difficulties—Mr. Benton's own belief that we shall then be free "from the struggles for and trouble of pabulum," shall be "disburdened of reproduction," illustrates it. But, as Mr. Wells says, "reproduction is a characteristic of life," and "all living things take nourishment"; and a life that is free from these "burdens" and "troubles" may be immortality, but is not life as humanity has always known it. A. E. R.

Reviews.

U Boat 202: The War Diary of a German Submarine. Translated from the German of Lieut.-Commander Freiherr von Spiegel by Captain Barry Domville, R.N. (Melrose. 2s. 6d. net.)

This book is interesting chiefly because of the contrast it reveals between the spirit of the German and the English submarine commanders. The Freiherr poses even on paper; his self-consciousness never deserts him, and he writes as emotionally about his nerves as he does about his heroism. He produces the effect of writing to convince somebody, probably himself, that the official description of the German character was true; he is surprised at the cunning of his enemies when, to take one example, the captain of his English tug pretended to obey his orders, but manœuvred and nearly rammed him. The language is amazing to those who remember the laconics of the English logs; here is the concluding passage: "As the wild beast after a false spring retreats like a coward and does not attempt a second, so also did our 'Bull-dog' depart from us and seek safety in rapid flight under cover of heavy rolling smoke-clouds. The whistling of our bullets and the loss of his helmsman had apparently subdued the surly little tug captain. But it must be allowed that the rascal was plucky, and we all recognised that fully, when we had recovered from our tremendous fright and were trying to remember how everything had happened." The seaman who shot the helmsman was decorated with the Iron Cross, it being apparently an heroic act to shoot an unarmed man. But what language to use of an unarmed enemy! The assumption that the enemy should obey orders, that "the fellow must be mad" to try to sink a nice, kind German submarine, the statement that "I could see plainly the captain's cunning watery-blue eyes shining fiendishly," all this reveals the psychology of an hysteric. His surprise that his enemy should be "plucky," and the self-conscious magnanimity with which he admits the fact makes us simply wonder what sort of world such a German imagines that he is living in. He actually refers to the "meanness" of the English in laying such quantities of mines that his boat could not easily get through the mine-fields; and it is with a feeling of derision that we close the book.

The Young Physician. By Francis Brett Young. (Collins. 7s. net.)

This is one of the most considerable, and, at the same time, irritating novels that we have read this year. The author seems to have everything except a tale to tell; skill in portraiture, invention of incident, technical knowledge, and a willingness to come to grips with the facts of life without crushing the reality out of them. But the scheme of the book has no focus; the author narrates the most important episodes in the school and student life of his hero, and banishes him to the East so soon as he has taken his degree. It is true that his life has been a full one, and that portions of it are portrayed with power and sincerity. We do not remember, to take one example, a more sincere and affecting rendering of the loving friendship between a boy and his mother than is given in the earlier portions of this book; these passages have the air of being not only true, but ideal. The boy's introduction to his father's family strikes another note of the mystery of heredity, and acquaints us also with one of those tragedies with which the history of our landholding system abounds. But the mood changes again when the hero begins his career as a medical student; Mr. Young is apparently on familiar ground, and details the course with considerable skill. The number of characters that he introduces, and etches in with a few skilful touches, is amazing; even the midwifery course produces the same effect of authentic portrayal of real people in real circumstances. Yet the total effect of the book is disappointing; we have gained an insight into the conditions of medical practice, and the preparation for it, expressed in terms of human beings, that we think has never before been so clearly and powerfully given. We know all that has affected the hero, but just when we want to know what it has made of him, how he intends to re-act to his experience, he runs away from a disappointing love-affair that has ended in tragedy. At the moment when the story ought to begin, it ends; all these people fade into memories, and the hero into a fugitive and disappointed ship's doctor. It is an unworthy end to a memorable book, a book that portrays more clearly than any other we know that sensitiveness to suffering controlled by science that it is the privilege of the medical profession to embody.

Living Bayonets. By Coningsby Dawson. (The Bodley Head. 6s. net.)

This selection of Mr. Dawson's letters to his family reveals him in the now familiar pose of propagandist and preacher. His self-conscious heroism is amusing; "we're just the same as ever," he writes, "cheery and waiting whatever may befall with a stoicism born of confidence. Our belief in ourselves, our cause, and our ability to win, never wavers. How extraordinarily normal we are you could hardly imagine." That is a common statement in these letters, as it probably was also in his propagandist speeches in America. Mr. Dawson perpetually writes to his family as though they were a public meeting needing official exhortations to maintain their morale; he holds the "Daily Mirror" up to Nature, and shows Tommy his own features in the official reflection. He discovered that God was on the side of the Allies, just as Mr. Bottomley did; "but in the darkest moments we know beyond dispute that it is His hands that make our hands strong and His heart that makes our hearts compassionate to endure. I have tried to inflame my heart with hatred, but I cannot. Hunnishness I would give my life to exterminate, but for the individual German I am sorry—sorry as for

a murderer who has to be executed. I am determined, however, that he shall be executed. They are all apologists for the crimes that have been committed; the civilians, who have not actually murdered, are guilty of thieving life to the extent of having received and applauded the stolen goods." It sounds like a speech of the Prime Minister, but it is an extract from a letter dated France, July 23, 1918. It is not surprising that when he heard of the American charge, shouting the war-cry "Lusitania," he should "think that somewhere beneath the Atlantic the bodies of murdered children sat up at that cry: I can believe that the souls of their mothers went over the top with those American boys. 'Lusitania!' The white-hot anger of chivalry was in the cry." Mr. Dawson so regularly strikes the right note, as defined by official propaganda, that we begin to wonder whether these letters were inspired with a determination to appeal to that larger family of the reading public. Anything less personal or domestic, we have not read.

The Iron City. By H. Hedges. (Boni and Liveright. $1.75 net.)

This story is offered to us, on the authority of Mr. Randolph Bourne (since deceased), as "the finest first novel he had ever read and one of the few great American novels." American appreciation is sui generis: "The Iron City" only attempts to express the difficulties of the introduction of the new spirit into the old educational and industrial forms of America. The conflict is, of course, vital to the continued existence not only of America, but of many other industrial countries; but the mind of a professor of sociologies in a very academic University of America does not seem to be the proper stage for it. There is, of course, a strike, which results in a triumph for the employers and the death of the union leader; but the whole affair is conducted with such decorous regard for law and order that even Bartholdi's statue of Liberty must recognise it as the American ideal. There are some tepid flirtations, one with a woman who is stated to be strongly sexed and the other with a woman who is stated to be intellectually gigantic; the reader will have to exercise his powers of divination to distinguish them. The book ends: "Oh, if they could only know to whose hand the future would be committed!" What is the matter with Gompers?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

THE NEW AGE "CLIQUE."

Sir,—Perhaps you and "R. H. C." will allow an occasional member—but I hope not ex-member—of what Mr. W. L. George describes as THE NEW AGE "clique" to supplement his effective comments on that subject in your last issue. I was particularly struck by "R. H. C.'s" explanation of the attitude of contributors to this journal after they have ceased to write for it. The same phenomenon has interested me for some years past, but I have come to a conclusion which, without conflicting with "R. H. C.'s" interpretation of the facts, is somewhat different from his.

I have met a considerable number of former contributors to THE NEW AGE, most of them writers while I was still a reader of the journal. Whenever these meetings have taken place, the name of the person to whom I have been introduced has recalled some article, or series of articles. This, usually favourable, recollection has at once induced in me a corresponding interest in the writer, and I have made some reference to THE NEW AGE. The effect of this is twofold—it either produces an evident desire to change the subject, or calls forth a bitter attack. When this had occurred a sufficient number of times to excite my curiosity, I began to analyse the different cases, and I came to the following conclusions: There are two forms of NEW AGE phobia; the latent, which manifests itself in the conspiracy of silence, so frequently emphasised in your pages; the active, which is marked by a bitter and malicious hostility to the journal and those associated with it.

In both we are dealing with different expressions of the same impulse, namely, self-defence. The backbiting ex-contributor to THE NEW AGE is more often than not an intellectual failure, conscious of deterioration. The consiracy of silence is an attempt to burke the unpleasant conviction of the conspirator that he owes whatever is good in his mental equipment to THE NEW AGE. The outspoken attack is a confession of an overpowering sense of inferiority, only to be made tolerable by the belittling of what one was and what one admired. The speaker knows that, whatever his subsequent commercial success and popularity, he is not doing such good work, nor writing with such an entire feeling of self-achievement and self-expression.

THE NEW AGE can boast of being the cradle of many contemporary reputations, but, in a complimentary sense, it is also their grave, for, if it is the first, it is also the last resting-place of what was best in certain talents. In other words, the work which now brings X fame and money, or both, is by no means the work which started his career in your pages. With hardly an exception, conscious and obvious deterioration lies at the root of the ungracious attitude of so many ex-contributors to THE NEW AGE. They have failed, precisely in the measure of their hostility, to live up to their NEW AGE standard. Moreover, some—and they are the most irreconcilable—are in debt for help and criticism which, however much resented, was invaluable. They prefer the dishonest ease of a less critical atmosphere, and in time become so accustomed to insincerity that they look back upon the time spent in the company of candid friends with the rage of humiliation.

It has been a hobby of mine to form a shelf of books reprinted, wholly or in part, from THE NEW AGE. Without exception these works support my theory as to the attitude of your previous contributors. The authors who have never since written anything so good are invariably your most unfriendly critics. Those who are still living on the ideas then conceived preserve a discreet silence concerning the source of such virtue as they possess. It requires more intellectual character than "R. H. C." perhaps suspects to be able to look THE NEW AGE in the face and to acknowledge an acquaintance not generally received in the circles whither so many of your ex-contributors have drifted, after one has "arrived" commercially. Only those with the easiest conscience have done it—those who are sure of themselves and of you.

OLD CONTRIBUTOR.

* * *

"SALUS POPULI."

Sir,—The review entitled "Salus Populi," by "A.E.R.," is interesting from several points of view.

The subject of the quack has never received either from the profession or the public the attention which it deserves. Up to a point, the extent to which quackery flourishes is a measure of the failure of the orthodox profession, but it has to be remembered that there will always be a number of persons prone to dissent as the result of their early psychic experiences.

The resistance to the new is not a phenomenon peculiar to the doctors; it is a characteristic of the human mind which man shares with other animals, and which, of course, serves biological ends. In any case, to attribute it to greed on the part of the profession is to give evidence of a mentality peculiarly warped by prejudice. This phenomenon of hatred of the medical profession is not uncommon. Mr. Bernard Shaw exhibits it in a marked degree, and if "A. E. R." will submit himself to a skilled psycho-analyst, it is probable that in due course he will have demonstrated to him the sequence of events which led up to this interesting peculiarity. What "A. E. R." is pleased to call the organised profession has amply demonstrated its utter incapacity to organise in defence of what is considered to be its vital interests, vested and otherwise, and it is very certain that it is powerless to appreciably hinder the recognition of the truth about cancer or anything else.

H. TORRANCE THOMSON, M.D.

* * *

PSYCHO-EGYPTOLOGY.

Sir,—Your correspondent "Student" is quite right as to what my words were meant to convey, and I will do my best to answer his question. But I must ask for time, as it is not the easiest of all subjects to deal with.

M. B. OXON.

Pastiche.

MARY MAGDALENE.

I am drawn once more along
With the loose-lipped wanton throng.
My haggard face, which once has been
With quick-repenting tears washed clean,
Is thickly smeared with red and white,
A flaming beacon in the night.
My mouth, streaked deep with crimsoning,
Once more becomes a light-bought thing.
Ah! Christ, long time ago I dreamed
That my smirched self should be redeemed. . . .
When I the hot street flaunting trod,
You turned on me, O Son of God,
Your clear, sad eyes; at first I thought
You looked at me as though you sought
To know for what price I was bought,
And laughingly myself I priced—
How you looked at me, pure, pale Christ!
My eyeballs pricked with pain so hot
I wept, although I knew it not.
My face seemed like a colour shop,
The paint dropped off so, drop by drop.
Into my mouth it streamed—I spat,
And shook with gusty mirth at that,
And, turning, fled, a sorry thing,
With sobbing laughter quivering.
And all along the dusty street
Your eyes were on me, strangely sweet.
It chanced we met again; that night
My heavy hair was henna-bright,
Lips passion-red and eyes like stars,
And at my girdle swung a vase.
Within this alabaster shard
I had a store of spikenard.
Lo! as I went, my cheeks burned hot,
For as I strove to barter—what?—
I came upon you, piteous one.
Ah! then I sought to turn and run;
But your clear eyes my footsteps held,
And sudden my lewd thoughts dispelled.
I stood in silence, down-bent head,
And hid my paint with deeper red.
Ah! God, my thoughts went fluttering
Back when I was a virgin thing—
How long ago I dare not tell—
My mouth was then no key to hell,
I knew not what I had to sell.
But mine not long was the intense
White fire that flames for innocence.
My fires are out, their fuel sold,
And I outlive them, deathly cold. . . .
Ah! Christ, you looked upon my shame,
And yet with pity, nought of blame;
You never named my rightful name.
I flung me down, and on your feet
I poured my perfume, sickly sweet,
And dried them with my hair all wild.
Dear Christ, how deep were you defiled!
And then, so greatly having dared,
I crept away, all tangle-haired.
My heart throbbed glory unto you.
Within me the mad longing grew
To leave the sordid market throng,
And go unpriced the ways along.

. . . . . .

But hard to break the harlot's mesh;
The livid spot is of the flesh.
And I for all eternity
A painted prostitute must be. . . .
Yet comes a poignant scent with me,
And all my shameful ways are filled
With spikenard long æons spilled.

PHYLLIS MARKS.

STRUGGLE.

Show me the man who has ceased to struggle, and you show me a man whose soul is dead. My hope is in the men who struggle; they are evidence of growth. The men who accept life tamely, without making a struggle to get the best out of life, annoy me.

When the desire for struggle leaves a man, he is getting old in years or in mind. Surely the beauty of youth lies in the struggle after ideals. In the lover the struggle after the ideal brings love to birth. Love lives in the struggle after the ideal, and dies when the struggle ceases. Youth knows love; old age knows affection.

The detestable thing about most old men is their complacency. This mask of death, complacency, they fob on to youth as wisdom; but youth is impatient of death and complacency. Youth hears the call to struggle.

The blackest periods of history were those in which the slaves were unaware of their slavery. The clever slave-owner treats his slaves as if they were free men. Our rulers have succeeded in convincing the majority of our wage-slaves that they are free men. This is clever flattery—so clever that our rulers may have adopted the habit accidentally.

To end the wage-system it is necessary for the slaves to realise their slavery. A cardinal point this, for propagandists. Every intelligent wage-slave, every revolutionary in field and factory, is appalled by the fact that his fellow-slaves think themselves free men. These men have been born with minds stunned and stunted. They are dead, and for the greater part have never lived; they have never struggled save for a crust of bread.

Let the propagandist, therefore, make the slaves aware of their slavery; this is the most difficult task. The slave who thinks himself free will not struggle for freedom. Set the slaves struggling, and free men will emerge.

Show me signs of struggle, and I can laugh joyously at this demonstration of life and growth.

Glance now for a moment at the trade-union movement. There are hopeful signs of struggle and unruly disorder. Hot-headed youth sets the branch-meeting alight. Complacent labour-leaders living, though long since mentally dead, are terrified at the thought of struggle; they draw back from the fire of youth and reach for a bucket of water. Let me do justice to the complacent ones; some of them may struggle—to retain their official positions, but most of them have been too long dead to struggle. Cunning is their best weapon.

Struggling is, of course, an unmannerly proceeding which shocks and disturbs those whose souls are only at home in the drawing-room of a Hampstead Garden Suburbanite, though the struggler may have a strange expression of dignity on his face. Old men are always shocked at the manners of the struggler—and afraid.

The politicians who are alarmed at the signs of a struggle among the wage-slaves to-day will attempt to stop the struggle by doping complacent labour-leaders who have long since ceased to lead. This is stupidity.

Knowing the wage-slaves well, I forgive them much when I see them beginning to struggle. What matter it though large numbers of them think of National Guilds as of something connected with the church round the corner? Notice that with the struggle they are waking to life and growth. They will become conscious of their slavery.

It can well be left to those politicians who pose as statesmen to put machine-guns in Trafalgar Square. This surely is the best possible way of convincing the workers of their slavery. The clever slave-driver hides his whip or loses it.

To the slaves who struggle, my admiration and salutation.

HARRY FOWLER.

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