

# THE NEW AGE

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE reasons given by Mr. Smillie to the "Daily Herald" for opposing a strike are both surprising and pleasing. "Like the great general he is" (as the "Daily Herald" remarks), Mr. Smillie did not want to "put the miners into the false position of apparent hostility to the community. . . . He wanted to see them fight with the community on their side . . . an all-round fight to reduce prices . . . a combined consumers' and producers' demand." Much more astonishing was Mr. Hodges' pronouncement made a day or two later to the same journal. "I am convinced," he said, "that the Labour movement must set itself the task of exploring every avenue by which the standard of living can be maintained and raised without recourse to the unprofitable and vicious system of trying to raise wages to meet prices. . . . If the Trade Union movement is worth its salt, it must concentrate on this issue." These be brave orts, but we are entitled to ask Mr. Hodges in particular whether they mean anything whatever. For we are only too well aware how little he has "explored every avenue" hitherto, or earned his salt in the manner he describes. Is Mr. Hodges taking cover in the generalisation that it is "the Labour movement" or "the Trade Union movement" that must "concentrate on this issue," and "explore every avenue" promising results? But a "movement" is incapable of concentration or exploration except in the person of its leaders. Unless the paid executive, the paid "brains" of the Labour or Trade Union movement, "concentrate" upon or "explore" the subject, the movement can do nothing. The "movement" depends upon officials like Mr. Hodges—or nobody.

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There are two successive acts of concentration which are necessary. The first is concentration upon Prices, as the key-problem of the whole of our economic problem; and the second is upon Credit, which, in turn, is the key-problem of the whole problem of Prices. We have just seen that the most advanced minds in the Labour movement are slowly beginning to call for concentration upon Prices; it is now to be observed with equal pleasure that a similar movement is taking

place in the direction of concentration upon Credit. The "Daily Herald" that used to be as ignorant of the financial problem as Sir Leo Money or Mr. Tawney would seem to wish, now desiderates some study of the meaning of Credit as a condition of solving the social problem. Reviewing a book (on Money!) by Mr. Philip Snowden, Mr. G. D. H. Cole writes in the "Daily Herald" that "the Labour movement badly needs sound constructive thinking on the credit problem." And that the heaven is really at work the following passage from the very depths of Socialist obscurantism is convincing evidence. "Any campaign," says the "New Statesman," "designed to reduce prices will have to go very much deeper than the demands for further control and for the punishment of profiteers. . . . The main causes [we hope our readers are attending to this, and reminding themselves that it is from the "New Statesman," the organ of the slowest intelligences in the Socialist movement] the main causes of high prices are to be found to-day in the operation of the financial system in relation to currency and credit . . . . and no campaign which does not deal with these questions has any chance of lasting success." We are not quite sure what the "New Statesman" means by a "campaign," any more than we are sure that in saying that the Labour movement needs sound constructive thinking on the credit problem Mr. Cole is not falling into the error of Mr. Hodges, that of putting all the responsibility upon everybody and nobody. If by a campaign the "New Statesman" means a public campaign in the sense of an educational crusade designed to instruct the man in the street in the mysteries of Credit, the time at our disposal is too limited in view of the pace of events. It might take only a couple of centuries to convince the "public" or the Labour "movement" that the main cause of high prices is to be found in Credit; and only another couple of centuries to convince them that a simple remedy for high prices already exists; but by four centuries, if not, indeed, by four months, the actual problem of the cost of living would cease to be of much practical interest. Fortunately no such campaign is really necessary. It may safely be presumed without reference that the "public" and the "movement" are in favour of reducing prices. If the leaders are ready to concentrate, explore, do some sound constructive thinking and initiate a campaign on, the problem—the public would willingly

accept the solution without asking how it was arrived at. This, however, is just the point; and we need not allude again to our own experience of the willingness of the leaders to follow their own advice to the movement.

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Fatalism is a well-known substitute for thought; and we see it being employed in the Labour movement as well as elsewhere. Mr. Robert Williams, for example, appears to have convinced himself that the "capitalist system" will one day, and before very long, break down of its own accord, like the "one-hoss shay," all at once and nothing first. That, however, is not the way of things; and we see no reason why "the vicious circle should ultimately strangle the capitalist system," unless somebody with intelligence and resolution pulls the rope. The present "vicious circle" of rising prices, followed at a respectful distance by rising wages, may and indeed certainly will produce some painful results. It will infallibly reduce the purchasing-power of Labour and, hence, Labour's standard of living: before very long, it will create a vast amount of unemployment; in less than twenty years it will *necessitate* another great war. But, provided these consequences are patiently endured by the "public" and the "movement": in other words, provided that their approach does not stir Mr. Robert Williams and his colleagues to any unusual activity of thought—there is nothing necessarily revolutionary in these facts or fatal to the "capitalist system." In brief, if the "capitalist system" has survived the recent world-war and shows no signs of collapsing of its own accord, in view of the present lunatic distribution of wealth in this country, we see no reason why it should ever fall without a powerful push from outside. The capitalist system can dance the vicious circle quite as long as the "public" or the "movement." Nor is there anything to be wondered at if this is the case, since it is in accordance with the natural as well as political law that "the King's Government must be carried on." Bad as the capitalist system undoubtedly is, and terribly as it works, its successor has not yet been recognised and duly anointed. Socialist thinkers, whatever they may think of themselves, are not yet superior in thought to capitalist thinkers: as an Opposition, they are not yet fit for world-government. But, as we were saying, in the world-sphere as in the political, a system can only be slain by its successor. The capitalist system, in other words, will only "collapse" when it is superseded. We would direct Mr. Robert Williams' attention to this fact and to the practical conclusions to be drawn from it. The revolution, in the first place, will not occur; and, in the second place, would be no real revolution if it did—until and unless its successor as a system is clearly of age.

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It might have been anticipated that the rapacious "City" would not be satisfied with a five per cent. interest on its "loans" to the Government as soon as the war was over. During the war, and while there could be no demand elsewhere for money, the City was glad enough to "lend" the Government all the money at its disposal: in fact, a great deal more than it had; and to be pleased, rather than otherwise, to receive five per cent. upon it. We know, indeed, that the "City" opposed paying for the war out of taxation and deliberately created all the evils of inflated credit by means of Government "loans" in order to find a profitable occupation for its money while other men were otherwise engaged. The war being over, and more profitable fields for investment than Government loans being now open to the gentlemen of the "City," the "City" has for some months been steadily forcing up the rate of discount on Treasury Bills, until last week it reached the figure of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Since the rate upon Treasury Bills is of

necessity the minimum in the market, the Bank Rate was naturally simultaneously advanced and is now 7 per cent. In short, the "dear money" which the economists of the Stock Exchange—Professor Pigou, for instance—have long advocated is now an accomplished fact; and, once set going, it is not now likely to stop until it reaches the panic height of the early days of the war. We are not so much concerned at this moment with the effect of "dear money" on the community in general—though it is obvious that "your life will cost you more"—as with the effect upon the Treasury. Is the Treasury prepared to take "lying down" this action on the part of the City, this forcing up of the price of accommodation? It is well known that the Treasury restrictions upon the money market, which existed during the war partly in order to prevent the "City" from financing the enemy, were only withdrawn in consequence of City representations purporting to promise cheap money as a consequence of a "free market." Yet, here we are, with a "free market" and dearer money; and dearer, in the first instance, to the Treasury itself. The Treasury, moreover, as the trustee of the national credit, has another ground of complaint. After all, as the "City" whined when the war was in progress, the credit of every individual firm, institution, and system in the nation depends upon the national credit as a whole. Had the war been lost, had the Treasury failed, the "City" would now be bankrupt and without credit. Yet the very "City" that owes its whole credit to the Treasury (that is, to the nation whose financial officer is the Treasury) now *lends* that credit to the Treasury at an ever-increasing rate of interest. It is, perhaps, fortunate that the gentlemen of the "City" do not realise the incestuous and matricidal crime in which they are engaged. The shock might even necessitate a psycho-analysis.

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Selling Treasury Bills at a high rate of discount is likely to have anything but ameliorative effects upon the general level of prices; but the only alternative to a degree of taxation which the "City" would veto is the employment of a system of Government borrowing upon what is known as "Ways and Means," the effect of which is the inflation of credit by five or six times the amount borrowed. The process is wonderfully simple, and is clearly described in the following extract from the memorandum recently submitted to the War-Wealth Committee by Mr. B. P. Blackett, Controller of Treasury Finance:

The chief method pursued by the British Government was borrowing from the Bank of England on the security of Ways and Means. This meant that the Bank of England as each advance was made added £x million to the item "Government Deposits," and balanced this entry by adding £x million to the item "Government Securities." The Government then drew on its balance thus created at the Bank of England for the purpose of meeting its war expenditure. This meant, as a rule, first an increase in the size of the balance of some Government contractor with some other bank and then a demand by that contractor for currency to pay wages. But whether or not the amount of additional currency issues were exactly equal to Ways and Means Advances, the final result was necessarily that although no kind of addition had been made to the volume of purchasable things, and although the Government had invented a method of paying for a share of the purchasable things previously available, the public obtained control, in the form either of bank deposits or as currency, of an additional amount of purchasing power equal to the Ways and Means Advance. Except in so far as the public re-lent this new purchasing power to the Government its natural result was to increase the demand for consumable goods and so put up their price. The effects of such creations of credit did not stop there, because a part of the new purchasing power remained with the banks as additional "cash," and was used by them to provide the basis for advances either to the Government

or to the public several times as large as the amount added to their "cash," and these again became purchasing power in the hands of the consumer.

Not much mystery ought to be left in the subject of the relation of Credit to Prices after this explanation. Even the "public" can now see, if it likes, just how "money" is made.

From the subsequent remarks of Mr. Blackett as well as from the speech in the Parliamentary debate on Thursday by Mr. Baldwin, the Financial Secretary of the Treasury, it would appear that the word has been passed round to concentrate attention upon the effect of *Government* credit and to say nothing upon the effect of ordinary commercial credit. But this will not do at all: capitalist finance must not be allowed to escape censure under the cloak of the Treasury; and more particularly, since the effect of commercial credit upon prices is, at least, five times that of Government credit and, moreover, is a constant and not an intermittent factor. We may remind our readers that Mr. Austen Chamberlain recently let the cat out of the bag when he complained that "as fast as the Government stopped creating credit, the financial community continued to create it": furthermore, that he was "convinced" that much of this new credit did not result in increased production, but only in "increased competition for the limited supplies of labour and material which are all that are available." And in support of this assertion we now have Mr. Blackett pointing out that the additional "cash" representative of Government loans is not only itself an inflation of spending-power, but is used by the banks as a basis for the creation of "several times" its amount; in fact, as we know from other sources, five or six times its amount. The importance of the distinction lies in the attempt obviously being made to attribute all the evils of high prices to the Government policy and thereby to effect, at one swoop, several advantages for the financial community. In the first place, the Government is estopped against further borrowing—that is to say, the financiers find a more profitable employment for their money; in the second place, what public discontent exists is directed against "the war" or the Government, either of which, according to fancy, can be blamed for high prices; finally, the financial community can continue inflating credit and raising prices without let or hindrance while the public is worrying the Treasury or preparing, like the Labour movement, to explore every other avenue than the one at its doors. The proof of the pudding will only come later, when it is discovered, some years hence, that in spite of the "complete cessation of Government borrowing," which is now the sole object of our financial policy, the prices of necessities and the cost of living continue to rise. They were rising before the war, though no Government borrowing was taking place. They rose 40 points in ten years of profound peace and production. They will continue to rise, from the same causes, long after the Government has ceased from borrowing and the Treasury is at rest.

The same Mr. Baldwin, by the way, was perfectly resigned to the prospect. In fact, it is with wonderful equanimity that our governing classes subject themselves to the inscrutable ways of Providence when the latter only affect nine-tenths of the population. "Our financial convalescence," Mr. Bildad Baldwin cheerfully assures us, "is only as yet in its early stages . . . it is bound to be long, slow and painful. . . . There is no royal road to financial stability [even in a monarchy!] . . . but the ruin of the war must be made good with time and toil and tears." We will not ask *whose* time, toil, and tears are to repair the ruin of the war. The national mourning is apparent in the enormous expansion of luxurious living among the wealthy classes. We will only say that the use of words, consecrated by the war, for the purposes of financial jiggery-pokery

is intolerable. There is not the least reason in sense, in fact or in justice, why the ruin of the war should not be cleared up in a period no longer than the war itself. As we have said, and as everybody may now know, there is no mystery about the cause of high prices; nor is there anything to prevent us from reducing prices hundreds per cent. almost immediately. We know how to do it. There is a royal road to financial stability: in fact, there is no other road; and so far from the journey being necessarily "long, slow and painful," or the process one for "time, toil and tears," it might be both short and merry. The "public" and the Labour "movement," however, will probably prefer with Mr. Baldwin and his suffering friends in the City, the long way round—and round—and round; any way to the trifling amount of real thought which the grasp of the practical meaning of Credit would entail. As Walter Bagehot used to say—only unfortunately he admired the English for it—the English public would do anything but think. Even our readers . . .

The debate in the House of Commons on Monday that finally "authorised the advancement of 26 millions in credit and insurance in aid of overseas trade" has naturally not been much commented on in the ordinary Press. Lenin has arrived at the conclusion that "Western Governments are the tools of the Stock Exchange and the Banks"; and it would follow *a fortiori* that the Press is not behind in bending the knee for a consideration. Let that be as it may, the transaction above described was worth more attention than it received from a "public" Press if only by reason of its intensifying effect upon the worst of our current diseases, the disease of high prices. For what, in actual outcome, is the design and action of the proposed "advancement of credit" but the creation of 26 millions of immediate spending-power on account of commodities subsequently to be imported from overseas; and the consequent immediate increase in home-prices? It will be said, no doubt, that the loan of 26 millions is a good investment: that, as one of the speakers admitted, it was designed to enable British merchants to "capture the German market" in Roumania and elsewhere. But if that is the object, why, in the first place, should not the commercial community put up the money itself instead of coming to the State; and, in the second place, what provision is made that the nation (as distinct from the trading community) shall share in the advantage obtained by the use of its credit? It is clear that the immediate effect of the creation of this credit (that is, this 26 millions of new spending-power) will be to raise prices. A secondary effect, it is expected, will be the capture by British merchants of a profitable German trade. Yes—and will the said merchants then re-imburse the community for the present sacrifice by reducing prices? On the contrary, we shall find that the reward of the consumer for submitting to higher prices now will be still higher prices in the future. That will be the outcome of the debate in Parliament on Monday.

It is a pity that "Oxford" cannot exercise disciplinary control over its dreaming members to save them from repeating the opinions of the "Spectator" in their sleep. Such letters as the Rev. P. E. Roberts contributes to the "Times" from "Worcester College, Oxford," would be very incriminating documents in the presence of a Bolshevik Revolution; and we must add that, if anything could, they would make a Bolshevik Revolution attractive. Mr. Roberts complains, on imperfect information imperfectly appreciated, that "Labour demands that the whole burden of the war shall be entirely shifted on to the shoulders of the 'idle rich.'" The ignorance no less than the greed of Labour is something stupendous—for Labour is apparently unaware of the "bitter truth" that "for generations yet to come the results of the catastrophe must

shadow every individual life." Not only, however, is Labour unaware of this bitter truth; but it is, in fact, not a truth at all. That the results of the catastrophe will shadow the individual lives of nine out of ten of the population is very likely: Mr. Hodges and his colleagues are only now prepared to "explore every avenue" to reduced prices—and there are many good red herring guarding the path to our avenue. But one in ten of the population is in consequence of the war a little Cræsus: between them, 394,000 persons have added 4,000 millions of wealth to their little store; and, in general, what is called the national wealth has been vastly increased. "It is time the people were told," said Mr. Chadwick in the House of Commons last week, "that England stands on a pinnacle of fame and financial prosperity which has never been known before." That is the fact; and it is time that the "public" knew it. From having been wealthy before the war, "England" [meaning the capitalist classes] is wealthier than ever: it is far and away the richest country in the world: its credit stands higher than ever; its resources are more ample and inexhaustible. It is characteristic of English "gentlemen" to pretend to be poor: and it is a noble trait when it arises from a distaste for ostentation. But when, as now, it arises from a fear that the real poor may ask to share their "poverty," it is despicable in business men and worse in an Oxford divine. Perhaps somebody will inform Mr. Roberts that his stipend is quite safe; and advise him to keep his mouth as tightly shut as his mind.

The rota of Labour representatives from which the delegation to Russia will be selected has now been published; it includes the usual names of the tourists of the movement—Messrs. Henderson, MacDonald, Thomas, Stuart-Bunning, Thorne, and Mrs. Snowden. It is to be hoped, however, that for once the vanity of some of these people will be subordinated to discretion, for it is very certain that for several of them, if not for all of them, anything but a respectful reception awaits in Russia. The gulf between Lenin and "the contemptible scoundrels of apostasy" (as he calls "the Hendersons and MacDonalds") is really too great to be bridged even by politicians, we should think; it is, in fact, the gulf between "revolution" and "reform"—that is to say, between error and stupidity, between would-be masters and would-be slaves. Moreover, it is obvious that the whole delegation, even if Lenin should be willing to listen to it, has nothing to teach the Russian revolutionary. Upon two subjects in particular Lenin invites instruction; he even begs for it—on the land question and on Credit. But do "the Hendersons and MacDonalds" know anything practical on either head? Could they make a single suggestion that would work? All we can say is that, if they can teach Lenin anything he is anxious to know about the practical aspects of Communist government, they have hitherto concealed their ability very effectively in this country. A second objection to the dispatch of such a delegation to Russia is the certain reaction of their mission upon the international relations of the two countries. Our war upon Soviet Russia was a disaster; it was not merely ridiculous. Our Labour "mission" to Russia is only ridiculous.

We do not, we hope, underestimate the importance of the Irish problem, even while we believe that it must remain unsolved until Rome agrees to settle it; but we must protest against the superficiality of the contention of "A. G. G." in the "Daily News" that "there is only one grave obstacle to happy relations between the British and American Commonwealths, and that obstacle is Ireland." In the first place, it would be as unreasonable for "America" to make the British failure to deal with Ireland a ground of dispute as it would be for England to make Mexico a ground of dispute with America; and, whatever may

be said to the contrary, international disputes never arise from merely political causes such as these. And, in the second place, even "A. G. G.," the little scout-master of Liberalism, should know that, apart altogether from Ireland, from any political cause, the gravest obstacle to "happy relations between the British and American Commonwealths" is to be found in the economic competition to which the two nations are committed by their respective and identical "capitalist systems." It is a calculation into which political no less than sentimental considerations can scarcely be said to enter at all. Ireland, for instance, may be most happily settled; and "A. G. G." and his American counterparts may be falling upon one another's necks in an intoxication of cocoa—the competition of two increasing exports for a single diminishing market will necessitate war, as a mere condition of the maintenance of the respective Governments and nations. We are not preaching war or even extenuating war in advance of its certain outbreak in certain contingencies. We are no more preaching war than the accomplished Jugo-Slav economist, Mr. Slavko Secerov, whose recent work on "Economic Phenomena before and after War" (Routledge, 10s. 6d. net) almost enables anybody to be a prophet of war. All we are affirming is that the causes of war are chiefly and determinantly economic; and that the main economic cause of war actually subsists at this moment between America and this country. Unless within a measurable period the "capitalist system" either of America or England is completely transformed, war between the two Commonwealths is inevitable. We only exclude the possibility that the capitalists of the two countries may combine.

## A Fragment.

The visions of my head upon my bed were these. Methought I swam heavily in a joggle of sea and many with me.

High was the wind, and the current likewise strong against us.

Seas roared against the black cliff ahead, which they called Fynan's Rock, and beyond this, they told me, lay those deadly quicksands, the Burofish Flats.

But from far away under the lowering clouds came a gleam as from the towers and palaces of the Golden Guild, and we took new heart to fight the salt and hostile waters.

And I looked in my dream and beheld one on the shore who bellocked at us with a loud voice, saying: "Without my nostrum ye shall all assuredly perish!" Hotly I denied him and battled on against the mouth-filling sea. Yet was my soul discomfited within me; for this man seemed in some sort to have reason in him. And the gleam of gold was gone.

He passed, and behold other two on the beach. And I saw in my dream that they were men of mind. And they spake mildly across the water thus:

"Whether or no your Golden Guild be in all points as ye throw it, O poor struggling souls, never may ye thus by any chance attain unto it.

"The wind and current are contrary, the sea is high, the passage long and life short.

"There is a better way.

"Come ye ashore to the land of Hardsense, cross this little spit of beach, and float with the current down the great river Human Nature to that Golden City ye behold afar, and may God prosper you."

And some of us turned and followed these two. But the others reviled and cursed us, saying: "They worship not the Golden Guildage that Nebukohlnazzar, the king, has set up, and the truth is not in them. Therefore shall they have henceforth neither part nor lot with us, but shall be unto us as heathen men and as wine-bibbers."

And I awoke and lay on my bed for the space of seven days and seven nights, perpending what these things should mean. Then, arising, with a loud voice called I, upon An' Ulysses, the son of Sighkos. But there came none.

PHILIP T. KENWAY.

## Credit-Power and Democracy.

By Major C. H. Douglas.

### CHAPTER IX.

THE conclusions to be derived from a consideration of the conditions observed to exist in the modern economic and industrial systems may therefore be tabulated somewhat after this fashion:—

(1) The outstanding feature of the Machine Age is the increment of production obtainable through co-operation and the employment of real capital.

(2) The link which enables numbers of individuals to co-operate is Credit based on Capital—that is to say, a belief that, by making, with the aid of tools, certain articles which the maker does not himself want, he will obtain more easily and more exactly his desires in respect of goods and services which he *does* want, than by applying himself to their production directly. At the present time the real basis of credit is broader than ever before, but the psychological basis is failing, owing to the misuse of capital.

(3) The material of which this link is fashioned we call money, which, whatever form it may take, derives its value solely from the belief, the "credit," that it is an effective agent for the realisation of the proposition contained in (2).

(4) The mobilisation and issue of this money, for *productive* purposes, rests primarily with the banks, which are not concerned directly with the maintenance of this co-operative relation, but rather with the rapidity with which the credit units so mobilised and issued are restored to the financial system. This is not the fault of the banks, but of the public and of the system.

(5) From (4) it follows that, where money is the inducement, the control of the *policy* of production—that is to say, the decision both as to what articles shall be produced and their quantity and quality, rests, not with the *administration* of productive enterprises, but as to its *initiation*, with the banks and others who finance their production, and as to its *continuance* with the price-makers—whose motive is in the very nature of things anti-public, since it aims at depriving with the maximum rapidity, the individuals who comprise the public, of the independence conferred upon them by the possession of purchasing power.

(6) The public, as individuals, can only acquire control of the policy of the economic and industrial system, by acquiring control of credit-issue and price-making. The organ of credit-issue is the bank, and the meaning of price-making is credit-withdrawal.

Now, there are probably very few serious, reasonably unbiased, and qualified students of these questions who would, after full consideration, be prepared to deny any of the foregoing propositions, but many such find it difficult to understand and agree with the contention advanced in the foregoing pages and in the previous volume. ("Economic Democracy," Chapter IX et seq.) that an essential postulate of a better state of things—i.e., public control of economic policy through public control of credit—is that ultimate-commodity prices should be less than costs; that an article used by an individual should be sold for less than the money it costs to produce. To anyone in this difficulty the following question may be helpful:—*If credit controls the policy of production, how can it be possible for the public to control credit and policy if all the credit*

*necessary to induce production is restored to the banks from the public through the automatic agency of uncontrolled prices?*

It is, of course, possible to control the *initiation* of any specified form of production by controlling credit-issue only, but, once started, there is nothing whatever to prevent an obsolete article from being produced and forced, by advertisement and monopoly, on a misguided public, long after a better, cheaper, and generally superior article is available, so long as the credit necessary to induce production—in common terms, the cost of production—is taken from the public automatically through the agency of prices. If, however, the entrepreneur, while subject to all the desirable features of free competition between establishments, involved by effective cost-keeping, is obliged, in order to compete at all, to come to some publicly controlled credit-bank at short intervals for the means to make up the difference between a price regulated (not fixed) by a fractional multiplier applied to all costs of production of articles sold to the individuals composing the public (as explained in Chapter IX, "Economic Democracy"), then, and it seems probable only then, do we acquire a valid, flexible, active control, not only of the initiation but of the development and modification of production, by the public acting in their interest as individuals.

It will be understood that these considerations do not affect the validity or otherwise of the basis on which it is contended that this fractional multiplier should rest—that has already been dealt with at some length; it is merely intended to show here that, without some such arrangement which places the co-operative producer in the power of the consumer, instead of the exactly opposite condition which now obtains, effective democracy is pure moonshine, and all progress is stultified. Any practical business man will know of cases—probably of dozens of cases—where processes and discoveries of immense value have been wilfully stifled because it did not suit producers to modify their product. There are ugly rumours about at this moment of certain enormously valuable petrol substitutes cornered and quietly shelved by the oil interests—by no means the worst of the Trusts which enslave us. From every quarter come more or less authenticated stories of calculated waste and sabotage—Eastern-returned travellers gossiping of mountains of rotting blankets lining the Suez Canal, Australians of the millions of bushels of rat-eaten and mouldering wheat cumbering their stores.

We do not acquire, by these suggested methods, control by the public, as such, of the processes of production—the "how" it shall be done. That is not the business of the public, as such, but of experts. But by controlling *both* credit-issue and price-making the public acquires control of policy with all its attributes—the effective appointment and removal of personnel, amongst others. *The essential nature of a satisfactory modern co-operative State may be broadly expressed as consisting of a functionally aristocratic hierarchy of producers accredited by, and serving, a democracy of consumers.* The business of producers is to produce; to take orders, not to give them; and the business of the public, as consumers, is not only to give orders, but to see that they are obeyed as to results, and to remove unsuitable or wilfully recalcitrant persons from the aristocracy of production to the democracy of consumption.

No peace will ever settle on the distracted earth until this matter has been fought to a finish, and it rests with the intelligence of those who are from time to time in a position to guide popular movements, whether a mere remnant of civilisation will achieve the Golden Age awaiting the settlement, or whether a decisive verdict is close at hand.

(To be continued.)



## The Women's Labour Market.

By Frances H. Low.

I HAD intended to deal with the serious problem of the labour of girls (14 to 16 years). It is the most urgent of our day. For in addition to the "loafing womanhood" that has been created by Government, where you have girls running about the streets as messengers, without discipline or training or knowledge that is of the smallest use to them, whatever their vocation in life, there are also masses of children straight from school pouring into factories, workshops and offices, doing the most mechanical types of labour, often standing all day in the most vitiated atmosphere, with nothing that expands heart, brain or mind, with no training in anything that is specific, and having none of the all-round training that work in the home develops.\* In fact, we are poisoning life at its source. But, as it happens, during the last fortnight the subject of Woman's work is being dealt with in the careless superficial way that characterises modern journalism, especially where technical or expert knowledge is needed. And this will have the most serious results. The particular fallacy will be repeated and reiterated until it becomes "gospel truth," and is turned into practical politics. The most revolutionary legislation will then be rushed through Parliament, involving, like Woman Suffrage, a complete change in the constitution, and becoming law without the country expressing any opinion in the matter.

As Mrs. Oliver Strachey's article in the "Daily Herald" has been effectively dealt with by Mr. Webb and other people, it is not perhaps necessary to traverse every single statement concerning "Skilled Industries," and to show the amazing inaccuracies stated therein. The humanitarianism and internationalism of the "Herald" endear it to me, but surely it is carrying the free platform a little too far when it allows statements, which ten minutes' verification could disprove, to be made, casting the most serious discredit upon men workers. I think myself it is extraordinary that the men in question show so little concern about repudiating these statements; in some instances, of course, they have not seen the article at all; in others, they shrug their shoulders and seem to think that lies and misstatements are just "part of the game."

Take, for instance, the statement about armature winders. So far are the men from keeping out the women, as Mrs. Strachey alleges, that there are already three thousand women belonging to this craft who are members of the Electrical Union. But as everyone knows who knows anything about this work, beyond the handling of a certain horse-power it is of a most deadly nature; and the Trade Unionists very rightly refuse to allow women to work machinery which would inevitably have a permanently injurious effect upon their health and probably kill them within a few years. Yet this cry is taken up and re-asserted in every trivial "ladies' letter"; and becomes serious, when, in place of confining themselves to dress, the writers deal with matters, as Mr. Webb truly says, "of which they know nothing." The writer of one of these columns in the "Outlook" finds it "interesting" that the Nottingham Women's Department of the Ministry of Labour does not limit its energies to the domestic employment problem, but "encourages the women with industrial capacity to continue their career in the interests of production." "If," remarks this sagacious lady, "the example of this town could be generally followed, the conditions of women's work would tend steadily to improve." Of course, to-day "industry" is the fashionable cry of the hour, and as the majority of these society writers would rather be out of the world

than out of the fashion, whether it be the newest thing in ball-dresses or Bergson, they merely repeat what they believe is the "smart" thing. If this writer thought for five minutes what factory life means to the great mass of women, if she had herself worked, let us say, for three months in a cotton mill, it would be the last thing on earth she would advocate. The artless suggestion that the more women who go in for an industrial career (whatever that may mean), the more will improve the conditions of female labour, is precisely the kind of unthinking jargon we hear on every side to-day.

Take another of Mrs. Strachey's grievances. She complains pathetically that women are not permitted by unscrupulous men to make the "chairs and tables we so badly need." As I am one of those antiquated persons who try to get to the roots of things that they write about, I know something about the conditions of the furniture trade. Even at this moment when the boom is unprecedented there are some two hundred skilled cabinetmakers out of employment; and there is grave difficulty in making room for many of the disabled men who have been trained and who are handicapped already in ways that are not experienced by the young women whom Mrs. Strachey and her friends think should be allowed to override carefully planned rules and safeguards. Consequently, the thrusting of women into this deadly competition, when there are scores of openings in which the services of women properly trained could be legitimately utilised, is not only of no true service to women themselves, but harmful and cruel to the men and women who find difficulty in getting work in their own trade. Take again that newly set up body, the London Society for Women's Service (formerly the London Society for Women Suffrage), which is now starting quite unnecessarily a bureau for every kind of woman's work—please note—"except domestic service." This is excepted "because of the large number of agencies in existence." Now the absurdity and the falseness of this exception are, of course, well understood by those like myself who know the subject of women's work au fond. For the last twenty-five years there has been in Prince's Street the Central Bureau for the Employment of Women. I have not always seen eye to eye with this bureau. I think it should have included the Household Arts in its scope and should have made them into a trained and organised industry on the same lines and having the same status as Sick Nursing. I think also it should have had a definite policy on the problem of the subsidised and partly subsidised women workers who compete with most disastrous effect with the genuine breadwinner, male or female. But this is not to say that I do not recognise that the Central Bureau with Miss Spencer at its head has done most admirable work, quietly, capably, soundly. If we had had an instructed, informed, high-minded, disinterested Government, it would have placed Miss Spencer at the head of those of its schemes in which women compete with men in factories (for though the Bureau does not actually supply industrial workers, it could have added its own wide knowledge to a Council of Trade Experts), in place of creating numberless Committees consisting of ladies of title and social importance, having a virgin ignorance of the labour market and all that constitutes knowledge of it. The London Women's Society declares that between February 1 and November 30, 1919, it had "ten thousand interviews." I will refer to this in a moment. It chronicles three great successes, amongst them being the return of Lady Astor to Parliament and the introduction of women reporters into the House of Commons. This is precisely the kind of spectacular success that would appeal to this body. It is not concerned with the most serious and difficult problem of our day, namely, the absolute breakdown of trained workers for the home, and the resultant

\* I am delighted to find Dr. Marie Stopes holding the same views upon the subject that I do.

chaos and confusion that exist in the country acting and reacting on the most important part of the race. This it is that necessarily has the most disastrous effect upon the next generation, an effect which, despite the satisfaction recently expressed by Mr. W. L. George, one of our modern thinkers greatly in request in feminist circles, constitutes a social evil of the first magnitude. The odd and ironical thing is that it was for the preservation of the Home that the average, perhaps not too intelligent, man went forth to risk his health and life in fighting the Germans, with the likelihood of returning, as thousands have returned, without a pension of any kind, broken in health and spirit, and having now the consciousness that large sections of women have not the slightest desire or belief in the conservation of the Home and the relation of man and woman it stabilises.

Cannot the London Women's Society see that the setting up of all these different Bureaus simply adds to the general confusion and makes things a thousand times worse? Each of these organisations works separately, has no connection with any other, takes no counsel with any other, and considers it should do precisely what it likes. If it is not allowed to do so, then we get sensational and inaccurate accounts of the tyranny and injustice of the men. There is no cohesion, no planned organisation, no consideration of what special types of work are needed and then efforts made to train girls for them as well as possible. With Miss Spencer's Bureau as the centre, every agency and every organisation newly started should be in immediate association, and under the same discipline and control as the men's Trade Unions.

I cannot understand why these ten thousand women, for whom and others appeals for £5,000 are presumably being issued, did not find their way to the Central Bureau. Here is Miss Spencer, with a large staff of thoroughly able, trained assistants; she has an excellent council of well-known men and women; she has all the necessary machinery, and is in touch with educational and employment bodies throughout the country, for whose benefit she publishes fortnightly surveys of the labour market, especially as it concerns women; and, most valuable of all, she has an unrivalled experience of twenty-five years' work.

The amazing muddle of Government Schemes is almost incredible. In place of the most careful and expert inquiries as to in which directions the activities of women are most needed, and training and equipment given for that goal, a whole host of promiscuous occupations are launched in the most casual and careless way. Provision is to be made for the "training of a few doctors" at Government expense. Are women doctors wanted? Is it not a fact—and I admit my own astonishment that it should be so—that only an incredibly small percentage of women employ members of their own sex. Take, again, the Government Scheme for employing women under the Ministry of Health. Every one who knows anything about the inspecting of poor homes knows that a knowledge of the actual conditions under which the poor live is an absolute necessity if the inspection is to be anything more than mere farce and futility. A young woman primed with the economic lore which she has acquired at the London School of Economics, to which is added a perfunctory acquaintance with various subjects more or less useful, could not make the right sort of inspector without knowledge of a very different kind, and that only experience can give. Take this young woman out to pronounce criticism on a struggling working-class mother and wife, who has managed to bring to decent manhood and womanhood a family of five or six children upon a weekly wage that an Eton boy often has for pocket-money. Let her go round with a wise and knowledgeable District Nurse who knows the poor through and through, and knows their great courage

and fine humanity, and in a few years you may, perhaps, if you can, instil into the "Inspector" some humility, create the right sort of official—tried, experienced and sympathetic. Hordes of young women who know all sorts of wonderful theories upon Economics and can give advice as to what should be done in circumstances and conditions that never occur in the homes of the working-class poor, irritate and alienate and make things even worse than they are to-day.

(To be concluded.)

## Hapsburgiania.

By Ezra Pound.

THE late Austro-Hungarian monarchy stopped private bankers gambling on the fluctuations of the florin exchange. "The activity of trusts and of all employers of labour" was, in that ramshackle empire, limited by a "complicated industrial code" which "smacked at once of the Middle Ages and of the twenty-first century." I derive this information from Mr. H. Wickham Steed's extremely sagacious work on "The Hapsburg Monarchy," a book written with great lucidity and foresight.

While not wishing to over-emphasise the parallels between pre-war conditions in Austria and post-war conditions in England, I confess to having found a retrospective consideration of Austria rather stimulating. London is not Vienna, and the English temperament differs from the Austrian, even though the financial rings in both cities may not so greatly and racially differ. At any rate, certain advice which would have been beneficial to Austria-Hungary, if taken, may not be wholly irrelevant; and what was sound ethics for Austria in and before 1914 is, presumably, no less sound ethics for England in 1920 and after. If the fulfilment of a man's forebodings is any test of his mental ability or of his realism of foresight, Mr. Steed's predictions about Austria have earned him a right to considerable respect.

In the course of his volume, wherein he advises Austria to attempt justice in dealing with her inner nationalities, I find more than one significant paragraph, and among them none more satisfying than the statement on page 137:

In most civilised countries the principle is now practically admitted that *no form of private activity is tolerable which exposes the community at large to loss and detriment for the sake of assuring advantages to small minorities.*

He continues:

In Austria-Hungary this principle has been applied not only to private trade and industry but also to private finance, and its application has been—from the Anglo-Saxon standpoint—all the healthier and less dangerous, because it proceeded not from any preconceived theory but from the practical necessity of remedying an actual and precluding a future evil.

The second half of this paragraph is not, perhaps, germane to my general intention of searching for solid positions in contemporary thought, but I have no desire to commit the author of it to views more radical than he held at the time of writing.

Certain things he found good in Austria-Hungary, certain things evil; these same things would be good or evil in England to-day. I do not say that the evils would be or are as acute; that they cry as loudly for drastic and immediate remedy; that England is on anything like such ultimate or penultimate legs as was Austria in the period 1904-14. One case of small-pox is perhaps less alarming than forty cases, but the disease is no less a disease.

The efforts of the police "to prevent the dissemination of dangerous knowledge," the tyranny of a Magyar minority, the oppression of Czecho-Slovacs, the flow of persons and information from the bureaucracy to the banks, the general obstructiveness of the bureau-

crazy—all come under Mr. Steed's analysis, and all meet with a just and well-moderated censure.

There are in history few, if any, exact analogies; yet it might appear that the oppression of a subject race is as "wrong," as unhealthy, for one State as for another; it might appear that the oppression of a class which happened to be locally and racially segregated may be not very different from the oppression of a class which is not racially and geographically segregated. It might appear that if it is an excellent thing to prevent financiers gambling on the florin exchange—i.e., levying taxation without representation upon the community—it would be equally a good thing to prevent financiers levying such a tax via increased banking rates, via a machinery of holding companies, via "increases of company capital" (watering of stock, etc.).

In Austria a great deal of power inhered in an absolute irresponsible institution called an Emperor. (Masaryk's estimate of Franz Joseph appears to me more just than Mr. Steed's, but as Mr. Steed presumably intended his book for Austrian circulation, and as it was suppressed for *lèse majesté*, despite his mildness with regard to the Emperor, and as the main contentions would not have been strengthened by any more drastic personal attack on an unsympathetic figure, we need not pause for what is here an irrelevance.)

In England, and even more in America, a vast amount of power, uncontrolled and subject to no popular influence, resides in banking rings. As the Hapsburgs were interested in nothing so much as in maintaining Hapsburg prestige, so the present English, American, and other banking rings are interested in nothing so much as in keeping credit-control in their own hands, whereto they are perhaps as active in opposing the dissemination of dangerous knowledge as were ever the Austrian police under Collaredo (*mutatis mutandis*), by methods considerably more advanced, but possibly no more long-sighted.

Doubtless it would have disturbed the quiet of the English Foreign Office to have listened to Mr. Steed before 1914; doubtless, no less, it would worry the "Treasury" to attend to Major Douglas in 1920.

I have written and said and resaid and reprinted the opinion that most men will forgive any injury before they will forgive the torture inflicted upon them in trying to make them think.

Obviously the banking rings do not want England to get out of her present financial difficulties so long as they can maintain a government which will listen to Prof. Pigou's suggestion that the best remedy is to let the bankers levy a higher tax on loans than is already permitted them. The idea that credit might be so arranged that men who build factories for the increase of production; that men who plant trees, that men who want to increase facilities for production, should be able to do so without paying any interest whatever—this idea must naturally be more abhorrent to money-lenders than any other idea conceivable. Yet certain eminent financiers have already (more or less clandestinely) admitted the commercial soundness of such a policy.

All of which goes to show that when you stop admitting that five and five make ten, when you start preventing the dissemination of this dangerous knowledge, it is very hard to get *everyone* to agree on the exact counter-propaganda. Some *will* say eleven, and some fifteen, and then some accidentally and intelligent honest person will confess that 10 minus 5 equals 5, before he observes that "conversely" . . . ?

In America personal liberty is at a lower ebb, at a level appallingly low for the moment; yet in England it is probably easier for a great financial combine if not to buy, at any rate to maintain and control the policy of the Cabinet, simply because of the higher degree of centralisation. It is the "executive" advantage of a metropolis. America's having a separate

capital on the Potomac acts as a slight check, and has corresponding drawbacks. It is always a faint influence toward decentralisation.

Whereunto the mot of Cosimo di Medici, "With three yards of red cloth per capita I will make you as many honest citizens as you require." In our time, but for the Cosimos being more modest, but for their being cautious Semites and Methodists or silent Levantines, but for their having professors to talk in public, we might hear, "For three yards' equivalent we will furnish as many 'representatives of the people' as policy may require." I see no reason for assisting them in this process. With the control of credit distributed, their power to produce "representatives of the people" would diminish.

## Sport, Dancing and Eurhythmics

By Valerie Cooper.

WE are accustomed to dwelling on the positive and beneficial qualities of athletic sport and seldom care to think or speak of possible negative aspects. And yet while fully recognising and appreciating the ideals of physical and mental efficiency inseparable from it—one cannot help feeling, if one looks at it from other standpoints, that—as one of the nation's chief means of recreation—it has certain grave defects.

Since results—not immediate but persistent—are the one really safe ground for judgment, and since sport and its products we have always with us, we should, if we look round a little, be able to make a moderately just estimate of it and its tendencies. Take, for instance, that wildly popular form of sport—boxing. Does one admire the physique or the mentality—implied and proved—of the typical boxer? Surely the ideals which produce such a type are not those of beauty but, on the contrary, such as tend to debase the æsthetic standard of the masses.

And may not women regard sport with just suspicion when they see what effect it has on those members of their sex who become its devotees? The fact is that no one looks for beauty or grace in the attitudes or movements of sporting men or women. When, among the welter of ungainliness produced by some of our favourite games—hockey or football, for instance—we see a flash of either quality; or, as is possible in net-ball—the most graceful and least popular of our field-games—a Reinhardt-like effect of upstretched arms, we are grateful as for a benefit unexpected and undeserved!

It is not cheering—this prospect—for, even if one forgets its strong professional and commercial elements, sport, on the whole, seems sadly in need of some complement or corrective.

In search of such a complement one turns naturally to that other great modern cult, "ball-room" dancing. Here, at any rate, professionalism does not count. "Everyone is doing it." But what, exactly, are they doing? "Jigging to music," says a well-known authority on rhythm. That is a little unkind, for most of the movements are slow and of a certain grace, pleasant both to perform and watch. (Since the "Ayes" and "Noes" probably share pretty equally the moral rights and wrongs of the matter it may as well be left to take care of itself—or to enliven the correspondence columns of the daily papers.) What they seem really to be doing is moving *to*—not *with*—the metre of music, the melodic and harmonic elements of which—by their usual nature and by the attitude of the dancers towards them—lull to sleep the intellect and thus help the escape into that world of warm, gently throbbing sensuousness which is so alluring in these distressful times.

The eagerness with which people snatch at the word "rhythm," and—though seldom using it on its own account—force it to do duty both for "pulsation" and "metre" is curious and interesting. One wonders if



its air of distinction and spirituality is so marked as to attract even the vulgar mind—at any rate, one often has the unhappy feeling that it is like Ariel in the hands of a Caliban.

People speak, with an offending familiarity, of the "rhythm," say, of a marching army—meaning "pulsation," one of the most elementary factors of animal life. Or, on a somewhat higher plane, of the "rhythm" of the seasons, tides, or our breathing—this time mis-using it for "metre," to which—in its simpler forms—every human being re-acts, and probably animals also. But of those subtle and enchanting variations of pulse and metre to which only innate or acquired culture can give the key, and for which rhythm is the true name—of those one hears little. Nor is this altogether surprising. Inasmuch as it is founded on pulse and metre, rhythm is a physical thing. It follows that the sense for it must be best and most surely cultivated by physical means; and, until the last few years, no such means existed. Sport and gymnastics developed, among other qualities, the feeling for pulse-regularity; dancing the perception, though not perhaps the sense, of metre; but it was left for Jaques-Dalcroze to discover—or, as he insists, to re-discover—in Eurhythmics the complete physical foundation of rhythm.

There are two wide-spread and different notions about Eurhythmics. One, that it is merely another "music-without-tears" method, the other that it is a new kind of dancing, for which—for some obscure reason (unless it is to "look pretty")—one discards all superfluous clothing. And both are partly right. It does teach—not as matters of "fact," but of living experience—everything in music which has caused so much useless drudgery to generations of students, young and old. ("Useless," because—even in these hopeful days of "appreciation" classes—the great bulk of so-called music-study is really the study of instruments; which bears about the same relationship to music as the study of phonetics does to literature.)

One may talk intelligently enough about metre, notation, duration, phrasing, climax, but unless one has lived them—imaginatively or actually—one cannot make music of them; and music—which fuses together the most elemental and the most spiritual parts of our nature—and its making are used as the path by which we are led to the experience of physical rhythm, and so—if one may be allowed the term—to rhythm-in-itself.

And it is also a new kind of dancing (the bare feet and short tunic were adopted because they give the body every chance of moving freely), for—as has been shown—"dancing" up to the present has meant for most of us nothing better than moving to the time of music. So far as the movement itself is concerned, the metrical beating of tom-toms would do as well as the best playing of the best music. But in Eurhythmics one moves *with* music, with the ebb and flow of its rhythm and with its spirit. Sport and "dancing" are conditioned entirely from without, Eurhythmics from within. To prove this, it continually turns the tables, as it were, on its students. After having given them musical experience it requires them to show their sense of metre, rhythm, proportion, and of beauty and fitness of line and movement, by inventing, carrying out and developing their own rhythmic plans and gestures. And this sense of rhythmic movement may also be used not merely as a means of "expressing" music physically, but as an independent art—able to join it as an equal, or even predominant, partner.

The growing interest in Eurhythmics may surely be regarded as one of the very few cheering present-day tendencies—in so far, at least, as it succeeds in escaping adoption as "the fashion," or, even more, as a new Garden-city cult.

## Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

IF Miss M. E. M. Young's play, "The Higher Court," recently produced by the Pioneer Players, had been a first play, I could have found all sorts of nice things to say about it. But it is not; Miss Young, although absent from the London stage since Forbes-Robertson produced "On the Edge of the Storm," is a practised playwright, and the inevitable question: "What do you mean by it?" should be asked in a minatory manner. She has, in spite of her prolixity, the gift of writing dramatic duologues; that scene in the second act (although the "Fred" joke is worked to death, burial, and resurrection) really gripped the attention by its unaffected sincerity in the revelation of character. It was superbly played by Miss Mary Jerrold and Mr. Randle Ayrton, but it was not only the subtle art of these two players that appealed; they had the very stuff of dramatic character to work with. But, apart from her duologues, Miss Young has the crudest ideas, the most amateurish technique; the whole play is on the level of the penny novelette, and her attempts at dramatic effect made me smile.

Here is a family of middle-class people living in a flat in West Kensington Palace Park Place (I think that was the full address). The younger daughter is just off to Paris, and at about 7.50 a.m. she receives a prospective proposal of marriage; that is to say that, if ever the young doctor is able to afford marriage, the younger daughter will marry him. For some incomprehensible reason the father thinks it is his duty to forbid the doctor the house; but, anyhow, the incident provides an excuse for one of those displays of paradoxical emotion that women love, happy tears, sunny grief—the forlorn fiancée who will evolve into "the merry widow." Miss Henrietta Goodwin plied her handkerchief and splashed the carpet, gurgled and giggled until the elder sister returned from Mass; more gurgling and embracing. Then the older sister is prompted to recite her creed: "What would I do if I married a millionaire?" and just as she declares that, of course, there will be no millionaire for her (they do not go to early morning Mass), he is brought into the flat on a stretcher. But a dead millionaire is better than none at all, so they have him carried into the next room, where he begins to revive.

Why was he, a stranger, brought there? The policeman said that he gave that address before he lost consciousness after the accident; he murmured to "Boyd's, boy," we are told in the second act with damnable iteration, "West Kensington Palace Park Place." How he got the address no one knows, but I suspect that Miss Young told him for the purposes of her play. She could think of no other way of introducing him to people with such rigid notions—and perhaps a millionaire is only presentable as a corpse. But there he is, and there he stays incognito for six weeks; memory lost, nothing by which he could be identified (the police even did not take a description of him, and his tattoo-marks should have made him easy to be recognised), he was just "The Stowaway"—and as "safely stowed" as the corpse of Polonius until the hue and cry began in earnest. What else could he do but fall in love with the Catholic Miss? She was a good girl, a good housekeeper, a good cook; she said her prayers and sewed her blouses, counted her beads and also her chickens before they were hatched. Being a millionaire, and the owner of London's most notorious newspaper, he was a little stupid—or (shall we say?) he had the journalistic habit of arriving at wrong conclusions. He thought that she was engaged to "Fred" (the silly man!); and, of course, another act was required to clear up the misapprehension and, incidentally, to provide Miss Young with another opportunity to muddle her dramatic effects. The millionaire is arrested on a charge of murdering himself

(Mr. Blake is the most stupid detective that I have seen even on the stage); but with his identity proven, and the misunderstanding about Fred removed, the play begins at the end of the third act. Having received her proposal, she rushes off to the church to ask if she has committed "sin"; and an appointment with her lover for the following day requires a fourth act.

The omens were favourable. The Blessed Sacrament said "Yes," the priest said "Yes," her heart said "Yes"; but the penny catechism, which she called "God," said "No." This millionaire had been married before; his wife had been unfaithful and he had divorced her; but "God" (price, one penny) declared: "What God therefore hath joined together, let not man put asunder," and she could not marry a married man. There was nothing to argue about; it just was so; and so: "Good-bye." If the Catholic contribution to the solution of the problems that cluster about marriage is a penny catechism that any convent-bred girl feels herself justified in interpreting literally we need not look to the Catholics for light and leading. For the very passage in the Gospels from which the text is wrested continues: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, *except it be for fornication*, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." But this case was the very exception to the rule; he had put away his wife for fornication; but the penny catechism apparently permitted no exceptions. When we remember how Catholics denounce "the right of private judgment" we must be surprised to see them, as in this case, deciding delicate problems of this kind without even consulting a priest. I do not pretend to know anything about Catholicism, but one reads of "dispensations" being sold—dispensations being the spiritual equivalents of the Acts of Indemnity that Parliaments pass when their servants have gone beyond the law. Rome is very obliging to rich people; and even if the law is as rigid as the heroine supposed, the law is surely open to "interpretation" if one can afford it?

But, of course, it is supposed to be her "conscience" that decides, a conscience that has been fitted since childhood with ready-made decisions of vital questions. Just when one would expect her to manifest spiritual intelligence, to throw some light on the question, she becomes an automatic machine giving prepared answers to prepared questions. One is reminded of Piccolomini's remark about the Irish: "They really seem to believe in Catholicism": and to share the astonishment of this man who subsequently became a Pope. To an English audience, at least, all the assumptions made by the heroine are the very matter of debate. How does God join people together? Presumably, by the sacrament of marriage. What is the guarantee that the sacrament has been given? The fact that a regulation ceremony has been performed is no guarantee; the fact that the King, for example, declares a foundation-stone to be well and truly laid is not accepted by the builders as a guarantee that it is so laid. The proof that the spiritual union has been effected is to be sought in the subsequent facts; everything acts after its kind, and the marriages that are made in Heaven are revealed on earth by the fact that the partners do cleave to each other. They do not make the best of a bad job, the job is so well done that it cannot be undone.

But what is the use of arguing the matter? The author has deliberately eliminated the drama from her play; there is no conflict between religion and inclination in this girl, the word "divorce" simply operates a "cut-out" mechanism, and, like Macduff, she "has no words." The probability that there was something wrong with her "soul" if it did not open her "heart" to the right man did not occur to her; a convent training does not encourage the inquiry into fundamentals. The upshot of it all is that the play has a penny novel-

ette plot, which leads up to a demonstration of the heroine as an inarticulate fool. It ought to have been a tragic ending, but the perversity of it annoyed me; I was glad to see Mr. Randle Ayrton tear up the catechism—it was a symbolic action. But whatever we may think of the play, of the actors there can be no question. Miss Mary Jerrold played the heroine with such a natural charm that I wanted to shake her when she became mulishly pious; while Mr. Randle Ayrton has never, I feel sure, more subtly portrayed the emotional states that, in these days, are disguised in commonplace language. His modulations are so delicate, so intelligible, that one wonders whether he really has five hundred different ways of saying: "No." Mr. Felix Aylmer contributed an intelligent study of a stupid doctor; and the rest of the cast supported.

## Maisie.

By Rowland Kenney.

THE Cave is one of our most cosmopolitan institutions. Men of all nations frequent it, and, although lager beer is the premier beverage, drinks of every country can be supplied. It is much illuminated. Two giants in gold-braided uniform guard the doors—though what they are supposed to guard the doors against no one has ever been known to explain. On the ground floor, to the right as you enter, is a drinking bar of the ordinary London type, but if you push through the crowd which continually throngs it, pass between the thick hanging curtains at the back and go down the stairs to the left, you will come to the basement. The basement is the Cave proper, the hotel itself has a much more high sounding name. The walls of the Cave are covered with mirrors and a variety of drink-extolling pictures. At the foot of the stairs and a little to the left is the orchestra of four players; and on the wall over their head is inscribed in heavy gilt letters Luther's dictum: "Who loves not Woman, Wine and Song, there goes a fool all his life long."

Right at the back are three alcoves where eight or ten people can sit and drink, partly shut out from the gaze of the throng in the centre of the room.

The Cave is well patronised. Thieves of many nationalities visit it. Service men fraternise across the tables. The harmless slouch of the countryman seeing London is often noticed. Roués, prostitutes and their "protectors" are the most regular customers. Sometimes the Church is represented. The gilded popinjay and the bilge and garbage of the five continents and the seven seas drift into it.

Four waiters hover between the tables and the bar, three of them clean-looking models of Swiss propriety whose voices have only been trained to say "Thank you, sir," nicely. The fourth is a nasty beast, but he has a quaint unconscious humour which saves his ribs from much violence. He attends to the table which Maisie honoured by her presence, and this story is about Maisie.

She was one of the Demi-monde from Belgium. In the Cave she was called Maisie, her real name was Sophi Warnier, to her landlady she was Miss May, and her pawn tickets were inscribed May Smith. Except for her mouth—she was cursed with the prostitute's mouth, curious, pitiful and vile—she was very pretty, with flaxen hair and lovely grey eyes, regular features and an ever-ready smile. She lived on beer, swore like a sailor, had drifted from the high estate of a Kensington flat with two servants and was rapidly qualifying for Wapping Dock or the river.

One summer evening the Cave was crowded with foreigners over for the International sports. A party of Swedes were in one alcove and a party of Italians in the next. In the centre of the room Maisie's particular friend Maude was amusing a crowd of beer-blown

Germans by giving them imitations of Cockney news-boy repartee.

Maude is as pretty as apple blossom, and as full of fun and tricks as a kitten. Between her cherry lips she continually grips a cigarette. There is something distinctly cheering about her; she is able to get her mind away from her surroundings and talk of living things, of books and music and the wide laughing world, of summer's joy and winter's mystery. She can so far forget the Cave as to rhapsodise over a sprawling, naked baby.

The Germans had a good time with Maudie until she saw me enter the room, then with a "Ta-ta, Sausages," she flicked her fingers in their faces and came over and led me into the farthest alcove, where, in the far corner against the wall, sat Maisie. Maude laid a pretty hand on her shoulder and spoke.

"Now, now you baby-eyed, straw-haired fool, if the Boy doesn't yank you out of this, sling you into a cab, take you home, spank you, give you a bottle of milk and put you to bed—may the Devil grill him for a week!" And Maude left us.

Maisie made a ghastly attempt to smile. She was very ill, too ill to drink. I tried to cheer her up a little; she falteringly but comprehensively cursed me. I remembered Maude's advice and tried to persuade her to go home in a cab. I tried hard and long, but she only swore and wept. She was stupid, foolish and contradictory; she would do nothing. In about half an hour she became so ill that I had to unfasten her clothes and take off her corsets without attracting the attention of the waiter—it was a difficult task, she was so limp and lifeless. After another attempt to drink she gave in and I helped her up the stairs. The intricacies of her tapes and buttons had been beyond me, and at every step I was afraid that some piece of feminine attire would be left in our wake.

When we left the hotel and emerged on to the Square I called a cab, but she would not enter it; she would walk on to Piccadilly Circus and go home by 'bus. I left her for a few minutes whilst I called at a chemist's shop for a bottle of ammoniated tincture of quinine; when I came out she was leaning against the window, half delirious and moaning of many things—of a Belgian Convent and the nuns, of Ostende and the Rue Courte. I led her down the Haymarket and into one of the side streets so as to be away from the Circus theatre crowd. That was a fortunate move, for we had not gone far in the direction of Regent Street before she fainted. I carried her into a dark doorway until she came round, and when she had recovered a little she had a drink from the quinine bottle. Ammoniated tincture of quinine is never nice to take and Maisie spluttered half the contents of the bottle into my sleeve, but she swallowed some of it and revived so wonderfully that her bad temper returned and she refused to let me accompany her home.

The following evening I sought Maisie's "home," which I knew was a single room in a mean street behind Lambeth Palace called Upmark.

After knocking at half the doors in the street I came to a house with a brass plate on the door. This plate informed me in rather vague letters that Mr. Plenty lived there and that he was a theatrical property maker.

As the name Plenty seemed somehow familiar to me I pushed open the door and stumbled over the step. The door closed silently, and gradually my eyes became accustomed to the gloom. I was in a long, dark passage. On the left at the far end was a thin streak of light coming from under a closed door. I knocked on the wall and a woman of about forty appeared. She had long, black, dishevelled hair and a wide mouth. Only one of her ears was to be seen, and that stuck out from her head like the handle of a jug. Her face was greasy and repulsive; her filthy bodice was open, showing her dirty breasts. In her left hand was a guttering

tallow candle which flickered in the draught, whilst in her right swung a baby. A piece of rag was wrapped round its waist and tied at the back. She gripped the knot and the baby spun round like a plummet at the end of a line. It was the same colour as the candle and seemed to have the same difficulty in keeping alive.

"Is Miss May at home, Mrs. Plenty?" I hazarded. She nodded in the affirmative and gave me a rather superfluous invitation to come in.

A subdued conversation was proceeding in the room on the left. I looked inquiringly at the door and Mrs. Plenty informed me in the best language at her command that the doctor was with Miss May. Trimming the drooping candle with her fingers she invited me to step upstairs into the "office."

The office was a curious little room. Under the window a battered old rooster was perched on the bough of a mouse-gnawed tree, his beak open as though to challenge some feathered rival. On the wall over the fireplace were a number of drawings of various parts of the human frame. Etchings of clowns and harlequins were mixed with picture postcards of music-hall celebrities; these and a few play bills monopolised the wall on the left. From another corner a most realistic "made" gorilla glared horribly with open mouth, his left hand grasping a thick cudgel. I sat down on a chair—to find that it had only three legs, and one of these was shorter than the other two. When seated I turned round and looked up to get another view of this small chamber of incongruities; all I saw were four plaster casts of diabolic expression.

The fetid atmosphere of the street drifted in through the open window, which I closed, and as there was no catch, I propped up the top portion with a wire leg covered with fleshings.

At that moment the outer door banged and the doctor coughed on the step. In two minutes Maisie appeared, dressed in a long diaphanous garment through which the flesh showed in graceful curves. She was inclined to be peevish and nasty, so I steadied her down on to the three-legged chair and enquired as to the nature of her illness.

"What does the doctor say, Maisie?"

"Say? He says it's a bad attack of influenza and he says I'm to have eggs and milk and stay in bed; and he says I'm to be careful and get round; and he says I'm to wear warmer clothes; and he says the damndest most ridiculous things anybody can say—to a girl on the game. Isn't it damned rot to tell me all that?"

I agreed and we talked of other things. A month's rent was owing and Mrs. Plenty had threatened to turn her out if it was not paid in a few days. The only reason why I had been admitted to the sanctuary was that Maisie had promised her a few shillings which she knew I would bring.

She sat cursing creation for a few minutes; she anathematised doctors, bishops, upmarkers, policemen and politicians; but on politicians her curses were rather weak—she had only met one, and he was kind to her.

We then communed with the gorilla and the rusty fowl, and went over the catalogue of her aches and pains before she went to bed and I interviewed Mrs. Plenty.

Three days later I sat on the only chair in Maisie's room and smoked hard, whilst the denizens of the neighbourhood discoursed in sulphurous tones beneath the window.

Maisie was very white and worn, her hair strayed over her sunken cheeks as if to hide the ravages of illness and time.

We talked of Belgium and London and compared them, greatly to London's disadvantage. We told each other stories and I laboriously worked up to a joke and a smile; but after two hours of incessant smoking I had to go.

Four days later I again visited Maisie. It was afternoon. The heat sizzled the asphalt on the pavement. Embankment loiterers hung limply over the parapet, languidly gazing into the sluggish water. The very river seemed to be furtively dozing, whilst most of its population were lying a-sprawl on the motionless craft. Even the city's ceaseless roar was muffled, swathed in an all-embracing sheet of sunshine. The atmosphere was a quivering haze.

When I turned into Upmark the footpaths were littered with children and dogs, all asleep. Half clad men and women snored in concert sitting on the steps at the entrance to the houses.

At the house of the gorilla maker there were signs of unusual activity; and two or three frightened children rushed out of the door as I entered. Mr. Plenty stood in the passage; he gazed helplessly into my face, his mouth and eyes wide open. But before I could speak Maisie's door was flung open and Mrs. Plenty flustered out and hurled at us:

"And the she-devil died owing me nineteen bob, damn her!"

## Epistles to the Provincials.

### VI.

I HAVE been asked several times since I began these letters, But who are the provincials, and what is provinciality? Of what service is it to fulminate against this obscure tribe without divulging who they are? Who is hurt and who is edified? One might as well write a history of the Press without giving a chapter to the "Daily Mail," or a sex novel without putting an unhappy married woman into it. Come, let us have a definition. Then we shall know where we stand.

Alas! definition I have none. Like Plato I bow down, if scarcely in adoration, before the inscrutable, or at any rate the dense, mystery of provinciality; but then, like him, I rise again and affirm, And yet provincials are knowable! I can say it with confidence, for I have known them. While I cannot define a provincial I can recognise one when I see him, just as I know an Englishman when I see him.

There are degrees of provinciality. To be a Shavian, I should say, is to be provincial; to be a disciple of Mrs. Besant is to be a very provincial provincial; while to read William J. Locke is not even to be a provincial—and in these letters I am not concerned with his readers. The Shavian is a provincial because he attributes to Shaw as a thinker an importance which intrinsically and in comparison with other thinkers he does not possess; because in doing that he is guilty of a heinous offence against good taste and "the best that has been said and thought in the world"; and because, in consequence of his error, he can neither understand nor enjoy Shaw. For of course Shaw is a witty writer and nothing more; he is excessively clever; he has actually written a play about phagocytes in which these germs are so alive as almost to be human—at least they are as human as the other characters in the play. The provincials whom we call Shavians are provincial, therefore, for two reasons; because they lack the sense of proportion and sin against the greater for the sake of the less; and because they misconceive the subject itself and thus fail to acquire what good for culture there is to be had in it.

The provinciality which attaches itself to Mrs. Besant (and to others as well: I am using her merely as a symbol) is a provinciality more aggravated, and its sin, like itself, is very simple, the mistaking of the false for the true. Culture among this class of the provincials has not yet begun; but on the other hand it is possible. These are the troglodytes of culture, and their interest in the shadows may lead them yet to the true forms. But until then—

The preference of the less to the greater is, of course, the truest sign of provinciality. I selected Shaw as an example because Shaw is in some ways perhaps the most limited of writers. He is one of those men of original mind whose ideas are original chiefly because they are odd. Like Butler, his originality is that of the "character" rather than that of the thinker; his ideas are crochets and spring not from a greatness, but from a peculiarity of the mind. But the undivided worship of even the greatest minds is also provincial. The Browning Society, for example, I should say, is provincial; and so are the aesthetes. The followers of Morris are charmingly provincial: the followers of Ibsen are revoltingly provincial. For the Nietzscheans I have a great regard, for they have done much to destroy provinciality, but, alas, themselves they cannot save; they, too, are provincial. Even the Shakespeareans—yes, "even *their* hide is covered with hair!" Wherever the less is preferred to the greater; wherever a writer or a culture is set up as a value in itself, obscuring the value of universal culture; wherever a preference is allowed to become an enthusiasm, or a truth declines into a conviction: there you get provinciality. The less is the enemy of the greater. What is the best antidote, however, to the evil of provinciality? Obviously it is "brilliant common sense," the quality which THE NEW AGE has so often drawn our attention to. "Brilliant common sense" will preserve us from wrong enthusiasms and small convictions, and will tell us that a school is not the world and a fashion is not art.

So much for provinciality among readers. When it is present in writers it is an evil still greater, for then it actively propagates itself. To take my first example again, Shaw is a provincial when he is his own follower, when he looks up to himself as a philosopher instead of taking himself lightly as a wit. It is, of course, a natural failing; nothing is easier than to slip into provinciality; intellectual sins are even more facile than moral ones. And when Shaw in a moment of frivolity says something amusing about society it is natural that when he becomes serious again he should uphold it as a profound truth—but it makes him a provincial. Chesterton is, I think, provincial in as far as he is Catholic. Once grant him that primary intellectual intolerance, it is true, he is as tolerant as you could wish. But the limits of his tolerance are dictated by his Catholicism, and he is just as enlightened as the Light will permit him to be. George Moore is the compleat provincial; he has always taken the by-paths when he could very well have taken the main road. He has now acquired an estate of his own and has given the public warning that trespassers will be prosecuted. Wells is provincial in his uncritical acceptance of the intellectual coin of his own age; and in spite of superficial signs to the contrary, his opinions are far less liberal than those of Chesterton. Take this passage from his "Outline of History." "There is not much scope," he says, "for the modification of a species in four or five hundred generations. Make men and women only sufficiently jealous or fearful or drunken or angry, and the hot red eyes of the cave man will glare out at us to-day. We have writing and teaching, science and power; we have tamed the beasts and schooled the lightning; but we are still only shambling towards the light. We have tamed and bred the beasts, but we have still to tame and breed ourselves." How modern in the worst sense is that! It might have been written by any present-day journalist, style and all. It is so irrelevant in a history, which, after all, might be supposed to tell us something specific, something not merely a platitude or a shibboleth, about the destiny of man, as to be intellectually merely an impertinence. It is of Wells' coinage, however. And is there any question that it is provincial?

It is when we come to current literary criticism, however, that we come to the very stronghold of provin-

ciality. What form does the monster take on in criticism? An ignorance either natural or deliberate of "the best that has been said and thought in the world." The books which are published to-day are not judged as literature; it is an exception if a critic has in his mind any standard when he approaches his subject. Take the following example selected at random from a number of recent reviews. A well-known writer, Lascelles Abercrombie, is writing about a writer little known, Gerald Gould, and the subject is a volume of poems by the latter, entitled "The Happy Tree." Abercrombie says "Mr. Gould's art . . . harmonises at its best into perfect unity a rich and profoundly impassioned substance." One might write like that about Keats, perhaps; but what *standards*, one asks, has Abercrombie, when he praises a perfectly mediocre literary man in this way? The judgment is provincial because Gould is compared, not with the great poets of England, but obviously with his contemporaries; and when I say contemporaries I mean those writers whose books happen to be published in the same publishing season as his. Compared even with Squire I do not suppose Gould is a poet; what he is compared with any authentic poet, therefore, I leave it to you to imagine. And talking of Squire, it seems to me that his work is a magnet which has attracted around it en masse the entire provinciality of the country. A study of the criticisms which have been passed upon him will tell one everything that need be known about provinciality; they are in themselves a standard of the provincial. There it is; provinciality is not a matter of taste but of position. For to possess taste one must have standards. The provincial critics, however, have none; they are safe; they cannot even err.

HENGIST.

## Views and Reviews.

### NO BABIES WANTED!

THE Malthusians, it must be admitted, do not lack persistence; whatever happens, they exclaim: "There are too many of you." When the war began, we were bombarded with sermons on the text: "The cause of war is excessive population": now that the period of reconstruction has begun,\* this ex-Poor Law Guardian and Borough Councillor declares in brief: "The difficulty of reconstruction is excessive population." So he proposes a national propaganda of the doctrines of Malthus, exhortations from platform, pulpit, Press, and posters, to the effect that: "Babies must not be born until further orders." In justice to the author, it must be said that he is not a neo-Malthusian; he does not advocate the use of contraceptives, indeed, he denounces their use as contrary to the teaching of Malthus, and the dictates of morality. The purpose of his suggested propaganda is the development of moral restraint, in marriage as well as out of it; men must disregard the distinctively female functions until they have saved enough money to exercise them without causing expense, present or prospective, to anyone else. Just as Labour has to bear practically the whole cost of maintaining the "reservoir of labour" for the convenience of Capital, so each of the individual members of the population must bear the whole cost of his or her share of the replenishment or increase of the population. Economic, not vital, power is to be regarded as the chief qualification for parenthood; and if an agricultural labourer with 38s. a week can bring up ten children, a man with £10,000 a year ought to populate a village—but the author's logical method has misled me. His argument is that the less money you have, the fewer children you ought to have; and the more money you have, the fewer children you want, or do have. As Tennyson might have said:

'Tis bread whereof our world is scant;  
O bread, not babes, for which we pant;  
More bread, and better, that we want.

I have tried again and again to show the simple fallacy of the Malthusian argument; but the simplicity of statement in this pamphlet inspires me to one more attempt. Malthus himself, in the last paragraph of Book III of his essay (7th ed.), declared: "The allowing of the produce of the earth to be absolutely unlimited, scarcely removes the weight of a hair from the argument, which depends entirely upon the differently increasing ratios of population and food; and all that the most enlightened governments and the most persevering and best guided efforts of industry can do is to make the necessary checks to population operate more equably, and in a direction to produce the least evil; but to remove them is a task absolutely hopeless." Malthus' zeal for his remedy is here plainly in excess of his regard for facts, or even for his argument; for his argument was that because population increases in a geometrical ratio, and food in an arithmetical ratio, population was always pressing on the means of subsistence. But here he asserts that even if you had unlimited food (that is, if the arithmetical ratio of increase of food were not true), population would still increase up to the limit. But a geometrical ratio can never equal infinity; ex hypothesi, there would always be more food than people, and the necessity for checking the increase of population would not exist. Yet it is precisely in this case that Malthus declared that it would exist.

The fact is that Malthus forgot the first conditions of scientific precision, viz., the statement of the conditions in which his law was true. The statement that the pressure of air, for example, is about fifteen pounds to the square inch is true only at sea-level; and every standard, even those of weights and measures, has its necessary conditions of accuracy—temperature, height, pressure, and so on. The condition in which the law of Malthus is, if anywhere, true is what we may call the state of Nature, that is to say, a state in which man is at the mercy of his environment. In that state, curiously enough, he practises control of population almost habitually; abortion and infanticide are common practices among savage races, and even among some civilised races. But the production of the means of subsistence is as possibly under the control of man as the function of pro-creation; in other words, it is not necessary that the production of food should increase in an arithmetical ratio. The breeding of varieties of wheat, for example, that will ripen one day earlier makes it possible to extend the wheat-growing area fifty or sixty miles northwards (quoted in Prof. Arthur Thomson's "Secrets of Animal Life," p. 237). The grafting of the non-rusting quality on English wheat, and the increase of its yield, by Professor Biffen, is another instance of increase beyond calculation in its possibilities; for there is not only the positive increase in fertility, but the elimination of waste due to rust. Breed varieties of potatoes immune from rot (and this is being done), and without any increase of fertility, the world's food supply can be increased by the simple elimination of waste. "The recent achievements of agriculture and horticulture are not sufficiently well-known," wrote Kropotkin thirty years ago; "and while our gardeners defy climate and latitude, acclimatise sub-tropical plants, raise several crops a year instead of one, and themselves make the soil they want for each special culture, the economists nevertheless continue saying that the surface of the soil is limited, and still more its productive powers; they still maintain that a population which should double each thirty years would soon be confronted by a lack of the necessities of life."

The fact is that the production of the necessities of life is as much under human control as is the increase

\* "Excessive Population in Relation to Reconstruction." By "A Disciple of Malthus." (Privately printed.)



of population. Then why should we concentrate our efforts on the restriction of population instead of on the production of necessities? The reason is quite simple; to maintain the present social system, and the unequal distribution of wealth. For this purpose, it is necessary to regard every individual as a consumer, and not as a producer, to regard supplies as limited, and wants as increasing with numbers. The author of this pamphlet says, for example: "So long as the supply of labour does not exceed the real demand for it, every man should be able not only to get employment, but directly, or indirectly, to produce sufficient to provide him with a share adequate for his status. But if the supply is excessive, and two men have to do one man's job, these two will not produce enough to give them each an adequate share, and either the general standard of well-being will fall, or one of the two will have to drop into a much lower standard." The simple fact that producers, like everybody else, are paid out of production, seems to have escaped the attention of the author; and that demand is, in the last resort, determined by supply itself is a truism at least as old as "Fabian Essays." At the present moment, for example, there is a great demand for money, because there is a largely increased supply of it (and its equivalents) in circulation, the effects of its disparity with the actual quantity of goods being seen in the prices of them. But the author's assumption that only under certain favourable conditions can the labourer produce enough to entitle him to "a share adequate for his status" is a simple absurdity; when the labourer stops working, or refuses to part with his products, the community starves. Austria is a very good example to study at this present moment; there is a positive decrease of population, and also a decrease in the "general standard of well-being." Production has practically ceased, and the value of the krone is I know not what ridiculous minus quantity. The plight of Austria is not due to the fact that there are two men for every job, as the Malthusian would declare, but that there are not enough men for the necessary jobs at work. And the question for us is not: "Are there too many working men?" but: "Does our social and economic system permit of maximum production and equitable distribution?"

A. E. R.

## Reviews.

**Arrows of Desire:** Essays on Our National Character and Outlook. By Prof. J. S. Mackenzie. (Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d. net.)

That Shakespeare was, in anything but the accident of birth, an English dramatist, is one of those propositions that are eternally open to dispute. The Germans claim him as their own; a Dutch actor has recently played Shylock; the Sicilians stormed London, some years ago, with "Othello"; while Russia went mad over "Hamlet," and young men cultivated a melancholy appearance at the street corners. That Shakespeare has this appeal, even in translations, indicates that what is characteristic in him is not English, but universal, or, at least, European; and Prof. Mackenzie gives away his case when, after devoting an essay to "Shakespeare's Henry V as a National Type," he casually says at the end of an essay on "The Character of Shakespeare" that "Hamlet, though nominally a Dane, could probably be used to illustrate the English character almost as easily as Henry." If we must talk of "our national character" (and Mr. Bernard Shaw scored heavily against the habit when he made one of his characters regard the phrase as expressing journalistic ability), it is better to observe it in history and action than in dramatic fiction. Emerson's "English Traits," which Prof. Mackenzie also quotes considerably, is much more important in this connection, because it surveys many

of the different forms of activity, compares the present with the past, and emphasises the fact that our national character is paradoxical, that, in good sooth, we have character only as private persons, not as a nation. Prof. Mackenzie's essays are readable enough, but not particularly illuminating; it seems hardly worth while to write an essay on "Conventional Morality," for example, to show that "both our interest in moral philosophy and our tendency to a certain kind of hypocrisy can be traced to a common source. Perhaps they may both be explained by the prominence of moral ideas in our ordinary practical life, and by the fact that these ideas are generally of a somewhat conventional type." But Prof. Mackenzie ambles so amiably among his quotations that the reader finds plenty to interest him without bothering about the author's arguments; indeed, he seems to be timid of definite conclusions concerning "our national character," and we can only conclude from that fact that he is a Scotsman trying to be just.

**History of Bohemia.** By Count Lützow. (Dent's Everyman Library. No. 432. 2s. 4d. net.)

It was a happy notion to re-issue the late Count Lützow's "History of Bohemia" now that the subject kingdom of Bohemia has been enlarged and transformed into the independent Republic of Czechoslovakia. It was an equally fortunate idea to provide the new issue with an introduction by President Masaryk, the man to whom this remarkable metamorphosis is so largely due. Count Lützow's history ends with the following words:—"The policy of the present Austrian Prime Minister is more hostile to Bohemia than that of any of his predecessors. Dark clouds seem to surround the future of Bohemia." Rightly enough, no attempt has been made to add anything to these sentences, which read so remotely to-day, and it is to be hoped that they will be left unchanged in all future editions of the book.

As President Masaryk points out, Count Lützow did not live to see his country delivered from Austrian rule. It is interesting, however, to learn from President Masaryk that Count Lützow, the former historian, also helped to make history: "When I was in Geneva in 1915 the Count was also near in Switzerland, and was closely watched by Austrian agents. Desiring in no way to compromise him, I kept aloof; but I soon found out that the Count was in touch with our agents who worked in Switzerland, and that he was rendering them substantial financial support."

Count Lützow's history is clearly and objectively written, and there is no further need to enlarge upon its merits here. But it becomes all the more necessary to regret that the proof-sheets have not been read with sufficient care. The result is that the book contains far too many misprints, only a few of which can here be indicated. Thus, Pastruck should be Pastrnek (p. 13 and again on p. 15), Olomouc should be Olomouc (p. 43 and again on p. 55), Bildur should be Bilder (p. 162), Erfahrung should be Erfahrung (p. 346), and so on. This lack of accuracy is especially marked in the case of Czech names and words, which are sometimes provided with their proper accents and sometimes not. For instance, there is Casopis (p. ix and again on p. 72, but correctly printed on p. 9); moreover, on p. ix, this word is used in conjunction with two adjectives, both of which are without their appropriate accents, although sometimes they appear in their proper form. Finally, in the introduction, the "y" which terminates three famous Czech names is printed, which terminates three famous Czech names is printed, not without an accent—which would have been more excusable—but with a wrong one. This is assuredly not President Masaryk's mistake! It is desirable that the earliest opportunity should be taken to remove these blemishes, which are quite out of keeping with the scholarly character of Count Lützow's history.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

## ARMENIA.

Sir,—Mr. Pickthall complains that the only other Armenian (Mr. Arlen rather vaguely implies that he is one) who has replied to him in the past called him a liar. I have seen no reason since then to withdraw that charge. What, after all, can one do with a man who states that "Reports . . . from Beyrout and Constantinople are declared to be authoritative, while telegrams from Armenians in Marash itself, who say that they are in security, are regarded as fictitious?" Mr. Pickthall cannot, seemingly, go to the length of denying that there has been murder in Marash, but he goes as far as he can. He is like most propagandists, and the more dangerous because he is also an artist. He makes an arabesque of his beliefs, principles, and prejudices, and that which does not fit into his scheme, shapely only to his eye, he rigorously excludes. And in this case he wantonly and cruelly excludes those other telegrams from "Marash itself" which tell a different tale, of wholesale loot and blood-letting. . . . But I am a little resigned about penetrating so biased a mind; for I am very certain that Mr. Pickthall, when he wrote that perversion about Marash, knew as well as I do that more corpses have lately been made in that district than he or I could well count through an hour of a sleepless night! And I think your readers by now know that I, as an Armenian, do not generally give too generous a credence to Bryce reports of massacre.

Mr. Pickthall says, again, that alien Greeks and Armenians, by weight of money, are trying to dictate the policy of England. . . . Surely, he can know nothing of human nature, of the kind that lives and dies for absurdities! Does he seriously think that the Armenians (we will ignore the "alien" Greeks) ever hope to reinstate their country in the proud position which only legend can claim for them? Does he really think that they, a people cursed with sophistication, are lured on by any hope of a quiet and peaceful Hayastan, free of the cruelty of oppression and of the indignity of European charity? I regret that they are made of more cynical stuff. And the keynote of their resistance and propaganda, despite all the sentimentalists who have besmeared her, is—well, Mr. Pickthall, it's just revenge! didn't you know? . . . And that is why I quite agree with him that money may be being spent furiously to prejudice the Turk in this country. More power to the Armenian elbow, say I! Had I money, I couldn't spend it more enjoyably. Sympathy must be seduced, if it can be got by no other means. The Armenians have paid with their lives, they will now pay with their treasure, to enshroud more quickly with weeds that growth of anarchy and misgovernment which was once called the Turkish Empire.

But I cannot see why Mr. Pickthall so consistently keeps his grievances against the Christian peoples of Asia Minor. They are really lost, finished, beaten, friendless. This war was the Armenians' last throw of the dice, their last furious gamble. And, as for 5,000 years, so now—they have lost! The war has left them worse off than ever before. So badly off, indeed, that, after fighting for England and themselves, after having stormed Erivan and Erzeroum, after having held and only lost Baku because of the idiocy of a British general who thought that 1,500 men were enough to relieve them—after all this, the Prime Minister of England can say of them that, if they relied more on themselves, the Armenians would become a "more manly and virile people"!

Since England was taught Imperialism by that brilliant and bedizened Jew, she has never "befriended" a small nation more dangerously than she has Armenia. If England can but continue to "befriend" her, there will very soon be no subject left for discussion between Mr. Pickthall and myself. For I am sure we could not disagree so heartily upon any other but that which he is pleased to call, incorrectly, "the scum of the Levant."

DIKRAN KOUYOUMDJIAN.

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## THE DEEP SEA.

Sir,—Mr. Ezra Pound has lately been using your columns to express his contempt for nations. It is curious that this question of nations has never been

exhaustively discussed by anybody, and that each man's view depends on his temperament. Hearty and uproarious persons like Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Bottomley are obstreperously patriotic, while those of a more fastidious temper, like Goethe and Mr. Pound, are apt to think nations vulgar. In argument I am not sure that either side would have much the best of it.

The strongest objection to cosmopolitanism is that it would be likely to produce countries such as Mr. Pound's native country. America is the melting-pot of the nations, and has managed to get together a hundred million people of all colours and tongues. Unhappily, they are all painfully alike. You start on the train from New York, and after travelling a whole day arrive at Chicago, which is another New York. Another half-day brings you to Minneapolis, which is identical with New York and Chicago. At the end of two and a half days more you are at Seattle, the glory and pride of which is to be indistinguishable from New York. At each place you see the same people rushing along the streets, squirting the same tobacco juice, and swallowing the same indigestible food without mastication. Variety is the spice of life, and no country is so devoid of variety as a cosmopolitan country.

One is further impressed by the fact that the mixing up of all these peoples has produced almost no emancipation of the intellect. The great majority of Americans and Canadians still go to church, and believe in the same things as Mr. Edward Moore. Young women are dismissed from posts in public libraries because they disapprove of war and cannot conscientiously buy Liberty Bonds. Other young women are sent to prison for forty-five years for saying that conscription is wrong. Neo-malthusians are punished almost as severely as anti-militarists. It is universally believed in North America that modern Greek scholarship has proved that "oinos" meant unfermented wine. There is a great agitation to prohibit barmaids from selling lemonade and other temperance drinks in Vancouver. Spokane, with a hundred thousand people, has no bookshop. Seattle, with four hundred thousand, is alleged to have one, but I have never found it. Worse than all, there is intense resentment of outside criticism, especially if it takes the form of wit. The hell of every American or Canadian is to hear his country laughed at. Mr. Wilson MacDonald has finely expressed this in "A Song to Canada":

"My land is a woman who loves

All whose word is a lie;

The limitless doves

That coo in the hour when her peril is nigh;

The poets who sing,

'Very fair is the bride of the North

As she now steppeth forth

To enter that council which girdles the world with its ring.'

But this is my grief that no longer she cares

For the old wounding message of truth

That sounds on the lips of a poet, who dares

Look under the rouge of her youth."

The great argument for cosmopolitanism is that it is necessary to avoid war. Those who believe, however, that the chief cause of war is pressure of population will attach little value to such a remedy. The Goths and Vandals did not attack Rome because of diplomatic misunderstandings. War can be averted only by a universal low birth-rate and a fairly even distribution of population throughout the world. When the birth-rate of all countries differs little from the death-rate, and the population per square mile is about the same in Brazil and New South Wales as in China and India, then war will be no more. When such an equilibrium has been reached, national differences are more likely to be augmented than diminished. There will be little emigration, and less international trade than at present. Fewer people will have need to learn foreign languages. Possibly one of the existing languages may be chosen as a means of international communication; but such a language could never be more than a learned language, unknown to the majority. Intercourse with foreigners will be rarer than at present. National differences will therefore be as well defined in the future as in the past, but there is every reason to hope that the feeling between nations will be akin to Chinese indifference rather than Prussian bitterness.

R. B. KERR.

## Pastiche.

### "RUS IN URBE."

If I could speed a silver stream  
Through dull unlovely Deptford Town,  
With meadow-sweet each bank adown,  
I think that Deptford Town might seem  
The substance of a happy dream.

Or could I charm a nightingale  
To sing in solemn Islington  
Just at the setting of the sun,  
The magic of it could not fail  
To be a nine-days' wonder-tale!

They've benison of bird and tree  
In Kensington, and water too!  
And oft-times overhead the blue,  
With clouds as white as white can be!  
And yet I hear the weary sea  
Of London breaking! Let me bring  
The great salt waves, with sheeted spray,  
To wash this waste of bricks away,  
And on the brown earth let me fling  
These seeds to waken with the Spring!

In Piccadilly foxgloves tall,  
And snowdrops where the grey Bank glooms,  
And what a sheen of bluebell blooms  
Would blaze where now the news-boys call  
Outside that weary music-hall!  
Great chestnuts down in Oxford Street,  
Where Strand now jostles larchen trees,  
And poplars, quick with sun and breeze,  
Would change Pall Mall, with swallows fleet  
Above a field of springing wheat!

L. M. PRIEST.

### THE POINT OF VIEW.

"If you want a cocktail very much," said the lady behind the whisky bottles, with a hint of contempt for such a dilettante taste in that serious pursuit of alcoholics to the satisfaction of which her energies were dedicated, "go up the stairs, through the curtain, and turn to the left, and you'll find the American bar."

"Very much" seemed a strong phrase for a very languid aspiration, but I followed her directions. And there, in that deserted "lounge," from the lips of its presiding genius (and I have no doubt that his skill entitled him to the description) I heard the sad story of the decline and fall of the "Empire."

At my very advent his lonely face lit up, as might that of a settler on some island in the South Seas when the rare arrival of a ship brought him into touch for a moment with the civilisation he had once known so well.

What would I have? Bronx, Manhattan, Martini—he plunged into a recitative of his ingenious wares. I took my usual course on such occasions. I threw the responsibility for so momentous a choice upon him who had made of the matter a life study. *Experto crede.* I believe in "Producer's Control" in these things; moreover, it serves to conceal a sadly insufficient knowledge of a large subject.

Conversation with bar-tenders is not among my gifts; but, absorbed in his mysterious art and, as it were, on his mettle to justify my confidence, he seemed to expect me to take the initiative, so I plunged into the subject upmost in my mind—that wonder of a ballet (it was "Petrushka") that I had just heard and seen. I remarked, prosaically enough, that it was very beautiful.

I perceived at once that I had greatly fallen in his esteem. He had thought, I believe, for a moment—or perhaps only faintly hoped—that here was a "real gentleman," a nut about town, straying into his old haunts by force of habit too strong to be resisted. And now I had revealed myself as another of those mysterious and contemptible enthusiasts, whose presence in his theatre signalled not merely the final breach with its great past, but the virtual atrophy of his functions—who had made a desert round his bar and called it Art.

He smiled resignedly and with a veneer of tolerance. "Very nice, I suppose, for those as likes it. Confess I can't see anything in it myself. Why, I remember

the balleys that *were* balleys, wot we used to 'ave 'ere in the old days. 'Round the Town' and all those—lots of 'em. They *was* something. Properly put on, too. They talks abaht the production of these 'ere"—he waved a contemptuous hand—"but wot is it after all? A lot of cloths! That's all."

So much for Bakst and Picasso. "A lot of cloths!" I abandoned the æsthetic ground as untenable in the circumstances.

"They seem to be a great draw, anyway. Every seat is sold to-night, they tell me."

He turned a pitying smile on my ignorance of real values in the matter. That the mere seats should be occupied was a matter of sublime indifference to him.

"Look at the money we used to take 'ere." He gazed reminiscently round the desert of plush and gold. "Why, in the great days you wouldn't 'ave been able to get near this bar at nine o'clock, not without waitin' yer turn. But we're respectable now." He winked a salacious eye. "We call this the cloisters now. It wasn't the seats in the 'ouse that did the big business 'ere. Stands to reason they can't make much now with all that space runnin' to waste. You remember it in the old days, sir?"

I told him I had seen some of the revues.

"Revoos. Well, some of 'em went all right. But I didn't much care for 'em. Too clever by 'arf they was. Give me the old balleys—wot was *really* balleys, I mean. Twenty years ago. They was the days."

It seemed there had been a steady descent from ballets (that *were* ballets, you understand) through revues (that were "too clever") to musical comedy (that was "too—refined"), and now the last depth had been plumbed with this "Russian stuff," whose patrons were so far lost to grace that they couldn't even climb the stairs for a cocktail.

Well, the just wrath of Providence had fallen on the building guilty of such a dereliction of purpose.

"They're goin' to pull it down," he said regretfully, "and put up a 'uge place with cinnymars and restyrongs and I don't know wot else. Seems a pity to me."

He spoke as if deploring that the theatre should not have a chance to redeem itself and "recapture its first fine careless rapture" or the "cosmopolitan rendezvous of the world" (vide the programmes of the "old days").

"Well, people will 'ave things different, I suppose." He sighed as if the ways of "progress" were something too mysterious to understand.

The orchestra was beginning again, and I thanked him for the cocktail (in which matter he *had* justified my confidence) and went back, pondering all these things in my heart, to the ballet that was not (it seems) a ballet, but only a work of beauty and delight.

I think it must have been after some such conversation that the Latin author jotted down his little conclusion to the effect that it was of no use disputing about matters of taste. But now we may no longer go to the "Empire" let us remember that what to some of us has been the triumph of Art has been for a certain bar-tender a very poignant tragedy.

MAURICE B. RECKITT.

### SEA-HERB.

Fate hath not sown thee by long Lethe stream  
That scarce gives back the light of leaden day,  
And with her slow wave laps the bitter clay  
The which with every wanhope herb doth tear;  
Nor in the innocent field (sweet field, adieu!)  
With the white spiced rose and honesty  
And heartsease "which may not be thine," quoth she;  
But where the calms and smiling suns are few;  
The gray stone holds thy feet; the savage air  
Snatches thy grace; naked and swart thou art,  
With no sweet sap to weep from out thine heart  
Even when the wind from thee thy flower doth tear;  
And songs of battle from the epic deep  
Fling furious brine even athwart thy sleep.

RUTH PITTER.

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