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CONTENTS.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

In face of the opposition of the Miners' Federation as confirmed at the Conference at Leamington last week, it is useless for the Government to expect to make an effective Act of its Ministry of Mines Bill. The Act presumes for its operation the assistance or, at any rate, the non-resistance, of the Miners' Federation; and since it is clear that not even the negative consent of this organisation will be forthcoming, the Act setting up the "ftuure government of the mining industry" will be still-born. On the other hand, it does not follow that because the Miners' Federation, now, as Mr. Smillie said, "organised practically to 100 per cent. strength," has been able to exercise a veto on the Government's proposals, the Government will be unable to impose, if it wishes, a corresponding veto on the proposals and demands issuing from the Miners' Federation. It will; and for the same reason that the Miners are able to exercise their veto, namely, that behind the Government is a solid opinion hostile, let us say, to nationalisation exactly as behind the Miners' Federation is a solid body of opinion hostile to the restoration of the pre-war system of Mines control. Without for the moment apportioning blame or, in fact, siding with either party, the situation, it will be seen, cannot continue as it is without serious consequences. The nation is bound to suffer if two equal and opposite forces, jointly in control of our coal supply, continue to prevent each other from getting on with their common function; and, sooner or later, a clash will be inevitable from the mere impossibility of standing still. Under these circumstances it appears incredible that neither party should appear to be willing to make the first move towards what in the end will actually be necessary—the consideration of a third way out that is neither the old system *nor* nationalisation. If there be a single statesman (as distinct from partisans) on either side, he must surely be preparing to act.

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What the Government offers under the terms of the present Bill is something rather less than nothing. Nobody can possible believe that it was meant to be anything more; and on this account we heartily approve of the exercise of the veto of the Miners' Federation. What Mr. Smillie offers, as a counter-suggestion, and in addition to his veto, is, however, from every practical point of view, so much more than nothing that equally little of value can be expected of it. The increase of wages, even if it should prove to be possible, is entirely illusory, as Mr. Smillie very well knows; if obtained at all, it will be at the cost of a good deal of friction and will turn out to be worth nothing whatever. Nationalisation, again, whatever Mr. Smillie may say of it, is now the remotest of contingencies and depends altogether on the increasingly improbable event of the return of a Labour Government. Finally we do not believe that it is possible, under the existing system, to advance wages and reduce prices simultaneously, at any rate without precipitating such a struggle as only madmen are prepared for. The "third way out" seems, therefore, to be dictated by reason upon all sides; and since we believe that we are in possession of the guide to it, we may as well once more briefly enumerate its advantages, in contrast with the prospects now open. In the first place, then, the Scheme offers to the Miners' Federation what they affect to demand—a real and not merely a nominal measure of control. Under the terms of the Scheme it is definitely calculable that the control exercised by the Miners over their industry would from small beginnings increase in the course of a few years to practically complete control. In the second place, the Scheme provides for such a reduction of Price that progressively and considerably the cost of living would be reduced; in other words, the purchasing power of wages would constantly rise. That is on the Miners' side. To the existing *owners* in the industry, the Scheme offers all that they have the right to demand, no confiscation of their Capital, no diminution of the "rights of Capital," no attack upon dividends as such, and security. Finally, the Scheme offers to the public not only the permanent settlement of the Mining industry—which itself might be a model for subsequent extension to other industries—but, the sum and substance of the demand of all consumers—more and cheaper coal.

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It might be imagined that the public promulgation of a scheme of this promissory value, emanating, moreover, from the same source from which the Labour movement has been willing enough to accept the doctrines of National Guilds—(Mr. Frank Hodges, for instance, is an Executive member of the National

Guilds League; in fact, "we are all Guild Socialists nowadays," thanks to THE NEW AGE)—would, at the very least, attract some serious public attention. We are not in the business of reform for personal profit (the Lord knows!) or for fun, but to get something done before the cataclysm descends upon us; and fourteen years of disinterested propaganda should be sufficient evidence that we are in earnest. The difficulties to be overcome, however, appear for the present to be insurmountable; it would seem that the effort necessary to the grasp of such a Scheme is too much for the exhausted state in which the war has left the nation; and that only the experience of a catastrophe will arouse men to the labour of real thought. Even that, however, is not the complete explanation. Other elements enter to prejudice the free inquiry that is urgently needed. For instance, there is undoubtedly a divinity, the divinity of Mammon, that hedges about the subject of Money and Credit and Currency that effectually repels all but the most free-thinking and vigorous minds. The rest are, perhaps, unaware of the effluence that affects them; they take refuge in the excuse that Currency is a game for cranks. Did not Mr. Tawney, for example, dismiss the subject with the remark that after every great war there is a crop of currency cranks? And what better defence could Finance demand than an attitude of that despairing kind? And there is still another factor, and of an even more sinister character—the disinclination of almost every *section* of professed reformers to consider a proposal to benefit everybody at the expense of nobody. Nietzsche, it appears, was largely right when he diagnosed resentment as the dominating concealed motive of much of our modern socialism. Because such a Scheme as we are proposing prejudicially affects only the smallest possible fraction of Society while benefiting even those sections hitherto called capitalist, as well, of course, as the vast bulk of the nation, producers and consumers indifferently, it naturally threatens the satisfaction of the resentment which animates many sections by making revenge impossible. But that is to withdraw from such their dearest object. What, they say, you propose to make the poor rich without making the rich poor! You propose to "let off" the Capitalist classes and to include them, without punishment for their past offences, in the new order of society! Rather than see our old enemies simultaneously relieved of the impending disaster, we will ourselves refuse relief and precipitate society in a common ruin! That, at any rate, appears to us to be the unspoken but real opposition we have to encounter. And until, by psycho-analysis or some other means, such minds as harbour resentment can purge themselves of their murderous and suicidal ill-will, no real advance can be made.

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We should be the first to admit that the subject of Money is difficult to understand. It is *intended* to be, by the minute oligarchy that governs the world by means of it. Nevertheless it is not so difficult that a little real application of mind cannot overcome it. Our contributor, "H. M. M.," for instance, has had no other material or opportunities for the study of the subject than any reader of these pages, but his articles, which conclude this week, show a perfect appreciation both of the Douglas Scheme and of all its implications. The paradoxical character of some of the propositions involved in the subject is only a "blind" to conceal their fundamental simplicity; for, as Mr. Chesterton should surely have taught this generation, it is the nature of truth to appear paradoxical. What is needed to "see the idea" is something just a little more logical than logic itself; an integrating sense that can put two and two together and make the miracle of four; in other words, a simultaneous comprehension of a set of relations, any one of which can be clearly realised. Take, for instance, the proposition that seems to have presented the greatest difficulty to most of our readers, and that may in consequence be regarded as the pons asinorum of the whole subject—the proposition that Price must normally be considerably less than Cost if we are ever to escape from Creditism, or the government of Finance. In isolated fragments the "idea" involved in the proposition is seen to be perfectly simple. There is no difficulty in accepting the following statements, for instance: that, as a whole, the national cost of the year's work results in a surplus of appreciated values over depreciated values—in other words, in a net appreciation: that, in consequence, if the whole of this Cost be charged to Price and be collected from the consumers of the actual goods consumed, the net appreciation of values is *presented* to the controllers of the whole system—in short, to Finance; that, and again in consequence, the only just price to the consumer is that fraction of the total Cost which depreciation bears to appreciation. Putting it still more generally, the consideration involved in the proposition is that as we now debit prices with depreciation of Capital, we ought simultaneously to credit price with appreciation of Capital; otherwise price bears the double burden of cost of depreciation *plus* cost of appreciation without ever deriving any advantage from the excess of appreciation over depreciation. These statements, we say, are simple, and they cannot be challenged. But only a successful attempt to integrate them, to see them as a single whole, will enable the student to grasp their significance when expressed in the proposition that the Just Price is the ratio of Consumption to Production; that is to say, of the depreciation of values to the appreciation of values.

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If it is with considerable reluctance that the problem of Credit in relation to the whole economic problem is being taken up, a slow advance is nevertheless being made. The Professor of Statistics at the John Hopkins University, for instance, was reported last week in the "Times" as saying that "until recently the word 'inflation' has been taboo in banking and Government circles"—elsewhere as well!—"but that now it is being widely recognised that the root cause of high prices is an inflated currency." "Profiteering, lessened production, lack of transport, increased wages"—all these, he says, have borne much more than their share of the blame for high prices. In actual fact, they are effects for the most part rather than guilty causes. The prime cause is inflation. At Belfast last week Mr. Thomas delivered himself of the same opinion. He had heard enough of "silly resolutions" demanding £1 or £2 a week increase in wages. The purchasing power of money declined as its nominal value increased. "He hoped that members would focus their attention on the problem of credit and currency." Very good; but what is Mr. Thomas doing to assist the concentration? We have heard nothing further of the Committee appointed by the Triple Alliance, the Labour Party, and the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress to inquire into the causes of high prices; and, in the meanwhile, all the constituent unions seem to be pursuing helter-skelter the fairy gold of increased nominal wages. Such a demand on the part of the rank and file is inevitable so long as the leaders do not do something more than invite all and sundry to "focus attention" on the real problem of Credit. While the grass is growing, the steed is starving; and it is not in the least to be wondered at that the rank and file, seeing no means of reducing prices, should insist on an increase of wages. It is for the leaders to discover a way out of the giddy circle; and it is for *them* to focus their own attention on the problem—and the solution we offer.

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The hostility to the Excess Profits Duty shows no signs of abating, and in the House of Lords last week

the Government was defeated on a motion of economy. Lord Inchcape repeated the falsism that we are now a poor country, and with such effect that the Government itself appeared to be half-convinced that it is a truism. "We ought to realise," Lord Inchcape said, "that we are, as a nation, 7,000 millions poorer than we were before the war," and to cut our coat accordingly. The misunderstanding is clear when we consider the nature of the two kinds of credit involved. Real Credit, according to the definition of Major Douglas—or, rather, according to common sense—is the correct estimate of our ability to deliver goods as and when and where we want them; it is a question, in fact, of plant, resources, organisation, skill and the thousand and one items that go to make up our national ability to produce and deliver goods. Financial Credit, on the other hand, has only a nodding acquaintance with Real Credit; it consists in the ability to produce and deliver, not goods, but money as and when and where demanded; and the "demand" in this case is a monopoly of the power we collectively call Finance. Now in this financial sense of the word credit, we are, indeed, as a nation poorer than we were before the War. The ability of the vast majority of us to *pay money* is considerably lessened in consequence of the financial operations of the war; and the disability will very soon have disastrous consequences unless steps are taken to "focus attention" on the problem of Finance as a whole. But to say, as Lord Inchcape says, that because we are as a nation poorer in money-tokens than we were before the war, we are therefore poorer in real credit is to confuse book-keeping with industry. Everybody knows that, in terms of an ability to produce and deliver goods of every description, our resources as a nation have been enormously increased, both relatively and absolutely. Fresh sources of supply have been opened up, rivals have been reduced, new processes have been applied, organisation, equipment, plant and skill have all been tightened up; so that if our "capacity to produce" before the War was 100, our present total capacity, taking all the factors into account, is, at least, 150. Now the question is: are we to *fail* to employ this real Credit merely because the financial system insists upon money-values? Are we to forgo the production of real goods and real services, now more than ever within our power, because the financial system demands the production of money? Being potentially rich beyond avarice in real goods, are we to remain poor in goods because the financial system makes us poor in money? It appears to us that the time has come when, from having been a good servant, Finance has become a bad master. Once it appeared to facilitate production; now it threatens to make production impossible.

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And not only threatens; the fact is on us. Without considering whether all Government expenditure is necessarily "waste," it is perfectly certain that in spite of our increased real ability to produce and deliver goods, not only is the production of goods and services being actually curtailed (by Finance), but even the means to further production, involving capital expenditure, are being denied because, paradoxically, such improvements no longer pay. The London and South Western Railway has withdrawn its scheme for the electrification of the London-Guildford line; and this withdrawal is the signal that the long overdue electrification of the whole railway system has been again indefinitely postponed. Why? It is not because we have not the means, it is because our financial system will not let us have the money. Look, again, at the relation of the railways to the public, that public on whose easy and convenient transport the real wealth of the community depends. The *financial* loss on the railways at present is 54 millions a year: and it is now proposed to make up this loss by adding 25 per cent. each to fares for passengers and rates for goods. In other words, real goods and real services are to be reduced (though we have increased real resources for both) because the system obliges us to balance the figures in the bankers' ledgers. There are fools, too, who think it desirable and profitable that this defeat of the intention of society should be brought about by Finance. One Member of Parliament on the Select Commitee upon Telephones welcomed the proposed increase of charges since it would "cut out a large number of unnecessary and frivolous calls, and leave the lines more free for those who really have a use for them"—in other words, for those who happen to have the money! That is the kind of incense or nonsense that Mammon loves.

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The cry for increased production without regard either to the character of the goods produced or to the still more important factor of the distribution of effective demand has begun to bear its predestined consequence: Production is outstripping Demand; in other words, we are "over-producing" for the effective market. The "Times" Special Correspondent, for instance, reports that "Birmingham is producing more hollow-ware than the country is prepared [with money!] to take . . . pedal bicycles are in danger of becoming a drug on the market . .. the demand for machine-tools, which is one of the surest indexes of the state of all the engineering trades, has fallen right away." One swallow does not make a summer; and we do not assert that an industrial slump is already here. But it will be here in a very few months with all its accompaniments of unemployment, attempts to reduce wages, bankruptcies of businesses, and, in general, the chaos of conditions favourable to the growth of Bolshevism. Lenin is merely anticipating events (and, of course, presuming, perhaps too much, on the stupidity of our leaders of all classes—or is it, perchance, on the power of Finance?) when he declares that England is ripe for Bolshevism. England is not ripe for Bolshevism; but the consequences inherent in the present conflict of Financial Credit with Real Credit will force into a Bolshevist attitude thousands whose minds are now utterly opposed to it. Multiply the signs discovered by the "Times" in Birmingham a hundredfold, make them general all over industry, and the result will be the state of affairs that Lenin confidently counts upon. At the risk of wearying our readers (whose only hope, nevertheless, THE NEW AGE is), we will repeat for the thousandth time that, under the existing system, no other conclusion is possible. We have said it before, we will say it again, that a system that increases Production without simultaneously and proportionately distributing the means of purchasing that production is doomed to "over-produce" and to effect all the other consequences of that fact. Surely the reasoning ought to be plain enough. You issue Credit (or purchasing-power)—or, rather, the Banks do—in order to increase production; in other words, in order to increase the amount of goods to be purchased. The immediate effect, however, of such an issue of Credit is the "inflation of currency," which is to say, a diminution of the purchasing-power of the public at large. Unless, therefore, either simultaneously with the issue of Credit, or by some other means, you re-distribute the purchasing-power taken from the public by the issue of Credit, the effect of the whole operation is that the means of production have been increased at the expense of a diminution of the effective demand. That, in fact, is what we call over-production. Over-production is under-consumption; and it arises from the fact that whereas Finance is employed to increase the Supply, it does not simultaneously distribute the means of Demand, but, on the contrary, actually reduces them.

The Cure for High Prices

IV.

THE housing problem is only a particular phase of the credit problem; and the two will be solved together. The Government scheme is not a solution, but an aggravation. To finance it the issue of 5½ per cent. local bonds has been authorised. In England £400,000,000 is required, in Scotland £29,750,000.

Now the bulk of the public's surplus money is already invested, directly or indirectly, so the money for these bonds will have to come from the banks, either by direct subscription or—more probably—by advances to the public on the security of their investments or property. They will simply inflate credits to the extent required, thus reducting the purchasing power of our money still further and charge us 5½ per cent. for the service. Five and a half per cent. on £400,000,000 is £22,000,000 per annum, not a bad return for a few book entries and a little paper.

If the credit system were reformed on Douglas lines houses could, of course, be built very much cheaper than they can at present, without requiring that wages, salaries, or builders' profits should be reduced by a halfpenny—perhaps even with them increased. But even with prices as high as they are just now it would still be possible to build houses and let them at rents far below what will have to be charged if we go to the banks for credit.

To compare the two methods, let us suppose that houses to the value of £1,000,000 have been erected. The cost of upkeep and repairs is assumed to be the same in both cases and so is left out of account.

(1) *If financed by the banks*: Borrow, pay interest, establish sinking fund. If the debt is to be paid off in 25 years the charges to be met in the first year will be:

Interest at 5½ per cent.	£55,000
Sinking fund (1/25 of capital sum)...	40,000
(a) First year's charges	£95,000

Over the 25 years the total charges will be:

Interest	£715,000
Capital sum	1,000,000
Total charges	£1,715,000

(b) Average charges per annum (1/25) £68,600

(2) *If financed by the community*: No interest would be charged.

(c) Annual charge (1/25 of capital sum) £40,000

If the Housing Scheme were financed by the banks the first year's rents—which would probably remain the standard throughout the whole 25 years—could not be less than the first year's charges, £95,000, which is 2⅜ times greater than they would be if the community did its own financing. And although after the first year the local authority would make a profit on the houses—in example (1)—it would be a gross case of profiteering at the expense of the tenants.

Even if some means of averaging the annual charges could be found, so that no profit should be made, the annual rents could not be less than £68,600, which is 1 7/10 times greater than communally financed houses would be.

If the debt is to be paid off in 50 years the corresponding figures are:

(d) First year's charges (if financed by banks)— £75,000.

(e) Average annual charges (if financed by banks), 1/50 of total charges— £48,050.

(f) Annual charge (if financed by community), 1/50 of capital sum— £20,000.

(d) and (e) are respectively 3 3/4 and 2 2/5 times greater than (f).

With communally financed houses the rents should be equal to the annual rate of depreciation, plus the cost of upkeep; so if we compare (a) and (b) with (f)—a quite fair comparison—a greater discrepancy than ever appears, (a) and (b) being respectively 4 3/4 and 3 2/5 times grater than (f). The longer houses last the lower the rate of depreciation should be and the worse does the comparison become.

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It may be asked why this flaw in our financial system was not discovered before. Probably it was because the conditions were not ripe for its discovery. The ramifications of financial operations are not exposed for everyone to see: to follow them involves trouble, and it may be that it needed a world-war to compel us to take the trouble and concentrate our attention on the subject. Besides, the experts on whom the Government relies for financial advice—i.e., the bankers—have a personal end to serve which would be adversely affected if the flaw were removed; so, if they know about it, they take care to keep it hidden.

It is not maintained that the banks set out deliberately to do the world harm, or that they are fully conscious of their responsibility for all the harm done; but the necessity of applying to them for credit has put the world in their power, and they have been unable to resist the temptation to take advantage of circumstances so favourable to their interests. Creating credit is their main business in life, and pays them well; and so long as it does that they will hardly admit, even to themselves, that the results are harmful. And when they observe that the credits they create set the wheels of industry running briskly, can we wonder if they delude themselves that they have created something of value when they have merely abstracted it from the community?

None of the remedies usually recommended for economic and social ills can possibly cure them, for the reason that they are either based on a wrong diagnosis of the disease or are not intended to cure. The restoration of the gold standard, advocated by some, will not do it. An increase of gold coin inflates prices just as much as an increase of paper money; and why it should be thought necessary to acquire large quantities of an expensive metal from abroad before the country can carry on its work is known only to professors of political economy and owners of goldmines. To spend less damages trade, and it is by trade we live. Restriction of credit or cessation of borrowing only means that useful undertakings will be crippled or ruined for want of funds. Increased taxation and a capital levy are mere palliatives; and increased production, under present conditions, intensifies the evil.

Of other remedies, nationalisation has lost its glamour. It implies Governmental regulation and an army of bureaucrats—things people are sick to death of—and it is indistinguishable in their minds from the Servile State. Besides the deadly effects of over-centralisation, there is the certainty under it that strikes would be called rebellion and put down by military force if necessary; and the fact that there would be no alternative employer would knock the last spark of independence out of the luckless proletariat and make them incapable of even thinking rebellion. Communalise credit and you will get all the benefit—and more—anticipated of nationalisation without its drawbacks.

Direct action, general strikes, and revolution may be admirable as protests against intolerable conditions; but of themselves they cure nothing. Even if it were possible by their means to overthrow Capitalism without overturning society it is certain that the change would not be an improvement unless the new rulers were aware of the precise feature of Capitalism that had caused the troubles they want to remedy and set themselves to remove it. Unless it is removed—and there is

only one way of removing it—the evils usually attributed to Capitalism will manifest themselves again, even under Socialism.

None of these things can break the "vicious circle"; and while it remains unbroken the country as a whole will remain poor, and the wealth that is produced will be inequitably distributed, no matter what form of government may be set up.

To anyone who will take the trouble to look it is apparent that the world is in a thoroughly dangerous condition. Unrest prevails in rich countries and poor. Agitations and strikes for higher wages to meet the increasing cost of living are daily occurrences; but prices elude—and while the system remains unchanged always will elude—the efforts of wages and salaries—and profits—to overtake them. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that every increase in pay granted under present conditions raises the cost of living and makes the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Compared with the effect of inflation in raising prices, profiteering hardly counts. It disappears in any case with the solution of the major problem.

Manufacturers—bearing a burden of borrowed credit—have to fight ceaselessly for markets for their wares in order to keep clear of bankruptcy. Failure of foreign markets means for the nation unemployment and ruin; and when faced with the alternatives, starvation at home or war abroad, no Government can hesitate to choose the latter.

To sum up: Inflation is the root cause of high prices, poverty, and modern wars. Its cure has thus the first claim on the world's attention. Control of the issue of credit and fixing of selling prices by the community, on the lines laid down by Major Douglas, is the only remedy that fits the facts, and so is the only one that carries conviction that it possesses power to cure. It is easy of application and can be put into operation by individual communities without having to wait for the conversion of the whole world. But one experiment would be enough to convert the whole world. It involves no confiscation or buying out of wealthy interests—two things sufficient to block any reform scheme: the first because it would rally every owner of a War Savings Certificate in defence of the existing order, the second because it would make the cost of reform prohibitive.

The high cost of living affects nearly everybody; any movement, therefore, that promises to reduce prices, and advances convincing proof of its ability to reduce them, is assured of public support beforehand, and will be the most popular movement in the world.

We have got to recast our ideas in the light of fresh inquiry. By his analysis of the credit system Major Douglas has shown us that some of our old ones were faulty; and he has revealed a new and more hopeful approach to the solution of economic problems. He defines his aim as "the maximum expansion of personal control of initiative and the minimising and final elimination of economic domination, either personal or through the agency of the State." This desire for the fullest personal freedom is common to all men, Capitalist and Socialist alike. Under Capitalism only the Capitalist is free. Socialism is designed to make everybody free; but the organisation of a Socialist State would frustrate the design. Reform of the credit system alone can open up the road to freedom; and it need not take longer to accomplish than the time necessary to understand and make known the merits of Major Douglas's scheme.

If for any reason we cannot see our way to accept his solution there are two other courses open to us. We can turn the nation into an army—in a word, become Prussians—or we can start praying that a miracle might be vouchsafed us. We shall have need of one or other of these things before a generation is over. League of Nations or no League of Nations, we have got to live. H. M. M.

The New Spirit in Germany.

By Huntly Carter.

II.—MORAL AND PHILOSOPHIC.

JUST before I left London I had a conversation with a German official. I asked him whether Germany was changed. He threw up his hands in despair and said nothing. I asked him how it was changed. He replied, "Morally." The reply puzzled me all the way to Cologne. I knew that pre-war Germany did not possess a high moral reputation, thanks to some of its eminent professors who went out of their way to provide statistics to prove that if Germany possessed morals at all it was of the barnyard order. There was one learned professor in particular, I forget his name, who wrote a book which contained a comparison of the number of crimes which came before the courts in England and Germany during ten years. Allowing for the difference of population, the figures worked out as follows:—Murders, 97 in England against 350 in Germany; rapes, 216 in England against 9,381 in Germany; incest in England 56, in Germany 573; English illegitimate children 37,041, German 178,115. There were other comparisons, all to the good of England, but these will suffice to show that Germany was a bad second in sexual immorality. Besides this I recalled a certain case that came before the English Courts during the war in which two celebrated names figured conspicuously—Billing and the Black Book. The latter was offered as evidence that Germany held a record of the pillars of English society who were alleged to be morally degenerate and therefore accessible to Germany's own brand of vice. My perplexity disappeared at Cologne. I was no sooner there than the significance of the German official's remark flashed upon me. The first thing I saw on leaving the train was a platform packed with passengers. Each passenger wore a bulging knapsack and was lumbered with bags and parcels. I saw, moreover, that the corridors and carriages of departing trains were so full of baggage that there was scarcely room for the owners. On inquiry I was told that these people were smugglers. They were, in fact, engaged in the illicit business of augmenting their scanty rations. In respect to the latter I was referred to official figures which showed me that the food rations were still much below the minimum of nourishment. According to a document handed to me by an official of the Austrian Government, the amount of nourishment required varies from 3,000 to 8,000 calories. The amount received from Government rations is much below 3,000, as the following extract from a report given to me by the American Society of Friends at Vienna suggests. "Germany suffers from perpetual hunger. Tuberculosis is three times as prevalent as before the war. Not only the children, but also their mothers, fall victims to it, and child mortality has increased 50 per cent. Mothers have no linen for their children, no soap, no disinfectants. Their own powers of resistance are greatly reduced by extreme hardships which they endured during the war—for instance, in standing in the street for whole winter nights in order to obtain food. The superficial observer must not be misled by the shameless extravagances of the war profiteers. The children of cripples and of war prisoners are facing the greatest destitution, and criminality among children is constantly increasing under the urgings of hunger." It will be gathered that a hard-working individual who requires, say, 5,000 or 6,000 calories is quite unable to obtain this amount from Government rations, and, as all essential food is rationed, he is forced to resort to illegal methods to augment them. From this fact alone it is easy to conclude that Food and Fear are the two potential motives of action of the immense wave of immorality that has caught the vast population of Central Europe on its crest

and threatens to destroy them. In fact, the shortage of food and the fear of starvation has simply set loose the very worst criminal instincts of the entire German-Austrian nation. It would take a very bulky book to describe all these instincts and the emotional systems arising from them. Take dishonesty, for instance, which has a very numerous offspring. Everyone is practically dishonest, not from natural inclination, but from necessity, actuating the instinct of self-preservation. A girl with a spotless reputation was so hungry that she entered a restaurant and ate her fill. As she had no money she was arrested. She told the magistrate she was starving and considered it her duty to steal. She was discharged. Then take hatred, another prolific source of bad feelings and actions. Both men and women are filled with wild hatred of each other, not from disposition, but from continued privation and disappointment. I could quote many cases I have met.

I found it was quite impossible to understand this amazing situation, bordering on general moral insanity, except by going to historical causes. I gathered full accounts of these wherever I went. Perhaps the Austrian ones are the best; in any case they present an unparalleled story of how a great nation was driven by the reverses of war into the lowest stages of immoral conduct. By immoral conduct I mean conduct that destroys the spiritual side of human beings. The story is one of a long and bitter struggle to avert and overcome a food catastrophe. It tells us how from 1915 onward the bare necessities of life gradually became scarcer and scarcer. Bread, flour, and other vital foods gave out and their places were taken by potatoes, turnips, and the vilest substitutes. These were strictly rationed, and as the rations were insufficient to support life, there arose a fierce struggle for existence and all sorts of illegal means were adopted to supplement the Government allowance. A delirium of smuggling, cheating, thieving, lying, hoarding, profiteering, indeed of every conceivable bad thought and action set in. There were continual conflicts between the public and the authorities. At one time, we are told, 30,000 Viennese left the city daily on local and long-distance trains for the country and sought out farmers and other producers. As they returned, heavily laden with farm produce, they were met by the police and deprived of their captures. The result of this was that the self-suppliers resorted to all sorts of stratagems, invented the most ingenious devices to conceal and disguise goods. Women went to the extent of carrying false babies loaded with provisions, they wore specially made garments, coils of hair, even artificial limbs made to contain butter, eggs, meat, etc. When they were detected, rather than let the authorities have the food, they trampled it underfoot. All this, no doubt, will read like a nightmare to persons who never experienced the bad effects of the war. But there is worse to follow. The wave of dishonesty produced by the food situation was nothing to the wave of sexual immorality. Women, even the most cultured and refined, became so devitalised by undernourishment that they seemed to lose all control of their moral faculties. As a result abnormal lust appeared. It manifested itself perhaps more markedly in the districts occupied by the Allies. With the coming of our full-blooded, lusty, and vigorous soldiers, possessing vital attractions that the half-starved German men lacked, women set out in a body to trap them, as though under the belief that sexual relations with these soldiers was necessary to restore their own devitalised bodies. The situation took its course, with the inevitable result of a serious outbreak of venereal disease, which, however, was taken in hand by the Allied military authorities, with favourable results. One method was to register each prostitute, of which the towns and cities seemed full, and to put her under strict medical supervision.

The conduct I witnessed in Central Europe was really the aftermath of the most serious effect of the wave of immorality. Perhaps it revealed signs of moral recovery, but, if so, they were hard to detect. What struck me most was that I was face to face with an immense concourse of people who seemed to have lost all sense of the difference between moral right and wrong, and who regulated their conduct according to their view of its effect in obtaining the necessities of life. But though they seemed to have lost their moral balance they still retain sufficient true emotional impulse to make the natural line of recovery, to which I referred in the previous article, from the present bad moral situation, both possible and probable. In short, the German people are accessible to the emotional impulse of the new idealism which has recently made its appearance in economics, philosophy, and industry, and is strongly manifested in the new forms of art and drama. I say emotional because I do not believe for a moment that the mass of the German people will be directly influenced by the new idealistic philosophy, although I was assured by a big publisher that there is a demand for solid books like Vaihinger's "Die Philosophie des Als Ob.," and Spengler's "Der Untergang des Abendlandes," as well as those by other idealists—Pythagoras, Plato ("The State") Kant, Nietzsche, and writers like Vaihinger who aim to go beyond Nietzsche. I fancy that the general Wildergeburt des Idealismus will reproduce some of the conditions of the birth of Christ. It will take place in a manger, and be attended by three or four wise men, what time the shepherds will consult the stars and transmit the result to the vast crowd by wireless.

A Dream.

AN old soldier, aged fifty-seven, suffered from a not very severe anxiety state with palpitations and a tremor of the head, all dating from May, 1915, at which time he was in training in England. Previous to the War he had been a flautist in a regimental band, and after his discharge attempted to play in several orchestras, but always came to grief through the shaking of his head. While in this state he experienced this vivid dream:—"I was in an enclosure surrounded by a hedge of trees some ten feet high, and shaped like an egg. All round me sat tigers, lions and all sorts of beasts, all quite calm, and all looking at me. I was not afraid, and they did not touch me. I was just coming out, when I was touched on the shoulder. I saw a monk at my elbow, and he said, 'You can't go out of here. Once you're in here, you can't go out.'"

We may note before going any further that he was a thorough "old soldier." His father had brought him up most strictly, so that he ran away and joined the Army when he was thirteen. He had served in India and Africa and had done extremely well until his breakdown, which had undoubtedly been a nervous breakdown, a condition of pure neurasthenia determined by over-hard training for one of his age, at the beginning of the War. It was only after this that he became psychasthenic. He was an excellent patient, and felt most acutely his position in a ward full of younger men, most of them of an infinitely poorer type than himself. His manner among them was one of an intense outward reserve.

Now let us consider his associations to his dream. I give them in the order in which they came.

Monk—"The same height as myself—black hair and eyebrows—clean-shaven—nothing nasty about him—healthy-looking—cheeks full—about thirty-two years old—dark eyes—a very funny dream—I have no connection with monks."

Monk—"Member of a religious order—ascetic life."

Beasts—"Sensual life—they sat very quiet."

Enclosure—"A beech hedge—the dream was very

strange—a warning in some way or another—not to follow my instincts."

Beasts—"Two lions, a tiger, two leopards, all in front of me—there were smaller ones at the back that I did not notice."

Lion—"A very fine animal—very strong—noble."

Tiger—"More crafty in its actions than the lion—I have seen a tiger loose—it went away because we kept still—we were sitting on a river-bank in India one moonlit night, and the tiger came down to the river some eighty yards from us, and drank and swam. We lay still. The wind was blowing from the tiger towards us, and it went away without noticing us."

Leopard—"Same family as the tiger—smaller and more cat-like."

Cat—"A very curious animal—it has some senses that most of us don't know."

Enclosure—"The shape of a man's skull."

At this point he was beginning to see what we might perhaps term the positive qualities of his beasts, and we began to discuss restraining influences. He decided that the fact that he was married had held him back from accomplishing many things. He then went on to describe how he had left his father for the "soldier craze," and how his father was still alive, being now ninety-one years old. After which he made some more associations to the monk, as follows—"He wore a brown cossack with a black cord—Franciscans—I have seen them in Ireland recently—the first ancestor of my name came from France in the twelfth century—he was a Franciscan—my great-great-grandfather was a baronet." Here, with a remark that he had never before known so vivid and indelible a dream, the associations ended.

When we examine all this, it seems plain that there are several layers of meaning in this dream, and that everything turns on the monk who stops the dreamer from leaving his egg, from being born again, that is to say. And it is not an exactly rash speculation to surmise that this monk is an exaggeration, an overgrowth, of the same influence that has reduced the dreamer's animals to such a state of inertia. And we might hint that the animals bring reminiscences of Dionysus at once. We may, if we wish, become semi-Freudian and speak of an Œdipus-complex. The monk is associated with the dreamer's father, and we may say that the dreamer has never shaken off the influence of his father, but is still burdened with it in his background psyche. It occurs to him to tell us himself that his father is still alive. But when that is done, we are still only on the fringes of the problem. For the monk awakens a reminiscence of a great-great-grandfather, a man who held a certain status. And here we find a bigger barrier of family tradition handed down from father to son. And behind this again is yet another reminiscence of an ancestor who actually was a monk. This almost raises the dreamer's problem to a collective problem at a bound. The monk becomes literally a monk, which is as much as to say Christianity, which, whatever it may have been once, has to-day declined into herd instinct and the ruminant herd mind. There is no doubt that the mandate to the dreamer to stop in his egg is a very powerful mandate. We may observe the youth and health of the monk, and that the dreamer found nothing actively inimical in him.

Now what about those animals? The lion associations are comparatively simple, and it is probable that his lion has, as a matter of fact, had several outings during his life. He ran away into the Army when he was thirteen, and, altogether, spent seventeen years and a half on active service. Nevertheless, his lion is now inert. The tiger, as he almost says, is a more complex matter. There has been activity here, too, a moonlit, semi-conscious activity that has not interfered with the main course of his life. We did not go into details, but the positive aspect of craftiness is, I suppose, a supple wit; and he was certainly very quick in the uptake. In the matter of the leopards he related one clairvoyant phenomenon that he had experienced in the South African war. So, broadly speaking, we may decide that his animals are emblematic of various psychological qualities that have been allowed, as it were, a spasmodic activity at intervals, but have been so charmed by the all-pervading monk that they are now motionless. The monk we have examined, but we may add his most objective aspect in the final rigorous Army training that reduced the dreamer to physical exhaustion, and the sequel of a neurosis that entirely forbade his original work of flute-playing.

Prognosis is not a task to be undertaken too lightly. However, we may remind ourselves of the dreamer's present age, and we may also observe his next dream. This was that he was on parade, standing before a drum and fife band trying to get them to play a march he had taught them. "Now," he said, "you all ought to know this march. You've had plenty of practice." But they could not remember the march, and he became exceedingly perturbed, because everyone was on the point of moving off. The drums and the fifes are his animals again, but, alas, they have forgotten their tricks, and his problem becomes a great tragedy. He has so little time in which to re-awaken their knowledge.

I have told this dream, not as the dissection of an old man, but because it seems to me a plain example of a more than individual problem of to-day. It has already been indicated by Jung that the collective problem is the individual problem writ large, and here is some exemplification of this. For what prevents the individual from leaving his egg, climbing out of his skull, being born again, is seen in this dream with a sufficient clarity. It is in fact a dream that has an almost universal applicability at this present moment, and one that can be traced under varying symbolism all through the chaos of modern phenomena.

J. A. M. ALCOCK.

Readers and Writers.

"BERTRAM LLOYD is the editor of two volumes of pro-German poems published in London: 'Poems written during the Great War, 1914-1918,' and 'The Paths of Glory,' under a cloak of humanity, truth, charity, hatred of war, hatred of the *greybeards*, who pull the wires of this bloodstained spectacle, love and pity for the sons and mothers who weep behind the opposite trenches. Among the authors we may mention Laurence Housman, Wilfred Wilson Gibson, Eliot Crawshay, Williams (sic), and the one whom the Germans call the English Barbusse—S. Sassoon." This drivel appears in the June number of the "Revue de l'Enseignement des Langues Vivantes," under the heading of "The Germans Abroad," and is signed J. J. A. Bertrand. I refrain from comment.

If the editor of the "Revue de l'Enseignement des Langues Vivantes" has not yet discovered his error, I will provide J. J. A. Bertrand with a better example of the propaganda still active in this country. Here it is. I quote a pen-portrait of Barbusse by Hermann Bessemer from a recent number of the "Deutsche Allegemaine Zeitung": "Henri Barbusse, to give a physical representation of him, is very tall, lean, with a strikingly small head upon broad shoulders. Across the narrow forehead, which is framed by wisps of hair interspersed with grey, passes a vein which in conversation sometimes swells with blood like a manometer of thought-pressure. His eyes are small, grey, and bright, very pleasant and kindly in a gaunt face nearly pale as marl. Twenty-three months at the front as a soldier and stretcher-bearer, with three severe attacks of dysentery, become credible when you study this drawn, sympathetic face. His demeanour is—to put it plainly—un-French.

Rather the English gentleman brand. Well-made, unostentatious clothes, the most courteous manner, without the slightest trace of affected amiability, frugal of gestures, and a restrained tone, which nevertheless is at intense pains in every word to win his hearer over. ."

Now, Mr. J. J. A. Bertrand, better that if you can.

* * *

There are probably large numbers of people in England who know Spanish, and probably, too, they turn their knowledge to good account. Exactly how, it would be hard to say. Possibly they compose invoices. In any case, if they ever do read Spanish authors, they keep the proceedings thoroughly dark. This long and mysterious silence has now been broken by Miss Ida Farnell, who has published a book entitled: "Spanish Prose and Poetry Old and New. With Translated Specimens." (Clarendon Press. 12s. 6d. net.) It contains about twenty essays of varying length on writers unknown or only partially known in England. On the whole, Miss Farnell has done her work well. She writes certainly too much about Juan Valera (devoting over sixteen pages to his novel, "Pepita Jiménez," which was translated into English long ago), and rather too little about Rubén Dario, for instance. Still, one ought to be grateful, considering that this is the first modern book of its kind in English (unless I am mistaken). Moreover, the translations of poetry are excellent. But a word in the publisher's ear. Twelve and six is rather a lot for a book of this size. Could it not be re-issued later in a cheaper edition? And now a word in the ear of Miss Farnell: Dislike of the Germans is not a special qualification for a critic of Spanish literature. And there are hearts (mine is one of them) which are by no means "uplifted" by references to "our Empire's glorious achievements." That is to say, if people cannot write on foreign literature without propaganda, they would do better to give up their present pursuits, and try—well, sailing toy yachts on the Round Pond, let us say.

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The Danish publishing firm of Gyldendal have shown enterprise in establishing a London branch, and something more than enterprise in issuing almost exclusively translations from Scandinavian novelists. But that is not all. They have discovered somebody who can translate Knut Hamsun into good English, whereby they have aroused the delight, the almost inarticulate delight, of Mr. H. G. Wells. In a bare paragraph of "Readers and Writers" it is hardly possible to do justice to this series of exhilarating events. They call rather for an ode with trumpets. But rather these may be kept in reserve for Messrs. Gyldendal's later achievements. I hardly like to obtrude my opinions upon this synod of Vikings, but I cannot refrain from one or two suggestions. In the first place, the Scandinavian writers excel at the short story, and as this does not easily bloom in England, let us have the best of them, translated if possible by the gentleman who has already emerged triumphant from his tussle with Hamsun's Norseness. It is true that the real shapers of English literature, the resolute throng which surges around the counters of Mudies, and brandishes lorgnettes in the parlour of Lord Northcliffe's lending library higher up (or it is lower down?) the road, are alleged to disapprove of volumes of short stories. But surely Messrs. Gyldendal, who, to judge by appearances, have managed to cow English printers and paper merchants into submission, will not flinch from the guinea-a-yearers of New Oxford Street. And, apart from short stories, they will not have done their duty until they produce a translation of Herman Bang's "Haablöse Slaegter" (I leave the title in the original, as no suitable equivalent occurs to me). Then they must bring out a selection from Obstfelder's prose works, and some of Kierkegaard. And then—but that will do to go on with.

Two recent books from America indicate that Czech literature is finding translators and readers there. The first is "Czechoslovak Stories," translated and edited with an introduction by Sárka B. Hrbkova (Duffield and Company, New York. London agents: Hendersons, Charing Cross Road. 7s. 6d.). Miss Hrbkova, who is qualified for her task in particular by being a Czech native of Iowa, has collected stories from ten prominent Czech writers (in spite of the title, Slovak literature is not represented in her volume), and translated them into good English. This is, in itself, a creditable piece of work. Moreover, the choice of material shows competent, if rather conservative, taste. No attempt has been made to indicate what has been done for Czech prose by a daring experimentalist such as Frana Sramek, for instance. Still, here are Neruda, Machar, Jirásek and Ignat Herrman, to mention no more, and perhaps Miss Hrbkova has been wise in omitting the modern impressionists. (Indeed, now I come to think of it, some of Sramek's "Flames" flicker a little too ardently for the great American public.) Miss Hrbkova provides the volume with an excellent introduction of nearly fifty pages, in which she gives a general outline of Czech literature, and there is also a separate notice to each author represented. All this produces an impression of good workmanship, and the same applies to the linguistic and bibliographical appendices. I notice, by the way, that this book is announced as the first volume of "The Interpreter's Series," which is to include similar collections from the Yugoslav, Modern Greek, Portuguese, Chinese, and Lithuanian literatures. Miss Hrbkova has set a good standard for her successors, and if they only maintain it, their work will be a useful addition to any intelligent reader's library.

* * *

The second of the two books in question is "Songs of the Slav. Translations from the Czecho-Slovak" (here, again, Slovak literature, as such, is not represented, and the title might therefore have been more appropriately worded), by Otto Kotouc (Boston, The Poet Lore Company). Mr. Kotouc has translated poems from Kollár, Hálek, Cech, Bezruc and Machar. His task was perhaps more difficult than Miss Hrbkova's, and this may explain why he has performed it with less than her skill. His technique is immature (he rhymes "fragments" with "currents"; "forests" with "crests"; "wish" with "perish"), and he has not been altogether happy in his selections. Thus, the five renderings from Bezruc do not include any of the best, or (what is the same thing), the most typical work of that remarkable poet. (He also makes Bezruc say, "Frigid's my cap," when Bezruc actually says: "I have a Phrygian cap.") But his version of Machar's impressive and sombre poem "On Golgotha" retains the impressive and sombre qualities of the original, and the credit for this success can be divided equally between Mr. Kotouc and Machar. At any rate, it is in this translation that I discern something which is about half-way between promise and fulfilment. It might have advanced further on the way if only Mr. Kotouc had decided what metrical scheme he was going to employ. However, it reveals enough merit to suggest that Mr. Kotouc may reasonably be expected to develop into a good translator of Czech poetry.

P. SELVER.

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[In reply to kind inquiries I hope to be sufficiently recovered from an operation to be able to resume my share in "Readers and Writers" before very long, *circulation permitting*. For it is somewhat dashing to learn, on my return from the shades, that the financial position of the journal is no better than ever. I shall come to the conclusion, after another ten years or so of it, that we are not wanted, but only needed!—R. H. C.]

Drama,

By John Francis Hope.

MISS SYBIL THORNDIKE is an actress who has attracted considerable attention in the Press during the last two or three years; and if theatrical reputations could be made in the Press, instead of in the theatre, she would be as "great" as some of her admirers have declared. Ever since I said that her performance in "The Beaux Stratagem" showed that she had the intelligence of a third-rate actress, her intelligence has been discerned by the most unlikely people (such as "H. W. M." in "The Nation") and in the most unlikely places. But criticism, after all, is the art of telling the truth, while partisanship is an excuse for dispensing with it; and every performance that I see Miss Thorndike give, and I have seen many, tantalises me with the difficulty of finding the exact critical phrase. That fact is a tribute to her power; she is, I think, the most powerful actress on the London stage—but the fact tells us nothing of her quality. For her power, after all, is only a physical endowment, is, or should be, the very thing she manipulates to produce the desired effect. That she could shout or scream the roof off Drury Lane is a fact only to be considered when we want the roof removed from Drury Lane; ordinarily, we do not, and I sometimes wonder whether her power does not constitute an initial handicap She can produce an effect, of a sort, so soon as she appears, and the fact probably disguises from her the real nature of the effect she has produced. She gets the tribute of applause, but never, so far as I know, the tribute of silence; she yells at the audience, and the audience thunders back at her—but the lightning flash of which the thunder is only an effect is never visible.

She is terribly industrious, too; she works not like an artist, who can only do what he wants to do, but like an ambitious person who wants to get on. She will play anything—which is practically a condemnation—and with anybody, which is a proof of bad taste. Another fact to be remembered, which keeps her power on the physical level, is that she has no effect on the people she plays with; they are neither better nor worse for playing with her. In "The Mystery of the Yellow Room," now running at the St. James's Theatre, she has Mr. Lewis Casson and Mr. Nicholas Hannen playing with her, two actors who have been associated with her for some time, notably in the season of matinées of Greek tragedy at the Holborn Empire. Mr. Lewis Casson always gets the "straight" part, while poor Mr. Hannen, like a general utility man, is fobbed off with anything—in this case, with a white wig and whiskers and the reputation of a scientific man. I have seen Mr. Hannen many times during the last three years, have admired his energy, his industry, his general willingness—but he does not improve. He plays Professor Stangerson in this play in a manner that is usually described as "very good for amateurs"; he is conscientiously made up as an old man, but his only idea of age is a degree of infirmity due to rheumatism, and he totters about like an advertisement of someone's backache pills, without for one moment convincing anybody that he is real. Yet old men can be played without rheumatism, as William Farren showed in his performance of Paddy Cullen in "The Doctor's Dilemma," and Fred Kerr is always showing us, but notably in "The Grain of Mustard Seed." It is not that Mr. Hannen's powers as an actor are defective, but that he is slow in the imaginative conception of a character and falls back too often on traditional stage renderings of character parts.

But if Miss Thorndike were really "great," as her admirers allege, it would be impossible for anyone playing with her to give a completely uninspired performance. Actors are sensitive people: they catch moods from one another; and Mrs. Pat Campbell, to take a recent example, elicited subtler work in "Madame Sand" from Mr. Basil Rathbone and Mr. Ivan Samson than I have ever seen them do before. She conveyed to them a sense of imaginative reality; and I dare swear that, for the time, Mr. Rathbone thought that he was de Musset, and that Mr. Samson was sure that he would write the Raindrop Prelude. That is great acting; but Miss Thorndike plays Mathilde Stangerson without suggesting the filial relation, or eliciting Mr. Hannen's really paternal feelings—and the poor young man can only totter about the stage, and break his voice, in a vain attempt to show that science is older than Moses.

But poor as the "Mystery of the Yellow Room" is as a play, and bad as some of the acting is (Mr. Arthur Pusey played the young journalist like a schoolboy reciting his lesson), it was worth doing because it revealed another of Miss Thorndike's limitations. The first act is supposed to represent a Presidential reception in Paris, and Miss Daisy Markham (who is Daisy Markham?), who presents the play, showed us that she did not know what to do with her hands or her fan —so we could only look at her really pretty arms. I had never seen Miss Thorndike in evening dress before, and I certainly wondered how she would behave herself in polite society. Unlike most women, she is unaffected by clothes; an actress like Irene Vanbrugh can tell us what she means by the swing or hang of a skirt, and she really seems to alter with the fashions. But Miss Thorndike is Miss Thorndike whatever she wears—her sense of clothes is as elementary as that of a girl at boarding school. She can do nothing with evening dress but wear it, and when she has anything to express, her technique is not modified to suit her attire, or the time or place. Her jumps and starts of apprehension of the nearness of her husband seemed ludicrously incongruous with her attire; she was gauche, and her sense of the theatre deserted her when she obviously tried to play the dramatic lady.

I do not know whether I can make it clear, but she betrays at every turn the consciousness of a working woman. So long as she has something to do that might fall to the lot of a woman to do (whether it is pretending to nurse a baby, as in "Napoleon," or nagging at an immoral hussy, as in "The Trojan Women," or acting as a secretary, as in the second act of "The Mystery of the Yellow Room"), she is convincing; give her something to do, and she can do it. Even on a sick-bed in "The Children's Carnival," she could produce the slight harshness of a consumptive's voice, the physical exhaustion and the facile maternal emotions of a working woman. So-called "character" parts are distinguished by their "business," and she knows how to play the "business." But that higher form of acting, the character creation by the expression of moods in style (it is really a lift from the physical to the psychological level), she is incapable of; one knows what she means to do, but what she is prevents her from doing it. As Hecuba, she could only nag at Helen, as an old woman might be supposed to nag a younger one; but in so doing, she betrayed a lack of tragic sense or style, betrayed the fact that her imagination conceived of Troy as being very like the slums of Manchester.

One comes back to Carlyle's description of Mirabeau: she is not great, but large. Her range of effects is very wide—but we know where they come from. In "The Mystery of the Yellow Room," she has her great scene in the third act, avoiding the embraces of her husband while lying on a sofa? She works hard at it, throws herself about in most uncomfortable positions—and one remembers Miss Doris Keane's famous fight against a kiss in "Romance." But she does not play the scene with the same effect, in spite of the fact that Mr. Franklin Dyall, who plays with her, is a far better actor than Mr. Owen Nares, who played with Miss Doris Keane when I saw her. Miss Thorndike is only

play-acting, industriously, vigorously, efficiently, if you like; but she is not electrifying the audience with the sense of inevitable reality as Miss Keane did. London will not flock to see this kissing scene as it did to see "Romance"; it has not the same dramatic quality. One comes back to the judgment again and again; she has power, but not raised to the nth degree of genius. She knows and can do all the technical tricks, but is incapable of creation. She remains provincial (she even retains her accent), because she does what the public has already applauded—instead of compelling it to applaud a new personality. She is derivative, and not creative; and is of more interest to history than to drama.

The Individual.

By Denis Saurat.

THE POET: At our birth and at each decision we take in life, we reject a great number of possibilities, which, however, remain in our potential. In response to the appeal of certain circumstances or people, some of our possibilities usually under the control of our habitual personality assert themselves in us. We then assume a different personality. But when our usual personality returns, we find ourselves in a false situation: we have to keep the promises, and bear the responsibility of the acts, of the usurping personality. Hence lies and unfaithfulness, without malice prepense, but natural. Hence the fundamental unreliability of most men, who are not sufficiently masters of their own characters to keep down intruding personalities.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The possibilities thus rejected by each are infinite for each. They interpenetrate one another, and thus constitute an external common unconscious. The Potential belongs to no one individual. There is no limit between the self and the not-self. Our feeling of an outside world is the sense that some of our possibilities are not realised and that some are.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: This is the law of contraries, and how they attract each other. A being has some fundamental tendency. He knows himself, that tendency becomes to him commonplace, exhausted, and a hindrance to his other desires. In consequence the highest and most conscious part of him takes their side, in as far as it can (although the fundamental tendency is still preserved). Thus one being is compact of contraries. A tendency is a limitation, which a being often needs to escape from; the opposite extreme is the most useful quality to that being; and he possesses himself of it.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: The difference between one individual and another comes from the proportion in which each consents to limit himself—to suffer—in order to actualise and intensify himself; the measure in which he consents to work. The more a being limits itself, the more intense it becomes, the more of the Potential it casts out: the more it suffers.

THE METAPHYSICIAN (again): Each being, each desire, develops on its own plane; it cannot pass up to another plane of being: that would be to cease from being itself. But in its own plane, in its inexhaustible capacity for subdivision, each being has infinite development open to it: the only infinite it desires. Never does it want, never is it able, to change itself; it only desires to express itself more and more, such as it is.

THE POET: Thus, after death, vile beings will continue to express their vile desires subdivided into vile ideas.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST (on old age): A desire, the desire of physical voluptuousness, having transformed itself into diverse other desires and into ideas, falls and ceases. It was the principal desire behind the body. Its co-desires continue their existence and keep up the common expression—the body. But the disappearance of their chief creates numerous obstacles to their existence. In the ensuing struggle, each one, more or less rapidly, reaches its own perfection. One by one, they fall, they sleep. They give up that mode of expression, the body, which exhausts them, perfects them, kills them.

THE POET: They sleep, to wake up again, and then, their chief, sexual desire, being no longer present, having been finally subdivided, they build for themselves a new vehicle of expression, easier, suppler, more pliable to their wants, than the body.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Thus a being dies in old age, gradually. Sexual desire is the principal desire in the body: life on earth is sexual life. When it disappears, in old age, the expression must change: death is coming.

THE POET: Childhood is the gradual appearance of the desires of a being: the world refuses to be hustled: it only consents to take a new being into account little by little. The introduction of a new being is a gradual and regular struggle.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: There are in us numerous secondary desires which need to be expressed. If they are not, they fill us with their dissatisfaction. From this arises the necessity for regular occupations and physical labour, for those secondary desires are chiefly expressed in the actions of the body. Their dissatisfaction causes illness. Being hardly conscious, they are easily forgotten, with evil results. They only allow us to work at our higher expressions when they are appeased. And with their collaboration, higher desires may be better expressed.

THE POET: So in society must the masses, the gathering of the innumerable secondary desires of mankind, be occupied and satisfied.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Many of our deeper feelings hardly become conscious. They become apparent in our actions. Anyone who would judge us by the relation between our conscious feelings and our actions would find us senseless.

THE POET: Sometimes, in moments of great calm, before sleep, in dreams, we perceive the summits of those deeper feelings, like islands appearing in some universal low tide.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: As our ideas, subdivided from us after our death, will no longer be conscious of us, thus we no longer know those cosmic feelings which carry us and make us act. They are parts of immense beings, anterior to us, of whom we are points.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST: Even our willed actions correspond to deeper feelings than those which seem to inspire them. Our non-willed actions must correspond to deeper feelings still, which perhaps constitute destiny.

THE METAPHYSICIAN: Which express themselves through us to become conscious: perhaps that is the aim of our life.

THE METAPHYSICIAN (again): The unconscious is the presence in individuals of the universal desires. It does not concern men, but universes. It is an error to look to the unconscious part of a man for his true personality. The unconscious is not personal; it is vague; it is not so powerful as the conscious. When drawn into light, nothing very high or very desirable is obtained. Its power comes from its immense mass. It is not man's aim to draw into light the great vague desires of the universes upon which we live, but only the parts of those desires we have chosen as our own, and concentrated upon. To cultivate the unconscious is going backwards. It is the cosmological heresy, which consists in trying to realise the world's desires, not ours; in giving ourselves up to become the universe. Universal desires have reached in their sphere—an unconscious one for us—the intensity they are capable of. We force and warp them when we try to draw them higher, to make them into the essential parts of our beings; they are the larger and least important; the centre of our life is not in them. Our languages are not made for them, and do them wrong. The work of man is on the next higher stage: he has only to enjoy world desire, not to express it.

Rural Walks.

By C. E. Bechhofer.

THE reason I went for a walk through rural England last June is rather sentimental and personal, but yet in a way connected with the conclusion of the war. I have my whole life gone about with the feeling of a distinctly Teutonic flavour to my existence, due to my name and no other cause whatever. I have never been quite able to persuade myself that—except for my name—I was as English as most people. I was born and brought up in London, and my home-life as a boy was as English as possible; my mother and my mother's relations were wholly English and I never heard a word of any other language. But the sentiment that I was a sort of foreigner nevertheless remained strong in me, until recently the death of my father threw me back with a jerk upon the very English side of my family. A talk with my only surviving grandfather took me into a new world of consanguinity. As forebears, he referred me to the Robertses, the Roffs and the Durmans; and a natural curiosity prompted me to see to what extent my hitherto unsought and unrevealed relatives were to be found in the country: I mean the rural country. Now that the war was over it was possible to commence the search.

The Robertses, of course, are not a family, but a clan, dispersed throughout the British Isles and especially in North Wales, in which district, I understand, one family in every twenty is a Roberts. To look for my family needle of blood-origin in this haystack would, I decided, be labour lost, so I left the Roberts strain unexplored. My Grandmother Roff, according to report, was the daughter of a Russian revolutionary exile, whose real name, Orlov, had been corrupted by English tongues into "Roff." My first instinct, though I had no ground for the supposition, was to dismiss this derivation as a myth; in any case, Orlovs in Russia are as common as Robertses in England, and I did not feel that I should receive much enlightenment by pursuing this clue to my ancestry. There remained the Durmans. This name, my great-grandmother's, besides being less generally distributed than the others, was made still more distinctive by the fact that the place whence this branch of the family came was known. My grandfather told me that he remembered having gone, in his early days, seventy or more years ago, to stay with his mother's relatives at their farm near Harting, which is, as he explained to me, a village in Sussex, close to the Hampshire border, near the market-town of Petersfield and about sixty miles south-west of London. With this information I thought that I would go to Harting and search out my great-grandmother's records. Perhaps some Durmans would still be there; perhaps the family had died out. In any case, the search seemed well worth while for itself alone, and this was the motive for my journey.

England has not been the same since the beginning of the war. Every day I go about I feel that I am living in a country that is geographically familiar to me, but whose inhabitants have changed and are changing beyond recognition. For this reason everything I see and hear in England—in the streets of the towns or in the country lanes, in tram, tube or taxi, farmhouse or café—seems to me interesting. I feel as if I were really in a foreign country, whose language I speak but whose manners are often new and strange. Under the old appearances new currents are working, so if I seem prolix in my account of what I saw and heard on my journey through the South of England in search of my forefathers, I hope that my readers will perhaps be able to find some of the interest in my adventures which I did myself.

My journey to Waterloo Station was a little unorthodox. Near Oxford Street I approached a man driving a van and asked him the best way to Waterloo. He at once replied that he was going that way and offered me a lift in his van, in the style of the eighteenth century. I climbed up. People who walk or motor or travel on omnibuses through London's main streets have no conception how different these seem to one riding in a horse-van. The roads become full of strange and terrific dangers. One moves in a maelstrom of threatening collisions, runnings over, slips on a too polished roadway, hasty pullings up and bumpings upon kerbstones and cobbles. "It ain't no manner o' use driving down here with one hand," said my new acquaintance. "This teaches you how to twist 'em." A policeman put out his hand and detained us at a crossing, while motor-omnibuses and private motor-cars put us in jeopardy on all sides.

"The perlice is all right," explained the van-driver, "so long as you don't give 'em no back talk. If you give 'em back talk, they gits your number up, an' then you're done for. But if yer don't give 'em no back talk, the perlice is all right."

I suggested that driving down the Waterloo Road, which we had now reached, must be amazingly difficult, with its traffic and slime and tramlines and other obstacles.

"Lor' bless you," he said, "I've a good little mate between the shafts. 'E's a good little mate to me and 'e knows 'ow to get about. W'y, the Waterloo Road's as good as a 'oliday to him after the City. That's the place where you've got to twist 'em."

He then informed me that his horse was now about to call in for its usual half-pint. I looked astonished at this suggestion of equine intemperance, but my informant explained with a laugh that he meant only that his horse would not pass any drinking-trough without a drink; "No, not if you offered 'im twenty thousand pounds, 'e wouldn't." And after the horse had had his usual "half-pint" we reached Waterloo Station and the carman put me down with a friendly farewell.

Of the journey in the train from London to Petersfield I do not propose to write. It is a fairly safe rule that the quicker one travels the less enjoyable the journey is. To enjoy travelling the best way is to walk; one observes more, has more amusing encounters and can adapt oneself best to the accidents of the moment. Riding comes next; but already you are as much saddled by the horse as he is by you, and you can no longer gang your ain gait. Cycling is infinitely less agreeable than riding; driving is good, but one is now less independent than ever; the automobile, except as a means of covering ground quickly, is as disagreeable a mode of travelling for the motorist who would like to enjoy his surroundings as it is to everyone else upon the road. An aeroplane is soon monotonous; but worst of all is the train. Caged in the pitiably ugly compartments of a train, confined to a road that has long since been scorched and spoiled, together with the whole visible surrounding countryside, dragged at a rate you cannot control in company you cannot choose, the traveller has long ceased to look for pleasure in railways. Once, travelling by train through the Caucasus, I heard some wild music coming from beside the track and through the window I saw in the corner of a meadow a Cossack dancer leaping and twirling to the notes of a native pipe, surrounded by a little crowd of local admirers. I would have given anything to be able to join the circle, but, by the time I had begun to appreciate the amazing skill of the man's dancing, our puffing monster had dragged us out of sight of him. Again, motoring once down the steep mountain road from Kashmir into the Indian plains, and turning a corner, there came to our ears a delicious sound of music. We looked hastily up the hillside—one acquires rough and hasty movements in this fast mechanical travelling—and there in a grassy dell a few yards away from the road were two little shepherd boys with their flocks around them, engaged in a contest of melody. The one who had just played was holding his pipe in his hand and listening to his companion, who was

piping most tunefully. They did not trouble to look up as we rushed by, and once again I only realised what a pleasure I had missed when we had passed by too far to turn back.

But one thing at least the train did give us on the way to Petersfield, and this was the sharp bite of the country air which rushed in while we were still in the suburbs of London. Even the air of London City cannot wholly destroy the atmosphere of those of its suburbs which twenty or thirty years ago were quiet country villages.

Arrived at Petersfield, I drew my haversack on my back and sought the road to Harting. Petersfield appeared a small and snug market town of some 4,000 inhabitants, with a road or two of small shops straggling past the old market-place and the church. It was market-day, but, as the afternoon was well advanced, most of the business was over. There was still enough bustle in the square, however, to hold a newcomer. The noise was enormous. At two corners of the square were cows bellowing for their calves, which had been taken from them. Countryfolk do not heed this noise, but to townsmen it is one of the most heartbreaking of all sounds. In the middle of the square three or four farmers and their drovers and boys were trying to sort out their purchases from a herd of sheep, under the amused gaze of a sergeant and three or four men of the Hampshire Constabulary. Some of the sheep, frightened by the sudden invasion of a barking sheepdog, made a bolt for freedom in my direction. An old drover in a dirty smock ran rheumatically across their path, shouting shrilly, "Woa, you boy-oys! Woa, boy-oys!" His appearance sent the sheep back, and they scampered across a pile of hurdles towards the church. There followed a scene of wild confusion; sheep, dogs, farmers, and boys were all joined in a confused mêlée. While it was in progress I went and inspected a handsome statue in the middle of the market place. It represented a man riding a horse in a Roman toga—surely an uncomfortable costume. What made it attractive was that the laurel fillet in his hair, his spurs, the bridle, the horse's shoes, and a band tied round the horse's tail were all of polished brass, which contrasted pleasantly with the lead-coloured stone. A long Latin inscription informed me that the subject was William III, called of Orange, and that the statue had been erected by a local dignitary. By the time I had learned these historic facts the fight of the farmers and the sheep had ended in the inevitable victory of the former. Two drovers were dragging by the hind legs a pair of remarkably fat and sturdy sheep who had been the ringleaders of the mutiny. The other animals, their followers, had been split up into three companies and were being driven off in as many different directions by their new masters. The market was seemingly at an end, and, asking my way, I walked out of the little town down a country road.

It was a fine, warm evening, and ambling in the winding lane was pleasant. I soon left all trace of Petersfield behind. A few farms dotted the pleasant countryside, while a mile or two in front of me were the rounded outlines of the high Downs. Through a gap in the hedge on one side of the lane I caught an oblique glimpse of the verandah and part of the croquet lawn of a picturesque little country house. Two old ladies, primly clad in black, drove slowly past in a governess-cart. A mile further on, I came to a cottage, where a robust old countryman who was drawing water from a well raised his head to look at me and to call out a good evening. The road which had been tarred and smooth was now suddenly succeeded by one of dust and pebbles, and I guessed that I had reached the county boundary between Hampshire and Sussex. Climbing a steep hill rather painfully, for the long drought of April and May made the untarred road cruel going, I came at the top to a pleasant view. The high and rolling outlines of the Downs filled three sides of the prospect before me, with an opening in the direction of the sea, and just below where I stood was the village of Harting. It was exquisitely situated in the green and sheltered valley. The red-tiled farms and houses and the green-tiled church spire around which they were grouped nestled comfortably under the protecting hills. Long curving walls gave the village a lively shape. The place looked happy and prosperous. It has been said of Harting that it is "perhaps the most satisfying village in all Sussex." My first sight of it confirmed this judgment.

(To be continued.)

Indiscretions; or, Une Revue de Deux Mondes.

By Ezra Pound.

VIII.

IT comes over me (it should probably come in parentheses) how much they must have talked politics. That Julia Crump should prognosticate official position is one thing, but that a child of six should lift up its miniature rocking-chair and hurl it across the room in displeasure at the result of a national election can only have been due to something "in the air"; to some preoccupation of its elders; and *not* to its own personal and rational deductions regarding the chief magistracy of the Virgin Republic.

In this case it may have been that I was genuinely oppressed by the fear that my father would lose his job and that we should all be deprived of sustenance. It was in the days before "Civil Service," and an appalling percentage of Government employees were almost automatically "fired" as a "natural result" of every change in administration; fired after perhaps thirty years' service and with no prospects of a pension.*

Thadeus might have been expected to discuss the subject—I have no recollection of Thadeus, or of anything his save his beard—I am thinking of Uncle Amos, his lot. He was travelling in the South before the "war," and was caught there, presumably, by it; at any rate, there remain his permits to pass through the Rebel lines—but thirty years later, seeing that he never held office, that he never *did* anything political——! I give it up. I merely feel that in the years before I remember anything there must have been an infinite discussion of "Demys" and "G.O.P."

Amos and Mr. Fouquet can't have changed the subject, from the opening of the Easton until the years of their deaths. Note that Mr. Fouquet was old French Louisiana, and "red hot Tammany," and that his bald head and drooping, double-length Bourbon or Chauncey Depew nose and white whiskers were separated from Uncle Amos' chubby, black-whiskered visage by only one place at table—that of Mrs. Fouquet, stiff, plump, encased in dull green with brown reflêts, or dull brown with dull green reflêts, and in either case a good deal of braid, and a perfectly non-committal, good-humoured, stiff little smile. And that Uncle Amos was solid Republican, and that for at least two meals every day for fifteen years there must have been an uninterrupted flow of facetious insult, and that they must have found it "essential," or at any rate the survivor must have found it essential, as he only survived seven months.

But it, the politics and the jocularity, must have been the tone of some period or other, some period that read "Puck" and "Judge," and that is mirrored in the drawings and crude (? Rowlandson gone to the bad) colours of those back numbers. I don't mean that I actually remember seeing my Uncle Amos reading a copy of "Judge," or even in possession of same, or that Mr. Fouquet quoted the Tammany publication, but there must have been some aroma of the untempered "illustrated joke" about niggers and hen-coops,

* The Civil Services are still unpensioned in U.S.A.

and of the cartoons of the symbolic Elephant and Mule that was germane to their jocularity, the shrill, high, normal tone of Fouquet, ascending to pure Punch and Judy or dropping to a false double-bass (it is just possible that this was done for my benefit and that he did not use it in "ordinary conversation," but I doubt this hypothesis. I adored both him and my great-uncle.), playing into Amos' fruity chuckle, and all about God alone knows what, about Tammany, about Chauncey Depew, or having to do with High Tariff.

But they all must have "talked politics," even old Quackenbush, who looked like Napoleon III, and was, presumably, put at the head of "the other long table" because he lacked humour, or was too solemn to keep his temper in facetious conversation.

I want merely to indicate a factor, both in what must have been the tone of a generation, and in the milieu from which Miss Hermione fled to the Saw Tooth, preceded by that serene and stately presence, Mary Beaton.

They always thought it ought to be "done"—i.e., that someone should put "it" (Hailey and environs, and Mary Beaton on the plank walk, and Blue-Dick and the rest of the "characters") into " a story"—i.e., the form of washed-out Maupassant with the "humour" and pathos and nice feelings and bell in the last ¶, which the then American monthlies offered in lieu of literature. They, of course, couldn't do it; it enriched their table talk for life, but it couldn't be passed on to magazine writers . . . " of course Owen Wister," etc. There were stories about the West—what they had was aroma and anecdotes: " Kentucky Hardware," for example, who called it that because he didn't want "his folks home" to know what he was doing; the man who sawed wood one week and when subsequently invited to repeat the operation (ten days' interval), said: "Saaw wud? Saaaw WUD!! Saay, Rip, dew yew wanter gao Eest an' sell-a-mine, Rip? I got ten-thousan'-in-the bank."

This fable indicates the mutability of fortune in new land where silver is digged from the earth. There was likewise the scenery, miles of it, miles of real estate, "most of it up on end"; Shoshonee Falls "bigger than Niagara"—either upwards or sideways, but for some reason neglected by fashion.

Of course they didn't, couldn't "do anything with it"; in the first place they hadn't the "seein' eye," and in the second an anecdote, as the change in Hank Bains's fortunes, is merely the sort of thing that has occurred in cheap imaginative work since the beginning of time; the only possible interest inheres in its being the man who is sawing wood in *your* backyard at the moment, and not in Bagdad or Ispahan. It might become literature if one knew Hank's circumstantial or psychological vicissitudes before "gold was struck" on his claim, or melodrama if "Rip" had been a cruel oppressor or hated cinema "rival."

When I say they hadn't the "seein' eye" I mean that they never succeeded in conveying the visual appearance of any one of their characters as distinct from any other. There was an almost complete lack of detail. Horace Morgan the gambler wore a long black coat (? frock) down to his knees; Blue Dick may have owed the adjective to an accident with blasting powder; of Curley, Poison, and Mike Bennet, nothing remains but the indications of nomenclature; of the variations from cinema cow-boy "rig-out" (i.e., habiliment) to that of miner's clothing—apart from the fact that the miner in action carried sticks of dynamite in his boots—to the variants of presumably "wrong-fitting" store clothes one has but scantiest indication. There is a photograph of "Rip" at somewhat later period, presumably formal in intention, which shows him in a presumably expensive but very queerly cut "pair of pants," but their form may have been temporal and not exclusively regional, or at least the factors may have blended . . . or, simply, the tailor may have calculated for the foot-wear.

I have the impression that a certain percentage of the community was tattooed—not, of course, over the whole surface of the body. And—while dwelling on foot-wear—it would seem that a considerable majority of the citizens died while wearing the article. This impression is probably due to " Western exaggeration"; I don't suppose the town can have lost more than, say, 10 per cent. of its early population from pistol shots. For example, when Blue Dick wanted to get Rip out of a mine he didn't shoot him, he merely rolled a boulder on to his feet, thus necessitating removal for treatment. This was probably chivalrous consideration for Hermy . . . besides, he didn't dislike Rip, he merely wanted the mine.

Views and Reviews.

A POTTED PLAYWRIGHT.

SHAW himself began it with his " Quintessence of Ibsenism"; Pelissier adapted the process to produce his "Potted Plays"; but I think that Mr. Duffin* has gone too far in his attempt to boil down a playwright. We do not all, like the little girl in the advertisement, prefer a quintessence to an organism. Besides, quintessences are sui generis, and tell us nothing to the point concerning the works from which they are extracted. For even if we admit that Mr. Duffin has correctly interpreted Shaw's ideas, as expressed in his novels and plays, the fact remains that the intellectual content of a work of art is its least important constituent; the author's meaning is negligible compared with his effect—indeed, his effect may be widely different from his meaning. The human organism, we are told, is constituted of twenty-one different systems, arranged into three groups of seven, interacting ad infinitum; even if the author knows what he intended to communicate (and Shaw told us, apropos of Ibsen, that a creative artist never does understand his own work at the time of creation), he does not know what he actually has communicated. Shaw has frequently thought that he was communicating Puritanical ideas, as in " The Devil's Disciple," for example, when he was really making a delightful contribution to high comedy in the person of General Burgoyne. He has thought, again and again, that he was making a contribution to philosophy, social philosophy particularly, when he was really communicating that æsthetic pleasure in the exercise of the intellect that is called the comic spirit. It simply does not matter, for example, whether Shaw really does or does not think that " home is the child's prison and the woman's workhouse"; what does matter is that the phrase shatters the mood of reticence concerning "sacred" things, and forces domesticity into the arena of discussion. I have seen people who, ordinarily, never mentioned their homes without raising their hats, become fiercely explanatory of their domestic arrangements in the attempt to prove that Shaw was wrong—to the delight of those who cared less about Shaw's meaning than his effects. The quintessence of Shaw's effect, as I understand it, is not that he has conveyed any particular meaning (he has conveyed too many), but that he has made everything questionable, trusting that reason will clear the way for inspiration.

Taking this point of view, there is no reason why we should commit Shaw's own fatal error of taking him seriously. It does not matter whether Shaw's theory of the spider-woman who must have children is, or is not, true (Shaw contradicted it himself when he declared that "marriage is now beginning to depopulate the country with alarming rapidity"); what does matter is, that apart from the comedic value of the conception, it helped to destroy the theory of the psychological identity of the sexes which was then the basis of the

* "The Quintessence of Bernard Shaw." By Henry Charles Duffin. (Allen and Unwin. 6s. 6d. net.)

feminist movement. It made clear the fact that a woman's full powers are exhibited only under emotional stress, while emotional stress inhibits the full expression of a man's distinctive powers. Byron stated the idea in a phrase not easily forgotten :—

Man's love is of man's life a thing apart:
'Tis woman's whole existence.

The modern psychologist who says that "woman is only sexual: man is also sexual," is expressing the same idea. It is really a commonplace of human knowledge, and, like most commonplaces, it is only remembered by a genius. The spider-woman hypothesis is not so true as it was, because we are certainly developing a type of woman who corresponds to the virgin worker-bee—even the type of chorus-girl has changed from the full-chested, fat-legged Juno of musical comedy to the anæmic, flat-chested, long-legged abortion of revue. Shaw really wrote of the conflict between sexual and intellectual passion—and the fact that this generation contains a large number of people incapable of passion, limited to velleity, does not alter the fact that, wherever these passions exist, they will be in conflict.

But admitting that this is Shaw's meaning, it tells us nothing of his effect. He has analysed marriage into its two constituents of conjugation and domesticity, and tried, but failed, to arrange a modus vivendi between them. It required an European war to make conjugation without domesticity possible on a large scale, and the results are commonly described as "deplorable" or "disastrous." There is no need, of course, to attribute the peculiar conjugal relations engendered by the war to Shaw's teaching; they were phenomena common to all wars; and the effect of Shaw's work on this subject must again be limited to the theatre. He has written some of the most brilliant comedy in English literature on the subject of incompatibility in marriage, he has expounded every likely and unlikely solution of the problem, he has brought the subject into play again—and, while believing himself to be a feminist, has smashed the feminist contribution to literature. For it was only when women forced themselves on to the stage, as well as in the theatre, that what was called the "licentiousness" of comedy (it was really an intellectual treatment of sex) became modified, the "moral test" was imposed, and marriage as an institution was treated with the reverence due to a mystery. The assumption of intellectual comedy was, in Stevenson's phrase, that "marriage is like life in this, that it is a field of battle and not a bed of roses"; but "sentimental comedy" insists on the bed of roses, the state of bliss, that Shaw's whole work has laughed to scorn. The quintessence of Shaw's effect, on this subject, is not, in my opinion, that he has contributed anything of value to the solution of the practical problems of marriage; but that he has restored the comedic state of mind, that free play of the intellect on emotional states, in which alone solutions are possible.

Mr. Duffin points to one curious omission from Shaw's plays which still more obviously restricts his effect to the theatre: "of the industrial system, he has little to say—there is a caustic hint or so in 'Major Barbara' and elsewhere, but the awful thing does not oppress his soul as it should." Shaw's own analysis of the psychology of the artist would suggest that it is precisely because the industrial system does "oppress his soul" that he cannot write about it—it is his one failure of overcoming, for that he hates the system and all it connotes, no one acquainted with his general work can doubt. But he cannot get his mind free from it, to play over it as he has played with marriage, and war, and religion. The horror of the industrial system lies precisely in the fact that it does "oppress the soul," because it is conceived tragically as an inevitable development of human nature; but the conception of human dignity that Shaw holds, and expounds in so many other affairs, makes slavery ridiculous—and that he has not seen the possibility of changing the state of mind in which the industrial system is regarded as being tragically inevitable into the state in which it can be regarded comically as corrigible, is a serious limitation of his effect. A discussion play as well written as his "Getting Married," for example, would lift the whole thing out of the realm of feeling into the realm of intellect; we can all rage against the industrial system, the most acute minds, like those expressed in the editorial pages of THE NEW AGE, can criticise and analyse the fundamental processes and assumptions, but until the load is lifted from our shoulders, until the comic spirit has played about it and showed us that the inevitable is only a state of feeling that is ridiculous, until we can laugh at the industrial system we are not likely to change it. It is not the tragedy, but the absurdity, of the capitalist system that we need to be shown; when we discover that an association covering 99 per cent. of the total British output of an important steel product actually provides a handsome income for one of its firms for producing nothing at all, fines those firms who produce more than their quota and gives a bonus to those who produce less, we are confronted with a type of mind that is simple idiotic—and not until we see that the capitalist system of production for profit is idiotic shall we feel equal to the task of superseding it. "John Bull's Other Island," and the figure of Mangan in "Heartbreak House," show us that Shaw is quite capable of a free play of the intellect on financial matters; but he has not yet tackled, so far as I know, the absurdity of a system of production that pays its members not to produce. He can leave the tragedy of the industrial system to Galsworthy, we want the comedy of it from him—and until he provides it, the rest of his work is without solid foundation.

A. E. R.

Reviews.

Inspiration. By J. Herbert Williams. (Sands and Co.)

It is a pity that such a subject as this should be dealt with by a man committed by his Church to the doctrine of plenary inspiration of Scripture. Mr. Williams is a Catholic, and his book has received the Imprimatur at Edinburgh; and knowing his sect, we anticipate his argument, we know that he cannot come to any conclusion contrary to his creed. We know that he cannot admit a theory which would say in Byron's phrase:

'Tis every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
And accurate as any other vision.

It is his self-appointed task to suggest a modus operandi for the Catholic doctrine of verbal inspiration of Scripture; and he accepts the working analogy of automatic writing, but only as an analogy. Automatic writing is certainly not included among the diversities of gifts of the Spirit; but as the Bible happens to be a book which, ex hypothesi, is verbally inspired, inspiration by the Spirit must obviously be extended to literary activity. Whether it extends to the copying of the text, or, if not, which is the originally inspired text, are questions more easily asked than answered. Why one should suppose that St. Paul, for example, was equally inspired when he spoke "not by commandment" as when he "spoke by commandment," and particularly why his and the other Biblical writers' assurance of their Divine inspiration should be accepted; and not that of a modern mystic like Swedenborg who made the same claim, are difficulties that Mr. Williams does not solve to the satisfaction of those not of his communion. The fact is that the doctrine raises more doubts than it can solve; why should we suppose that St. Luke, for example, was Divinely inspired to give us the ipsissima verba of the Magnificat that he never heard, and which Mary did not

tell him, as Mr. Williams shows conclusively? What reason (except that of maintenance of the doctrine of verbal inspiration, which is argument in a vicious circle) can we have for believing that the Magnificat is any other than a literary treatment of events comparable with that used by other historians? Nobody supposed (because he is not obliged to suppose) that Thucydides gives us the ipsissima verba of Alcibiades' speech to the Spartans, or Pericles' orations to the Athenians; and nothing but an acceptance of the teaching of the Catholic Church can make admissible to human reason the argument that the Magnificat is so rendered. It is the doctrine of verbal inspiration itself that needs exposition and proof, and Mr. Williams dare not attempt that.

Touch and Go. By D. H. Lawrence. Plays for a People's Theatre, No. 2. (Daniel. 3s. 6d. net.)

The People's Theatre does not exist, and these plays are suitable for production in it. Mr. Lawrence has even less sense of the theatre than Mr. Goldring, and his rambling preface is repeated in his rambling play. Apparently he deplores the struggle between Labour and Capital; and if the trend of the text is accepted, he believes that Capital is perfectly willing to lead Labour by the hand, but it won't be driven to do so by threats. If the miners threaten to strike in support of the clerks' demand for increased wages, the employer, although willing to grant the increase, will refuse to yield to force. But after about three thousand miners have trodden on his face (a simply absurd scene which only reveals that Mr. Lawrence mistakes an attempt at disgusting brutality for dramatic strength), he is willing to be reasonable if Labour will only find leaders that he is able to respect. We reach this conclusion after three acts of haranguing, public and private, with a peculiar domestic interior to divert us. If Mr. Lawrence would try the simple experiment of reading his play aloud, he would discover that he knows nothing of dramatic speech, while his characters are drawn from the dustbin.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

CURRENCY AND CREDIT.

Sir,—Are not the explanations of Mr. Baker and "C. H. D." of the house-building illustration defective? If Mr. Baker's adventure were manipulated so that the price charged included the interest due to the banker then £70 worth of house would be purchasable by *that* factor in production, and the two totals would then balance. And with regard to "C. H. D.'s" argument as to the "cost of living," would not the purchasing power expended in this way be merely passed on to other producers who would be able, in the ultimate, to spend it in buying that portion of the house represented by that share in the cost of the house?

W. W. HILL.

[No. *Prices* represent a *taking back* from the public, sometimes through a long chain of hands, of *costs*, i.e., purchasing power distributed *to* the public via production. The only real source of this purchasing power is credit. So long as the individual's credit (effective demand) is taken from him by the cost of living, which is past production, he cannot control, i.e., buy, current or future production. The credit-value of current and future production is entirely in the hands of the financial process.—C. H. D.]

* * *

Sir,—Mr. A. E. Baker's letter is worth following up. In his little community, let us suppose there are no such things as interest, dividends, and profits, and also I have £1,000 in cash and run the only bank. Let us suppose that by some jiggery-pokery I can make my £1,000 into £3,000. I lend the £3,000 to Mr. Jones to build three houses, who pays Mr. Robinson £1,500 for bricks and pays £1,500 to workmen to put the bricks together. Mr. Robinson, let us say, gets his bricks for nothing, and the workmen live on fresh air during the building operations. The Cost Price of the three houses is £3,000, and Mr. Robinson and the workmen can afford under these stated conditions to buy the houses from Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones sells out for £3,000, and pays back this money to myself. Thus, I have gained £2,000 out of Mr. Jones's enterprise and my jiggery-pokery.

Let us suppose, now, Mr. Dennis Milner sees through my little game (or, if he cannot do that, determines to learn by experience), and opens a rival bank. By the same jiggery-pokery he makes his £1,000 into £3,000, and lends the money to Mr. Jones to build three more and similar houses. The Cost Price as before is £3,000. But in this case, Mr. Dennis Milner forgoes £1,000 made by jiggery-pokery, and demands of Mr. Jones only £2,000 in return. Then the Selling Price of the three houses is £2,000, i.e., £1,000 below the Cost Price. The Just Price, however, is still only £1,000.

That this jiggery-pokery is a fact is, I understand, Major C. H. Douglas's argument. This artful business relies for its effect on the power of monopoly and the confidence trick.

Lastly, Sir, I gather from your Notes that there is no need to understand all the intricacies of the argument before taking action. The banks make money and increase in power enormously out of their business, and that alone should be sufficient *for the moment* to induce the trade unions to open up a rival bank.

E. C. B.

* * *

"HOLBEIN BAGMAN."

Sir,—Those of your oldest readers who remember the piquant articles of one who was of your early writers will regret to learn that "Holbein Bagman" died of enteric here on June 4. "Holbein Bagman," or, to give him his daily designation, Professor P. E. Richards, the acting Principal of the Islamic College, Lahore, was born in 1875, and first earned his living as a journalist at Exeter. During that period of his activity, developing an interest in comparative religion, he attained to the desire of preacherhood. With this intent, he contrived to go to Jesus College, Oxford, and, after graduaing, to Manchester College to train as a Unitarian Minister. Until 1911, when he arrived in India, he had pulpits at Halifax and Walsall. In 1911, he became Professor of English at the Dyal Singh College in Lahore, and four years later accepted a similar post at the Islamia, where during the absence of Professor Martin he officiated as Principal. In his professional capacity here he was, among many other things, a member of the Board of English Studies of the Punjab University, and, ever interested in the undergraduate, the Head Examiner for its Matriculation. Such, briefly, was the career of one whose charm and personality will be missed by his greatest friends, his colleagues and students, and no man hath happier praise than that.

Lahore. MORGAN TUD.

* * *

THE KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN.

Sir,—"A. E. R." speaks (THE NEW AGE, July 1) of the "astronomical revelation of the infinity of the universe." This is far too simple. If this has been "revealed" it would be interesting to know when, how, and by whom. Is there any astronomer or physicist of repute who would *to-day* assert, without qualification, the infinity of the universe? The simplicity of the assertion is too great for other reasons. There is the omission, striking on "A. E. R.'s" part, even to refer to the Spencerian dilemma of the inconceivability of either of the apparently only two possible alternatives, and there is the further fault that there is left undetermined the validity of the "axes of reference," the word infinity may itself need to give it a meaning.

To speak of "laws" of the universe or of nature is dangerous. "Law" is no doubt a highly convenient conception, but, outside mathematics, is it possible, in strictness, to say we know *any* law of nature? Not even the Newtonian law of gravitation is secure.

Of the quotation "by 'person' we generally understand the individual *as clearly conscious of itself*, and acting accordingly" (my italics), the psycho-analysts will doubtless have something to say.

G. E. FASNACHT.

Pastiche.

BEHIND THE LINES.

Rain—all the roads are awash with it,
Mud to the limber-axles, churned up by the wheels;
Mud in the camps, all the desolate length of them;
There in the horse-lines—mud.
Even the hills are hid—hid by the cloudbanks;
Stars in the heavens no doubt—the heavens are hidden too.
So I sit in my improvised shelter—the tarpaulin sags in the midst,
Raindrops drip down from it; rivulets flow through below;
All the same chilly discomfort—drab dreariness, ugly and bare.
On the upturned box that serves me for table, a fly,
Last fly of the summer's millions, dying of age and the cold,
Crawls slowly towards the candle. Lighting my pipe, I pause;
With the match 'twixt my fingers I burn the wings of the fly.
For what reason? God knows—or the devil. I am sick and aweary and old,—
Not with the years, but their sadness. Wry then destroy? or why spare?
Did the fly feel? And what matters? We are both fellow-victims of chance,
And the fever is raging within me! my pipe has gone out; I am cold.

. . . . . .

Starlight—a Greek garden in starlight;
Over there the hushed peace of the hills;
It is cold and the ground is frozen; the garden deserted and bare.
Were there roses here once? or lilies? It is years since I saw a flower;
Never a bloom but the poppy, the poisonous poppy that feeds
On the rotting limbs of strong men—on the once fair flesh of boys.
Yet here in the night, 'neath the calm still stars,
Is Beauty—Greek beauty; beauty of marble, things cold and hard and fair.
I am sick of it all; I am sick.

. . . . . .

Have I lived before? Is the past a dream?
Letters from home its echoes—echoes of dreams?
This only is—Life on the skirts of Death,
Marching and fever and danger; the duty that will not wait.
I have dreamed the rest, and my memories
Are memories of things unreal.

. . . . . .

Have I dreamed of Life? This only is my life—
A single unit, hemmed around with force
Blind and destructive. Breathing-space at times,
Whisky and cards, light talk, a careless song;
Fine friendship blossomed in the face of Death,
Broken by Death.

. . . . . .

Have I dreamed of Love? All now I know of Love
Is dark Perversity's unfruitful brood,
Cold lusts that lack even Passion.
Or again—a four days' leave—Salonica,
Shrivelled out of semblance to all womanhood,
A dark foul staircase, at it top a crone,
In broken English eked with gestures out
Tells us the house is full. We damn her, and push in.
The parlour. Half a dozen men,
Tommies like us. Three women—girls perhaps;
Not one of them counts more than twenty years.
But is this girlhood? One climbs upon my knee;
Her lips invite, kiss without passion.
She is tired, yet plies her trade no less;
It is her bread.

I suffer her caresses—up more stairs
She leads me to her chamber. There in that small room,
Which may perhaps have housed a virgin once,
Where still indeed God's mother from the wall
Looks down upon her—there she sells herself.
How many times a day? I did not ask.
Salonica is filled with men who seek
To satisfy their lusts; the brothels garner in
A golden harvest. And the girls are tired.

This is not Love? The gesture is the same;
The highest passion seeks but this same end.
May I know Love hereafter? On my wedding night,
Between my bride's pale purity and me,
Between her pouting lips and mine that search
To wake her sleeping woman's nature there,
Shall not rise up the image of this thing,
These cold lips tired of kisses, and that sex
Aweary of its function?

. . . . . .

Have I dreamed of Fame? While still Death's angel broods
O'er the long lines, Fame seems a little thing.
Or who shall dream of Fame while Fever sits
Throned in the burning brain? Hunger and thirst,
Fatigue and fear, the job that must be done—
These teach Ambition the true worth of Fame.

. . . . . .

Have I dreamed of God? The very name seems strange
When no curse tacks itself thereto.
I do not know. Faith may have once been mine,
Failing Faith, Hope, I neither know nor care.
To-day. Whisky is more to me than God;
It warms me up, it helps me to forget.
Can God do this—even if there be a God?

. . . . . .

These are but memories, as life now resumed
Was then a memory. Else I could not write.
Once more I've seen the Spring bring violets forth,
The apple blossom, the rich-hearted rose.
Once more the peaceful summer's lengthened out
To fruitful autumn, and I've seen the fields
Ripen to harvest. Yet my thoughts have strayed
Back to that other harvest, and my mind has passed
Over those fields now half forgot again
And gleaned therefrom the images ye see.

PAUL DUDLEY HERMITAGE.

THE BLIND DEVIL.

A certain spirit emerges from our unconscious depths when we are morally sick.

It hates the sound of laughter, because it is afraid of being laughed at.

It hates joy, because people may be, somehow, enjoying themselves at its expense.

It hates everything that it does not possess, and most things that are worth possessing.

It is the anti-Dionysian spirit, and it has become a malign power in the human soul since the end of the Dionysian era.

Hitherto, it has wrecked and ruined Christianity, which was meant to include the Dionysian spirit, and to transmute it.

It is afraid of love, afraid of children, afraid of truthful colour and form; afraid of reality and the joy of reality.

It loves . . . . but let us drop a curtain here, and label it "Convention." The things it loves are too stupid to talk about. It thinks they are too terrible to talk about.

It is The-Devil-and-all-His-Works—or practically all.

K. R.

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