

THE NEW AGE

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, AND ART.

No. 1434] NEW SERIES Vol. XXVI. No. 18. THURSDAY, MAR. 4, 1920. [Registered at G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] **SEVENPENCE**

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

SIR AUCKLAND GEDDES makes himself useful to Capitalism by throwing tubs to the whales. As fast as one phrase ceases to occupy the attention of the public, he is ready with another; and in the debate on the cost of living in the House of Commons last week he threw out no fewer than half-a-dozen at once. Quite indifferent to the explanations he himself had offered before for the prevailing level of prices, Sir Auckland Geddes on this occasion enumerated a number of "causes," most of which were inconsistent with his earlier expositions and inconsistent with each other as well as with the actual truth. What, however, did that matter? The immediate and not so very great difficulty of pacifying the House of Commons was got over; the public was none the wiser; and, of course, the main thing, namely, the continuation of high prices, was secured. At the Crystal Palace a day or two later he was disposed to be more candid. Whether it is that in the House of Commons he fancies that he is addressing children who can be stuffed up with fairy-tales, whereas at the Crystal Palace he was addressing business men, the fact remains that he became more confidential there than ever he has allowed himself to be in the House of Commons. Amongst his business friends, and particularly amongst the exporters, there was no need, it seemed, to be mealy-mouthed about the aims and objects of the present deliberate policy of high prices; they were, in a word, the development of the export trade at the expense of the home market. "At present," he said, "the home market was too attractive . . . but the filling of it up with goods was proceeding very rapidly. . . . Prices were high, people were unable to buy as much as they could before . . . and a check sooner or later would be bound to come in it." Is not this precisely the object we have always attributed to the group that fixes prices for us? Can it be more clearly confessed? On the other hand, we see a good deal of encouragement to propagandists in it; for if it is possible that the British Federation of Industries does not despair of persuading the people of this country that they grow prosperous by exporting more and more and consuming less and less, nothing need be regarded as impossible to propaganda. It may even be possible one day to convince one or two people

that the control of prices is economic control; and hence that the way to economic democracy is through price-control.

* * *

The public, however, can expect no help from the everyday Press. That is practically certain. Whether calling itself Liberal, Unionist, Independent or Labour, the whole of the Press that depends upon advertisements for its maintenance is bound, consciously or unconsciously, by deliberate policy or by the nature of the beast, if not explicitly to defend the financial oligarchy, at any rate never seriously to attack it or to allow it to be attacked. There are, we believe, journalists in Fleet Street who are competent to analyse the cause of high prices and to advise the public upon the remedies. But they will not be permitted to publish their knowledge. Worse even than that, their knowledge will be employed for the special purpose of edging public attention away from any discussion that promises to reveal the secret. Any observant reader can, if he have a mind, confirm this for himself. Let him note any sentence that suggests that "finance" is at the bottom of high prices and mark its subsequent history. For a day or two perhaps, nothing further will be printed on the subject, but the steam-engines of indignation will be turned on to the "profiteer" or upon Trade Union restrictions on output. Before very long, however, a paragraph will surely appear—possibly in an article by Sir Leo Chiozza Money or some such stalking-horse—suggesting that "finance" is either innocent or helpless, and that to look for the cause of high prices in finance is to waste time. The general reader—that is to say, the ninety and nine who expose their minds to print without criticism—will be unaware of the propagandist relation between the two statements. He will not realise that he has been carefully led away from an aspect of the subject in which he might have discovered the truth, or, in fact, that there was any design in the matter whatever.

* * *

Occasionally, and by the more unscrupulous journals, less subtle tactics are employed. The "Daily News," for example, has a trick of shunting a discussion from an economic to a political level whenever it appears that an economic discussion is about to lead to a genuine disclosure. If the "Daily News" can pretend that the economic aspect is too familiar to need

further attention, the trick may be assumed to be even more successful. Here, for instance, is an example. "Readers of the 'Daily News' [we were told last week] will find little to surprise or mystify them in all this [in the "soaring cost of living"]. They have known what was bound to happen and why. They have all along been prepared for high prices following the wholesale destruction of wealth in the war, and for exceedingly high and constantly rising prices as a result of the Government's *laissez faire* policy at home and Carthaginian peace-policy abroad." We will ask our own readers to go over these sentences from Mr. Cadbury's conscientious organ and to examine their meaning. We are mistaken if a word of truth can be found in them. They appear to us, indeed, to be utterly self-contradictory; for how can the "readers of the 'Daily News'" have known what was bound to happen and why in the matter of soaring prices *in advance* of possible knowledge that the Government would adopt a *laissez faire* policy at home and a Carthaginian peace-policy abroad? The sense, however, is not the matter really at issue; for it need not be assumed that the staff of the "Daily News" is necessarily imbecile. What is to be observed is the diversion of public attention from economic to political considerations—chiefly, of course, to the purely party consideration of the wickedness of Mr. Lloyd George's Government in particular.

The "Daily Express"—incidentally, another of the journals that claims to have "stopped the war with Russia," though, as we shall see, the war with Russia was stopped for quite other reasons than the Allies' fear of the "Daily Herald" or the "Daily Express"—does not neglect to deal with the high cost of living at home. In fact, the "Daily Express" has a special remedy of its own, a remedy which it has long advertised and which it has now published, for bringing down prices. It might have been assumed, of course, that the remedy would not be and could not be radical; but even we were scarcely prepared for the grotesque inadequacy of the recipe that was published last week. Without falling into the trap by discussing the "Daily Express" scheme at length, we may briefly note its leading features. In the first place, we are to "adjust" the exchange with America by sending over 50 millions of gold bullion, obtained, if necessary, by melting down "trinkets." Secondly, shipping freights and profits are to be controlled. Thirdly and lastly, "full and unrestricted trade with Russia" is to be established. These things done, we are confidently to expect to see prices come down with a run—from, it is possible, a shilling to as much as eightpence-halfpenny! The absurdity of the "Daily Express" "policy," however, must not blind us to the danger of the intention behind it. Lord Beaverbrook does not serve Mr. Blumenfeld for nought; and it is incredible that either one or the other should seriously believe that the foregoing "plan" is practical outside a newspaper office. What, we flatter them, is in their minds (even if only at the inaccessible back of their minds) is the calculation that the more numerous the false issues raised at this juncture of our affairs the better chance the real issue has of escaping discovery.

The new Principal of the London School of Economics, Sir William Beveridge, appears to be a man worth keeping our eye on; though we hope that our sympathetic attention will not embarrass his retention of his office. In an interview with a "Daily News" representative last week on the subject of the cost of living, he is reported to have said: "Personally I am convinced that the present rise in prices is in the main caused by currency and credit evils rather than by shortage of supplies . . . and this means that your principal attack must be made along the lines of

finance." The "Daily News," of course, was careful to avoid following up the clue; and, in fact, the rest of the interview appears to have been taken up with pretending that this judgment had never been made. But it stands on record, and with the authority, whatever it may be, of a Principal of the London School of Economics who has recently been acting as an official of the Food Ministry.

Mr. Frank Hodges appears to have realised at last that Nationalisation is dead, and that it is easier to persuade a Congress to carry a resolution than to carry it out. At the forthcoming special Trade Union Congress, called to devise means for "compelling" the Government to adopt Nationalisation, it is now expected that nothing will be done of the smallest practical importance. As we have repeatedly said, the five million members of the Trade Union Congress never had any intention of declaring a General Strike on behalf of the resolution forced on them by the Executive of less than a million Miners; and the assumption that they had, upon which Mr. Hodges and his friends have been acting, could only be sustained in deliberate ignorance of the facts of the case. The matter is plain at last, however; and Mr. Hodges and Mr. Smillie are now left in the predicament so distasteful to the self-deceived—that of having to swallow their words or to do something even more desperate. An alternative to the confession that their policy has been wrong is to blame the rest of the Trade Union movement for failing to support it. The policy was right, they may say, but the other Trade Unions were afraid to make good their promise to us to see it through. An even worse alternative to the confession that their policy has failed is the resolution, said to be under discussion, to formulate fresh wage-demands immediately and to strike for them, with or without the support of the rest of the Trade Unions.

While it cannot be denied that a wage demand of this kind is natural under the provoking circumstances, we are not at all certain that, apart from other considerations, it is now practicable. Mr. Hodges and some others appear to be under the impression that *at least* a successful wage-strike is always open to them. As "statesmen" they can contend that they would have preferred nationalisation or a division of the excess profits between the workers and the consumers; and they can claim that they have done their best to confer these benefits on the public. At the same time, they may say, if the public will have none of these things, the Miners' Federation can always fall back upon a wage-demand and secure it by means of a strike. Once again, however, we are not so sure that this is the case. There is a limit to the power of the Miners to force up their own wages; and we are disposed to think that this limit has been almost if not quite reached. In other words, we doubt whether the Miners' Federation, whatever means it cares to adopt, is likely to be more successful in a wage strike than in its policy of nationalisation. The fact is, we believe, that both Mr. Hodges and Mr. Smillie have come to the end of their effectiveness in their present world of discourse. Unless they can develop some entirely new policy or idea, they are doomed to continued failure, and this quite as probably if they demand higher wages as if they repeat their demand for nationalisation.

The strike on the French Railways has not fully developed at the time of writing; but we cannot pretend to be greatly excited by a movement, however dramatic, that is so empty of ideas. The demand of the French railwaymen for nationalisation is another instance of the failure of Labour to profit by experience, of which a still more deplorable instance is the concurrent demand of the Seine Socialists for a repetition of

the Russian Revolution in France. Anything may happen in the course of pressing forward such demands—save the realisation of the objects of which these demands are supposed to be the means; for the simple fact is that nationalisation is not a remedy for a single one of the evils experienced by the French railwaymen; and a repetition of the Russian Revolution would be an even worse blunder than its first appearance. It will be taken, no doubt, in this country and elsewhere, as an encouraging symptom of the spread of revolutionary ideas Westwards, that French Labour should declare a General Strike, without regard to the ideas contained in it. And an encouraging symptom it is, of the survival of energy, at any rate, in the French proletariat. For ourselves, however, the spectacle of the proletariat everywhere dashing its head against the bars for want of the sense to open the door is more depressing than exhilarating. The French strike will certainly fail, since it has not the key to real success.

We have never been enamoured of the Bolshevik Revolution; and we protest that Western European countries have nothing but a warning to learn from it. It may suit certain people in this country to believe that Lenin is the greatest practical Socialist or Communist that ever lived; but, in truth, his function has been, under the disguise of Marxism, to introduce into Russia by a kind of Cæsarian operation the most recent and highly developed capitalist organisation the world can show—the system founded in part upon the American Taylor. This consists in the centralisation of technical control under an autocracy of industrial engineers and the scientific exploitation of Nature, human and otherwise, in the interests of maximum production. There is not the smallest doubt that whatever Lenin's fancies about himself or his ideas may be, this is what his policy amounts to; and when he dilates on the "electrification of our entire industrial system by means of power-stations situated in the Urals," it is obvious where the man's heart is: it is really in America rather than in Russia. His unprincipled character (which we hasten to say is perfectly compatible with a heart that bleeds, like Mr. Lansbury's own, for suffering humanity) is further revealed in his willingness to "compromise" with Capitalism until there is nothing whatever left of his original Communism. "We are prepared," he says, "to make peace on terms of fairness which even the most imperialistic capitalists could not dispute—and are ready to give foreign capitalists the most generous concessions and guarantees." When Kerensky was proposing to do no more (indeed, rather less), not only Lenin denounced him as a bourgeois traitor, but the "Call" and the "Daily Herald" were loud in their condemnation of the "capitalist" conspiracy. Lenin, it seems, may steal the horse where Kerensky may not look over the hedge. But Lenin calls himself a Communist.

It may be doubted whether anything will come of the examination into the possibilities of a War-Wealth Tax; the discussion is another tub for the whales, and it can easily be submerged, if necessary, in a General Election. But it may be observed, by the curious, that already in the initial stages of the inquiry, every objection hitherto raised against a Levy on Capital, on the ground that such a Levy was impracticable, has been disposed of by no less a practical authority than Sir John Anderson, the Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue. The proposals put forward by himself for taxing the increment of wealth between the years 1914 and 1919 are clearly applicable to all the wealth there is; for what is to distinguish the wealth in bulk from the wealth annually added to it? And, furthermore, Sir John Anderson appears to have in mind the application of his proposals to a general as well as to a particular Levy, since he specifically mentions such devices for collecting the Levy as

limited partnership with the Government, transfer of shares, floating charges, and the like—all of them being means we ourselves long ago suggested as practicable in case of need. It becomes certain, with Sir John Anderson's evidence, that the real objection to a Capital Levy was never its dangerous impracticability, but rather its dangerous practicability; and we can only suppose that the present inquiry into a War-Wealth Tax is designed to "talk the motion out."

* * *

The historian of the Labour Party must often be prepared to record the incredible; but we imagine that even his practised mind will revolt before accepting as true what nevertheless occurred in the House of Commons last week—the Labour Party's "welcome" of a Bill to make Labour mainly responsible for unemployment. The ostensible motive of the Unemployment Insurance Bill, which received its second reading last week, was to lift the dread of unemployment from the minds of the working classes, not by preventing unemployment, but by requiring the wage-earners to insure themselves against it: but its real object, of course, was to rob the opposition to "increased production" of its most powerful support among the rank and file, namely, the tendency of increased production to result in unemployment. When the present Bill has become law, and twelve million workers are duly insured against unemployment in sums ranging from fifteen to six shillings a week, not only will the Trade Unions have no further "excuse" for objecting to "super-production," but we cannot see what rational ground they can have for maintaining their "restrictions" on output and apprenticeship. After all, the defence for these has always been the necessity to preserve and distribute employment; but if the Government is now prepared to insure Labour against unemployment (partly at Labour's expense), what possible reply can Labour make when the request is renewed to speed up production by abandoning the old restrictions. Mr. Clynes was explicit and deadly in his criticism of the Bill. But after killing it with words, he proceeded to thank the Government for bringing it in, and promised it the support of the Labour Party.

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If we could attribute such intelligence to the Paisley electorate, we could assume that its motive in returning Mr. Asquith was less any expectation of positive action from him than hope that his presence might stimulate Mr. Lloyd George's Government; for it must be impossible even for Paisley voters to imagine that Mr. Asquith carries anything new under his hat. To the best of our recollection, Mr. Asquith has not said since the war a single thing that he had not said a thousand times before the war. He has learned nothing by the war, and obviously not because there was nothing for him to learn by it, but because he is no longer capable of learning. And this is the old statesman whose return to Parliament was regarded as the significant event of the week, in the offices of the "New Statesman" no less than in the offices of the "Times." We can only say that the country in these circumstances is likely to get the Government and the conditions it scarcely deserves—in other words, a repetition of the events that brought about the European War. For it is absurd to suppose that if Mr. Asquith has learned nothing from the war, he has learned how to prevent another. On the contrary, with his known and demonstrated ideas (ideas written in millions of young men's lives), it is altogether probable that, given the opportunity again, Mr. Asquith will again have the "misfortune" to lead this country into war. He and his friends may protest that he is at heart a pacifist; but the fact is that Mr. Asquith's policy necessarily involves war, and equally necessarily a war for which his policy is never "prepared."

Credit-Power and Democracy.

By Major C. H. Douglas.

NOTE.—An obscure subject and text have been further obscured by a gross error in printing. The formula towards the end of the second column of my last chapter should have read as follows:—

"Although the unregulated system of credit-issue and price-making distributes purchasing power both in respect of capital-production (tools, factories, intermediate products) and ultimate products (necessaries, services, amenities), it takes back, in the prices of ultimate products only, practically the whole of this purchasing power."

CHAPTER IV.

As a result of the foregoing analysis, then, it seems fairly certain that:—

(a) All credit-values are derived from the community, regarded as a permanent institution; not merely from the present generation of workers "by hand and brain."

(b) The rate of Production is primarily dependent on the Scientific and Cultural inheritance of the Community; secondly, on its tools and plant (both of which have a rough financial equivalent in Group B, Chapter II); and, thirdly, on personnel. Personnel, however, sets the "pitch," i.e., determines the Efficiency of the use of Capital, for any given policy, and the Arbiters of Policy, whoever they may turn out to be, have an interest in selecting the finest personnel available, to operate it.

(c) The financial system recognises these facts by deriving all financial values from Credit, which takes all these factors into account. As, however, the existing System of making prices includes all dispensations of purchasing-power to individuals during the processes of production (i.e., "costs"), in prices; and all "prices" are purchasing-power taken from individuals, it must surely be clear that credit-issue and price-making are the positive and negative aspects of the function which controls the economic life of the community, and so controls the community itself.

(d) The community does not control credit-issue or price-making, at present.

It is probable that some system of credit-issue and price-making founded definitely and logically on a policy of which Society, as a whole, approves, is an integral part of any immediately possible civilisation, and if this be so, it is clearly of the very highest importance to decide on that policy, and to see how it differs from the existing one, against which Society is quite definitely in rebellion.

It is above all things desirable to recognise that the problem is a practical one, and that nothing whatever is to be gained by assuming that Capitalism in its present form has always been fundamentally bad. The existing Capitalistic System is doomed because the world has ceased to have need of it in that form, not because it was the invention of the Devil. That is not to say that there is not a good deal of original sin about, in the opposition to its modification!

To understand the trend of the present system from the standpoint of Policy, in the light of the above analysis, we must notice that it results in keeping the overwhelming majority of persons employed approximately eight hours per day either in producing, distributing or safeguarding, what is admittedly a deficient supply of ultimate commodities, and this in spite of the tremendous advancement of Science and its application to Production. We see also that whatever the amount of these ultimate commodities produced, and however much cash the community earns, the aggregate prices of mere consumption goods can be made to equal the aggregate earnings in respect of the production of both Capital goods and consumption goods, either by keeping the articles in short supply or making monopoly arrangements to set prices at a "suitable" level; but,

in any case, prices of Capital goods plus prices of consumption goods are in excess of aggregate earnings because of the credit factor in the prices; a relation which results in the control of plant and improved process passing from the producers, as fast as produced, into the hands of the credit-mongers and the price-makers, rather than into the hands of the community to whom it belongs in the nature of things. This concentration of control being obviously assisted by a short supply of ultimate products until competition is finally and completely eliminated, those having control have every inducement to deliver the minimum quantity of goods at the highest obtainable prices, so long as these, in the aggregate absorb all the distributed purchasing-power.

Now, the important point to observe is the effect of all this on the use made of the collective energy of Society. It seems quite likely that, at the beginning of the Machine Age, the Capitalistic System had the effect of concentrating effort on the expansion of real Capital to an extent which no other conceivable arrangement could have brought about in so short a time, to the ultimate advantage of everyone. Not only so, but the real competition which preceded the Trust era kept production of ultimate products up, prices and profits down, and the consequent area of distribution through the agency of wages, comparatively widespread. The evolution from the individual entrepreneur and private banker into the limited liability company, with its large body of shareholders, and the great Joint-Stock Branch Banking Systems (obviously nearing complete co-ordination) has widened the area of the distribution of purchasing-power through the agency of *dividends*, while, at the same time, the actual necessity for "direct" wage-earning labour has been diminished by the increased utilisation of mechanical power and machinery, which tends to contract the area of the distribution of wages.

It may be noticed in passing, that had these processes been allowed to proceed unhindered (which was probably a practical impossibility), several things would have happened to clarify the situation. There would, firstly, have been such immense unemployment that the wage-system would have become unworkable long ago. It would have been recognised that the *dividend* is the logical successor to the wage, carrying with it privileges which the wage never had and never can have, whether it be re-christened Pay, Salary, or any other alias; because the nature of all these is a *dole of purchasing-power revocable by authority*, whereas a dividend is a payment, absolute and unconditional, of something due. The first is servitude, however disguised, the second is the primary step to economic emancipation. It would then have forced itself on the general attention that all dividends come out of credit, and that the whole economic life of the community is controlled by its distribution. (It may not be superfluous to point out that there is no more inevitable connection between dividends and "production for profit" than between "pay" and Socialism.)

With the Trust and the Joint-Stock Banking System came agreements restricting price-competition, and with that came the apotheosis of Trade Unionism, forced to meet the situation by methods identical in principle, leading in both cases direct to sabotage. We have already seen that if an essential article can be kept in short supply, its price can be made to suit the policy of the price-maker. Under the existing arrangements, labour is such an article, and so is the collective thing we call "the standard of living." Because the credit of the community, which, if distributed, would have resulted in universal dividends, has been largely centralised in the hands of the Banks and Industrial Combines, all of them struggling for power, that part of the community which still gets its purchasing-power through the medium of wages and salaries has been

faced with starvation, unless it "earned" them, machinery or no machinery. The result is common knowledge; a widespread conspiracy to "make work" for which I, for one, see no alternative under the circumstances.

Similarly, the Trusts and Banks, obliged as a condition of existence under the system, to re-absorb the majority of the credit distributed as wages, through the agency of prices, restricted the supply of ultimate commodities, not only by their own forms of sabotage, but by directing production more and more to Capital goods and goods for Export.

We are now perhaps in a position to see to where the present system has brought us. Real Capital, the lever of Atlas, has become the preponderating factor in production, but is not lifting its load because the only conceivable *point d'appui* of Capital is Credit. (The public can no more control Capital *directly*, than a passenger, or a Committee of Passengers, can instruct an engine-driver directly as to the running of his engine.) The community does not control credit, and the whole policy of its present controllers is to prevent the community from getting control by taking back in prices the maximum purchasing power, a condition which is assisted by restriction of the supply of ultimate commodities by export or otherwise.

The fundamental idea which it is necessary to grasp is that you cannot get existing and future credit-power into the hands of the community, unless the distribution of purchasing power, both in respect of Capital increases, as well as in respect of ultimate products, is only taken back from the community in the proportion that consumption bears, not only to these products, but to Capital production as well, using Capital in just as wide a sense as the credit-issuer uses it.

The result of this is that as a condition of such a state of affairs, prices of ultimate commodities would have to be fixed, not with regard to what they would fetch, but with regard to the above ratio, which would result in a price which would be a fraction of cost; the difference being made up to the entrepreneur by an issue based on the actual Capital still remaining as a result of effort represented by total "cost."

(To be continued.)

The House of Commons.

By Hilaire Belloc.

VII.

AFTER this digression upon the falsity of trusting to parliamentary experiments elsewhere as a guarantee of the permanence of Parliament in this country, let me return to my main thesis, the House of Commons.

If it be true, as it is, that a parliament is necessarily an oligarchy, and will be at once national and efficient in proportion as it is an oligarchy; and if it be true, as it most certainly is, that human beings will only tolerate oligarchy in the particular form of aristocracy, we conclude that a strong, living parliamentary system must be aristocratic in character, and that failing such a character, a parliamentary system declines. It is challenged and at last superseded by other forms of government. The strength of the British system lay in its aristocratic character, and it is the failure of this character which has led to the decline of the House of Commons.

We have next to study what this failure has been and (what is of less practical importance) how it has come about.

What has happened in this essentially aristocratic State to lessen its ancient aristocratic quality? What are the apparent phenomena of that decline? What are the causes which have led to it?

When we have answered these questions we can proceed to the last portion of this study, which we shall find to be, first, whether the sovereign authority

of the House of Commons can be revived, and if it cannot, what can take its place.

A State is aristocratic, remember, when two conditions are present.

The first and fundamental one is the desire upon the part of the citizens for aristocratic government—the tendency—organic, and in the main hardly conscious—to submit to an oligarchy, and to pay a peculiar respect to those who compose it. Only those men who have never lived in an aristocratic country, or have never read of aristocracy in the past, can doubt that such an appetite *does* arise and lasts for centuries in certain communities; particularly in the great commercial communities of history. Aristocracy is from below.

The second character of aristocratic government is a function of this first. The aristocratic oligarchy though established in power must, as we have said, play its part. Respect is there waiting for it. The people demand it and will even go to a considerable degree of illusion rather than abandon their regard for it. But if for any reason it fails to play its part, if the governing class and its popular governing organ fail to fill the aristocratic rôle, no appetite upon the part of the governed can restore it. The governed may demand an aristocratic nucleus, their every appetite may crave for such a thing at the helm of the State, but if the thing is not there, if it ceases to be, that appetite will remain unsatisfied.

Now what has clearly happened in the case of England, what was already developing after the middle of the 19th century and what is fully disclosed at the end, is a weakness in both these elements of an aristocratic State. The mass of the people have come to demand an aristocracy far less than they did. In great sections they have come to forget, in some they have become positively hostile to, the old political attitude upon which aristocracy reposed.

On the other side of the arrangement, the governing class, and in particular its special organ, the House of Commons, has progressively failed to maintain the aristocratic attitude. It has lost, or at any rate it is losing, the respect of the governed; and these two interacting tendencies, each increasing the other, have produced in our time an unstable political condition in which neither is the ancient organ of government fully desired, nor even, were it fully desired, can it find within itself the old strength to play the old part.

It is convenient to take the second of these phenomena first, because it is the most obvious and the least disputed. It can be dealt with briefly; whereas the first—the loss of the aristocratic spirit among the people—needs a longer examination.

It would be tedious to recapitulate here the somewhat monotonous and unceasing series of spontaneous acts which have lowered the prestige of the House of Commons in our time. They are of common knowledge. They have become commonplaces. They continue daily, they have become a part of public life and we now expect no others.

Until some ten or fifteen years ago, indeed, the moral level to which the House of Commons had fallen, the indignities which it nourished, and the corruption which possessed it, were insufficiently known to the mass which it administered.

The process was already of long standing, but a knowledge of it was confined to the few thousand individuals who are directly connected as pressmen, servants, clients and relatives with the few hundred engaged in professional politics. It was a healthy and necessary work at that time to expose what were called the "scandals" perpetually recurring at Westminster, and to make public what had already everywhere become the theme of private conversation.

There was a certain hesitation on the part of patriotic men lest exposure of this kind might not

weaken the State without any corresponding advantage. These critics of too much truth-telling argued that we might be passing through an exceptional period of corruption and that if the thing should right itself it would be a pity to weaken the authority of that which was, in spite of its internal decline, the only existing organ of government.

But the criticism was ill-founded. The truth was bound to come out in time and it was better that the mass of men should know where the evils of the State lay and of what sort they were—or at any rate that they should have samples whereby to judge—than that they should continue in ignorance up to the moment of collapse. Moreover, the process had gone so far that the hope of recovery—let alone of recovery without exposure—was negligible. Therefore the work of exposure was undertaken, and in a time curiously short for so large a task, was, I think, completely successful. Even the official Press, which depends upon and is connected with professional politics, the few millionaire owners of which are either themselves professional politicians, or obtain from these such honours and other advantages as they crave, cannot completely ignore what has now become notorious.

Without the research that would disclose any number of particular examples—many hundreds—and that would show how these examples succeed each other almost daily and are now never absent from the atmosphere of Westminster, a man has but to recall a few at random: they form a sufficient list. They include the giving of secret contracts, the levying of blackmail, the immunity of even exposed and proved culprits from the criminal law not only when they themselves were professional politicians but even when they were no more than relatives, the absurd sale of honours—a thing of no great practical importance save as a symptom of all the rest—the very much more serious sale of policies.

The whole thing has moved it in Queer Street; and as one scandal after another has followed in dreary procession, the public at large has almost ceased to give particular attention to each newcomer and is content with a general impression of roguery. The character of what the House of Commons has now become is established on its financial side, as is the character of a man who has been caught several times doing something funny with a cheque. His acquaintances do not particularise and may perhaps, if they were put to it at a moment's notice, be unable to write down more than a dozen or two examples of his shady dealings. But there is no doubt at all of his moral colour or of the opinion in which he is held.

But the thing to notice in all this, the thing which concerns the future of the State and in particular of the institution which has fallen so low, is not the degree of the moral descent, but its special character and colour.

It is not the weakness, still less the enormity; it is the baseness and pettiness of this series of scandals which directly concerns the decline of aristocracy, and with it of its principal organ at Westminster.

As we shall see in a moment, this truth affects many other aspects of the great change; it explains the new *personnel*, the comedy of political pledges, the undignified mountebank tricks of the chief actors, the farcical phrases and situations, the odd political and financial libel cases, the still odder failures to prosecute—and all the rest of it.

The note of the decline is not so much that the type of men in power are wickeder than those of the past as that they are baser and more contemptible.

If there is one political lesson to be drawn from history more than another, and not only from history but from our own personal experience of the government of man—or of animals for that matter—it is that the qualities required for government are other than moral qualities. This is not only true of government,

of course, but of every other human function. A man draws well or ill, sails well or ill, rides a horse well or ill, upon a basis quite different from that which makes him a worse or a better man. What is required of him in his function are the qualities consonant to that function, and these are—though not indifferent to—other than the main qualities which save or damn the soul.

It would be both cynical and false to say that in the government of man the scale of moral values does not count. It is ever present because the government of man is a highly human function. But what I mean is that a particular act or motive which may be almost indifferent in the moral sphere may be fatal in the political, while another which may be of the highest place in the moral sphere may be indifferent in the function of government.

The characters which keep an aristocratic body in its place are universally recognised though difficult to define. The first undoubtedly is dignity. The second, closely allied to dignity, is a readiness in the individual to sacrifice himself to the whole. The aristocratic spirit demands in those who govern a readiness to suffer personal loss or injury for the sake not only of the State (that demand is common to all healthy government) but of the aristocratic quality of the State and in particular of the aristocratic organism to which that individual belongs.

Another subtle character and one very little recognised because it is so exceedingly difficult to differentiate (yet its presence is powerfully felt) is the *representative* character of the aristocrat properly so called. By various instinctive methods, of which he is even himself unconscious, he maintains a distinction between himself and those who desire to regard him as a superior: yet he must be national: he must so act that the less fortunate man who reveres him shall regard him as a sort of glorified example of himself. A living aristocracy is always very careful to be in communion with, actually to mix with, the mass of which it is itself the chief. It has an unfailing *flair* for national tradition, national custom, and the real national will. It has, therefore, as a correlative, a living and active suspicion of the numerical and the mechanical in the establishment of that will.

To take a practical example. An English governing class which in the middle of the nineteenth century had given up riding horses and playing cricket would have ceased to govern.

Now what we have to remark about the House of Commons in its present condition is that these peculiar qualities, which are not ethical qualities but the special qualities of a particular governing function, have failed.

An aristocracy may loot on a large scale. A particular member of the governing class may make his fortune too rapidly, and almost openly through his political power. Yet there is an aristocratic way of doing it, and an unaristocratic way of doing it.

To take a concrete example. It is morally far worse to buy your own land with State money at several times its market value and put the proceeds into your pocket, than it is to take a few shares secretly behind the door from a Jewish company promoter. It is morally far worse to enclose public land to your private advantage than it is to accept an insufficient secret pension from a low and grudging financier. Yet the first set of actions will not destroy the prestige of an aristocratic body, and the second will.

To take actions of the same degree of obliquity, and that not a very extreme degree: actions which we do not seriously blame in a man. A member of the governing class may practise nepotism and may see that his relatives get a comfortable place at the taxpayers' expense. So may a man quite unfitted to be the member of any governing class. Yet in the eyes of those accustomed to and demanding aristocracy, the

first action seems natural, and the second ludicrous. The openly favoured relative of the aristocrat is felt to be one of an accepted organism: the secretly favoured relative of the professional politician is felt to be out of place: he has no claim.

But the capital charge is still the general one of ineptitude. When a governing body ceases to be aristocratic you feel it not only in specific indignities and particular buffooneries or petty thefts: you feel it in a sort of insecurity. The frantic efforts to conceal, the silly blushing denials, the haste to get away with the swag—all these are the symptoms: and worst of all the incapacity for sacrifice. An aristocracy willingly—nay, at regular intervals—sacrifices. Now one of its members voluntarily submits, now it makes an example of another. It plays a consistent drama of the grand manner—nor in doing this is it insincere: it is but fulfilling its nature and part. But when the worst culprits are clumsily shielded or desperately promoted, when you have the impression of a gang “all hanging together lest each hang separately,” when an ardent passion for personal safety colours all the ramp—then the aristocratic spirit is dead. It is the surest sign.

The Revolt of Intelligence.

By Ezra Pound.

VIII.

It is, as I was saying, very clever of the capitalist propagandists to pretend that *any* change whatsoever in the present economic system would “paralyse industry,” stop competition, deprive men of “the big rewards,” etc. It is also clever of them to see only two elements, Labour and Capital, in a problem where there are three; labour, capital, and intelligence. A coagulation of capital and intelligence is a quite important (yes, Lord Monkswell, quite important) factor in industry, at present. No one denies that during the past century, and even now as we write, Capital has and has had a function in industry. One does, however, claim that the function has been exaggerated, and that the rewards for it are excessive. One also claims that the coagulation of intelligence and labour could, in many cases, eliminate and, in many more cases, minimise the necessity for Capital.

There is no need to confuse the constructive manufacturer with the usurer, even though the two functions be performed by the same individual; I am a reasonably good poet and a moderately bad tennis player; I could presumably stop playing tennis without ceasing to exist as an author. The dissociation of ideas has not made much progress in Anglo-Saxon countries.

I said in my last article that Capital found it very easy to bribe intelligence. Possibly I should have said “to bamboozle intelligence.” Simply: the man whose head functions, enjoys this functioning; he will exist and enjoy existence if allowed to function. Like Kipling’s explorer he may even get a certain hard-bitten pleasure in noting that someone else reaps “the reward.” A man may enjoy creating a railroad or a factory exactly as he may enjoy creating a poem or a picture.

I take, as I would always wish to take, a particular example. In this case a relative on one side of my family, a member of the New York stock exchange, was discussing a deceased member of the other side of the family. I can still hear the puzzled intonation: “That man! He sweated blood to build that line of railroad. I dropped money on it. What he ever got out of it I don’t know.” Apart from the titillation of vanity that might have come to a man from having his name in large brass letters on the front of a locomotive—for the early Western enthusiasm for transport named the individual machines as seamen have named ships through the ages—I must conclude that the reward must have been very largely in the sensation of

accomplishment. The typical Capitalist, Warenhauser, received, I believe, the cash benefits. I am disinclined to believe that the railroad builder was led on by the hope of riches. The hope of riches could not have moved him to the greater and later labour of getting measures for the irrigation of the American desert through Congress. And in his extreme old age, when he no longer owned an inch of land, when he was so poor that he was glad to receive £2 from the present author as a Christmas present, he was still capable of being happy because the State’s crops for the season were good. I believe he would have been incapable of not undergoing that particular and peculiar æsthesis.

Now in nearly all economic discussion, and certainly in all arguments for the “capitalist system,” such a man as this is listed as “capitalist,” and all his functions and labours are put down to the credit of Capital. Moreover, men of his type are scared off economic reform by being told that it will prevent them from getting their fun. There are very few men who are not subject to the intoxication of kinesis. That is to say, as long as a man is doing something he likes, getting a comfortable living, or thinking he is going to get rich, he will neither bother his head about a system of economics, nor welcome a discussion of change. These particularly efficient super-labourers are the trump cards in Capital’s hand. We return to the Shavian “Never was I so free as Cæsar’s slave.” When these men “revolt against capital”; or when they divine two functions in themselves, one as constructor and the others as usurer, then we shall have reform or beneficent revolution. The obstacles to their revolt are obvious, *and* psychological.

The man whose head works rapidly and accurately loathes the dunderhead and the botcher; the man of talent, of special faculty, he who has made himself efficient through driving his will across his own initial defects, suffers disgust, even to the point of almost physical torture in the presence of incompetence, of shilly-shally, of stupidity, of block-headedness. He is bound to come into closer contact or at any rate more vivid contact with the stupidities of the workers than with the, possibly well-mannered, acquisitiveness of the usurer. The slowness of labour, the tiresomeness of labouristic ergoteurs, etc., etc., in fact, all the annoyances of his life, are bound to proceed from those whom he directs, and not from those who levy a tax upon him in ways which do not annoy him.

To follow Lord Monkswell into a qualification of normalities: man is apt to feel gratitude or amiability to those from whom he receives or seems to receive benefit. The entrepreneur is apt to feel more kindly toward the man who advances him money (even at a highish rate) for an undertaking than toward those who “work for” him or who “co-operate” and continually annoy him by ineptitudes and interruptions. Under the present system the kinetic organiser can get more immediate fun out of life by being amiable to the rich than by trying to galvanise a thousand working men, or trying to build up an effective unanimity among workers, half of them unintelligent and the other half cranky.

If “labour” wanted a practical policy, which it probably doesn’t, it might seem advisable for her to buy over directive intelligence. I don’t mean merely to get parliamentary leaders, but to discriminate, first, in its own mind, between the directive intelligence and capital, and then to choose its own captains, in actual working of factories, etc. I don’t say this is easy. At present I believe the “leader” often works his way up through the “shop,” and, I think, as often “turns capitalist” the minute he “owns” the said works, or a share in them. It is a hardish school, and leaves little altruism.

Altruism. The word will take a little exemplifying. To get to the special case, and leave theory: I know one owner, who has always been an owner, who in-

herited his works in rather bad condition, who has made them sound, who does not admire Sir A. Geddes (or Sir A. Geddes' brother). For the last ten years I have heard him denounce the injustice of the present system. Denunciation based on concrete observation, sic: "To see a man sitting there with a drill at twenty, and to see him twenty years later still at the same bench, earning the same pay! No, something *must* be wrong, somewhere." He has put in a profit-sharing scheme, and proposes to enlarge it as soon as possible. "Only you've got to go careful, or you go bust before you know it."

I take, I dare say, a rare enough type of employer, but not one who will oppose any solution that solves. He cannot find a way out himself. And the present generalities of governmental control of railways (incidentally) do not fill him with confidence.

The altruism of my second type was very "human." He was wholesale agent for large cloth firms in the south of France; he viewed labouring men with something approaching terror, but he felt for others (within his own class). There was no hypocrisy; he said nothing about it; it was in unconscious facial expression that he showed his distress over the misfortune of clients who had bought largely in 1918 in the belief that the war would go on, and prices continue to rise. Poor devils left with all that stuff and no sales. No chance of his selling anything more to them. Then a new distress came upon him. He couldn't get skilled packers and invoicers. He had sold his whole warehouse full of stock to les Allemands.

Human sympathies would, nevertheless, survive the triumph of Major C. H. Douglas' profound attack upon usury.

Pfister.

It is a little difficult to classify Pfister. He has an unbounded admiration for Freud, considers Adler one-sided, and has comparatively little to say about Jung. Freud as the originator of the psycho-analytic movement deserves every congratulation; but no one who has made any careful study of Jung can now take Freud as his leader. But Pfister is not to be defined strictly as a Freudian. He has written a book, "The Psycho-Analytic Method,"* a work that is remarkably comprehensive, except for the reservations just made. He does not, for instance, breathe a word of the collective unconscious, and his analyses are entirely Freudian, with the exception that he employs his position in the interests of "sublimation." He is Protestant pastor and seminary teacher in Zurich. He accepts all Freud's dicta on the mechanisms of dream formations, as, indeed, one is bound to do, so long as the association method be followed *literally*. But when a patient's associations contain personal reminiscences, they should, I think, be taken to be just as symbolic as the symbol from which they originated. The point to remember is that the dream should be *lifted* from literalness on to the emotional or intellectual plane, as the case may be. The result of this is not so much a sublimation as a transmutation. This leads us to consider the genesis of neurosis. The theory of sexual trauma has long been discarded, though it does, as a matter of fact, fit some cases. A wound of any sort is a shock, and is not debarred from producing neuroticism just because it happens to be a sexual shock. Sex and emotion are so unfortunately intertwined that the one cannot suffer repression without damage ensuing to the other. Again, any shock may cause disintegration, and everyone has a weak spot; it may be sex; it may be egotism; it may be misinterpretation of one's

tendencies, of the Wish. Next came the idea of infantile fixation, a particular emotional-intellectual attitude towards the parents, acquired in childhood and perpetuated throughout life, to be reawakened whenever the individual met circumstances that set in motion unconscious associations to the childhood life. Then this was spoken of as a failure in adaptation to circumstance, and the neurosis was considered as a regression into childhood, varying in its manifestations with the particular childhood conditions. Well, as Jung rightly remarks, the neurotic has the soul of a child. But we have not yet reached the genesis of neurosis. Why has the neurotic the soul of a child? We have all been children, and we have all met good and bad fortune in childhood. Why, then, are we not all neurotic? Why are we all graded between insanity and sanity? It can only be answered that it is a question of sensitiveness, and that the neurotic is born so. He has a predisposition. Sensitiveness is inherent in his psychological composition. Here I propose to leave the matter for the present, just suggesting the word Karma, and making the remark that perhaps even that is not a sufficient explanation. Karma can be traced well enough through our lives of to-day, as psycho-analysis shows. The fruits of an act are the emotional-intellectual associations made with it, which none can escape without renunciation, that preliminary to an "unreturning journey."

To return to Pfister, he is a Freudian and not a Freudian. His analyses are conducted according to Freud; his theories contain more than Freud. As he deals mostly with youthful cases, it is natural that he should find sexual troubles. About Adler he has very little to say, and this, too, is natural enough. In Europe to-day nine people out of ten suffer from a distortion of emotion. Of outlets for purely intellectual activity there are many from which to make a choice, but outlets for emotion, for love, are at present only too few. It is here that Pfister leaves Freud. Freud originally used the term libido to denote the urge only to sexual activity. But what Pfister adds to this is, "For the energies existing within the propagation processes and determining these, I prefer the expression, propagation-energies, for the metaphysical tendencies belonging to these energies, the name, propagation-will." Well, this is all to the good. Neither the one nor the other of these compounds unfortunately is so desirable as to be adopted by us for the sake of enriching the English language; but the point is that here Pfister has transcended Freud. And from this stage it is only another step that will enable us to say with Jung that the libido is "nothing concrete or familiar, but rather an absolute X, a pure hypothesis, a picture or marker, as little concretely conceivable as the energy of the physical world." It is not possible to return from this to the Freudian conception of the libido, as Pfister wishes to do. For it takes us straight to the collective unconscious, to which Pfister gives no consideration, except for a few fragmentary references to mythology. It is worth observing here that what Freud and Adler mean when they speak of the unconscious is that entity called by Blake the Spectre:

And cast his Spectre into the Lake.
Each man is in his Spectre's power
Until the arrival of that hour,
When his Humanity awake,

There is no question of "sublimating" this. It must rather slip from the shoulders like Christian's pack. That is why I say that the word transmutation should be substituted for sublimation in psycho-analytic terminology. This, in terms of a definition, would be a specific integrated response to the libido.

Pfister's book is divided into two parts, the second of which is concerned with actual psycho-analytic practice. We may note first some excellent remarks

* O. Pfister: "The Psycho-Analytic Method." (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd. One guinea.)

on treatment by suggestion, psychotherapy, and recommend them to the Hurstians. The basic objection to suggestion is that it does *not* effect a transmutation, but, on the contrary, attempts to cut off a man completely from the unconscious. It is a Prussian method, bred primarily on the will to power. If used with discretion and psycho-analytic understanding, there is, however, value in it. Pfister treats this point with great good sense, as he does the whole psycho-analytic technique. On the subject of transference he is particularly deserving of study. Transference is the term given to the psychological attitude of patient to analyst, and may vary from a complete resistance against to a complete dependence upon the analyst. It is the outcome of the patient's own psychology as a rule, though not always, and needs a very tactful handling. Very roughly speaking, perhaps the best way of dealing with this phenomenon is to find out what in the patient the analyst symbolises. A patient dreamt he was planing a piece of wood. The plane was the analyst, and the analyst was self-knowledge. The patient was stimulated and left standing on his own feet. I trust the reader will not from this imbibe the notion that all cases are so easy to handle; for in reality some most complex problems are to be met. Psycho-analysis is only starting, he must remember, and anything now said on the subject is to be regarded as a purely provisional makeshift. Some of it will hold water and some will not. We may, however, note Joubert's maxim that one should not argue truths of *sentiment*.

Pfister continues his treatment in the rôle of pastor and educator. This is not a pure psycho-analyst's duty, but it raises some very interesting points. He was the first outside the medical profession to take to psycho-analysis, and it is significant that he is a teacher. There is no doubt that there is imperative need that schoolmasters should be psychologists. Prevention is better than cure in psychological matters as in everything else, and the amount of suffering an analytically trained teacher could remove would be truly enormous. Provisionally, at any rate, there should at least be a psycho-analyst attached to every school. The psycho-analyst of the future will have more qualifications for his work than just a medical training. A medical education of to-day, in and by itself, is nothing more than a technical training. For psychological work there is obviously needed, besides this, a reservoir of general knowledge, particularly with regard to the province of religion and myth. Doctors and schoolmasters will have to work together in future. The first step has been taken by Pfister.

As a final comment I would say that it is indeed refreshing to hear Pfister speak of liberation and utilisation of instinct. Christianity in its beginnings ran away from instinct, as was the only thing to be done at the moment. By now, official Christianity has degenerated into a counsel of repression of instinct, which is as much as to say a repression of religion. Nor is it only the Catholics who are blameworthy, as Pfister would maintain. The Protestants, particularly our own Puritans, are much more guilty—so much so, in fact, that Milton "wrote in fetters." The Catholics did at least employ the confessional, a place for abreaction of emotion. But this, on the other hand, was more than outweighed by the paralysing power of God the Father and Mother Church. Anyone who wishes to convert this should first study that country where Catholicism has been practically unchecked, Spain. But now we may perhaps be permitted to hope for a psychological understanding of the New Testament that will lead us back eventually to that fountain of all religion, India. For in the sight of India the New Testament is but a fragment saved with difficulty. Nor can I see why we should follow Dr. Levy's invitation into the by-paths of Nietzsche. As Dr. Levy says, Bolshevism is the result of Christi-

anity, but of official Christianity, of repression, in other words. But as regards Nietzsche, the less is contained in the greater, and everything in him of value, besides much more, may be read in the pages of the Mahabharata.

J. A. M. ALCOCK.

Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

To see "Pygmalion" again after five years (and five such years) is to be convinced that Shaw's future in the theatre is just beginning. Previously, in addition to being a legendary person, he was a publicist of considerable self-importance whose activities included the drama, and whose plays we were therefore misled into interpreting in terms of his "social philosophy." Shaw and the Shavians made it practically impossible to accept his dramatic works as dramatic works; something of the Wagnerian cant clung to them, and just as Wagner pretended, as Nietzsche put it, "that his music does not simply mean music! But more! Infinitely more!" so Shaw's plays meant I know not what of suburban symbolism, of social criticism, of progressive philosophy. But the war that killed Shaw as a publicist has made Shaw the dramatist; the Shavians, too, have died for their country, and have given Shaw to the theatre. Gone for ever is the selected audience, the atmosphere of superiority, the air of unconventionality which was culture. At the Aldwych Theatre, there is the ordinary theatre audience which laughs, gets its second wind, and laughs again—so much so that the actors began to talk through the second laugh. The idea that Shaw was too "intellectual" for the ordinary public was a mere delusion of snobbery; not a point is missed at the Aldwych, and the happy alertness of enjoyment is most gratefully different from the strained eagerness to be instructed that the Shavians manifested.

To some extent, the credit for this result must be given to the players. The memory of impressions, I know, is unreliable; but I certainly think that the performance at the Aldwych is distinctly better than the original performance at His Majesty's Theatre. Sir Herbert Tree was a more singular actor than is Mr. Aubrey Smith; Mr. Edmund Gurney was a more impressive dustman than is Mr. Frank Bertram—but, then, the dustman should not be impressive, and Professor Higgins needs no additional singularity. There is perceptible at the Aldwych a more easy flow of characterisation, a universal willingness to let the parts play themselves (as actors put it)—with the consequence that the whole conception of the play is clear. "Pygmalion" is a comedy of manners, and its whole temper is improved. The dialogue is still witty, but it seemed to be no more than witty at His Majesty's; it is the fluent facility of Shaw's humorous invention that keeps the audience at the Aldwych in a continuous roar of laughter, and it is good-humoured, not satirical, laughter.

Having at last got Shaw free from irrelevant associations, we can see that he links up not with his contemporaries but with the classics of English comedy. We have to go back to the Restoration comedies for this same facility of comic invention, this fluency of characteristic speech—and they limited themselves in subject to the adulterous intrigue, and their types of gallants and cuckolds became stereotypes. But Shaw ranges wider, with a more eclectic taste; and if the Restoration comedian's chief comic resource was trickery and deception, Shaw's is the simple expression of character. The subtle art of juxtaposition has never, so far as I can remember, been carried to a finer perfection than in "Pygmalion"; it is for that very reason that the humour flows so continuously. His people have their own values, and are not afraid to declare them; but their values are not the absolute

values of which moralists make so much, but the pragmatic, educable values of living experience. Among his own people, Alfred Doolittle might not seem remarkable; expounding the ideas of a natural born vagabond in the presence of a specialist (and specialism is only made possible by a suppression of the vagabond instincts), he cannot open his mouth without comic effect. There is hardly a detail of his life that is not revealed as a grotesque caricature of that of a man of leisure; the public-house becomes "the poor man's club," and he certainly manifests as much interest in "politics, religion, and all the other amusements" as an intelligent clubman could.

That actors like to play Shaw, I verily believe; he gives everyone something to do that is worth doing—and in "Pygmalion" even the parlourmaid gets a laugh. His assaults on probability never outrage possibility; American testators make such strange bequests that Alfred Doolittle's legacy of £3,000 a year as a recognition of his merit as a "moral philosopher" produces only the required dramatic effect of surprise. Shaw has so long posed as an "intellectual" that we are apt to forget that his knowledge of human nature is extensive and peculiar. As rent-collector, dramatic, musical, and art critic, social propagandist, the idol of the drawing-rooms, God knows what, he has talked with everybody from a washerwoman to a Queen; and has that extensive acquaintance with humanity that is common to great artists. It is this knowledge that enables him to build up a character with an infinity of little true touches, that make his characters real people. When Alfred Doolittle, to take one example, refuses £10 because it is a lot of money, and would tend to stimulate the instinct of responsibility, while he could waste £5 with an easy conscience, those who know the type must applaud the exactness of the observation as well as the humorous effect of it.

But the success of this revival reinforces my contention that, although popularity is no proof of artistic merit, artistic work is popular. The people will stand anything; and the phrase does not mean what those who usually utter it pretend, but exactly what it says. The people will stand anything, the best as well as the worst of work; and when the classics fail to appeal, it is because they are played by people who do not understand them, but are giving expositions of some usually inane tradition. It is the dramatic value of drama that appeals, the character of comedy, and so long as people have eyes in their heads, and ears that are not deafened, so long will the acted play retain its hold on the public. "Pygmalion" I dare to call a classic, because it is, as Hamlet phrased it, "well-digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. . . . There was no matter in the phrase to indite the author of affection; but [it is written by] an honest method, as wholesome as sweet." And the actors play it in the classic manner, with a perfect sense of character and of ensemble. The performance is as good as any French acting (and we learned ensemble playing from the French); and, best of all, we are not afflicted with that schoolmasterly underlining of detail that used to give Granville Barker's productions the air of the Fabian nursery. This is human speech, humanly rendered; and everybody contributes to the total effect. The programme does not tell us who produced it, but whoever it was is to be congratulated on a perfect cast and a perfect modulation of playing. The thing seems so natural that it just happens; Shaw has never been better served than in this performance. It did not seem possible that Mrs. Patrick Campbell could improve her performance of Eliza Doolittle; but Mr. Aubrey Smith (whom I first remember seeing with Mrs. Campbell in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" about twenty years ago) has such an easy style, plays Higgins quite simply as a single-subject expert, that Mrs. Campbell gets her effects with less obvious art than at His Majesty's. There is not the

abysmal difference of manner between Mr. Smith's Higgins and Mrs. Campbell's Eliza that Tree showed, and Tree's vowels were unworthy of a professor of phonetics. Tree made no more than a heartless bully of the character; but Mr. Smith reveals him simply as the preoccupied scientist with no real or ready appreciation of the human reactions of his experiments. The play gains immensely by his appearance in it; and Mr. Frank Bertram's obvious enjoyment of the part of Alfred Doolittle found its proper response in Mr. Smith. But where everybody was so good it is really not necessary to distinguish; "Pygmalion" is a play at the Aldwych, and not merely a series of parts—and I can think of no finer tribute to the actors than that.

Readers and Writers.

THE new edition of "The History of Trade Unionism," by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, has just been published by Messrs. Longmans at a guinea. The text with which we have all been familiar has undergone a considerable revision; and I note with particular interest that the famous opening definition of a Trade Union as "a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their employment" no longer reads as of old. In place of the phrase "conditions of their employment" we now read "conditions of their working lives." This change, though it represents a considerable advance on the earlier definition, is nevertheless still inadequate as a description of a modern Trade Union. In fact, in the course of this new preface Mr. and Mrs. Webb practically invalidate the definition themselves by observing that the Trade Union movement "has equipped itself with an entirely new political organisation . . . which has already achieved the position of His Majesty's Opposition and now makes a bid for that of His Majesty's Government." The political activity of Trade Unionism, whether we approve of it or not, is undeniable; at the same time it obviously springs from something more than a desire to "maintain or improve the conditions of the working lives" of the wage-earners, being, indeed, the outcome of a desire to improve the whole of the life, not only of the Trade Unionists, but of the community. The new definition is thus, as we see, clearly inadequate to the facts.

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As the "History" is brought down to 1920, it could not avoid making reference to the "Guild idea" whose activities began thirteen years ago; more especially since the idea shows increasing signs of becoming the next constructive platform of industrial unionism. Mr. and Mrs. Webb reserve critical comment, they tell us, for a different volume—a volume of studies rather than of history; but they do not, even in the present volume, minimise the importance of "Guild Socialism" or "National Guilds." In fact, considering the characteristically British attitude they assumed towards the "Guild idea" when it was first struggling for expression in these columns, their present recognition may be said to be generous, though in my opinion it is still far short of the due that a genuine history of our times will one day pay the authors of the Guild movement. THE NEW AGE, I observe, is only once mentioned in this revised History, and then in a footnote containing several inaccuracies. The Guild bridge was *not* built by a group of thinkers "largely drawn from the Universities." As a matter of fact, even of the four men to whom Mr. and Mrs. Webb give the credit of formulating the Guild idea, only *one* came from a University; and he, I am certain, would not claim to be the initiator of the idea. Nor can Mr. Penty be credited with any direct share

in the original *National Guild* propaganda, since for long after its inception he doubted whether the Trade Union could serve as the possible nucleus of the "restoration of the Guild system" and preferred the conception of the small and local to the large and national Guild. The time has not come, however, to write the true account of the genesis of the Guild idea. Quite possibly it may never come. I would warn everybody, therefore, to be chary of accepting as gospel any narrative that is not vouched for by one or other or both of the only two people who are really acquainted with the facts.

* * *

Speaking of Mr. Penty, I was unaware last week that my list of five books recently republished from *THE NEW AGE* might have been six by the addition of his "Guildsman's Interpretation of History." Not the whole of the book, I believe, was published serially in these columns, but a good part of it was. I shall refer to it again when I have seen the volume.

* * *

By the same token I forgot to call attention to an interesting note in the preface to Mr. S. G. Hobson's "National Guilds and the State" (Bell, 12s. 6d. net). More is in it than at once meets the eye, as the discerning will realise. "The banking organisation of this country," Mr. Hobson writes, "is not a separate institution, a self-contained sovereignty. It is an integral, almost a subsidiary, part of the industrial and commercial system; and it would be a profound blunder to make it the whipping-boy for its masters, the great industrial magnates and associations." I am a mere minnow among these whales; but I cannot refrain from copying out a sentence or two from President Wilson's book, "The New Freedom." I am opportunely indebted for them to a pamphlet just published in America by an old contributor to *THE NEW AGE*, Mrs. Hulst.

Since I entered politics (writes President Wilson) I have chiefly had men's views confided to me privately. Some of the biggest men in the United States, in the fields of commerce and manufacture, are afraid of somebody, are afraid of something. They know that there is a power somewhere so organised, so subtle, so watchful, so interlocked, so pervasive, that they had better not speak above their breath when they speak in condemnation.

The control of credit has become dangerously centralised. It is the mere truth to say that the financial resources of this country are not at the command of those who do not submit to the direction and domination of small groups of capitalists. The great monopoly in this country is the monopoly of big credits.

We have been dreading all along the time when the combined power of high finance would be greater than the power of the Government. Have we come to a time when the President of the United States, or any man who wishes to be the President, must doff his cap in the presence of this high finance and say, "You are our inevitable master, but we will see how we can make the best of it"?

President Wilson's book was written some years ago; and the answer to the last question is now, I should say, in the affirmative. In any event, these extracts appear to me to suggest that my old colleague, Mr. S. G. Hobson, may be wrong when he writes sceptically in his new preface of the hegemony of finance. It is true, of course, that money is a means of the exchange of other commodities—is, if you like, only that; but, since practically all production to-day presumes exchange and depends upon exchange, it seems also true that whoever controls the medium of exchange controls production at the same time. As certain of our own poets have already said: since every commercial transaction that is not simple barter requires money or some form of financial intervention to complete, the monopoly of money must carry with it

more or less control over the whole of business. It does not, therefore, appear to me that Major Douglas and *THE NEW AGE* have got hold of the mere whipping-boy in their attack upon the "Money-Power." Money is the life-blood of society.

R. H. C.

Art Notes.

By B. H. Dias.

EPSTEIN is the greatest sculptor in Europe. This statement needs no qualification whatsoever. The death of Gaudier-Brzeska robbed the world of his only possible contemporary peer. Of the Christ, of the Mrs. Epstein, of the Gabrielle Saonne bronzes, now at the Leicester Gallery, one can only say that they are equal to any sculpture that has ever been in Egypt, in Assyria, or in the Congo. The critic is permitted his preference for Epstein's "abstract" work, but is compelled to admit that in the three above-mentioned works Epstein the representative has equalled Epstein the maker of strange images.

A process of "abstraction" or synthesis has, however, occurred. Egypt, Greece, Africa, Assyria, Mongolia have lent racial qualities to different busts in this exhibit, so that at least six of the bronzes are not merely portrait busts, but the concentration of race into; the expression of race by means of; the single head. This occurs in slighter degree in the very American soldier.

The world's better intelligences gave up what is called Christianity during the Renaissance, and since that period there has been no religious art in Europe north of the Pyrenees. There has been propaganda; there has been sentimentalisation about religious subjects (so recently as Eric Gill); there have been Sunday-school illustrations of the Bible and innumerable paintings of religious subjects. ("Christ and the Boy Scout," for example.) But there has been no religious art.

"The Guardian" will cite Bougereau as a refutation of this statement, and is perfectly welcome to do so. Epstein's "Christ" is a break in this order of things; it is, emphatically, religious art. This figure would arrest and hold attention, it would convey the full blast of its sculptural and emotional content, were it found in the desert by tribes who had never heard of the Christian religion. It is, that is to say, an *expression*, not a mere reference to a known legend or "history."

There is not the faintest trace of dogmatism in this work. One cannot restate it in language. The Gospels are an adequate footnote; they would explain various artistically irrelevant facts about the statue to the above-supposed "tribes"; but these facts are sculpturally no more necessary to the statue than a philological note about Venus or Victory is necessary to the statues of Milos or Samothrace.

The statue is not translatable into the phrases: "I have behaved in a perfectly reasonable manner, and my hand has been pierced. I refused to be intimidated by imbeciles, and my hand has been pierced. I have also been interred, but you have not seen the last of me. Two and two make four, and the sealing me into a sepulchre will not alter the sum of two twos." The statue expresses all this, but does not end with that expression.

Ce bonhomme n'est pas très agreable. An unkind photographer has suspended his camera from the chandelier and taken a distorted photograph which brings out a resemblance to the heavenly twins, President Wilson and Sir A. Geddes. This is a slander on the bronze, and the degree of distortion may be gauged by the transformation of the rectangles of the base into obtuse and acute angles.

This sort of contretemps may befall any work of art; one may disregard it, as one disregards other irrelevancies. The Mrs. Epstein and the Gabrielle are on a par with the Christ. The other heads are excellent,

but the present critic is inclined to think that they are in a different category. They are, like the head of Admiral Fisher, good Epstein. They are what we can count upon Epstein doing when in form. But the Gabrielle is Epstein's skill and experience, plus inspiration, plus the unpredictable élan. There is a grace and poignancy in it which was not in his abstract work.

Over and above the personalities of contemporary art squabbles, over and above the discussable personality of the sculptor, there rises this triumph of his genius. The jests of the gutter-critics, the small-talk of exasperated acquaintances, should count for a very slight patter of sound, a passing sprinkle of rain which will wear away nothing of the bronze. And in an age where, as in all other ages, there is little lasting merit, we can give unqualified praise and unqualified thanks for such work as is here presented.

The Senefelder Club (Leicester Gallery) shows, as usual, some excellent lithographs—Goya, Gauguin, Daumier, Fantin-Latour, and one very good Guevara, "The Turn's End," Wadsworth's "Ladle Slag," a Matisse study, Bonnard's "La Rue." One notes that the Goyas carry with great efficiency, despite the closeness of detail; Lautrec is clever; the Daumiers, 128-31, merit special attention; J. McL. Hamilton shows grace; H. E. Cross, pleasing pointillism.

It is probably a little late to note the meritorious January show at the Eldar Gallery. It contained a Forain, showing utter mastery of water-colour, atmosphere, and real knowledge; and various works by great names, of diverse interest—a Ziem, a la Monticelli, a K. X. Roussel, a Vuillard in dull granulation.

The Chelsea Book Club exhibits the child-naïve manner in Nicola Galante. Their Renoir exhibit contains the good "Jeune Garçon" (No. 4) sort of hard woodenish manner, an interesting piece of work, the one "modern" canvas in the room, distinct from the rest of the crushed fruit which Mr. Fry explains to us, in a foreword, that we should enjoy, not because Renoir painted well (which he did on numerous occasions), but chiefly because Renoir liked passionately the good things of life; because his art is "almost as simple a matter as the enjoyment of good food"; because "Renoir trusted implicitly to his own sensibility." Mr. Fry seems to think that Renoir was very daring in saying "how much he loved a pretty sight." But a reference to chronology might almost lead one to believe that Renoir was young and impressionable at a time when nearly everybody did like pretty sights ("Bubbles," etc.), and when this simple predilection for pink cheeks, chromatic flowers, etc., would have aroused no very acrimonious protest. However, it is very, very hard to write convincing forewords for collections of not quite the best work of artists who have a deservedly large reputation. One might almost venture the formulation that these canvases of Renoir's show the effect of impressionism upon a fundamentally nineteenth century personality, who happened to be a good painter, with no psychology whatsoever.

At the Goupil, Professor Frederick Brown shows some goodish water-colours, but the Monarro group seems to have no reason for existence; the backwash of Monet's and Pissarro's imitators, resulting in a sort of London groupishness sans the Fry pallor or the Sickert fog-an'-sootism. (Note that this fog-an'-sootism is Sickert's own, and worthy of praise in Sickert, in whom it did indicate a certain courage, a certain courageous realism, a certain search into ugliness for the possibilities of new harmony.)

Pissarro has provided one woman with a horse's tail without convincing us that the effect is intentional. C. H. Hassell's 32 is not so bad. E. M. Henderson tries the Gauguinesque, not unpleasingly, etc. Even Monet's own "Les Nymphes, paysage d'eau," might be almost Stephen Crane after Turner. One penalty for greatness is that all one's side-slips are destined for garish publicity. Amen.

We note with some amusement that the Society of Modern Portrait Painters have failed rather lamentably in an attempt to insult Mr. Guevara and modern painting in general. They tried a spoof show of new geniuses, and failed to take in even the most hasty of our contemporary pressmen. Mr. Konody has given them what they deserve in the "Sunday Observer" for February 15, and we need not continue the story. We trust they will go away and lie down until they learn better. Of course, if the poor old dears were in earnest—i.e., if they wanted to begin Vita-Nuovas—to see if they could earn better livings by trying to follow new masters (however ineptly). . . . Still, that is an economic question which they should refer to their agents. (N.B.—We do not think this latter hypothesis is correct, but if they want to bring off this sort of thing they should not hang their efforts on the same wall with Guevara.)

Views and Reviews.

DISSIPATED ENERGY.

IT must be five years since Mr. Ivor Brown rushed in where Mr. G. D. H. Cole feared to tread, and, in a controversy in THE NEW AGE, accused me of Cæsarism, I think, because I would not say "Democracy."* It is a word that always seems to me to be, like Shibboleth, a password to the passage of Jordan; and I find it as difficult to pronounce as the Ephraimites found "Shibboleth"—therefore I halt at the passages of Jordan, unsure whether I even wish to cross. The difficulty is, of course, that "the word has come to mean nothing, or, rather, it means so much that it means nothing at all," as Mr. Ivor Brown now admits; its technical meaning of a form of government has gone, almost every new form of government is given a new name, and "democracy" seems to have become a term for politicians to conjure with. We have just fought a war "to make the world safe for democracy"; and as the term has now no technical meaning, our only reason for dissociating "democracy" from the objectionable results of the war expresses a desire to preserve the efficacy of the word as a spell-binder. Like Religion, like Virtue, like Liberty, like Socialism, and the rest of the hypostatized nouns, "democracy" has become a weapon of propaganda and an object of worship. Nil nisi bonum; it means well; but honest men have to face the question whether they can use the word at all.

Mr. Brown begins with his etymological definition of democracy as "people's power," but he soon adds to that physical fact a psychological object; and people's power exercised on behalf of people's purposes seems to be his basic idea of democracy. But instead of devoting himself to the definition of people's purposes (a subject as fascinating as it is important), and to the demonstration of the most effective method of applying the people's power to the prosecution of those purposes, he wanders off into dissertations on public opinion, equality, equity, and natural rights, representative government, democratic guarantees, democracy and plutocracy, democracy and liberty, democracy and devolution, and the democratic idea. But although he has himself defined democracy as "people's power," and confronted us with a phenomenon of what is called crowd or herd psychology, throughout his book he uses the word to mean the equal division of power among individuals. "Democracy is created when public opinion, ceasing to be tolerant of the tenure of political power (actual Legal Sovereignty) by one man or by a few, passes to an active resolution that this power should be possessed by the people, and therefore divided among the people." In other words, instead of democracy being people's power exercised on behalf of people's purposes, it is a dissipation of

* "The Meaning of Democracy." By Ivor J. C. Brown, B.A. (R. Cobden-Sanderson. 6s. net.)

power among the largest possible number of individuals. It is not a self-governing people that Mr. Brown has in mind, but a collection of self-governing individuals with no apparent common purposes.

The result of this division of power among the people is thus described by Mr. Brown. "Let us take the case of Richard Roe, a railwayman, living in St. Pancras. He would have a share in the control of St. Pancras borough, of the London County Council, of the South-Eastern Regional District (should it be found desirable to divide England into federal units) and of the United Kingdom, and thus in a remote degree of the League of Nations. In addition to that, he would have a say in the management of his own railway station, or of that branch of railway work in which he was engaged; he would be represented both on his local railway authority, on his divisional authority, and his national authority; he would have a share in the creation of the Local Trade Council and the Guild Congress. He might be linked up industrially with the railwaymen of other countries, just as he is linked up politically in the League. If he happened to be a party politician, he would find representation of his views on local and national party committees; and, if he were a Socialist, he would certainly be connected with the Socialists of other countries. Then he would have participation in any club or friendly society or co-operative society he chose to join, not to mention membership of a religious sect, or a secularist society, or a football team; or he might be interested in education and attend a weekly class. If devolution carried to this pitch did not make Richard Roe realise that democracy is something more than a specious title, then the fault would lie surely with Richard Roe." There you have it; the sacred name of Democracy is above reproach; it is Richard Roe, poor, common, human nature, that is at fault if democracy is intolerable to him. His only protection against this overwhelming devolution of functions would be to devolve them on someone else, or to ignore them; and in either case Mr. Brown's "democracy" would die a natural death. The reason that is always given for devolution, the congestion of business in the body that exercises power, will apply not less strongly to the poor individual who worthily tries to exercise his forty-eighth-millionth share of power. Richard Roe would never have time to do any work, or to make love to his wife, under such a system; it is one man's work, as every journalist knows, to follow the activities of any one body, and even in Parliament members specialise in subjects and tend to become experts in finance, foreign affairs, labour questions, law, or public health, and so on. Mr. Brown naturally enough objects to "government by experts" (although it is precisely the expert knowledge of the conditions of labour possessed by the labourer that is his chief argument for the formation of Guilds); "the British process of 'muddling through' is well in the democratic tradition," he says, and his Richard Roes will certainly not fail to maintain the tradition.

Apart from the objection that "democracy," even as Mr. Brown develops it in his book, is a pantechonicon word, there remains the fact that it is hopelessly doomed to failure because it is based on equality, not on equity. The pure ideal of good government is stated in the old Communist axiom: "From each according to his means, to each according to his needs"; and if, as Mr. Brown himself says: "Authority must be parcelled out . . . according to the principles of function," he is himself demanding equity, and not equality. It is a mistake, as I think I have told him before, to focus attention on the public legislative activities of Parliament; the Local and Private Acts of Parliament are of much more interest in any discussion of political power than the public Acts. For public legislation tends to be based on the principle of equality, although not necessarily on the equality of

individuals; even the plural voter has to have a plural qualification, the principle of equality of qualification being the obvious one. But the Local and Private Acts of Parliament tend to correct the defects of equality by equity; as Dicey puts it: "Parliament, however, habitually interferes, for the public advantage, with private rights. Indeed, such interference has now (greatly to the benefit of the community) become so much a matter of course as hardly to excite remark, and few persons reflect what a sign this interference is of the supremacy of Parliament. The Statute-book teems with Acts under which Parliament gives privileges or rights to particular persons or imposes particular duties or liabilities upon other persons. This is, of course, the case with every railway Act, but no one will realise the full action, generally the very beneficial action of Parliamentary sovereignty, who does not look through a volume or two of what are called Local and Private Acts. . . . They deal with every kind of topic, as with railways, harbours, docks, the settlement of private estates, and the like. To these you should add Acts such as those which declare valid marriages which, owing to some mistake of form or otherwise, have not been properly celebrated, and Acts, common enough at one time but now rarely passed, for the divorce of married persons." The principle of function, *la carrière ouverte aux talents*, is the principle of equity, not of equality; it is the allocation of power ad hoc, not the dissipation of power ad hominem. When Mr. Brown disabuses his mind of the delusion that "equity, however desirable it may be, cannot be applied to politics on a large scale," he may be able to develop his idea of democracy as "people's power" without contradicting himself at every turn.

A. E. R.

Reviews.

The Husband. By E. H. Anstruther. (The Bodley Head. 7s. net.)

It is a novelist's privilege to do whatever she likes with her characters except to leave them unintelligible to her readers. She may use whatever style she likes, but the style must reveal; we must know not only what people do, but why they do it. Miss Anstruther's style is the reticent, and her reticence is neither informing nor revealing; she tells a plain tale of incompatibility so simply that the wife seems merely an obstinate fool, and the husband a spiritless one. The "poor relation," Penelope Brooke, is so poorly related that she annoys the reader at every turn; her paltry pride, her paltry humility, her general lack of expression, or of anything to express, conceal her personality from the reader. Miss Anstruther pretends that these people have an interior life, but they touch only at the circumference of being, they re-act to stimuli, they are not impelled to action by any need of self-expression. They seem to be people who exalt the means above the end, the discipline above its object; they sacrifice themselves without regard to the worthiness of the object, and there really seems to be no need why we should differ from their estimates of their own value. The scene is laid in a country house, and in artistic circles in Chelsea; Penelope Brooke's one contribution to art being a rendering of Schubert's "Du Bis Diet Ruh," which everybody thinks is a reason for her undergoing a course of voice training. She has a revelation at the Tate Gallery; the Turner collection makes her feel that "to serve God is to serve man"; but how, or why, she came to this conclusion, or what it really means, the author does not tell us. Penelope thinks that it means that she must not concern herself with her own affairs, and, really, she manages them so singularly that the experiment of letting them manage themselves would be well worth trying. Yet it is after this revelation that she comes to the conclusion that "she must go because she cared

for someone more than for herself." Miss Anstruther tells us that Penelope was not only capable of, but animated by, a great passion; but there is singularly little evidence of it. Penelope does not know her own mind for two weeks together; she thaws, and freezes, for no reason that we can discover, and she probably falls into her proper place as "the husband's" second wife. She will remind him so inevitably of the unperceived excellence of his first.

Poor Relations. By Compton Mackenzie. (Martin Secker. 7s. 6d. net.)

This engaging study of some of the penalties of success has one of the supreme merits of a good novel; its fertility of invention keeps the interest so continuously engaged, that it is practically impossible to put the book down until read. It is a novel of situations rather than character, and the situations range from the frankly farcical (such as the scene with the children in a ritualistic Church at Hampstead) to the cynically criminal, including a goodly share of the suavely hypocritical. The characters are types, but well-drawn and well-contrasted types, and fairly representative of an average family—although it is to be hoped that few families have so united a purpose as this one had. Spoliation was their motto—and what they could not take from their brother John's purse they took from his reputation. Although Mr. Mackenzie has crammed the events of half a dozen lifetimes into six months, the situations are handled so deftly, with such a delicate air of derision for all concerned, including the hero, that the story does not seem overcrowded; the cumulative effect is necessary to divert the good-nature of John from a barren watering of the wilderness of blood relative to the more promising occupations of matrimony. It was one person's work to keep his relatives at bay, and his wife would do that work much better than he could, being free from the embarrassment of previous attachment. Although Mr. Mackenzie derides him (and the successful author of "The Fall of Babylon" is obviously not a great dramatic artist, but a successful theatrical writer), John is a likeable man, his good-humour being ample compensation for a lack of subtlety in the understanding of human nature. There is some delicate satire of Church and Stage (which virgin was it who "had a theatre on the Thames side of the Strand, and who, although broad-minded herself, could not break her unwritten contract with the public to preserve the association of 'purity' with her 'art'"?), but critical literature and architecture are handled similarly. The "touch" is perfect; Mr. Mackenzie obviously enjoyed the exercise of his skill in writing it—and although, like John's dramatic work, it is not great art, it is a clever exercise of talents working within their limitations. The result is an enjoyable book which deserves its popularity.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

GERMANY TO-DAY.

Sir,—Before I take up "R. H. C.'s" comments upon my article "Germany's New Sturm und Drang" (*THE NEW AGE*, January 22), I must protest against the violent dismemberment of that article—against the yawning gaps left in its unity and continuity.

Mr. "R. H. C." is "convinced that Nietzsche is nowhere so dead as in Germany to-day." Well, it is only an English fiction which is dead—that false imperialistic interpretation of Nietzsche which the English invented and attributed to the Germans. But it is not true in relation to what is sound and ascendant in the philosophy of Nietzsche. That new and popular editions of Nietzsche are appearing, that Nietzschean reviews are published and Nietzschean societies founded, seem to be dromedaries of fact at which "R. H. C." does not strain.

Strange, too, is his psychology of war and the spiritual

effects of defeat and victory. "If Nietzsche," says he, "was not listened to after 1870, I doubted whether he would be listened to any more after 1918." History ought to tell my critic that prophets of culture, especially anti-national prophets, are seldom listened to after victorious wars of conquest in the lands of the victors—that only defeat brings introspection and a revival and revaluation of spiritual values.

Culture, according to "R. H. C.," appears to be something with a "still, small voice"—like conscience. Something ladylike and exquisite and manicured. But culture is not only a Vere de Vere polish, an aroma, an orchid. It is not merely static, a tradition or a cult. Its very name implies ploughing and planting and pushing forth of the human spirit. If it be a living Culture, it must be a living force. It will operate in the exaltation of Art, Thought, and Philosophy liberated from old forms and ideas. In spite of "R. H. C.," one might even conceive of it as an upheaval—an eruption. Had he seen it uplifted and burning on the wave of revolution as I have, he might also be able to understand it and its manifestations in terms of the activistic, the dynamic, the subversive, the creatively destructive.

We need not adventure here upon thin ice with the question, "What is Culture?" Therein is Culture like her sister Taste. But there is no denying that there is an elemental significance in these cultural phenomena in Germany—in the good and the bad. To him who is able to compass them or plumb their depths, it is clear that the spiritual forces at work here are world-forces. *I will venture the prophecy that if Germany is not hounded into utter ruin—which portents already prove would involve the ruin of Europe—the world may expect from her not only a new Renaissance but a new Reformation.*

I made the contention that the old Germany was as much entitled to an imperialistic-commercial policy as Britain. I did not mean to imply that Germany was bent upon aggression. Germany, I may add here, was actually still more entitled to such a policy on the score of her healthy organic growth on an upward curve of national development, her natural need for room, the merit and the efficiency of her civic and commercial qualities.

But even had Germany deliberately willed and provoked an imperialistic war—even then, I say, according to the cut-throat state-morality actually prevailing before the world was made so sublimely "safe for democracy," it was as much Germany's incontestable right to launch such an imperialistic war as it was England's, America's, and Italy's in the case of the Boer Republics, Spain, and Turkey. "R. H. C." may find this ethic still more execrable—it is not of my making.

Germany, he remarks, has no right to complain because "Brute Might" defeated her. But Germany has the right to complain because the trial of strength was neither just nor fair—that quality of Brute Might as represented by her was in the end overwhelmed by quantity of Brute Might as represented by her enemies. Her defeat is therefore a triumph of the lesser over the greater attribute, and therefore, biologically, a setback to the race. It is a loss to the race of lions if one lion who has proved himself a match for five is finally overborne by a combination of thirty—the precise number of Germany's enemies.

When I wrote of the creative energies of Germany going forth to conquer a new empire, I was not referring to trade, but to thought. Hence "R. H. C.'s" remark that this "terminology is not cultural but big bagmen" is left flapping in the air. But what if Germany were to set forth to conquer a new commercial empire by "scientific organisation"? That would surely be most commendable, as commerce goes. I might point out that, in Germany, Art and Industry have already effected a very fine partnership (as in the *Werkbund* idea, now being imitated by the English). Culture-cum-Commerce also has its prophet—as in the stimulating ideals of Walther Rathenau (*Von kommenden Dingen*, etc.), who is one of Germany's biggest bagmen, and already acclaimed by French culture as the teacher of a wiser, fuller, higher form and code of modern life.

It would prove tedious to disentangle "R. H. C.'s" war-invalidated logic concerning my remarks upon Prussian militarism. Surely one may to a certain extent admire an institution and recognise its achievements without loving it? It is one of the grim, avenging

ironies of the war that Prussian militarism in an inflated yet degenerate form, and Prussian bureaucracy in a sinister and exaggerated form, *have now actually triumphed throughout the world*—without producing the Prussian virtues in their victims.

I wrote that a new Renaissance of Humanity is appearing in Germany. "R. H. C." implies that I meant a "Nietzschean Renaissance"—quite a different thing. I wrote—perhaps a little vaguely—that "women have suddenly been given liberties greater than in any other State"—political liberties, naturally. "R. H. C." interprets this as "the licentiousness of women." And if Nietzsche, that consummate artist, would not have approved of the artist having a share in government, I do not know my Nietzsche.

Though American-born, I trust that I have freed myself from the worship of quantity and even acquired an irreverence for statistics. I gave the quantity of books published in Germany as compared with England and France, not as a proof of culture, but as a literary phenomenon of great cultural significance, especially under present conditions. But it would be as easy to prove that the quality of this quantity is superior in this matter to that of England or France—in other words, Germany prints and reads not only more but better books. When "R. H. C." declares that England's 24 books per head prove a higher state of culture than Germany's 51 per head, he is defiling his argument with Chestertonian tricks. Whether a public consumes huge editions of "Her Violet Eyes" or of such an epochal work as Oswald Spengler's "Untergang des Abendlandes" *does* matter a great deal to culture. It would surely be nothing to the discredit of British culture were the British public to digest mammoth editions of *THE NEW AGE* instead of "John Bull" or "Home Chat."

So it is with new publications—their mere number is, of course, no sign manual of culture, and might easily be the reverse. How much is dirt and dross, how much good mental food or spiritual ore? There is much rampant madness, much that is viciously anti-cultural. Germany is not at present acting as a unit, but as a great arena of individual energies. And yet the number and the inexplicable success of publications of the first order must be accepted as one phase of cultural activity and interest.

My point that the theatre of a nation may be taken as one of the indices of its state of culture, "R. H. C." evades with the remarkable excuse that "Culture does not go to the theatre in England"! The fact that the German public welcomes the best plays of all ages and all nations he seeks to discount by saying that Culture selects, whilst "Germany swallows everything." He is opaque to the fact that the German public is able to select still more discriminately from a rich and endless variety of the best. Parallels are not always possible; national habits differ. And yet the English cultural (if I may be permitted to coin a word) are, in contradistinction to the German proletariat, so impotent that they cannot even provide a single active and successful theatre in which to present what they select.

I do not know before what cloudy fetish of culture, what bloodless occult ikon, possibly of Paterism, "R. H. C." prostrates himself in cloistral mirk. But that the popularity of good, even great books, the abundance of intellectual periodicals, a vital theatre with lofty standards, national reverence for great poets, artists, and thinkers, the crowding of old universities and the opening of new, and the like signify nothing to Culture, I regard as a discovery of sublime audacity. It serves to remind one that the war, with all its mental obliquities and *Unkultur*, is still mowing and gibbering even in the best brains.

"German science!" cries "R. H. C.," quoting my words. "German truth!" he adds, as though I had been guilty of such an absurdity. Why all this boisterousness in italics? If there is a label, or a libel, attached to the science of Germany, this is due to the most unscientific rabidness of Entente science. The scientists of Germany have always been distinguished for their broad cosmopolitanism and universality.

My critic is also wrong in the assumption that *THE NEW AGE* is not read in Germany. But I have seen it frequently quoted in German papers during the war.

"The proof of the pudding," says "R. H. C.," a little

ingenuously, "is in the eating," and "History will repeat itself." I am afraid that the pudding he has been eating has been heavily adulterated, and that the history he has been repeating is the "Times' History of the War."

HERMAN GEORGE SCHEFFAUER.

Berlin.

* * *

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS.

Sir,—I think your correspondent "I. L." should reflect that it may be *very* worthless to take a genuine interest in a number of things; and the more "genuine" the interest the more "worthless," evil communications not being the best atmosphere for good manners. However, that is not the point. It is perfectly true that a number of "useful" activities spring from infantile "useless" activities. Dr. Jones gives a good instance of an engineer who made canals and bridges ("Papers on Psycho-analysis," p. 612). But when we try to apply this to psychological activities we find that we are not moving in a quite identical sphere. To consider a concrete instance, the boy who cuts worms in two from curiosity may become an anatomist, or even a surgeon; but if he attempts a surgery of the psyche rooted in this same infantile "curiosity," then his course is not only worthless but injurious to community, to patient, to himself. While the Freudian sublimation *may* suffice for those who play with machinery as engineers do, in psychology it is worthless, either a stagnation or regression; and each of these three terms is an euphemism. I am not giving a piece of theory. "I. L." can find a perfectly accessible analogous example in the tale of Ananias and Sapphira, his wife (Acts, ch. v).

J. A. M. ALCOCK.

* * *

THE PHOENIX.

Sir,—I was already familiar with the line of argument taken by the Phoenix as a justification of its attempt to suppress or avoid the criticism of Mr. William Archer, and the letter of its chairman in your last issue adds nothing new to it. "The Phoenix," we are told, "is a society started by a few enthusiasts to give performances of certain plays which they wished to see. They managed to collect a little money from subscribers, and have been most generously helped by voluntary workers and by the players who give their services for love." These are all excellent reasons for preserving privacy; they afford no ground whatever for the attempt to select publicity. The Phoenix cannot have the argument both ways; if it is simply a private society of enthusiasts, there is no reason whatever for calling public attention to its activities; if, on the other hand, it seeks publicity, the public interest demands that it should have a representative selection of opinions. Wherever there is a classic revival, there will always be a Jeremy Collier; and if Mr. William Archer chooses to attract public attention to the Phoenix by demanding expurgation of passages in the various texts, and denouncing people who, unlike himself, can hear these passages without feeling uneasy, the Phoenix ought to pass a vote of thanks to him for the fine flavour of immorality that he extracts from its proceedings. That the Phoenix only wants intelligent criticism I can well believe; the complaint is common; but it cannot give intelligence to dramatic critics (that is the work, performed or omitted, of Providence); it can only allow them freedom of expression, and what Mr. W. S. Kennedy calls "a courteous request that [Mr. Archer] should delegate his distasteful duty to another" denies that freedom of expression. Mr. Archer has a right to do his duty, distasteful or otherwise, to hold the Phoenix up to morality, "to show vice its own feature, scorn its own image," and all the rest of it—even to call the attention of the police to the fact that Webster or Dryden, Heywood or Ben Jonson, is actually being played. The attempt to suppress Mr. Archer puts the rest of the dramatic critics in a false position—we are chosen because we do not disapprove; he is rejected because he does, and our relation to the public is thereby warped. I repeat what I said before, that I will not become a member of a clique; and unless the Phoenix offers the apology that is due to Mr. Archer, the Phoenix may enthuse to its heart's content—but in privacy, so far as I am concerned.

JOHN FRANCIS HOPE.

Pastiche.

SIMOEMS.

BY H. I. HARDING.

AN EVENING RIDE.

Houses and men left behind, a long smooth road going nowhere: it runs between great reed beds, inside the city: the grey-brown flowers of the reeds sway in the wind.

Going through the city gate, we turn to the east: follow the moat, in which white ducks gorge themselves, head down, tail up, thus reversing the commands of nature.

Continuing through marshy fields, we pass the tumuli of heroes of old time. North and south runs the city wall of the old Liao city. We traverse the sepulchral grounds of a prince, fallen on hard times.

Bending back towards the city wall, we strike a gate, but do not enter: daylight fades, the moon shines bright. Castellated wall, ruined gate towers, here and there a tree growing on them—all show black against the pale sky.

Northwards we ride low down by the moat: looking forwards and backwards, it is difficult to say which is the more beautiful. At the northern corner tower we turn west over the stone bridge: crossing it, we admire the moonlight reflected from the running water.

Entering the city, we ride between willow rows along the stream. Everything is devoid of colour, but the moon makes up for this deficiency. We see the Lady Moon reflected in the water: even the wet mud by the bank sparkles with her brilliance.

As we near the gate of the inner city, houses and men become more numerous. Here and there a light shines out across the stream and is reflected in its water. Late silk-spinners finishing their day's work gather together their implements and return home.

We return home also, asking ourselves: Why did Heaven destine us to toil with pen and ink in dark dwellings? Why not to wander freely under the open sky, admiring that which Heaven has made for man to enjoy.

Peking.

AN AUTUMN WALK.

The sun has just risen: dew is still on the leaves and grass: the nip of dawn is still in the air.

I see the western hills standing up faintly against a pale sky: the hills appear more ethereal than the sky.

My heart is in the hills, but my body is among cabbages and turnips of the plain: I have to go into the great city every day in order to do what people bid me.

Temple of Mercy and Grace, Peking.

ON LOOKING NORTH OVER MY TEMPLE WALL AT MIDNIGHT OF FULL MOON IN THE SIXTH MONTH.

Fields of white earth, parched by an eight months' drought. In the middle distance a farm cottage, where a wedding is taking place and men are awake and lamps burn until dawn.

To the west, dim hills like the ghost of hills. Over them a sky pricked now and then by lightning flashes, faint under the moonlight.

But I am sure that it will not rain: growing things must still thirst. And if the rain is long delayed they will die and men will go hungry.

Temple of Mercy and Grace, Peking.

EVENING.

Blue thunder-clouds with pink-white edges a hundred miles away to the north-west: below them, but above and far beyond the hills, a rain-storm coloured red by the setting sun.

Over the Western Hills, purple cloudlets rimmed with gold: the hills stand out blue-grey against a golden sky.

It is cool in the hills: I wish I were on their summit

where breezes blow from the four quarters and the air is fresh and fragrant.

Here the wind scorches, man and beast sweat: walls and houses send forth the heat they have absorbed during the day.

Temple of Mercy and Grace, Peking.

TWO BELLS.

I have wandered in many lands and I have heard many bells, but among them all the voices of two alone have taken possession of my soul; to me the one is the voice of the East, the other of the West; the East speaks through the bell of the great Bell Tower of Peking, the West through the bell of Giotto's Campanile at Florence.

As I lay in bed one burning night at the Temple of Mercy and Grace, trying to sleep, but sleeping not, I heard the bell of the great Bell Tower, and it spake as follows:—

"Loom! I am the voice of Fate. Loom! Man understands me not—why should he? Loom! Some nights, you say, I strike the curfew; some nights, you say, I strike not until nearly midnight, and then—loom! loom! loom! Why? you ask. But why not? Loom! I have seen the dynasties in. I have seen the dynasties out. Emperors have arisen and have vanished, empires with them. Now we have a republic and it—loom! loom! loom! Other bells are merely bells. I am the inwardness of things. I am the voice of Fate. I am Fate! I am Fate. Loom!"

So I fell asleep, and as I slept I wandered through a narrow street between tall houses, and little street-cars clattered past and turned corners, and people walked over cobbled stones and talked and talked, and evening was coming on. And then the bell spoke, the bell of Giotto's Campanile—or rather it sang, and as it sang it said:—

"I am the voice of light and life and love. Faithfully, day by day and year by year throughout the centuries, I have brought my message to you, O men and women of small understanding. Verily, few there have been who have understood, but tenderly and sweetly I ring and ring and ring. For he who tries to live without my message liveth not, but is dead. And as I ring I hope, and as I hope I ring, ring, ring."

Temple of Mercy and Grace, Peking.

(Note.—The author's idea is that the respective portions should be so read as to suggest the tones of the Peking and the Florentine bell in question. The words of the former should be read slowly in a deep bass voice, "rallentando" on the "loom," the song of the latter being read rapidly in a tenor voice which endeavours to reproduce in the word "ring" the tone of the Florentine bell.)

"I CANNOT LOOK AT THE SKY OR THE STARS."

(Statement Made by a Prostitute.)

Why did you bring me here
Where daisies grow,
And there are little yellow flowers
With flat clean faces—
Primroses, aren't they?
You said "change was enjoyment."
Fool, your damned mistake
Is costing me my job!
That lark's song's like a knife
Stuck in a prisoner's flesh.
Take me away to where
London is light, and the old circus
Blazes; there's my place;
That's where you've put me,
You and others like you.
Street-light, not sun-light,
Is where this flower grows.
Run . . . there's the London train!

WINIFRED MITCHELL.

All communications relative to THE NEW AGE should be addressed to THE NEW AGE, 38, Cursitor Street, E.C.4.