

# THE NEW AGE

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
NOTES OF THE WEEK . . . . .	145	VIEWS AND REVIEWS : The Answer to Malthus—	
WORLD AFFAIRS. By M. M. Cosmoi . . . . .	147	IV. By A. E. R. . . . .	154
OUR GENERATION. By Edward Moore . . . . .	148	REVIEWS : Quiet Interior. The Breathless Mo-	
THE DEFEAT OF THE WORKING CLASS ( <i>concluded</i> ).		ment. The Romantic. Communism . . . . .	155
By "Greville" . . . . .	149	LETTER TO THE EDITOR from R. T. Nugent . . . . .	156
DRAMA : Mr. Malatesta. By John Francis Hope . . . . .	151	PASTICHE. By P. A. Mairet, Margaret Sanders,	
READERS AND WRITERS. By Herbert Read . . . . .	152	John Helston, Toomai . . . . .	156
"L'ACTUEL" : An Unpublished Poem. By E. M. . . . .	153	PRESS CUTTINGS . . . . .	156

## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE Pacific and Disarmament Conferences are still being taken with portentous seriousness. But what result can come of any Conference on conventional and official lines? The nations are caught in a pass, of which the inaccessible walls are formed by the hard economic facts. Great Britain, the United States, and Japan *must* have an expanding export trade as a means of providing that "employment" which our economic muddle has made almost an end in itself. There must therefore be relentless competition for the constantly diminishing margin of foreign markets. This in turn can only, in the end, find its solution in war which has the incidental advantage of easing the situation by its wholesale sabotage. It is in fact the safety-valve of capitalism. Now the Powers can only "arrange" the Pacific through one or more of them forgoing the claim to the indispensable expansion, and so closing the safety-valve. Any nation which really did this (and kept its engagements) would be dooming itself to destruction. Its social economy would inevitably explode, either in a violent revolution or in some kind of sensational breakdown of its industrial and financial machinery. The mere generation of international goodwill is not the main problem, nor even the clearing-up of particular misunderstandings; nor anything that any Conference could directly touch. The cause of war is inherent in the economic system, and (given the system) is self-acting and certain. Apart from a radical change of financial policy, the most that any Conference could conceivably do would be to postpone a war for a short time, or to regroup the destined combatants. But to war at no distant date—and on a world-wide scale—mankind, as things stand, is committed. But this does not mean that we are the helpless slaves of mechanical conditions. The economic system, it is true, once it is established, does, independently of human will, assure war; but the system has itself been, consciously or unconsciously, chosen by the human will. That will must awake and, with full consciousness, this time, deliberately choose a sane method of ordering its economic life.

In view of the anticipated General Election, Labour is beginning, *more suo*, to bleat about this international issue like a bewildered sheep. The "Daily Herald" is very sure that "Labour's policy" is equal to "removing the root causes of war." Let us see.

The "policy" is summed up under four heads. Two of these are "democratic control of foreign policy" and "revision of the Peace Treaties." How much good these will do, we have just seen. There follows "the abolition of the system of Economic Imperialism." Like the "abolition" of any other large and amorphous entity (capitalism, for instance), the value of this point lies entirely in its definition, which the "Daily Herald" prudently omits. We should like to know *how* it proposes to abolish it. The only definite guidance we are vouchsafed is in the fourth point, "the establishment of a system of national ownership of capital and industry, and their control by the people." We might go on nationalising this, that, and the other for twenty years, and it would make no difference whatever to the problem of foreign markets, unless the root question of credit-control were directly dealt with. But in order to do this, there is not the slightest need to wait for those Greek Kalends on which the King will send for Mr. Clynes or Mr. Hodges. Let but one important trade union take up the Social Credit policy, and put its back into propaganda addressed to all classes, and the doom of plutocracy will be sealed.

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Mr. G. D. H. Cole is likewise exercised as to the Labour Party's electoral propaganda. He rightly insists on the importance of the Party's standing for "a real reversal of policy and a courageous handling of fundamentals." He urges that its task must be "intensive and democratic political education on a far larger scale, and on far more fundamental questions than any political party has yet seriously attempted." Yes, but how "fundamental" after all is Mr. Cole's own economic criticism? We would not disparage his contribution to the thought of the movement. He has done valuable work in threshing out some of the many complex questions of Guild administration. His views on these have always to be reckoned with, even when one finally disagrees with him on a particular point; and many of the principles he has enunciated will have to be embodied in any satisfactory Guild system—and only by some kind of Guild system can the social problem be solved. But for some time past Mr. Cole has done little else but repeat himself. He does not seem to have anything helpful to tell us as to how we are to get on with the task at hand. He proposes no steps which offer any large immediate results. He has, lamentably early, suffered the fate of most pioneers—for the time being at least—and in his present phase

he is as virulently obstructive and obscurantist as he himself found the Fabians only four or five years ago.

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A despairing acquiescence in a general reduction of wages seems to have settled down on the Labour movement. The Engineers in their second ballot accepted the employers' modified proposals by a large majority. The Dockers' Executive has not even thought it necessary to take a ballot before accepting a substantial reduction. We do not know indeed what else the Unions can do, *within the limits of their present outlook*. It is no good simply to ramp and rave against reductions after the manner of "extremists," when one has no constructive policy to propose for obviating their necessity. But that does not justify the reductions. There is no *real* necessity for them. Indeed, the very reverse is the case. The great necessity of the situation is to distribute purchasing power. The incomes of the working class, as of a large proportion of the middle classes, ought to be greatly increased. The measure of possible income is our *potentialities* of production. We repeat yet again that these are fully adequate to provide an income of £500 a year per family to our whole population. Yet the "Westminster Gazette" can smugly observe, "We hope that a better time is coming for the docker, but inevitably he has to make his contribution to the conditions that will bring that better time." How can a vast restriction of effective demand help matters, when the difficulty is that already the market for goods is far too small? And with the too exiguous unemployment doles running out, what is to be the end? The Labour leaders are not sincerely trying to find a way out. Mr. Fred Bramley, in the columns of the "Times," expounds their philosophy. One of these fine days that blessed entity, "evolution," will bring about some form of Socialism. Meanwhile, they accept all the capitalist presuppositions; "reduce wages? By all means; only too ready to oblige; do all in our power to arrange the thing peacefully." They seem not even to dream of any drastic new departure *at once*. They regard the calamities of their unfortunate clients as politically serviceable counts in the indictment against the "capitalist" parties. They are apparently much more anxious for the punctilious observance of the orthodox rubric prescribing a political triumph of Labour, than for an immediate social advance which might make a Labour Government superfluous.

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We have already drawn attention to Germany's remarkable industrial recovery, and pointed out how largely this is due to the policy of drawing on the communal credit in aid of the home consumer. As regards the nation in its capacity as consumer, if regarded as a solid unit, the German policy has moved some distance along the lines we advocate. But it does nothing to provide for a more equal distribution of wealth within the nation, or for the democratic control of industry. Germany, in short, has (in some measure) adopted the "low prices" half of our programme, but has left out the "dividends for all." The urgent necessities which we pointed out last week may soon drive our own Government to adopt a similar system of credits. But unless Labour wakes up at once and takes a leading part in pressing for financial reform, all the democratic and egalitarian side of our policy will be omitted. Our own people should take warning from what is happening in Germany. Capital is being concentrated in unprecedented fashion. Herr Hugo Stinnes is reported to control no less than 1,340 distinct companies with a capital exceeding £500,000,000. He is the real employer of a million and a half workmen. This is the kind of dictatorship of the profiteer to which we may yet come in all countries. The "Daily Express" oddly enough seems to like the prospect. It positively revels in the thought of the energy and sacrifice with which

the German working class are "throwing themselves into real production." The workman, we are told, rises at a quarter to five and puts in an hour's work in his garden before going to the factory. After working intensively at the machine till six he then has another turn at horticulture till dusk. His average wage is about sixpence an hour. "Is Labour," the "Express" asks in all the glory of leaded type, "in Allied countries sleeping, while Germany is availing herself of the most brilliant opportunity in all history?" Apparently it expects the working man to be fired with enthusiasm by the golden dream of spending the rest of his life in working a seventeen-hour day for a bare subsistence.

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A ray of light in the general gloomy outlook is provided by one item in the agenda of the conference of the South Wales Miners' Federation. This is a proposal to organise a bank to transact Trade Union business. We should like to know more of the details of the scheme; its value would depend very largely on these. Still, some of the South Wales miners are at least beginning to think along the right lines. We have repeatedly urged the imperative necessity for the Trade Unions to go into banking themselves. That is the obvious path to the solution of the social problem. That is essentially a matter of overthrowing the tyranny of the close ring of the great banks. But there is no need to confiscate the financiers' property. No more is needed than that the people shall refuse to go on banking with them, and do their own banking on democratic lines. We look forward ultimately to consumers' cooperative banks, holding such industrial shares as they take up in trust for their *depositors*, and distributing among these the dividends on them. But the present monopoly of credit can only be broken in the first instance by Trade Unions penetrating into the financing of their own industries. It is here alone that we have great organised masses of real credit, capable of providing a sufficiently solid foundation for banks of a radically novel type.

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Dean Inge has been indulging in another of his Jeremiaads on "The Dilemma of Civilisation" in the "Edinburgh Review." As usual he at once intrigues and irritates the reader by an astonishing mixture of perverse blindness and penetrating acumen. Following one of the writers whom he is reviewing, he excellently characterises the essence of the present system: "There are not enough consumers at home to keep the great industries running at their maximum profit, and so the surplus must be unloaded on foreign countries"; hence a "scramble for markets and the constant danger of wars for trade." But he seems never to have asked himself, *why* "there are not enough consumers at home," seeing that the enormous majority of the people obviously do not consume nearly as much as they would like to. Again, he rightly insists over and over again that we are mastered by machinery instead of using it, like masters, for our true welfare. But he seems to assume that this is due to some mysterious property of machinery itself; he does not grasp the fairly patent fact that this is simply a question of the nature of the financial control over the machines, and of who exercises this control. He accepts the judgment that, "we are and must remain the slaves of our machines, so long as we are unable to feed our own population." But to be under the necessity of using machines is not by any means necessarily to be their slaves. To sell freely, out of the ample surplus we can easily produce, such exports as are needed to procure food and raw materials from abroad is a totally different thing from the constant *forced* sale of exports necessitated by a vicious system of credit-control. The Dean fails to see that the only real trouble is that the machines cannot get a chance of doing their proper work, because we have no sufficient machinery of distribution to get rid

of their enormous potential output. So he is misled by the specious appearance of an inability to support so large a population. He clamours for a "gradual reduction" of this, and reveals his ingrained hatred of mankind in the mass by a shuddering allusion to a "devastating torrent of children." It is a pity that Dean Inge cannot reconcile himself to the distasteful prospect of the working-class being better off, or overcome the petty vanity of playing the unrelenting Jeremiah. If he could get these inhibitions out of the way, the two sides of his mind might be happily co-ordinated, and his full intellectual force be turned onto the constructive problem with the most fruitful results.

The reports of the recent Congress of the Third International are singularly illuminating. They demonstrate how thoroughly this organisation is a "Russian International"—in other words, that it is not an International at all. There is no genuinely international consultation, each country contributing its own counsels and suggestions, with a view to the growth of the thought and policy of the whole. No; Moscow has thought everything out, and the representatives of more benighted peoples humbly sit at the feet of their Russian instructors. Very characteristic is Lenin's adjudication on the differences between the right and left wings of some of the Communist parties. "It is necessary that those who hold the Right Wing point of view should take two steps to the Left, while those who are opposing them from the Left Wing must take one step to the Right." Foreign Communists are to "dress" to right or left, at the word of command from Moscow, with all the rigid precision of drilled soldiery. We do not see British working men ordering themselves lowly and reverently in this way to men who, having made a hideous mess of their own home affairs, are now carefully canalising the Revolution back into capitalism.

#### TROTH-PLIGHT.

The birds last night in the darkness flying  
Across the fern and crying, crying,  
Teu whit! Teu whoo! Teu whit! Teu whoo!—  
The noisy owls as little knew  
Or cared what we went there to do  
As the quiet winds about us sighing.

And now the day is here; and none  
Is like to see us, save the sun,  
Come on, my love, the hills are clear.  
My lovely one! my bonny dear!  
If last night's troth may still hold true—  
Ay! when last night's great stars are blown  
In dust before the lords of breath  
On their last gust and dying groan  
That herald universal death,  
We still shall hear, as did those two,  
Teu whit! Teu whoo! Teu whit! Teu whoo!

I'll love when last night's tears are dead  
And all their beauty overhead  
Is out of mind, is out of sight—  
When yonder sun no more shall tan  
The cheek of any girl or man  
Or set Dame Nature's bonds alight. . . .  
Who knows? the troth we kept last night  
May yet outlive each witness bright—  
Old Sirius Aldebaran! JOHN HELSTON.

#### FROM THE MAHABHARATA.

Vasudeva said—

That man that rendeth buildings to the ground,  
That breacheth lakes and reservoirs, that soils  
And devastates the universe itself,  
That man from sin remaineth still unstained  
By worship of the three-eyed deity.  
That man unfavoured by auspicious stars,  
With sin corrupted, should he meditate  
On Civa, burneth thereby every sin.  
The very worms, the insects and the birds  
On Mahadeva set, may care-free roam.  
This is my certitude, that such devote,  
From rebirth find emancipation. TOOMAI.

## World Affairs.

THE faith and the hypothesis underlying this our exposition of the Universal Problem, underlying this our quest after the One Truth, the one and the pan-human truth of the present Æon, this faith, which may be revealed through the providence of the Species, and this hypothesis, which indeed is only a pragmatic scheme and risk—our foundational faith, the whole of our guess and adventure, is the spiritual evidence of continuity and divinity; of the continuity and unity of the universe of God, and of the divinity and supra-humanness of being human. Our hypothesis and outline is the belief that the Psyche in all souls is the same Psyche, and that the psychic energy of all souls is the same energy. Our hypothesis is that Over-souls exist. Racial souls exist—such is the perennial tradition of all races, and such is the Platonic tradition. Over-souls and the unity of the Psyche exist for ever and without a beginning. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky has also affirmed this immemorial belief of Man. Broadening and deepening the concept of Psychic Energy given to our age by psycho-analysis, we feel justified in postulating the existence and the identity of Libido, of psychic wisdom and power in races as a whole, and in the Species itself, in the Species. We believe that this simple and primordial identification is truth itself, verihood. So transcendantly and divinely is this identity obvious and verified by races and by persons, by ages and by all time, that with awe and in annihilation of humbleness we abstain from proving the existence of Existence itself, from upholding the divinity of all sacredness. We propose only not to deny God and Man; and to permit Providence to glorify and to eternalise itself through our blind obedience and through our will's tyranny and power in the transcendent blindness of the execution of the Infinite Purpose. The Eternal is. The Universal Soul, the Over-souls of ages and races and the individual Souls are one and the same Duration, one and the same third Hypostasis of God.

Every approach to the One Problem of the World must be explored, and we must try to-day really to begin at the beginning and to think *universally*. The questions of the world-organisation are hourly resolving themselves into one single but universal question of the human future and human existence. The problem of UNIVERSAL HUMANITY is becoming, for the first time in the whole evolution of the Imperium, an historic problem, and one demanding a conscious and self-determinative solution by the nations and classes of Man. And by the sexes of Man. And by the hemispheres of Man. In our opinion the noontide has come, the great draw and deadlock of the heights. We suggest that the great noontide of the West and East has arrived, and that the problem of the synthesis of the Geon has ripened, though ripened only in its centre. It has ripened only in its focus. The problem of consciousness, and the divine trial of consciousness, has ripened and is becoming sour already, becoming even sour and dangerous, though still remaining a central problem only, a logic problem only, a question of leaders and of guidance only, not a question of the world's ocean of Sophian, common humanity. What is the difficult and perplexing meaning of the sourness and of the centralness about which we are stammering, and over which we are hesitating? The bulk and the content of mankind, Sophia proper, the World of Man, has not ripened and is not becoming sour and over-strained, though the present infinite suspense and tension in the world is truly radical. It is radical. The foundations of the world are being shifted and undermined in these decades and these half-hours. The foundations of the really Promethean, really deliberate history of Man, are being laid in these centuries and in this year. Yet the sacred and feminine sea of the race is not aroused to the heights of guidance, to the Superman's heights.

Awakened and awaking is humanity everywhere. Man is becoming conscious. But Providence and Destiny govern Sophia and the sea of souls. The Race is not fallible. The guidance of the Over-souls to-day, the guidance of the Geon in its Logocic centre, in freedom, is, however, lost and confounded on the heights of consciousness and under the weight of responsibility. In the focus of the world the world is in crisis and is fainting. The Superman and his freedom are in danger of giving way to Destiny. The guidance of the world is prostrate. The world itself is common and human and omnipotential.

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Every way out must be tried to-day, and a new path must be discovered leading both into the future and onto the heights of the sovereignty of Man. In our view Man is a divine being. This fact of naked verihood, that Man and his life are the manifestation and self-realising of the Infinite, of GOD, is not a fact of our invention, but the universal truth of the world itself, the earth's meaning and the foundation of being human. Humanness and Sophianness are divinity itself; and politics and history, finance and economics, are the technique and the process, the incarnation and the proof, of the pressure of that Sophia of God which is Sophia of man at the same time; the beatific self-fulfilment and mutual completion of the Creator who is omnipotent, and of the Awareness who is omniscient; both of them everlasting and without a beginning. Without a beginning is the Creator, and the Awareness and Consciousness that are His instrument; and Beatitude or Value are without a beginning, the mutual fulfilment of that Power which is infinite strength itself, and of that Reason which is the only and the universal wisdom. Reality is without a beginning. Whatever is real in an essential and important sense is infinite. It is without end or beginning. The Superman's new impulse in the world's enfolding to-day must be infinite if it is to be real. It must be an impulse without a beginning and by the grace of the Creator and Father alone. It must be an impulse out of Infinity itself and unmistakably real and perfect; leading straight through to the Holy Spirit and to infinity itself again.

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Every tunnel and channel must needs be explored in his fateful and long hour, and even the Eternal Wisdom of the human kind itself, the holy tradition and clairvoyance of human generations; even the individual intuition and the divination of utter despair, the divination of mortal risk, must be valued and used. Verihood is obvious and eternally simple. But being radiant and etheric, being transparent and ubiquitous, being Sophian, being common, the truth of the Truth is difficult of access and is covered by the Universe. It is covered by life, by the worlds of the worlds, and by the sense of the ego. Verihood is divine and is not individual. Verihood is pleromic. Verihood itself, and the crying despair of the world's guidance, compels us to break the spasm of the Superman and to break up the deadlock, the draw, and the tension of the world's crisis in its mystic centre. In its impotent mystic centre only. In its centre only. We are compelled to affirm the verihood of our own simple vision and of our fathomless conviction. The world, in our conviction, is an organism. Geon, or the planet of the human kind, is a being. Geon itself, in our infinite conviction, is traversing a cosmic and infinite spasm and trial. The earth, we say, is in spasm. No proofs for this statement we offer. Verihood is the victorious truth of revelation and simplicity, the mirror of the supernal truth itself. To Anthropos and to Geon the human spirit must ascend to-day. From the spheric view of verihood the problems of the world become sacredly simple and organic in their complexity.

M. M. COSMOS.

## Our Generation.

THE letter that I quoted last week contains so much of the kind of truth which should be made public that I gladly quote it again. "Democracy," the writer said, "was cant." And he justifies this bold and unpopular statement with a striking generalisation. "I find three divisions of men," he says: "(a) negative men—authoritarians, (b) passive men—the herd and the vast majority, (c) positive men—libertarians. Majorities never govern. Only negative or positive tiny minorities ever govern." Among the negative minorities he classes not merely the avowed authoritarians, such as the Conservative Party and the Coalitionists, but Labour, Socialism, indeed all parties—"for the real, 'corporate body' of these is the executive (Government) of each, not 'the Party' (the Nation), and these executives in each in turn are each an 'authority,' are committed to negation, and, therefore, cannot create. That is to say, these do, and are bound to, affirm the continued existence in reality of what was and is not; whence, it follows, lies and unrealities (or destruction—the same thing) can but issue." There is so much packed into this short quotation that it will be profitable to review it. If the majority is passive, if democracy is the shuttlecock tossed between positive and negative forces, then it is clear that the real battle is between these forces, between, that is to say, what my correspondent calls the authoritarians and the libertarians. The real function of the multitude is to ratify. When a new equilibrium has been reached between the positive and the negative forces, the majority will confirm it by adding to it the immense weight, making for stability, of its inertia. If there were nobody in any given society but positive and negative men, the normal condition would be untempered war. If there were no positive or negative men in a society at all, there would be an immovable inertia, a peace of death. The norm of society, therefore, is not the mere multitude, or the conservative, or the libertarian, but all three together. And when my correspondent goes on to say that, "though still without any uniting and commonly accepted principle [the authoritarians], do unconsciously join in the common cry for 'status' and in the common repudiation of existing authority, no matter whether this last is of Church, or State, or existing party, or any other thing," he is justified, because in doing this the authoritarian is not rebelling against society, but essentially warring against his enemy, the authoritarian, the maintainer of negative values. Perhaps one can war against society; but it is doubtful; for society is quickened by those who appear to war against it, and, at any rate, the life of society itself is a constant war. The real damage is done when those who call themselves authoritarians or liberals attempt to exalt their attitudes into philosophical systems. Liberalism is a feeling, a prejudice if you like; flattering it a little, one may call it the leaven of society, but it becomes monstrous when it begins to masquerade as the whole loaf. "Every little boy or girl," except the passive majority mentioned in the letter, "is either a little Liberal or else a little Conservative"; and that is all that is in Conservatism or Liberalism. But whoever writes truly about politics must write neither as a Conservative nor as a Liberal, neither as the people, nor even, if that were possible, as all three. The author of the letter, it seems to me, is a Liberal who has overcome his Libe-

ralism, who uses it and is not the mere instrument of it. Certainly, at the present time, when the whole nation walks backwards with more ease than it steps forward, when walking backwards seems to have become the normal mode of locomotion, nothing is more necessary, nothing shows health and soundness more clearly, than "the repudiation of existing authority, whether it be of Church, or State, or existing party, or any other thing." "What I mean," the writer concludes, "is that our real duty to-day is not to do our duty. Our real moral duty—the real duty of every positive man—is to resist authority, existing authority, at any cost to self." It is necessary that our duties should come as truly as our thoughts out of the living centre of our personality, that "duties for everybody," as Nietzsche said, should not be our duties. This is, perhaps, the most difficult demand, and the most easily to be misunderstood, that can be made upon men. For duty is traditionally regarded as something imposed from without—by whom, who knows?—and as something common to the greatest and the least. In reality it is not. In practice every man's performance of his duty is conditioned by his conception of it; the unconditional objectivity of duty is a falsehood against which the present generation is revolting, and is justified in revolting. Whatever is living and creative in duty is paralysed by it, and nothing is left but a mechanical obligation. Duty nowadays is often nothing more than a form of cowardice.

Our island has now become so small, in every sense, that it seems it has difficulty in holding both Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Northcliffe. In that case, it is a most unlucky size, and it should hasten to become either a little larger or a little smaller. To those of us who have managed to preserve a tithe of our taste amid the cultural perils of the national life, there is something humiliating in the spectacle of two men, for the character of neither of whom we have any respect, quarrelling in public, uttering reams of moral indignation, and each expecting public sympathy where public reprobation is all that is accorded. The "Times" attacks Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Curzon: Mr. Lloyd George replies: "Such an attack at such a moment seems to the Government to fall below the normal standard of English journalism"—(cheers). But one only wonders, in that case, of what infamous complexion the attack could have been; and one is not roused to sympathy, one is only surprised, when Mr. Lloyd George refers to the outrage in public. Really there is something almost indecent in the assumption, on which all politicians act nowadays, that attacks upon them are of public interest, and are felt by the people. The people, alas, are themselves attacked so often, in silence and from sunrise to sunrise, that the recriminations of Lord Northcliffe and Mr. Lloyd George can only be "news" to them. And what kind of man is it who wishes his squabbles to become "news"?

It is a sign of vitality when the clergy venture outside their churches; and although nothing great was said in the demonstration in Hyde Park on "The Social Message of Christianity," the demonstration itself, by virtue of being in Hyde Park, was more significant than a year of sermons. Things which the dim, religious atmosphere of a church would have made it difficult to utter were proclaimed forthrightly in Hyde Park. The Rev. Humphrey Chalmers, taking up Mr. Lloyd George's warning not to interfere in politics, affirmed that the Church "intended to deal with everything that affected the soul of man." Now that would have been hard to say in a pulpit, simply because it would be hard to mention the name of Mr. Lloyd George in a pulpit, as difficult as it would be to introduce it in a sonnet, even in a sonnet to the Welsh hills. Really the Church has become so religious that it is almost impossible to utter a living religious truth in it. To Hyde Park, therefore.

EDWARD MOORE.

## The Defeat of the Working Class.

By "Greville."

(Concluded.)

MR. THOMAS had a correct estimate of the position when he stated at Derby: "If there is a Triple Alliance of miners, railwaymen, and transport workers, that strike is against the Government. If you win, you must of necessity assume the government of the country." True, but why? Because the Government was acting as the representative not of the community but of the capitalist minority, which controls the only means whereby the masses can earn their daily bread under the system of private financial control of the means of production. Unless the working class leaders were resolute enough to call in the industrial power of the Unions to checkmate the capitalist conspiracy to reduce their members' standard of life, no other means was available, as the political machine was controlled by the economic power of the great industrial financiers and capitalists.

The Triple Alliance secured a written undertaking: "that there should be no resumption of work on the part of one or more organisations until a complete resumption without any victimisation on the part of the members of the three organisations was obtained. This the Miners' Federation readily agreed to, and gave their honourable assurance that there would be no resumption on the part of the Miners' Federation unless and until there was a complete resumption of work on the part of the railwaymen and transport workers." ("Report on Mining Crisis," page 18.)

Events proceeded in course of negotiation during the week-end, April 9-10. A close observer of the attitude of Thomas, Williams, and Bevin could not fail to suspect them, as they betrayed in their manner a serious apprehension of the gravity of the issues involved—either in a retreat or in an advance. Allen, of the N.U.R., Cramp and Gosling bore a demeanour more befitting to the seriousness of the occasion than the levity of their colleagues.

The General Strike was provisionally fixed for Tuesday, the 12th, though the N.U.R. Executive, in opposition to Mr. Thomas, had desired to call their men out on the night of Sunday, April 10. Negotiations were resumed on the Monday and Tuesday. The strike was postponed till Friday, the 15th, though the sub-Committee of the Triple Alliance had recommended that "It should take place at and from midnight on Thursday night." Mr. Thomas declared at Derby that he had "striven for peace all through."

On Thursday, April 14, several important meetings took place, the significance of which is hardly known to the rank and file. There was the meeting of the mine-owners at the House of Commons on the early evening of Thursday. The mine-owners were severely "barracked" by the Government for holding that meeting, as their case was really unrepresentable, except in the hands of a skilful advocate like Mr. Lloyd George. On the Thursday evening the Prime Minister was interviewed by a deputation representing the Federation of British Industries. After the departure of this deputation, the Government had a consultation at which steps were taken to avert a general strike by re-instituting control of the mines under the Emergency Powers Act. It was intended to issue this proclamation at 6 o'clock on Friday, April 15. At 11 p.m. on the Thursday evening the Government Whips reported that, should a general strike be in progress on Monday, April 18, it was improbable that the House of Commons would support the Government in its Emergency measures. The heads of the Government Departments had also stated that the Civil Service was restive on the question of taking sides against the miners. All the reports agreed that the middle-classes were by no means enthusiastic on the subject of assisting the Government to defeat the strike, and the Defence Force



was hardly to be relied on in the case of an extremity arising.

It was at this favourable conjuncture that the vanity of Mr. Hodges, unchecked by Mr. Herbert Smith and Mr. Robson, threw the whole position away, for he declared to the House of Commons, concurrently with the incidents just related, without consulting his Executive and in the teeth of the decisions of the Delegate Meeting, that the miners would accept a temporary settlement on wages. To quote the Derby speech: "Mr. Hodges, not hurriedly, not impulsively, but carefully and deliberately answered: 'Yes; the miners were prepared, he believed, for negotiations for a temporary settlement on wages.'" Never before did the self-confidence of an individual bring such ruin and disaster on those whose interests and whose case he was paid to advocate. Mr. Hodges knew perfectly well that that reply represented his personal policy; its principle was rejected in fact even at the ballot which took place weeks later. Whether the answer was planned between Mr. Hodges and Mr. Thomas, only those two gentlemen know, but the use that was made of that answer by Mr. Thomas and his colleagues was an unwarranted use, considering that the N.U.R. had pledged its support to the miners' case as presented by the Miners' Executive.

It is an error, however, to assume that the general strike would have occurred on Friday but for this incident in the House of Commons. The blunders of Mr. Hodges, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Robert Williams, and Mr. Bevin had been colossal during their management of the crisis. Their suspected incapacity, to the impartial observer, had become a proved incapacity. Notwithstanding this, the inherent injustice of the miners' case had withstood all the misrepresentation of the Government's propaganda department. Mr. Lloyd George had been told in plain words that he would cease to be Prime Minister once a general strike began. His last card was the re-institution of control by Proclamation which, while checkmating the Triple Alliance strike, would have shattered the prestige of the Government, and allowed a moral victory to the miners.

The Trade Union official is in a fortunate position, as few men in the Unions have the means or the knowledge of investigating his actions. The men concerned in this calamity have been re-elected to their posts; yet no member of the Government, no member of any capitalist concern would have been allowed to retain office, had they committed the errors these Trade Union leaders did during that fatal week. Their failure to handle the crisis properly will cost the working-classes of Britain £250,000,000 per annum off their wages. The results are apparent everywhere. The housing schemes are being abandoned, as the skilled workman will not be permitted to receive wages sufficient to enable him to live in his own house, and the economic rent will be obtained by compelling two families to live in one house. That is one example of how the workman's standard of life is to be reduced in the immediate future. That is the naked truth about the housing policy of the Government.

There remain two other bodies of workmen whose future is in doubt, i.e., the railwaymen, and the agricultural labourers. The tactics of the railway directors have been changed since the miners' strike. At first wages on the railways will be reduced on the sliding scale; but, on de-control, there will be an enormous reduction in staffs, a policy against which the strike weapon is almost useless. The secret estimates before the Railway Executive in June, 1921, indicate that 30 per cent. of the men employed on the railways will be superfluous under the new grouping scheme. The Northern Eastern Railway engineer declared the other day that the economies on the railways essential to earn a remunerative dividend would take the form of the reduction of skilled men. He estimated the electrification of the North Eastern would make superflu-

ous 30 per cent. of the engine drivers. All the skill and ingenuity of Messrs. Thomas and Cramp will be required to extricate their men from the complications of next August. It is true the N.U.R. has flourished since Mr. Thomas became general secretary; but that was due to the strike of 1911, the terrible conditions of service on the railways, and the special circumstances of the war. Judged by the experience of April, 1921, at the testing time in August, Thomas will fail, as Hodges and Herbert Smith failed, in a crisis requiring vision, integrity of purpose, and resolution. The Trade Union secretariat are of no value unless their far-sighted judgment is available to warn their members of the plans of the employing class. The pay these men receive is much higher than the highest amount any individual member of their Union can earn at his craft. In the Manchester area, in 1921, there were 3,500 Trade Union officials receiving salaries ranging from £6 to £10 a week. These men rapidly acquire the economic outlook and habits of the ordinary professional man without the vision and courage of the enlightened professional man. Moreover, the Trade Union bureaucracy, being themselves the creation of Capitalism, have a tendency not to wish for the abolition of Capitalism; lastly, the Trade Union secretariat have never cultivated "the virtue of resignation."

One of the tragedies of the world is that the average life of a workman is fifteen years less than that of a member of the well-to-do classes. That means that the Trade Union leader at 55 or 60 years of age, in physical and mental capacity, is at the level of 70 or 75 in the well-to-do classes. Some of these men are quite senile. Crooks was an example in point. He had been long past useful work, as are more than half the Labour Members of Parliament and a substantial proportion of Trade Union officials.

The recent events are alleged to have constituted a defeat for the "extremists." Had the Triple Alliance strike taken place and been a failure, there would have been great force in that contention. The miners' case was in fact lost because the Government knew that the acting Chairman, the Treasurer, and the Secretary were opposed to the policy of the pool laid down at the Delegate Meeting. The Government calculated, sooner or later, that the vanity of the officials would lead them to superimpose their policy on the rank and file—the unfortunate people who had to live on the reduced wage—which anticipation encouraged the Government, with its knowledge of this conflict between the officials and the Executive, to resist the demands put forward by the Delegate Meeting. It is idle to pretend that the wages settlement would have been better without the strike than with the strike, as Mr. Hodges is pretending in the article in the "Western Mail." There is not a series of figures in existence submitted to the Miners' Federation which can support this contention.

The paucity of the intelligence of the Labour movement can no longer be concealed from the independent observer. Mr. Churchill cannot govern, as we all know, but it was from his own incapacity that he so correctly measured the incompetence of the Labour movement. The moderate element in the movement is without the gleam of an idea how to circumvent the attack on the workers' standard of life. The advanced element did endeavour to organise a common resistance which might have succeeded, or which might have failed, but certainly would not have allowed the Government to win on the oldest trick in politics of "divide and conquer."

This brings one to the conclusion of the matter, in speculating on the fate of the agricultural labourer. With the miners thoroughly defeated, with the railwaymen unable to choose a strong position on which to unite their forces, how will the agricultural labourer fare? Already there is much clamour to cut his wages.

"Hodge the overpaid"—what a mockery this pretence is! Will the scanty prosperity of the agricultural labourer in the last three years be filched from him? What are his chances of success with a General Staff consisting of Clynes, Henderson, Thomas, Adamson, and the rest? None can tell, but it is significant, perhaps hopeful, that every permanent change in social organisation has begun with the revolt of the agricultural labourer. It is that historical fact which may lead the ruling classes, even those meanest of men, the farming class of England, to hesitate ere they rouse the countryside against them in revolt. In the meantime, the wishes of all good-hearted men should go out to the agricultural labourer and his leaders, for it is certain that upon them now rests the burden of the battle, the first stage of which was lost when Clynes, Thomas, Williams, Hodges, and the rest ran away on April 15, leaving their bag and baggage in the hands of the capitalist enemy.

## Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

MR. FAGAN has broken the continuity of his Shakespearean series at the Court by producing "Mr. Malatesta." It is written, and the title-part is performed, by Mr. William Ricciardi, who is described as "the great Italo-American actor." But with all respect to Mr. Ricciardi's gifts as an actor (and they are remarkable), one does not quite see why they should be shown to us in a play of his own devising. Actors frequently have the idea that they can show themselves to the best advantage; but I cannot, at the moment, recall one actor's play that justifies the belief. They drop inevitably into dramatic cliché; when they write, they assume that the values of melodrama are absolute, as though the ease and power with which they can express those values were a proof of their validity. The consequence is that instead of a new view of life, in such plays we get not an old but a conventional view. Both the tragic and the comic conceptions of love pose it in conflict with the conventions, a fatal conflict in the case of tragedy, a vital one in the case of comedy, for the catastrophe is averted by mother-wit. But in both cases, the assumption is that the convention is wrong, because it does not allow for variation from the type; it is left to actors, when they write their own plays, to assume that the convention is right, and to compel conformity to it. The stage, left to them, would be as Wilson Barrett wanted it, a valuable adjunct to the Church; and Jeremy Collier himself could not more effectively have reformed the theatre than Mr. Ricciardi has done. There is vice in his play, certainly; but it is vice condemned, vice repentant, vice forgiven and virtue triumphant—and probably two lives ruined in the process.

That is the trouble with melodrama; it keeps us talking in the most general terms of conventional morality, condemning generous impulses as vice and lauding prudential ones as virtue. All this talk of "betrayal" is beside the mark; if the woman does not want to give herself, why does she do so? She is just as responsible as a man; in sexual matters, as we are always being told, she has more self-control. The cry of "betrayal" is a plea of non-responsibility, a doctrine far more dangerous to morality than any amount of illicit intercourse. Accept the assumption that intercourse outside wedlock is wrong, subsequent marriage will not make "an honest woman" of her, any more than "compounding a felony" alters its felonious character. Marriage is degraded when it is prescribed as a punishment for "sin," or as reparation or atonement, or anything but the sacramental union it is supposed to be. The prescription for such purposes shows the same stupidity that some magistrates betray when they offer a young criminal a choice between

going to gaol and joining the Navy; if the estate is honourable, the entrance of obviously dishonourable persons (judged by the same standard) into it can neither maintain nor enhance its honourable nature. Reasoning on the assumption of the moralist, the proper penalty to inflict for the offence of illicit intercourse is the refusal of the right to marriage. But ministers only refuse to marry the deceased wife's sister, only refuse communion to the divorced person—and the outsider, like myself, can only smile at the inconsistency.

But that is the chief theme of "Mr. Malatesta." Mr. Malatesta's son has been pursuing his legal education experimentally. His first case is the defence of a poor woman charged with murdering her illegitimate child, and his plea in mitigation: "Where is the scoundrel who 'betrayed' her?" moves his father, the judge, the jury, the public, to tears. I wept myself at the appearance of this hoary fallacy; as the scoundrel had not murdered the child, obviously he could not be charged with the offence or as an accomplice. There was no evidence that he knew anything about it, so he was not even "constructively" a criminal. The plea in mitigation was therefore irrelevant. But, of course, the lawyer's son does not make this plea when he is himself proved to be the father of the servant-girl's child. The hollow hypocrisy of "moral" pleading could not be more convincingly demonstrated; and psycho-analysis has taught us to ask of these people who want to punish someone for doing wrong what it is that they themselves have to hide. Dramatic literature is full of such cases of moral protest and condemnation, from the Player-Queen in "Hamlet" (she only "protested too much") to the Puritan in "Bartholomew Fair," and Joseph Surface in "The School for Scandal"; and even the Gospels, with their: "Judge not, lest ye be judged," should have warned the moralists against their dangerous practice of condemning their neighbours. But my chief objection to them on the stage is that they show no versatility; one knows the trick to satiety—but Mr. Ricciardi tries it again.

But he wrote the play himself, and gave himself all the "fat"; and if one man can carry a show on his shoulders, Mr. Ricciardi is that man. He is an actor of astonishing vigour and flexibility, as quick on the turn of emotion as Moscovitch himself. That the character is reminiscent not only of "Daddalums" but of "Potash and Perlmutter," and of innumerable other plays which present a conflict between strong, natural, effusive emotion and the annoying restraints of snobbish "gentility," is Mr. Ricciardi's fault and misfortune; he took his type from all the "successes" in the foolish belief that they can be repeated. Perhaps they can in a continent like America, but here an actor of remarkable power can only make his mark by doing what no one else can do. I can think of several actors who could play Joe Malatesta, just as I can think of various parts that Mr. Ricciardi could make a mark in. I see him imaginatively in Shakespeare; his Falstaff, his Othello, his Shylock, would be worth seeing. But he has chosen the mediocrity of melodrama, and his full powers are never exercised.

There is no acting worthy of mention besides his own; it is efficient, but merely that of feeders to Joe Malatesta. He it is who keeps the show going, whether quarrelling with his wife about etiquette, serving macaroni, or drinking Chianti (real Chianti supplied by a firm in Charing Cross Road). He put as much energy into the scene in the third act, when he discovered that his son had "betrayed" the servant-girl, as the whole of Mr. Fagan's "Othello" cast put together; and in addition to the energy expended, it was an extraordinarily vivid piece of acting. But it failed of its full effect because the material which it expressed had very little intellectual or emotional value for us; such acting would be invaluable in revealing what is usually above our comprehension, it is wasted on such

obvious and familiar material. Joe Malatesta is a likeable man, who can be seen round Back Hill any day; but he is in no sense a significant personage, and great art is always significant. Mr. Ricciardi has wasted himself.

## Readers and Writers.

THE literary journals are busy with a fresh outbreak of anthologies, but so far it has been my fate to examine only one case in any detail. This is "An Anthology of Modern Verse" compiled (apt word!) by A. M. and introduced by Mr. Robert Lynd. For anthologies in general I have no respect, nor for the people who read them—every man should keep his own anthology, and it is a personal affair with which he need not bother the world. But if the fool persists in his folly he must expect a criticism not only of his little volume of preferences, but also of the personality those preferences reveal—for every anthology is a confession of character. In the present case I will only shrug my shoulders, so to speak, and wearily say that a mind that, in its perversity, can turn even a rugged iconoclast like Thomas Hardy into a felicitous lyricist of prudent tendencies is so functionally mediocre that it would be criminal to encourage it by a discussion. I will turn rather to Mr. Lynd's apologia on Poetry and the Modern Man. Here such great naïve errors stalk unguardedly that I am driven to a simple enumeration (thereby risking, I know, the disparagement that rightly attends "un critique au crayon bleu").

We meet the first error on the first page: "Every child is a poet from the age at which he learns to beat a silver spoon on the table in numbers. . . . We may even trace the origins of the poet in those first reduplications of sound that lead a child to call a train a puff-puff and its mother ma-ma." This introduces what we might call the "bow-wow" theory of poetry. It assumes that poetry is so little a thing of the mind or intellect that its origin and essence may be found in that infantile delight in senseless noise common to all mortals. We need only compare the weight of a baby's brain with that of a fully developed man, make a due allowance for qualitative development, and so arrive at an almost exact arithmetical equation of the value of this theory.

"All fine poetry is a thing of pleasant sights and pleasant sounds—of images and music." This presents us with an epicurean theory of poetry, using "epicurean" in its modern derogatory sense. It is implied that poetry should not involve the use of mental effort or of any intellection whatsoever: that it should merely appeal to the passively receptive areas of sense-awareness. As a theory it is void because it neglects the physical truth that the brain has evolved areas with comparative functions, and that in a normal man such areas construct concepts of experience which demand æsthetic satisfaction beyond mere pleasant sense-awareness.

"We judge the greatness of an author largely by his genius for writing memorable passages. . . . The appeal to the memory seems to be part of the appeal to the imagination." This statement involves an antinomy of memory which we might call mind; and mind, as we have already seen, being for Mr. Lynd an unessential quality, the function of poetry is given as the construction of memorable passages. This is a utilitarian theory of poetry. I have no precise objection to a utilitarian aspect of literature: indeed, all human values are in a sense utilitarian. But Mr. Lynd makes a different statement: he says in fact that the virtue of poetry is found in its ability to aid the memory. And then, with as it were a critical look at his bald definition, he makes a brave attempt at qualification. He

recognises that memory is not a good in itself, and so assumes that it must be in some way attached to the imagination. The truth is that memory is a servant of any mental process, though never a very trustworthy one. But we must distinguish between conscious and unconscious memory. Mr. Lynd is all the while referring to conscious memory—or to memory made conscious—and this faculty is scarcely ever concurrent with genius—unless it be with mathematical genius. The psychology of inspiration even shows that a good memory is a positive hindrance to the imagination, which might more truly be described as the play of the unconscious mind—a play free from all mnemonic aid. This distinction can be brought out by analysis: Memorable expression of the kind favoured by Mr. Lynd appeals via rhyme and alliteration to the ear; imaginative expression, of the kind peculiar to any work of genius, appeals via static image, or via dynamic rhythm, to the eye. Now there is a hierarchy of the senses and in this hierarchy sight is pre-eminent. And so "the greatness of an author" is not so much a matter of words heard as of things seen. In this way, by reducing an artist's expression to its analogue in the senses, we can make a comparative evaluation. I don't mean that the value of, say, Dante is a visual value: that would be to equate art in terms of the senses—a process that should appeal to Mr. Lynd. My meaning is an imaginative concordance, and in this sense we might say that Zola was *smell*, or that Mr. D. H. Lawrence is *touch*.

"Longingness is the beginning of poetry, whether in the nursery or the grown man." This is the romantic theory of poetry and is more insidious and utterly fallacious than any other theory of art. It is, indeed, the root of all mental and cultural decadence, but that aspect of the matter I will neglect for the present. We must seek out the inner evil before we turn to the causal effects. This "longingness" is a state of mind described by Mr. Lynd as "the home-sickness of the spirit for a perfect world." It is a state of mind that desires an indefinite  $x$ —that, as Professor Santayana somewhere says, "imagines that what is desired is not this or that—food, children, victory, knowledge, or some other specific goal of human instinct—but an abstract and perpetual happiness behind all these alternating interests." And I may as well continue the quotation a little further, for what follows is a profound and sufficient criticism of this home-sick art: ". . . an abstract and perpetual happiness is impossible, not merely because events are sure to disturb any equilibrium we may think we have established in our lives, but for the far more fundamental reason that we have no abstract and perpetual instinct to satisfy." It is wisdom as ancient as Plato that true happiness consists in "the sum and harmony of those specific goods upon which man's nature is directed," and poetry, which is that harmony made manifest, is a steadfastness in reality rather than a longingness for a perfect world—a clear insight of the mind rather than a home-sickness of the spirit. This is the only balm that will unseal the mind's eye; without it we can only *hear*—hear, like Mr. Lynd, the silver spoons in the nursery.

You may be amazed that so many fallacies should be hustled into one brief preface, but I assure you that I have quoted fairly and in accordance with the context. Indeed, though I have read Mr. Lynd's essay very diligently, I have found only one sentence with a grain of truth in it. In a mood of appealing frankness he confesses that "there is almost more of the spirit of John Clare than of Wordsworth in the modern eagerness to set down exactly some small individual experience as a thing of value in itself." That is said in commendation, though to my mind nothing more damnatory could be thought of. I know that John Clare has recently been resurrected: it is rumoured



that his baneful ghost killed the Athenæum; but what exactly was, or is, John Clare? A poet of one poem and, as for the rest, a man devoid of any significance whatsoever, possessing no intellectual curiosity or one thought of any value, but merely registering, like a seismograph, the tremulous shakings of his own weak nerves. And such is the spirit (call it spirit?) that Mr. Lynd finds in modern verse; and he seems amazingly complacent about it all. But why quote Wordsworth on the fly-leaf? If thou *indeed* derive thy light from Heaven. . . . HERBERT READ.

## "L'Actuel": An Unpublished Poem.

### I.

SOME time ago a series of philosophical dialogues appeared in these pages, the work of a young Frenchman, M. Denis Saurat. They were followed by a statement of principles entitled "Principia Metaphysica," with a commentary as appendix. I have now been given the opportunity of outlining, imperfectly of necessity, for against space everyone but Professor Einstein fights in vain, the argument and development of a philosophical poem, unpublished and written in French, on which M. Saurat has worked for a decade. "L'Actuel" is in conception and performance on a scale which has not been attempted in this country, nor, as far as I can recollect, in France, for half a century. Its scope is indicated accurately in its subtitle "Epopée métaphysique en IX chants." A prolonged flight in lyrical thought (it contains about 3,000 lines), it is as remarkable for profundity and wealth of intuition and for force of expression as M. Saurat's dialogues. I shall not attempt here a criticism of the poem, for that would not be fair, seeing that it is not yet publicly accessible, either to M. Saurat or to my readers. I will content myself with the remark that, as undoubtedly as the dialogues, it is a work of genius; and pass on to an account of it.

In the Prologue M. Saurat states the thesis with which readers of his dialogues must be familiar: that all Life annihilates itself in Perfection. Being follows a rhythm which carries it to a comparative perfection; and that being attained, it falls back again into the Potential, from which it rises once more in an eternal movement. Life kills itself in perfection, because in perfection there is no desire, no reason for action, for movement, for life:

Plus rien ne l'émouvait de ce qui meurt la vie;  
Étant parfait, pourquoi eût-il rien désiré?  
Pourquoi son infini se serait-il serré  
En des créations infinies et finies?

Un à un, il avait gravi fatalement  
Les degrés éclatants de l'empire des choses;  
Au sommet, il s'était fondu dans le néant;  
L'obscurité derrière lui s'était reclose  
Tout être s'annihile en sa perfection.

The first canto, entitled "La Création," consists of a series of cosmic hymns describing the formation of the world. It is desire which brought the universes into being.

Désirs vagues, flottant par les abîmes mornes,  
Suspendus dans la nuit pendant l'éternité,  
Vous êtes l'origine innombrable et sans bornes,  
Dont tous les êtres à jamais ont éclaté.  
Vous êtes l'étoffe première  
Dont tous les mondes vont jaillir.  
Le temps, l'espace et la matière  
Sont votre langage, o Désirs!

How does desire attain to expression in the universe? By becoming finite, by concentrating itself in living points. Life limits itself in order to become actual; but in limiting itself it rejects, it separates from

itself, all that its chosen form does not express. In all creation there is therefore pain:

Mais l'infini n'est satisfait qu'aucun langage,  
Ce qui s'exprime en lui ne le diminue pas,  
Rien ne satisfera l'inépuisable rage  
Qui le travaille et jamais ne s'apaisera.

Et le désir s'exaspéra dans ses Images  
Jetant avec fureur les mondes dans la nuit.

Et la tourmente s'élargit dans l'infini.

"Nothing will satisfy the inextinguishable rage of the Potential"; and thus being is by a necessity actualised with more and more intensity. Out of the first "univers immense et vague" there arise one after another the universes, the stars, our world and the earth, all expressions of a more and more definite actualisation. M. Saurat celebrates their birth in hymns of great beauty, and concludes the first canto with a description of the rise of the plant and animal kingdoms and the appearance of man. But still

Le désir se multiplie et s'élargit sans trêve,  
A travers l'homme frémissant,  
Poursuivant  
Ses plus lointains rêves.

The second canto is entitled "Osiris." Here the human drama begins. Osiris represents what M. Saurat has in his dialogues called the Material Convention. He is the founder of the laws of matter and being, but in its evolution being is passing beyond him. And because it is doing so, destruction threatens Osiris, the Evil One is coming upon him in the form of Typhon, the serpent. Isis, to find some way of salvation, goes on a pilgrimage to Brahma, the incarnated wisdom of the East. She is at first calmed by his irony, his counsel of smiling inaction; but in the end she is angered:

"Maître des hommes d'une trop fertile terre  
Et des peuples assis trop longtemps près des eaux,  
Quelle erreur a grandi dans ton noble cerveau,  
Te cachant le réel de sa trame serrée!  
Malheureuse, à tes pieds que me suis égarée!  
Si tu avais jamais contemplé l'horizon  
Des déserts, lors des soirs où rôde le Typhon,  
Et si tu avais vu onduler l'Épouvante  
Tu saurais quel destin monte vers ton attente,  
O Brahma! tu saurais ce qu'un jour tu sauras,  
Si les forces du Dieu ne lui suffisent pas!"

And she returns to Egypt in time to witness the ultimate conflict between Osiris and Typhon in their incarnated forms as sparrow-hawk and serpent. First the combatants battle on the earth; then the god lifts the serpent from the ground, and they become two super-cosmic, animal forces, fighting in the cosmic world. At last Osiris, feeling his strength departing, re-identifies himself with the being of which he is a personification, the sun, the centre of the material forces of this world. But Typhon folds his huge coils round the sun; and it bursts into fragments, which to Isis appears as a shower of stars, and which is the dispersion of "the limbs of Osiris." And so the canto ends apocalyptically:

Et quand Isis leva ses regards affligés  
Debout sur les déserts qu'avait grandis la lutte,  
D'innombrables clartés précipitaient leur chute;  
Du zenith jusqu'à l'horizon, incessamment,  
En longs éclats de feu tombait le firmament  
Comme si tout à coup les voûtes surchargées  
De l'univers avaient cédé, désagrégées  
Laisant crouler les myriades des soleils  
Et les limites des ténèbres, sous l'éveil  
Insupportable, reculaient dans les abîmes.  
Et la terre apparut ainsi qu'un être infime  
Sur qui, subitement, revint comme une mer  
Le poing brutal des nuits qui s'était entr'ouvert.

Thus the Material Convention in itself breaks up, because it is not enough; and Isis in despair exclaims:

Qui nous dira les mots supêmes qui libèrent,

Qui lavera nos fronts des sueurs de la terre,  
 Nous rendant la maîtrise de nos volontés?  
 Qui nous dira que ce n'est pas la liberté  
 Mais seulement la Force en nos veines qui gronde?  
 Et ne sommes nous donc pas les maîtres du monde?

She seeks assistance next in a new convention,  
 Moral Convention. E. M.

## Views and Reviews.

### THE ANSWER TO MALTHUS—IV.

IF we are careful not to identify nervous energy with intellectual activity, Mr. Pell's argument will be easily followed. As Ribot said: "All psychic activity certainly implies nervous activity; still, all nervous activity does by no means imply psychic activity—nervous activity being far more extended than psychic activity." An athlete, like a racehorse, develops an enormous amount of nervous energy during a contest, but his intellectual activity is not correspondingly increased. The townsman as compared with the countryman, the woman of leisure as compared with the chronically exhausted woman who works for a living, even the worker-bee as compared with the queen, the grass-fed horse as compared with the corn-fed horse, all differ in the amount and kind of energy they produce. And the re-action on fertility is obvious, or should be so. The worker-bees are sterile; concerning horses, every breeder knows that "nervous, vicious animals are not so likely to breed as those of milder temperament" (Mayo: "The Diseases of Animals"); the birth-rate is higher among the poorer people in towns than among the richer. There is an optimum point for fertility which civilisation always tends to overpass; it is not merely possible, but easy, to make conditions too good for the performance of the required function. Darwin, for example, gave many instances showing the sterility of wild plants when transplanted to cultivated gardens, he knew, as every gardener knows, that "too much manure renders some kinds utterly sterile," "when wheat was imported directly from France into the West Indian Islands, it produced either wholly barren spikes or furnished with one or two miserable seeds, while West Indian seed by its side yielded an enormous harvest."

The same thing is manifest among animals; what is called "good condition" is notoriously unfavourable for fertility. The Arabs ride their mares to exhaustion before service, and Darwin knew that "mares which have been brought up on dry food in the stable are often infertile when first turned out to grass." That breeding exhausts the organism is a commonplace; but the exhaustion is favourable to fertility, and breeders take advantage of the fact. It does not matter whether one turns to fowls or rabbits, pigs, cows, horses or human beings, the same inverse relation between good condition (which means nervous energy) and fertility is demonstrated. The factors which make for a high development of nervous energy are:

A moderate amount of physical exertion.

A plentiful diet rich in nutriment in proportion to its bulk, and rich in proteids.

A bright and bracing climate.

A bright and cheerful environment generally, with plenty of mental stimulation.

Deny these to the mass of mankind, as Malthus wanted to do, and "they live like swine, and breed like rabbits," as one vigorous contemner of the poor said. But it is because they live like swine that they breed like rabbits.

Mr. Pell deduces these general rules:

Generally speaking, the birth-rate and the death-rate should rise and fall together.

In comparisons between different countries, the most wealthy and progressive should be the least fertile.

As a nation becomes more civilised and wealthy, the degree of fertility will tend to decline.

As we ascend the social scale, the degree of fertility will steadily diminish with the increase of wealth and fertility.

In the fluctuations of a nation's prosperity, periods of depression should show an increasing birth-rate, while periods of prosperity should show a decline.

These are general rules from which, owing to the complexity of the factors, we may expect many exceptions.\*

I cannot follow Mr. Pell's demonstration here; he goes all over the world, criticising the imperfections of vital statistics by the way. But a reference to Japan, which, industrially is in about the same condition as England was when Malthus wrote, will help to make Mr. Pell's contention clear:

Like causes produce like effects, and a similar result is making itself apparent in Japan to-day. The rapid introduction of European and American machinery is breaking up the old home industries, and leading to the employment of a large number of the people in the factories, including, of course, a disproportionate number of women and children. This has inevitably led to a lowering of the standard of comfort. Lafcadio Hearn declares that with no legislation to protect the workers there have been brought into existence "all the horrors of the factory system at its worst." The effect is to be seen in an enormous increase of the birth-rate, comparable in magnitude with the corresponding phenomenon in England. Thus we are told that "in Japan the birth-rate is rising, and has increased in the last twenty-five years from 25.8 to 39.9 per 1,000." No doubt a good deal of this apparent increase is merely statistical, but not all of it. This is shown by the fact that with the increased prosperity brought about by the war, and probably also as the result of legislative measures to protect the workers, the birth-rate has begun to decline.

In an article on the Japanese problem in the American number of the "Times" of this year, Mr. Sidney Coryn mentions that the Japanese birth-rate in California is nearly three times as large as the birth-rate among the whites. He also says:

The American standard of life is a high one. The Japanese standard is a low one, and the low standard always wins against the high where the two are brought into competition. If the American is to survive in a contest with the Japanese, he must abandon everything that makes life worth living to him. The man who works for eight hours a day and who is determined to work for no more than eight hours a day, cannot compete with the man who works twelve hours a day, and who cares nothing for hygiene. He cannot compete with ideals immeasurably lower than his own.

It is the chief merit of Mr. Pell's work that this demonstration of the law of fertility makes it possible to solve this problem of population v. civilisation. When the conditions of fertility are known, the problem of reproduction becomes manageable. The Malthusian solution would be to lower the American standard of living to that of the Japanese, and provoke what Mr. H. G. Wells once called "a devastating flood of babies." But the higher standard of living need not be lost; the lower standard is necessary only for the function of fertility, not of civilisation. The Japanese birth-rate in America will decline as the Japanese become more prosperous (already, we are told, "they are concentrated in certain steadily enlarging areas, and these areas represent the best of the agricultural lands"), as surely as the southern negro birth-rate has declined during the nineteenth century. Alternatively, the American whites can increase their birth-rate if their exaggerated woman-worship is reduced to a practical understanding of the conditions of fertility. Otherwise, the well-known phenomenon of subject races outbreeding and supplanting their conquerors will be repeated in the "democratic" melting-pot of America.

A. E. R.

\* "The Law of Births and Deaths: Being a Study of the Variation in the Degree of Animal Fertility under the Influence of the Environment." By Charles Edward Pell. (Fisher Unwin. 12s. 6d. net.)

## Reviews.

**Quiet Interior.** By E. B. C. Jones. (Cobden-Sanderson. 8s. net.)

"Quiet Interior" is a very clever study of middle-class London life, with more than a hint of Bohemia. Mr. Jones can write dialogue, he can sketch character and handle the clash of temperaments very well—but he cannot tell us anything. One feels more and more with these introspective, psychological novels that life is a cyclone whirling around a vacuous centre; there is nothing in their central characters. They should, at least, interpret, but they sit mum; like Viola, they never tell their love, but watch their beloved marry someone else, and break their hearts gracefully. We can understand life revolving around a centre of attraction; but really Claire, in this book, is what Carlyle called a "centre of indifference." These people who are always "waiting on the Lord" to "give them their heart's desire" (in this case, he is a gentleman-farmer with considerable means, not much conversation, and apparently no passions, except to be like everybody else) are singularly uninteresting; we reach them with the same sort of shock that occurs when we stumble in the darkness over the stair that is not there. If only they did something, and failed, one could feel for them; but they will not even stretch out their hands to take what they want. Claire, in this book, wants to be "loved" before she is "desired"; and because, in the order of nature, she observed desire first, she could not respond to it. "I feel sure in my own mind that, if he'd loved me first, just only for a few moments first, it would have been all right. I could have responded to anything then; yes, to anything. I'd do everything he wanted if he loved me a little first. But without that—seeing that other feeling, all by itself—I couldn't." A more self-deluded young lady it would be impossible to define; love responds at whatever angle of presentation. It is a passion of giving, not an establishment of an order of precedence. But with people like this, hum-ming and ha-ing, chopping logic about vital attractions, at the centre of a story, life seems a very dreary affair. We want the poet's affirmation:—

But sweet as the rind is, the core is.

We are fain of thee still, we are fain!

And we are fobbed off with a woman for whom "the thing she'll crown herself with, all her days" is the fact that she loved and lost because she did not love enough to respond to fundamentals. However, she will make a good aunt; that is all she is fit for.

**The Breathless Moment.** By Muriel Hine. (The Bodley Head. 8s. 6d. net.)

"The Breathless Moment" has a theme similar to that of Mr. E. B. C. Jones' "Quiet Interior," but treated from a different angle. It is as though Pauline, in Mr. Jones' book, had become the heroine of Miss Hine's, and reached her sister Claire's conclusion after experience. Sabine Fane has all the accomplishments, even more than Mr. Jones' Pauline; but she exhibits her "beautiful figure" more often—and in bathing costume, not in the demure dress of a Moon-maiden in amateur opera. Miss Hine's hero is a squire, but more given to fishing than to farming; and like Mr. Jones' farmer, he has had a curious home-life. But unlike Mr. Jones' farmer, Mark Vallance had a guilty secret; he wanted to enlist, but his aunt would not let him. Some years before, he had married an actress—and even afterwards, he had to do what his aunt told him. She was a Quaker, and apparently always told him not to. Sabine Fane, the magnificent housekeeper ("come down in the world, my dear, but obviously quite a lady") fell in love with the magnificent Achilles, Mark Vallance; and when the aunt was safely dead and buried, and Mark was going to join up, Sabine demanded her honeymoon, and "the miracle of a child." But when Mark returned suffering from "Jacksonian

fits," with a blank memory for his unmarried wife, she had to begin all over again to make him love her. Then he became jealous of the mythical dead husband she had invented as the father of her child, and, being a woman, she would not tell him the truth. Alarms and excursions; a surgical operation; and Mark, having conveniently discovered that his first wife was dead, was prepared to marry Sabine. He regretted his lapse with her; "it was wrong, Sabine. We should have waited": and she humbled her pride of motherhood to murmur: "I regret it." So that the two novels reach the conclusion of Socrates: "Whichever you do, you'll regret it." Women, apparently, have never grown out of the habit of Lot's wife, of looking backwards, and regretting. Their sense of right and wrong seems to register verdicts automatically; what they want to do is right, what they have done, or failed to do, is wrong. These may be regarded as the axioms of feminine literature; woman never is, but always to be, right, and until she is right, perhaps man will never be blest. We commend the idea as the subject of another novel.

**The Romantic.** By May Sinclair. (Collins. 9s. net.)

Those who have read the second essay of Nietzsche's "Genealogy of Morals," particularly the third section of it, will find nothing very startling in Miss Sinclair's conclusion: "Every kind and beautiful thing on earth has been made so by some cruelty." Miss Sinclair certainly does not refer to Nietzsche; it is now the fashion to introduce a psycho-analyst to explain what the characters have not divined for themselves. "The Romantic" is a well-marked type of impotent, compensating for his lack of power by every sort of cruelty, lying, treachery. Miss Sinclair spares him nothing; like all torturers, he is self-tortured, and knows not the way of escape from his internal conflict. Miss Sinclair uses her ambulance experience in Belgium with very good effect; she writes of this cowardly poseur with an uncanny insight, like a good judge of cowards. We remember that in her "Journal of Impressions in Belgium" she revealed much of the morbid psychology that she here attributes to the Commandant; in that record, it was the woman who suffered from "a total lack of balance." These lady-novelists certainly look very curious in trousers.

**Communism.** By Eden and Cedar Paul. (The Labour Publishing Co. 6d.)

The more clearly the fundamental principles of Communism are stated, the more its impracticability as a solution of the world's difficulties becomes clear. Mr. and Mrs. Paul's text-book of Communist doctrine will not, and probably is not intended to, appeal to those who are not already Communists. Of its five "underlying convictions," three will strike a non-Communist as statements definitely contrary to fact.

That social stability . . . can only be regained by the establishment of Communism, through the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . .

That the change . . . will involve the seizure of power by unconstitutional means, that it will necessitate the forcible suppression of the counter-revolution. . . .

That the overthrow of capitalism must be worldwide. . . .

To these controversial and controvertible opinions the writers add the dogma that "Whoever is not on the side of the Communists is, consciously or unconsciously, fighting on the side of capitalist imperialism." "As Trotsky says: the essential movement of contemporary history has been simplified in the extreme." Such simplifications are as attractive as they are misleading. From the point of view which sees contemporary history mainly as a struggle between the principles of centralisation and decentralisation of power, capitalist imperialism and communist authoritarianism are in the same camp.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

## THE DEFEAT OF THE WORKING CLASS.

Sir,—My attention has been called to an article entitled "The Defeat of the Working Class" which appeared in the issue of THE NEW AGE dated July 21, 1921, in the course of which a quotation is made from a report alleged to have been submitted to the Cabinet by the Federation of British Industries in 1920, to the effect that "demand cheap coal from Germany as a reparation and the Miners' Union will not be able to insist upon its national standard wage." I should like to take the earliest opportunity of informing you that no report on the subject mentioned was submitted by the Federation to the Cabinet in 1920, nor has the Federation at any time in any report made the proposal imputed to it by the writer of the article.

R. T. NUGENT,

Federation of British Industries, Director.  
39, St. James's Street, S.W.1.

["The writer of the article" was summarising in the passage referred to certain representations which were made by spokesmen connected with the F.B.I. to the Government with a view to securing a reduced price of coal in this country by obtaining foreign coal under "Reparations," and so securing a less cost of production. The words objected to should not have been quoted as though these words were the exact ones used.]

## Pastiche.

## FROM THE TCH'OUNG-HU TCHENN KING.

Fei-wei (the famous archer) had Ki-tch'ang for a pupil. He began by telling him, "First of all you must learn not to blink your eyes; then I will teach you how to draw the bow." Ki-tch'ang learnt it in this way. When his wife was weaving he lay on his back under her loom, fixing his eyes on the threads as they crossed and on the shuttle as it passed to and fro. After two years of this exercise his gaze became so fixed that his eye might be touched with a needle and it would not wink. Then he went to Fei-wei and said that he was ready. "Not yet," said Fei-wei, "you have yet to learn how to fix your mark. When you see your target *grow* by the power of your attention until it seems too large possibly to be missed, come back, and I will teach you to draw the bow." Ki-tch'ang hung in his window the long hair of a yak and set a louse to climb it. Then he exercised himself by fixing his gaze upon the louse while the sun, passing behind it, was shining full in his eyes. Day after day the louse appeared larger and larger. After three years of this exercise he saw it as enormous—could distinguish the heart of the insect. When he had succeeded in piercing, with certainty, the heart of the louse, never cutting the hair with his dart, then he went to find Fei-wei again. "Now," said the master, "you know how to shoot. I have nothing more to teach you."

Lie-tzen was shooting with his bow before Pai-hounn-ou-jenn: a cup full of water was hung from his left elbow, and he drew the bow with his right hand to its farthest, let go, fitted another arrow, shot again, and so on with the immobility of a statue, while the water in the cup never trembled. Pai-hounn-ou-jenn said to him: "You shoot like a man too much occupied with what he does, shooting artificially—not like an archer indifferent how he draws, shooting naturally. Come with me to some high mountain, to the edge of a precipice, and we will see if you still keep that presence of mind." The two men did so. Pai-hounn-ou-jenn stood upon the brink of the precipice, his back to the abyss and his heels projecting over space. (An archer steps back to draw his bow.) He then saluted Lie-tzen according to the rites before beginning to shoot. But Lie-tzen, seized with vertigo, already lay upon the earth in a perspiration. Said Pai-hounn-ou-jenn to him: "The superman can look into the depth of heaven, the abyss of earth or into the remotest distance without any mental emotion. But it seems to me that your eyes are troubled, and that if you were to shoot now you would not hit the mark."

Translated into English from Dr. Wieger, by P. A. Mairat.

## DREAM DUST.

A tiny sprite stole softly to my room  
Long ere the dawn stared coldly through the pane,  
And wove a spell o'er me, while night did wane,  
Saying, "The fairies bade me cheer thy gloom."  
I asked its name, and low it did reply:  
"The Elf of Happy Dreams—with night I die . . ."

Loudly you bustled in on us, and flung  
The curtains wide, vowing the day was raw . . . .  
I heard a gentle sigh, and turning saw  
A quivering wisp of gossamer that hung  
Suspended o'er my bed . . . . you paused to frown,  
And murmuring "A cobweb!" brushed it down.

MARGARET SANDERS.

## PRESS CUTTINGS.

Addressing a further meeting organised by the Church Socialist League which was held in the Coventry market square last night, the Rev. Paul Stacy spoke very scathingly of the Labour movement, and contended that the social credit scheme associated with the names of Major Douglas and Mr. Orage is the only immediately practical policy to establish industrial and political stability.

There was no way out of the present social deadlock by a Bolsheviki revolution in England, said Mr. Stacy. Even if such a thing happened it would end in a worse reaction than had occurred in Russia. Neither was there a real possibility for change from trade unionism apart from an intelligent constructive policy inspired by a vision. If trade unionists had given up the attempt to make wages keep pace with prices, and had given real thought to reducing prices themselves to all consumers, they would not now be in danger of piecemeal defeat, but would have preserved their organisations and strengthened their position as a force for public good. Still less hope was there from the Labour Party in Parliament, which was entirely devoid of ideas, and would not gain in influence by being increased in hundreds. Trade unionism and a Labour Party, in order to convert the country, must scrap outworn cries, think more, and show more real intelligence and initiative. There was one bright ray of hope in this direction—the success of the Building Guilds. If the Building Unions in London, Manchester, and elsewhere could build houses better and cheaper than other people, and create the incentive to public service, whilst fully guarding the interests of their members, other unions could surely do the same. One of the hopes for the future lay in working out the Guild idea, as had been done in Italy with such wonderful results.

But one other question, continued Mr. Stacy, was still more imperative—the communal control of credit. The real difficulty behind everything was the private control of finance. A few score of magnates really ruled England, and probably a few hundreds or thousands of them controlled the world, including Governments. The financiers worked through the banks by controlling prices. They skimmed off prices those masses of financial credit which were used in loans for still further production, so that the world became glutted with goods which people could not buy. Hence unemployment, and the struggle for export markets, varied by the sabotage of war to enable private credit to begin again. There was no royal road to social justice, but the Douglas Scheme for the control of credit was the only apparent way at present for ending the deadlock to any advance. Producers' banks on the one hand and a price-fixing authority on the other would at least give the country time to breathe. When the people had begun to obtain a share in the control of credit they would have a voice in the policy of industry, and there would be no need either for abortive revolutions or strikes which failed, leaving consumers hostile to Labour, and how else could we prevent ultimately another world-war? Surely this was a question for both Labour and the Church.—"Midland Daily Telegraph."