

THE NEW AGE

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
NOTES OF THE WEEK	169	DRAMA: The Irish Players. By John Francis Hope	177
WORLD AFFAIRS: Terror of the World's Noon-tide. By Volker	171	VIEWS AND REVIEWS: The Answer to Malthus—VI. By A. E. R.	178
Towards National Guilds. By National Guildsmen	172	REVIEWS: Some Contemporary Novelists (Women). The Black Peril, or the Path to Prison. The Philosophy of Love	179
Physical Tests of Psychic Phenomena. By Arthur E. Baines	173	LETTERS TO THE EDITOR from A. E. R., S. G. Hobson	180
OUR GENERATION. By Edward Moore	175	PRESS CUTTINGS	180
READERS AND WRITERS. By Herbert Read	176		

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

INTERNATIONAL relations continue to be discussed in an atmosphere of cultivated unreality. Everywhere is the same apparent reliance on mere phrases and formulæ. Thus, the "Times" has been protesting against the "One-Power Standard." It pretends to think that all would be well if Britain would adopt Mr. Asquith's counter-principle, that the Navy "should always be adequate to secure the safety of our sea-girt Empire and our sea-borne supplies against any reasonable calculable risk." But obviously the "adequacy" of the Navy for this purpose depends entirely on the strength of possibly hostile navies. With the United States embarking on a vigorous policy of naval "preparedness," Mr. Asquith's formula (though more polite) comes to practically the same thing as the "One-Power Standard." The brutal facts of the world-situation are not to be drowned by the most ingenious ringing of changes in our phraseology. The Prime Minister again has been turning on the tap of his Cymric sentimentality at Thame. "The British Empire has but one concern in all these questions—that the peace so dearly won should be a real peace." "If there is another war, it will be terrible beyond thought. . . . The gallant young men of Thame will have died in vain." What does Mr. Lloyd George mean? Or does he even suppose himself to mean anything? Nations must live, and our economic system means that men can only acquire the needs of life by getting "employment"; and this can only be "provided" for them by lodging the greatest possible quantity of commodities wherever a market can be found for these. Meanwhile, the margin of fresh markets is continually narrowing at the same time that the circle of industrial competitors is still increasing. To meet such a situation with mere "good-will" and "pacific ideals" is like preaching vegetarianism to hungry lions. The "Nation" seems to be as blind a guide as Mr. Lloyd George himself. Commenting on Senator Borah's suggestion that the United States should use the Allies' debts to America as a lever to induce us to disarm, it naïvely wishes "Washington would use it against the causes of armaments, and not merely against the armaments themselves." Is it credible that the "Nation" fails to see what it is asking for? If America really wanted to attack "the causes of armaments," she would have no need to look across the Atlantic—at any rate, until she had drastically set her own house in order. Wall Street would do at least as well to begin on as Lombard Street.

"The finance of the year is a wreck." That is the cheering message with which the taxpayer has been speeded forth to enjoy his summer holiday as best he may. There will be a big deficit on the next Budget. How are the accounts to be squared? It is almost impossible to expand seriously the amount raised by taxation. Certainly any increased taxes will meet with furious opposition. And, if put in operation, they will react detrimentally on industry and grind the consumer still further. Nor can the margin be nearly made up by necessarily trifling "economies" at this point and that. The new advisory committee of business men is mere window-dressing. Its composition, however, is illuminating. Lords Inchcape and Weir head the list; that is the kind of "wisdom" that is revered to-day. There is a grave danger that these men will insist on cutting down still further the expenditure on such things as education (housing has anyhow gone under for the present). But the demand for these social assets cannot long be held in check. Unemployment again is bound to be still very bad during the coming winter. To leave the unemployed altogether without special provision would probably prove politically impossible, and certainly socially disastrous. A policy of mere "Anti-Waste" is therefore hopelessly doomed. And the impasse is as complete in regard to municipal finance as to national. The impending imprisonment of twenty-six of the Poplar Councillors for failure to meet their liabilities is but an extreme instance of a pressure that is everywhere felt. There is no way of escape except by radically new methods of financing administration, central and local alike. The whole idea of collecting in cash enough to meet current expenditure must be abandoned. It belongs essentially to the old static view of production and distribution; we must adopt dynamic categories, and realise adequately the *flow* of economic processes. Just as the *potentialities* of production are the only measure of the purchasing power which a given industry can distribute to its beneficiaries, so they are the only measure of what society as a whole can assign to the supply of its social requirements. We must no longer think of setting aside a fund for these out of the proceeds of past industry, but of what proportion out of our possible maximum of productive activities shall be in the future directed to these ends. A sound system of "taxation" in fact would be a mere matter of book-keeping, not an actual collection of revenue; and it would be concerned with assignments for the future, not with the distribution of an existing fund.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has been congratulating himself that "the strike fortunately came when industry was at its lowest ebb, and when it suited most people to shut up their factories rather than to carry on." This is yet another confirmation of our view of the ill-omened coal stoppage, which was begun, continued, and ended in an atmosphere of sinister financial intrigue. Sir Robert Horne went on to declare that "he looked for a decline in the price of coal, which was of the greatest possible importance to all our industries, and he was confident they would see a reduction in a short space of time." We do not know on what Sir Robert bases his optimism. We hope he is not deluding himself that the "settlement" has settled anything. In spite of the Miners' Federation's decision to work the Coal Mines' Act of 1920, there is the acutest discontent smouldering amongst the men. Such a state of repressed unrest is anything but conducive to a steady maintenance of output. We advise all publicists and captains of industry, as well as the ordinary domestic consumer, to put their minds on the problem of efficiently reorganising the coal industry. We hope, too, that the men will turn their discontent into a constructive channel. A working miner remarks in a letter: "We miners are down now and they are kicking us, but you wait and see. We are not dummies." We are sure the rank-and-file are not dummies; but for their leaders "dummies" would be much too flattering an epithet. We trust that the men themselves will, in their branches, thoroughly look into the "Practical Scheme for the Establishment of Economic and Industrial Democracy" in coal mining; and then require the leaders either to take action accordingly or to get out.

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The "Guild Socialist" does not know quite what to say about the railway position. It hankers after nationalisation plus a modicum of workers' control. But it knows that this is hopelessly out of reach for the present. It recognises, too, that a share in control under existing conditions would be rather a danger than a boon. It concludes that the Unions had better concentrate on perfecting the organisation which shall be able to assume control on "the Day." Such a "Day," of course, will never come in this country. Perhaps, for the "Guild Socialist," it is only a convenient "social myth." But if it is not to be taken literally, the alternative (within this purview) is a very gradual "encroaching control" from the bottom up. How long is this likely to take? A hundred years, shall we say? This new Fabianism of the National Guilds League is as uninspiring as the brand issued by the old firm in Tothill Street. Why not try "encroaching control" in the financing of the industry, where it would take the workers straight and rapidly to the citadel itself? Under the Social Credit scheme, we repeat, the partnership of the workers would be a genuine "encroaching control"; it would not mean their giving hostages in any way to the present plutocratic regime. They would, as a corporate and organised unity, acquire the full and independent ownership of a continually increasing proportion of the capital. And this ownership would carry with it all the powers of control, with the exception of the right of fixing prices, which the ownership of capital now confers. As Labour became the predominant partner, it could begin to introduce whatever forms of administration it might, in the end, conclude that it really desired.

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It is a slight sign of grace on the part of the S.D.F. that at its Conference it discussed the question of banking monopoly. Unfortunately it still seems to be always learning, and never coming to a knowledge of the truth. Mr. Hyndman could give no better lead than, "Our principles are not to go against monopolies. . . . Let them go on and monopolise, until we are ready to take them." Could fatuity further go? It is the old story; always Socialism to-morrow, but

never Socialism to-day. But in any case, nationalising the monopoly would not cure the evil. What we are suffering from is just the centralisation of credit in itself. This centralisation would only be hardened yet more, if the nation "took over" the banks. There would be no better guarantee than now that the people who actually ran them (who might well be exactly the same persons as at present) would have any proper regard for the interests of John Smith, private citizen. The direct administrators of all public concerns take their ease, behind barrier after barrier screening them from the wrath of the indignant consumer, whose sole weapon, the vote, cannot carry within miles of their dug-outs. The only remedy is to decentralise credit and make the ordinary man the master of his own destiny.

* * *

The City Editor of the "New Witness" has been making some lamentable remarks on this matter of banking. Discussing the fall in the bank rate, his one fear is that the banks may be too liberal with advances, and thus enable "boomsters" to put up prices. This is simply the orthodox twaddle that is laddled out in the ordinary financial article in the capitalist Press; the banks must, of course, finance industry enough to secure a revival of trade; but the "speculators must not be allowed to get the bit between their teeth." We are constantly reading that kind of stuff; but we had hoped for better things from the "New Witness"—even on its City page. It is obvious enough that all issues of credit must tend to raise prices, if these are left to the tender mercies of "supply and demand." A social regulation of prices is a first necessity of any sound economy. Again, the real cause of complaint against the banks is that, as a general rule, they restrict credit far too much, and are not nearly ready enough to come to the assistance of the would-be producer. Ample and easily obtainable credit (safeguarded, as we have said, by a Just Price) is the crying need. Producers must co-operate to finance themselves, and thus break down the credit monopoly. Manufacturers' banks, farmers' banks, above all, Trade Union banks, are what is wanted; the more, the merrier. The "New Witness" is an outspokenly anti-plutocratic organ in its editorial policy. But what earthly good can come of its witness, if its City page propagates the current financial orthodoxy, which is the very basis of the plutocratic monopoly?

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The "Times" has introduced a curious variant on the accustomed version of the Great Lie, "we are far poorer than before the war." "Real capital," it audaciously declares, in a leading article, "is very scarce throughout the world." The enemies of the truth seem happily bent on destroying themselves. There is a superficial plausibility about the usual form of the falsehood. But in singling out "real capital," the "Times" has pitched on the very ground, where the absurdity of its statement is palpable. Of paper capital its assertion may be true enough. But everyone knows that our instruments of production have been enormously multiplied and increased in efficiency since 1914. And the same is true of every other leading industrial country. But it is just these things that are "real capital." Yet Mr. J. H. Thomas seems to have been led astray by this kind of bluff, just as much as any unregenerate member of the "capitalist parties." He declared in the House that the country had "lived on its capital for four years." If during those four years the nation greatly increased the only kind of capital that really matters, it obviously was not then "living on its capital." Mr. Thomas's speech—like all those of the Thomases and Clyneses and Bramleys—was orthodox (in the plutocratic sense) throughout. He kept both eyes fixed on foreign markets. He cheered the heart of the "Manchester Guardian" and "Westminster Gazette" by roundly declaring, "The whole

question depended on foreign policy." He affirmed of America and this country, "There were no customers to buy their goods." Why *must* production start with our discovering *foreign* customers? Did Mr. Thomas stop to ask himself why the hosts of would-be customers at home cannot consume the produce of our factories, or whether anything but unreasoning prejudice stands in the way of issuing to them the necessary purchasing power? If a Labour Party does not do something unique by putting points of *this kind* in the House, why trouble to have a Labour Party at all? We insist once more that the only question that matters, in this connection, is, can we deliver the goods? And the only possible answer is, we *can*.

* * *

The Imperial Commercial Association (over whose destinies Lord Inchcape presides) has been letting out of the bag once more that very unsavoury pole-cat, compulsory arbitration. The Executive Committee have sent to the Government a resolution on the subject. Of course, the proposal is wrapped up in all kinds of ways; a sort of a kind of a right to strike is reserved somewhere in the background. But this would be so hedged round with conditions that it would not be "the right to strike," as understood, in its simple downrightness, by Labour. To go straight to the issue—we are faced by a plain alternative, the right to strike or slavery; and that is the end of the matter. If we deliberately will the Servile State, well and good; but to admit any proposals of this nature *is* the Servile State. Do not let us tolerate any quibbling or evasion about that. On the whole, we do not think that Labour will consent to slavery. It accepts reductions of wages when its leaders tell it it must. It makes the best of a "settlement," full of the most dangerous loopholes, which the same leaders have hastily knocked together, when the word of command comes from the banks to end a stoppage. But it is full of fight at bottom—as witness the miners' heroic, however impossible, gesture in their final ballot. And it has certain fundamental principles of permanent application, to which it clings with invincible tenacity. And one of these is the right to strike.

* * *

The one danger is that leading Socialists, such as Mr. Bernard Shaw and Mr. Lansbury, have so recklessly advocated industrial conscription and so gratuitously lauded its Russian enactors. They will plead that they do not mean what Lord Inchcape means; *their* conscription is to apply to everyone, and is to be an incident in a definite passage from production for profit to production for use. Nevertheless, they have sold the pass. The thing they advocate is slavery, even though it be a more egalitarian slavery than that of the Weirs and Inchcapes. They have done their level best to weaken, in Labour quarters, the stark horror of slavery *as* slavery. The whole thing becomes, on the Shaw-Lansbury philosophy, a matter of nicely calculated expediencies and of the precise social results to be expected from this or that type of servile arrangements. If the bed-rock love of liberty is still, as we believe it is, ingrained in our people, it is no thanks to the Socialist movement. As a whole, that has been, and is, a liberty-hating movement. There *ought* to be (but there certainly is not) more hope in the Churches in this respect. They are avowedly pledged up to the hilt against slavery as such. Unfortunately their actual main objective in social affairs is peace—practically at any price. There is no doubt that the representatives of the Churches would all declare unhesitatingly against any proposed "reform," if they could be convinced that it would mean slavery. But most of them are *not* open to be convinced that compulsory arbitration means this; it exercises too snake-like a fascination over their pacific instincts. A few influential leaders, who know something about industrial issues, should proclaim dogmatically "Compulsory arbitration is slavery."

World Affairs.

TERROR OF THE WORLD'S NOONTIDE.

LET us understand at last how terrible our own times are.

That which is fine, that which is Nothingness itself, the Impalpable, the Substrateless—that which is most useful, and which gives form and gives life. That which abides above Time enclosed in lines, and which makes time which passes; that which is Duration itself, the ancient, lasting, never-to-be-attained—that is what is nevertheless ever-present in its infinite Nearness and Immediateness. It is ever-present to the Soul; such is the Primordial Revolution, such is what is Nearness of Immediateness. Such is the reality which is without Inflexibility. And that Mystery is such which eternally brings everything low and eternally fixes new heights to itself. Before this and such Duration and Mystery everything is blown away, and everything that is a thing and a materiality. This Life and Nothingness is love and embrace eternal, eternally wide. That, we say, which is the cause of the truth that *nothing can rest in itself*, but can only live if it perishes seraphically in the travail and birth of the higher; the incredible, intoxicated exultation, eternally swinging beyond itself; that which is Primordialness itself and is primordial—and that which compels all that is to circle round it—that is Divinity.

We affirm that we are ripe. We are ripe to put an end to poverty and neediness. For riches and abundance become us to-day. Not beforehand can the New Necessity appear. Riches and abundance become us. And again, the old need will not disappear before the new one comes. Let us understand that *there is a discordant cleavage between the old and the new needs. Let us understand at last how terrible our own times are. Let us no longer calumniate ourselves as the petty comrades of a petty epoch.*

Perhaps there has never been a constellation which demanded so much courage and genius, so much decision and mind, so much strength and love, as is demanded by the constellation of to-day. All round us there is an exhaustion, and an out-living of all things old, which robs us of breath. There is a process of dissolution which makes every, and even the last, little adherence laughable, and it will begin something so unheard-of, that everything in the past appears almost a philistinism. Again, we do not say that one day Temporality will pass over into Eternity. "No man shall see Me and live," signifies that God will never enter into the finite. And yet is this Temporal—so hated, despised and covetous—electrically shaken through and through by the Divine.

What other thing do we seek than the new way of life, which sanctifies facts and realities, and removes the curse which contempt or covetousness has spread over the world? *Life shall once more be possible and blessed.* But life can only live when it is freed from the numbing grip of Word, and Thing, and Touch, and Ego, and all lower deeds. Not in a grasping of the Ego, but only in the bursting of the Ego can God come; only in its electric streams, in its Budding and its Blossoming and embodiments and actions. Only when All is Godhead, and when nothing is considered divine can God be. But even though neither now, nor ever, shall we see God face to face in the course of the world, yet it is this prodigious novelty and event which shall soon begin before our eyes. The glorious old hymn says: "Mors stupebit et natura." *We shall see the world.* We shall see the World-Abyss prostrate in its depths of depths and in its immeasurably beatific completion.

The world will flower to-day. This is the Noontide of our present. The World-bud has saved itself from the World-Depths. The new necessity is no longer the

need of food and feeding. It is the need of the seed which loses itself in the bud, that it may not rot; it is the need of the blossom when it steps over the heights that it may again shut itself into the mysterious numbness of the seed. And as the primeval struggle with Nature ebbs to-day, the old needs disappear. *We are outgrowing Nature*; that is the key to everything new that will come. We are attaining puberty in the kingdom of Nature.

That is more than the bare technical draining of Nature, of which the Philistine is so vain. It is just the educated rabble, and the proletariat, which is feeding its vanity on naturalism and atheism, those cast-off clothes of the nineteenth century bourgeoisie; and only for him "all things go together with Nature," because he has not yet arrived at those experiences which are more than Nature. To-day Nature lies "undeified" under us. And it is good that we have outgrown the old Tyrant-God, and senseless, worthless, mechanical restraint.

Godless, mechanical, lies Nature, no miracle can suddenly break through her. But greater than the miracle which with unforeseen irregularity broke through the administration of Nature's laws, is the miracle of mankind—We Ourselves—which breaks through, uplifts, and redeems all nature, and boundlessly surpasses all natural life. The World-Abyss has swallowed Nature's deeps.

But this dying away of Nature, of Nature-life which is going to rest in us, we have paid for with the great price of the Immediateness, the Primordialness, the Youth, which we have lost. Whilst we freed ourselves Prometheus-wise from the creative primordial impulse, we now stand uprooted, cast loose from the jubilant, divine revolution, separated from the All-in-All as simple Individual, which is laughable and hissing sound in the Divine and in the Spirit.

Everything is being extinguished now which springs from the great passions, from the infallible instincts which let the Individual electrically palpitate in unison with the revolution of the divinity. Divine immanence, the strength of races, the spirit of peoples, sink under; the earthly, the cultivated, the savage, the national, the racial, disappear; types become one; and nearly unnoticeable, here and there, is the new type.

And as yet there is nowhere on earth a store-house of unused racial strength which could refresh the old blood as does a folk-migration. All mighty, creative, elementary thoughts end and yield to a "historicism" and to a coquettish romanticism which, well out of danger, toy with archæological love-trifles. The strong, form-giving, warmth and hate radiating men go one after another away, and none new replaces them. The hot, ample, sensual, clear and abysmal life of the body is perishing, is no more; as "not-of-the-spirit" it exists a little while by means of sport in a repulsive distortion. Blood is becoming corrupt. An unfettered, often perverse sensuality, such as licentious millenars have not seen, supplants the generative faculty, which sinks rapidly the more steeply the world hurries to the heights.

Yet do we not mourn for all this, it causes us a deep joy, we feel the birth in the wild throes, and know that not only the glory of the world, but also the mire and murder, the secret vices and curses, will blossom in glimmering splendour. Ever madder becomes the way of events; hardly does one event stand before it is already outlived, so that there is nothing more with which we could still deal seriously. And the rabble yelps at the door of the Most-Holy; everything is trodden on, besmirched; the whole earth, unfolded, becomes ludicrously small in the glaring light. Everything seems to lie before us "un-deified," un-consecrated, worthless, meaningless and material.

From the German by VOLKER.

Towards National Guilds.

As many as are the saints so many are the theophanies—which being interpreted, means that the Douglas Scheme has as many fundamental aspects as there are types of mind. This is not in the least to be wondered at, since Credit is the multiplied sum of the abilities of Man and hence is as universal as Man. In a metaphysical sense, Credit, indeed, is Man: the sum and product of the psychology of all individuals. Furthermore, just as from Mankind no human creature can be excluded—even a professor of political economy—so in the sum and product of Credit every individual is a contributory factor. Credit is all-embracing like the divine Love of the Christians; it is likewise all-giving in the sense that every individual is entitled to receive from it; strangest of all, every individual is compelled to contribute to it, whether he will or no. What is the "useful work" which alone, according to the utilitarian socialists, entitles the individual to a share in the common Credit? Nobody can define it, not even by negatives. The criminal, the lunatic, even a lecturer at the London School of Economics, can be said, from one point of view, to have a use-value in the totality of the common inheritance, if only as poisons provocative of the discovery of their antidote; and much less ingenuity is necessary to prove the value of the prostitute, the journalist and the popular preacher. No, every individual, we repeat, is a contributory, positive or negative, to the stock of human values of which the sum is called, in economic terms, Credit; and every individual, it follows, is entitled to a share in it. This is the beginning and end of the Christian and of the Socialist doctrine of the brotherhood of Man. Whoever denies it is neither.

Returning to fundamental aspects of the Douglas-NEW AGE Scheme, we lately said that the object of the propaganda could be thus summed up: to substitute Real Credit for Gold as the basis of Financial Credit. This formula, however, will appeal only to those to whom the question of Finance presents an interesting problem; it has not the smallest "thrill" for people to whom Finance is a closed book—the man in the street and the professors of economics. Other minds need other formulæ; and to those the following are offered for their choice. To the lover of peace, for example, we can truly say that the fundamental object of the Scheme is to prevent war by substituting international exchange for international competition, a consummation only possible when foreign trade is made voluntary and selective. To the Liberal, again, in so far as he professes to love personal liberty, we can truly say that the fundamental object of the Scheme is to substitute for the present concentrations of power *distributed power*, or individual initiative for the present merely corporate and oligarchic initiatives. The real economist (distinguishable in the dark, by his light, from the political economist) finds his account in another fundamental aspect of the Scheme, namely, its provision for the economy or maximum-use of all the constituents of Credit, natural and human. Since the design of the Scheme is to utilise values for the creation of greater values, the real economist (the engineer, the inventor, the scientist, the artist, the creators of values in general) is, for the first time in history, invited and not merely allowed to co-operate in the work of civilisation and culture. Still another fundamental aspect of the Scheme is peculiarly related to the noble mentality of the Labour movement in its ideal motive, the deliverance of the proletariat from the servility of wage-slavery. The partnership of Labour with Capital

in the control and administration of the instruments of real Credit is not merely a pious provision of the Scheme, but an indispensable condition of its realisation. The Scheme can scarcely proceed a step without the responsible concurrence and "redemption" of the working-classes. The sincere Christian, again, finds his ideals reflected in those aspects of the Scheme which make possible, without crucifixion, the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ upon earth: the brotherhood of Man as a necessity of social organisation; the recognition of the Trinity as an axiom of economics; the subordination of lower to higher credit-values as the object of society, and the criterion of human progress. What can be better for Christianity than to make it demonstrably desirable in material as well as in "spiritual" values? What has been worse for Christianity than the divorce hitherto maintained between this world and the next, between, that is to say, instrumental and final values? The formulation of a scale of values, running without a break from the so-called material to the so-called spiritual values; and the organisation of Society for the purpose of mounting this ladder—are they not the essence of practical Christianity? The last fundamental aspect of the Scheme that we shall mention is the racial or, as our colleagues, M. M. Cosmoi, would say: the pan-human. Assuming the truth of their dogma (which is also the world's intuition) that the leadership of the self-revelation of God in Man, in short, the work of the Son, the Logos, is the general responsibility of the Aryan race and the particular responsibility of "Europe"—the fundamental aspect of the Scheme which should appeal to the racially self-conscious, to all good Europeans, is its implied subordination of the Jew in all men to the "White Man" in all men. There is not the least doubt in our mind that the present control of Aryan credit (of every octave) by the inferior races, is the universal of the individual fact that in most Aryans the qualities of the "White Man" are subordinated to the non-white, if not black, qualities: that our racial subjection is, in fact, the reflection of our individual subjection. And a Scheme, therefore, which, as we have said, necessitated the elevation of superior values can truly be said to aim at the substitution of the superior for the inferior race. Good anthropologists, in other words, should find their account in the Scheme as easily as the other types we have mentioned, since racial eugenics is an essential part of the very highest real Credit.

We can well believe that the plain reader will inquire with scepticism whether we are really so "silly" as to see all these possibilities in a Scheme of which a draft application has been published for the Mining industry! In those proposals for the setting up of a Producers' Bank, the joint creation of Financial Credit, the regulation of Prices, and the communal recognition of increments of real Credit—is there, can there conceivably be, this vista of a new age? We affirm it with all the faith of which we are capable; the putting into operation of the Scheme by the Miners, let us say, would be the veritable and actual beginning of the historic period of the Second Coming of Christ. It is a commonplace that the greatest events have the most apparently insignificant causes; seeds are usually the smallest things in nature. Imagination, however, is the perception of the great in the small, of the harvest in the seed, and of the event in the initiatory act. It may be that many of those who are now propagating the Douglas Scheme, and even those who, in time, will put it into operation, are and will remain ignorant of the magnitude of their act. It is of no consequence save to themselves. History will say of them that they builded better than they knew. But for the rest of us, the work is lightened by the certainty that the Scheme is a seed of the Tree of Life, and that, when planted on earth, it will grow into heaven.

NATIONAL GUILDSMEN.

Physical Tests of Psychic Phenomena

By Arthur E. Baines.

(Author of "Electro-Pathology," "Studies in Electro-Physiology," "Germination, in its Electrical Aspect," "The Origin and Problem of Life," etc.)

THE attitude of the scientific mind towards Spiritualistic or psychic phenomena generally, as towards other things imperfectly understood, is to some extent an open one, but in the absence of evidence other than the statements of persons who although honest may be mistaken it cannot be said to extend to them a large measure of belief. Personally I am of opinion that the manifestations common to spiritualistic seances are not beyond the powers of a conjuror of ordinary ability, and are for the most part unworthy of the serious attention of thinking men.

The object in view is, as I understand it, to commune with the dead; mainly with a view to obtaining proof of a future state. The methods adopted, however, are more suggestive of a prehistoric age than of the twentieth century of the Christian era. We can go back, at all events, to the book of Samuel (ch. xxviii) for a parallel: "Then Saul said to his servants, seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her and enquire of her. And his servants said to him: Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. . . . And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: . . . And the King said unto her: Be not afraid . . . what sawest thou . . . What form is he of? And she said: An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived it was Samuel. . . . And Samuel said to Saul, Why has thou disquieted me, to bring me up?"

Put in less stilted phraseology the above might well serve as an excerpt from a modern work on Psychic Phenomena, or an account of a materialisation at Peckham; and be more convincing than either.

It has always been a mystery to me why scientific men of the calibre of Flammarion, Lombroso, Crookes and Lodge were content to forsake the methods which had made them famous and seek instruction at the hands of some person or persons of little education and doubtful veracity. The most fitting place for research work is the laboratory, and the only evidence on which implicit reliance can be placed is that afforded by instruments of precision. I am not speaking of religion, of matters into which we are told faith should enter. The issue is a plain one; it is simply whether the incarnate can communicate with the discarnate. If the question can be answered in the affirmative it only remains for the best means of communication to be discovered; if in the negative, we may not have learned anything, but should not be any the worse off. A line of research to this end can, I believe, be devised.

As the statements I am about to make can readily be verified by any competent electrician it will economise space if we take them as proved.

A vital force, sufficiently resembling electricity to be capable of expression in terms of electrical units, is generated in the lungs with every inspiration, and is conveyed by the blood-stream to every cell in the animal body, the brain receiving the larger supply and representing the seat of highest potential. No two persons are exactly alike, but the average electromotive force of a living human being in normal health is about five millivolts, the measure being taken from hand to hand through the coils of a sensitive galvanometer by means of suitable electrodes.

The galvanometer should be of the reflecting type, of a sensibility of about 4 metres, at scale distance, per micro-ampere, and the scale on which the deflections register in millimetres, preferably a transparent one, reactable from the back.

The difficulties in the way of the observer are chiefly concerned with technique. The hand electrodes used by me were solid rods of German silver, carrying terminals and provided with a shaped piece into which the thumb fitted. Now not only are the hands of different polarity, but the fingers and thumb of each hand are on different circuits, so that if the right hand, as a whole, is positive, the four fingers are negative and the thumb positive, but the latter carrying a larger quantity of nerve-current than the fingers governs the sign. Skin resistance may be anything from 5,000 to 50,000 ohms, and it follows that any inequality of pressure—especially of the thumbs—must, by altering the skin-resistance, influence the excursion of light upon the scale, and may even alter the sign of current. I took every precaution to guard against this, and am satisfied that no differences of pressure were exercised which would account for the phenomena, as a whole. The possibility of this occurring, however, introduces an element of doubt, which may be disposed of by the adoption of another form of electrode.

The theory underlying the proposed galvanometric test was this: if a discarnate spirit is able to make use of the nervous system of a human being, so as to cause that being to talk or to move, it follows, logically I think, that the discarnate Spirit is electrically of higher potential than the medium, and that in such case the deflection given by the latter should be materially influenced during the course of the manifestations. Furthermore there should be a change in the medium's Aura, and Kilner—the late electrician to St. Thomas's Hospital—has shown how, by means of the Dicyanin Screen, the Aura can be inspected by anyone of normal vision.

In one way or other, therefore, some evidence worthy of the name should be obtainable.

So far I have not been able to get hold of any dicyanin, but have carried out the galvanometric experiment under the following conditions:

Five well-known spiritualists—among them Dr. Abraham Wallace—were invited to attend, and were introduced into the testing room one by one, earthed for five minutes to get rid of any induced charge, and their hand-to-hand deflections very carefully taken. They were as follows:

- No. 1. (Medium) 265 m.m. positive,
- No. 2. (Dr. Wallace) 180 m.m. positive,
- No. 3. (Medium) 225 m.m. negative,
- No. 4. (Medium) 227 m.m. negative,
- No. 5. (Medium) 223 mm. negative.

Two other persons were present, their deflections being 230 m.m. and 260 m.m. positive, respectively, and the sitters were arranged in series, i.e., positive to negative, as regards juxtaposition.

The first observation was of No. 3, normal deflection = 225 m.m. negative:

Under what was alleged to be Control by a disembodied spirit the deflection became 15 m.m. positive; a difference of 240 millimetres. A second control made it 110 m.m. + and a third 88 m.m. +. These deflections were fairly steady, and, in my opinion, were not due to variations of pressure on the electrodes. The maximum change was from 225 — to 110 + = 335 millimetres.

No. 3 then resumed his seat and his place at the galvanometer was taken by No. 5 = 223 m.m. negative.

Under "Controls" the following deflections were registered: 48 + to 42 — (steading to 15 —). Then rose to 82 +, altered rapidly to 222 —, and steadied at 255 positive; maximum difference = 478 millimetres.

No. 1 was then substituted for No. 5; normal deflection = 265 positive:

Under the first control the observed deflection was 228 m.m. negative, steady, and remained so for several minutes, after which it was variable. A second "con-

trol" gave 225 —, and of the same character. Variation = 493 m.m.

We then tried No. 4 = 227 —, normally.

An Indian guide was said to step into his Aura and the deflection changed to 260 m.m. positive — a difference of 487 millimetres —. After a time the guide departed and the deflection reverted to normal. The guide then announced his return and the resultant deflection steadied again at 260 positive.

An interesting digression was made by Dr. Abraham Wallace. His original reading was 180 m.m. positive. After the whole party had been together for an hour or more it rose to 265 positive and this he succeeded, by concentration of thought or effort of will, in reducing to 40 positive. To this, however, I will refer later on.

The final test was of No. 3, and his deflection of 225 negative veered, under a "control," to 260 positive, steady. Upon cessation of "control" it reverted to normal; maximum change 485 millimetres.

In respect of No. 5 it is, I think, probable—although I could detect nothing—that inequalities of pressure on the electrodes account for the variability observed. The other deflections, so far as I could see, were not due to this cause and appeared to indicate some outside influence.

In regard to Dr. Wallace it is more than probable that in the effort to concentrate thought or will there was involuntary pressure of the left thumb, or, alternatively, relaxation of pressure of the right thumb. Either would have the effect of lowering the positive deflection, tend to bring it back towards zero and explain the diminution.

The increase of his register from 180 to 265 m.m. positive is, however, quite another matter, and one to which I have before called attention.

The deflection yielded by any person who has been shut in a room for an appreciable time with a number of other persons will be, roughly, the sum of all the electricities divided by the number of people present. If, for instance, there were three, each of 200 m.m. negative, and three, each of 200 m.m. positive, they would, in the course of an hour or two, all be at zero, because a common level would ultimately be found. Here we had a total of seven sitters, four of whom were positive and three negative. But three negatives and only one positive were weakened by short-circuiting and one negative was almost constantly in the galvanometer circuit. Moreover one of the positives was equal to the observed maximum of 265 m.m. and could therefore be eliminated as a factor in division.

The calculation would then be 675 neg. — 223 = 458 negative from 935 positive = 477 ÷ 6 = 80 which added to Dr. Wallace's normal 180 m.m. = 260, or within 5 m.m. of his final reading.

I agree that the foregoing tests are in no way conclusive. They *prove* nothing, but are sufficiently encouraging to warrant further investigation on the lines I have laid down. The late Sir William Crookes, with whom I discussed the matter some years back, was inclined to my view, and not long ago I wrote to Sir Oliver Lodge and suggested that further experiments should be carried out. His reply was as follows:

Dear Mr. Baines,—

. . . . I think I must have heard about your experiments with Mr. — and others through Dr. —. Indeed I lent him a galvanometer for the purpose, but, so far as I gathered, the results were not uniform or conclusive. You are certainly aware that any muscular contraction is apt to develop an electric current, not directly as I think, but as a side issue, dependent on some kind of osmosis; and I saw nothing in the experiments of which I heard that did not seem to me able to be accounted for in that sort of way, on lines more or less well known. Though if there had been some definite change during the access of control in the case of a medium, the facts would have demanded further inquiry.

I am myself too busy at present to undertake investigation of that kind, so I content myself with acknowledging receipt of your letter.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) OLIVER LODGE.

I have the greatest possible respect for Sir Oliver Lodge but was under the impression that he had not only devoted a great deal of his time to sittings with Mrs. Piper and a number of other mediums but had expressed his intention of withdrawing from professional work in order to further pursue his studies of psychic phenomena. His letter is tantamount to saying that it is hardly worth while to attempt experimentation with instruments of precision because he had heard that someone else had failed to obtain uniform or conclusive results. By means of the galvanometer and Dicyanin Screen uniformity of result is merely, as I have said, a matter of technique, and conclusions drawn from instrumental records are at any rate free from the suspicion of trickery. To this it may be added that by the methods hitherto adopted *no one* has obtained results which by any stretch of the imagination can be termed either uniform or conclusive.

The one weak spot in the tests of which an account has been given is the uncertainty as to inequality of pressure upon the electrodes. It is a difficulty by no means easy to overcome, but I think that thimble electrodes of manganin metal might solve the problem. By thimble electrodes I mean thimble-shaped finger and thumb stalls, joined up in series and connected to the galvanometer by flexible, insulated wires. If then the wrists were suspended in air and a plug of cotton wool was placed between each finger and finger and thumb I do not see how any pressure at all could be put on the electrodes, while with manganin error would not be introduced by heating up, for that alloy does not alter in resistance with temperature.

For the preliminary tests no one but the subject and the observer should be admitted to the testing room, the subject should be earthed for five minutes (a water-main earth is the best) and the hand-to-hand deflection taken with the above electrodes and in the manner I have suggested. After the deflections have been registered in this way all the sitters should assemble in the room, the medium chosen fitted with the electrodes and the result carefully watched. If at the same time a Dicyanin Screen had been prepared inspection of the medium's aura might also be made.

For this purpose it would be necessary to have part of the room draped off and in semi-darkness, or a smaller, adjoining room might be used; a dozen yards of flex, more or less, making little difference in the deflections. If that were done, however, the initial hand-to-hand reading should, of course, be taken with the longer wires.

To those who prefer to do things in a sensible way I advise a study of "The Human Atmosphere (The Aura)," by the late W. J. Kilner (Routledge). A d'Arsonval galvanometer of the required sensibility would cost about £15 to £20, a lamp and scale about another £7 10s., and the electrodes, say, £2 10s.; not a very large sum to expend on an investigation of world-wide interest and importance.

The difference between scientific and unscientific handling of a subject can be exemplified by quotations from Kilner's "Human Atmosphere," and "The Human Aura," by one A. Marques. Kilner says: "Hardly one person in ten thousand is aware that he or she is enveloped by a haze intimately connected with the body which although invisible under ordinary circumstances can be perceived by the employment of screens containing a peculiar chemical substance in solution. The writer does not make the slightest claim to clairvoyancy his researches have been entirely physical and can be repeated by anyone who takes sufficient interest in the subject." He adds that

in no case could any trace of an aura be detected after death; the italics are mine.

As against that we have the following farrago of nonsense from the pen of Mr. A. Marques: "It will readily be understood that death produces an immediate great change in the human auras. All the higher principles, together with the auric egg that envelopes them, disappear; leaving the doomed material body with only its life-long and inseparable etheric double floating over it; the caloric aura gradually ceases with the disappearance of animal heat; the pranic aura, which had begun to fade before the actual dissolution, turns to an ashen-grey light; all the electric emanations, already broken up during the sickness, cease; the magnetic flow alone continues, though in a sluggish and stationary (*sic*) manner; the Tatwic ribbons lose their colour, leaving only dead, colourless lines, as in mineral matter, whereby it can be said that the auric manifestation which remains around the body is only that which belongs to the dead material compounds, until decomposition sets in. Then the auric effluvia again becomes alive, and assumes the aspects and hues of the new lives that issue out of death."

In the discussion of what is known as psychic phenomena we have had far more rubbish of the above description than anything even approaching common sense. I commend the matter to the attention of the Society for Psychical Research.

Our Generation.

A LADY who perversely writes as a sleep—she has at least the distinction of not being one of the ninety-nine—has sent me a letter which can be of little use for this column; for she tries to lure me into the realm of academic problems, whereas I am pledged to consider only practical ones. But her letter is illuminating as an example of what we are, all of us, tempted every now and then to do: that is, to live among theories instead of in the real world, among problems. For instance, I had spoken of the necessity for exceptional men to be exceptional, and for leaders to lead; and I had said that these were "stultified at the very beginning by the strength of a tremendous modern belief—modern democracy." Now this is a real problem, which must be solved if we are to go on; it is revealed in almost every spiritual event—or absence of event—of our time. As a fact it has to be met. But what does my correspondent do? She informs me that "'Democracy' or 'Socialism' is worse than sheer cant if it is an abstract conception divided by an intellectual schism from its co-efficient 'aristocracy,' or 'individualism.' In the same way 'aristocracy' or 'individualism' is worse than sheer cant if it is conceived as separable from 'democracy' or 'socialism.'" And she illustrates this fairly self-evident proposition by a diagram. Now let us return to the world. Firstly, then, in the world as it is, aristocracy is not reducible to individualism, nor is socialism to democracy. The individualist is seldom an aristocrat, theoretically or otherwise, and he is very often a democrat; we are dealing therefore with aristocracy and democracy. My correspondent admits that "democracy is worse than sheer cant if it is an abstract conception divided by an intellectual schism from its co-efficient aristocracy." Well, that is exactly my case. Modern democracy *does* exclude the conception of aristocracy; it denies the need for leadership by exceptional men, and makes its most capable—though more often incapable—minds into mere servants. There is no function for the exceptional man in our society, and therefore no reason why he should exist at all. But a potential aristocracy does nevertheless exist; there I agree with the letter; the real question is how it is to be given more power, as the dynamic element in society, than at present it has. How is it to be given the courage to lead instead of to serve; and how are

the people to be persuaded not to follow but even to listen to it? That is the question which the potential aristocracy must itself answer if it is not to become the mere mourning cortège at the funeral of democracy. Frankly, I am amazed at a controversialist who naively assumes that the powers of democracy and of aristocracy are, as it were, evenly balanced in the world of to-day; that they can be contemplated and reasoned upon calmly in the ideal world of theory; that one of them is no more in need of support than the other. Of course, every conclusion can be justified by remarking triumphantly of A that B is its co-efficient; that is almost enough to make an intellectual happy. But one asks in surprise whether aristocracy to-day is really anything like the co-efficient of democracy? In a higher sense, perhaps? Aristocracy? Democracy? But why should one use such dishonest words at all just now, when what is evident is that those who can think for society and can save it are not permitted to do so, and that those who will neither think themselves nor allow others to be heard have all power in their hands, and at the same time are glorified as martyrs?

We deserve as a nation many of our trials, but surely we do not deserve the English Bench. The affairs of Sir Thomas Beecham were being settled the other day in the Chancery Court. The counsel for Sir Thomas said, what everybody knows, that he had freely given away his fortune for the advancement of music. The Counsel, Sir Thomas, music itself, received immediately a snub from the Bench: Mr. Justice Eve pronounced the immortal words, "And what good does that ever do anybody?" It can be safely said that in no other country in the world could a man holding the public position of Mr. Justice Eve have said that. Very few men in England would dare to say it, but then only an Englishman would think of saying it. Our public contempt for art, our failure not merely to understand it, but to give it that homage of misunderstanding which is called reverence, makes the utterance of a sentiment like this possible. Even in Scotland a lawyer has respect for things which he does not understand; but for an Englishman not to understand something is an indictment of it and not of himself. Just now, unfortunately, this kind of arrogance is particularly absurd. In its great days, when it was conquering one half of the world, and politically leading the remainder, England had perhaps a right to this attitude, seeing that on the whole it worked, and to England's advantage. But to-day, when all the old lessons are obsolete, when we are shivering in the dawn of a new dispensation, in which everything has to be learnt anew, when our minds should be humble and vigilant, it is unspeakably foolish. The Philistines we have always with us, of course; but it is permanently humiliating to the rest of us that we cannot, no matter what we do, bring home their sins to them, that they should have the good consciences while we —

The platitudinarians whom we left half-considered last week are worth a few more words. They are infinitely more subtle than they appear to be, infinitely more subtle, indeed, than they themselves suspect. If we look at them carefully we shall see that they comprise all the more "decent" journalists, all those who really mean well, the men of good-will who are so difficult to pardon. They write on everything; on politics, economics, religion, even art, and they state the "human" beliefs which men should have upon all these things. Mr. Clutton Brock is almost the paragon of the tribe. To him all the Philistines in Great Britain might go to school and become more intelligent, more amiable, more satisfied Philistines. To have amiable beliefs and to propagate them is more dangerous to-day, and infinitely less respectable, than to preach red revolution. It is to yield to a temptation which is always strong in a civilised country, the temptation to call a thing true "which is at once pretty and touching." Observe any man who holds amiable and

humane beliefs; you will find that that in itself is enough to give him a feeling of superiority to the mere reformer, the mere agitator. His feelings suffice him; nothing more is needed, neither action nor in the end the trouble of thought. The harm which the "good" journals in this country do is infinite. Whether or no we rise eventually beyond our good and evil, it is certain that we shall have to rise beyond our good; that is really becoming a possession which can only bring shame to us. If we could throw off every belief which lulls us to weakness by making us feel that everything is right; if we could rid ourselves of the fatuous superiority of our humanity and decency of heart—a form of superiority which is always in Englishmen a little vulgar, we might be left in a state of humility far more salutary because more real than the cultivated humility of the amiable. EDWARD MOORE.

Readers and Writers.

I THINK it was in these columns that Benedetto Croce was once claimed as a philosopher of the New Age. Since then the practical activity has been too much with us and we have forgotten the philosopher of the spirit. We perhaps had our doubts even then of his, shall we say, pragmatic reality. Now we have a translation of his studies on Ariosto, Shakespeare, and Corneille to remind us that he is still a force to reckon with; and to me, at any rate, he returns with all the old vitality and persuasion. The danger then, as I try to reconstruct it, was that it was too easy, far too easy, to fail to distinguish—or rather to keep distinct—the progressive stages in the activity of the spirit that he so precisely analysed. He left us so little as the province of art. And because we were so convinced of his æsthetic, we would carry the principles of that æsthetic into the far different province of criticism. We saw, quite clearly, what exactly art was: we saw that to understand art as art we had—as the phrase went—to identify ourselves with the artist. Where we made the mistake was to imagine that this process, the identification of art, was the be-all and end-all of criticism. We did not reflect that art is one activity and that criticism is another: that art is creation—that was clear; that criticism is an independent judgment of that creation we did not realise; and Croce was not a little to blame. There was Bergson, besides, and all the general atmosphere of intuitionism, telling fatally against the emergence of any complete understanding. But "Ariosto, Shakespeare and Corneille" throws us back to the old conception of æsthetic—I'm not sure that that has ever left our unconscious minds—and it establishes, with utmost clarity, the adequacy of the Crocean philosophy as a critical instrument. It enables us to march once more under the banner of Croce quite sure that we shall not land, at journey's end, in the Bergsonian camp.

It is rather a humiliating confession for an Englishman to make, but this essay on Shakespeare is the best—the best from every point of view—that has ever been written. The *Ulricis* and *Furnivals* of Shakespearean criticism were ever to be treated cavalierly, but the *Hazlitts* and *Coleridges* (though there were not so many of them to justify these plurals) were serious knights. Yet I know of no aspect, that is a critical aspect, in which this present essay of Croce's does not excel even the best that Coleridge or Hazlitt wrote. There is a wider, a more coherent philosophic background; there is a more comparative justice in it; there is besides (rare critical quality) a sense of humanness. Croce is unmoved by the vortex of schools and has a capacity to see the essential quality of all art and the essential fallacies of all criticism, a capacity to supersede not romanticism or classicism, but both. It is this capacity that makes his criticism, and its underlying æsthetic, so very vital to every man sane enough to

see the importance of a renaissance of culture. There is this real problem in modern literature: if you go where two or three are gathered together in the name of Youth—and by Youth I do not mean the scholars of Mr. Squire—you will probably find them discussing what they like to call the anti-romantic revolt. They mean that they are tired of the very name of Keats—estimable though certain qualities in Keats may be; they are tired of the egregious personalism of modern verse and novel—charming as the revealed personalities may be; they are tired most of all of this nest of singing birds, this amorous-lyric, rhyme and chime tradition of the last century and a half, and they would now turn to the spirit and motive they find perhaps in 18th-century Europe, perhaps in the classic world, where there is an adequate conception of life and an attitude of manliness towards it—qualities so necessary for this sick world. The "Morning Post," even, seems aware of a new need, and speaks fatuously of the "Back to Pope" tendency and the heroic couplet. Well, the names of Pope and Boileau may be on the lips of these neophytes, but it is in a sense far different from the "Morning Post's." What they find to attract them in Pope is not by any means the artificial constraint of the rhymed couplet, but rather the attitude of Pope towards life—his intelligence and esprit. It is the classical mind and not the classical manner that is so attractive and it is merely untutored reaction to imagine otherwise.

* * *

A return to Croce's new book will discover the critical justification of this fresh attitude. In the essay on Corneille there are these words: "In poetry the reason or the rational will is itself a passion." The real significance of this sentence—and it is not a casual phrase devoid of context—will be realised when it is recalled that in Croce's æsthetic art is identified with intuition. "Art does not classify objects, nor qualify them, nor define them. Art feels and represents them. Nothing more. Art therefore is *intuition*, in so far as it is a mode of knowledge, not abstract, but concrete, and in so far as it uses the real, without changing or falsifying it. In so far as it apprehends it immediately, before it is modified and made clear by the concept, it must be called *pure intuition*." The correlation of these two phrases—reason as passion and art as pure intuition—is the secret of a full understanding. Croce everywhere recognises the motive or the emotion as alone giving value and energy to the æsthetic activity; and as a motive or emotion he can conceive nothing higher than that reason which, as I think Spinoza held, must itself be a passion before it can subdue other passions. He traces the development of this harmonising intelligence in the art of Corneille—though personally I am not sure that Corneille is an ideal sponsor: he is deficient on other grounds—humanness, for instance. But the quality exists wherever a coherent design is exhibited in the diverse expressions given to a creative mind—wherever the intuitions of that mind are marshalled to some purpose. Purpose, however, does not deform or defame those intuitions: they remain pebbles in the mosaic, but not individually purposive. The æsthetic element remains always serene. It must be remembered that when Croce defined art as intuition, he also degraded the function and delimited the scope of art and made it something basic and essential, but not something necessarily a good in itself. "If art, then," he says, "be the first and most ingenious form of knowledge, it cannot give complete satisfaction to man's need to know, and therefore cannot be the ultimate end of the theoretic spirit. Art is the dream of the life of knowledge. Its complement is waking, lyricism no longer, but the concept; no longer the dream but the judgment."

* * *

You see how little, when it comes to criticism, Croce will be responsible for the plea that pure lyricism,

poetry unclouded with intellect (as the reviewers dare to say) or that any form of the pure intuition is a sufficient be-all and end-all of a poet's (or a painter's) activity. The æsthetic passion must rise through the lyric, beyond the dream, to intelligence and thought—from the symbols of things to the vision of reality. Otherwise our poets are but half men and half poets: "They become," as Santayana so excellently describes them—"psychological poets, singers of mental chimes, listeners for the chance overtones of consciousness."

HERBERT READ.

Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

It is usual to praise the Irish Players for their "simple and unaffected art," as one critic phrases it; but I must confess that my recent experience of their work has been disappointing. In each recent case, in "The White-Headed Boy," in "O'Flaherty, V.C.," and now in "The Playboy of the Western World," I had what I considered the advantage (I am now doubtful of it) of having read the play before seeing the performance. In each case their playing has given me far less pleasure than my own reading did; while I enjoyed the comedic spirit of the plays, the Players presented them as literal matters-of-fact. There is probably a difference of temperament to be allowed for, certainly a difference of experience; the Irish Players, I admit, know more about the Irish people and drama than I do, but they know them differently. These things are real to them, while, for me, they have only an imaginary reality; with the consequence that they give a performance from which I do not get the same effect that I get from reading the script. The Irish plays seem to me to be full of imagination, of wit, of the spirit of intellectual play; the Irish Players, on the other hand, seem to me to have no spirit of play in them, to be literal, conventional, commonplace, horribly pedestrian. I register the fact that the Irish Players do not produce the Irish effect for me, that instead of presenting a work of art they give us a scene from life.

I do not think that I am alone in this sense of being let down from the level of imaginary reality to the level of peasant life. I notice that the "Times," very singularly, emphasises the brutal facts of the play, and does not properly assuage its uneasiness by the remark: "It is all, of course, a huge joke, a poet-playwright's fiction; but the fact that it can be told plausibly at the expense of these particular people in this particular place at this particular time is not without a certain significance." I submit that this judgment is indicative of as complete a failure of the actors to reproduce the characteristic effect and spirit of the play as it would be if a performance of Falstaff provoked it. It signifies that the mood of comedy did not prevail; that there was no sense of intellectual play in the performance; that although it undoubtedly is "all a huge joke, a poet-playwright's fiction," it is, to the Irish Players, a literal matter-of-fact statement (probably libellous) of life in County Mayo. I begin to understand why there was a riot when it was first produced.

I appeal to Synge himself, in his preface: "On the stage one must have reality, and one must have joy." Reality the Irish Players certainly showed us, but not joy. "In Ireland, for a few years more, we have a popular imagination that is fiery, and magnificent, and tender"; and I find it impossible to use one of those words to describe the performance at the Court Theatre. The "Times" feels the same difficulty, and says that

"the Irish Players reverently treat the play as an Irish classic. Indeed, the Christy treated it almost as a holy sacrament, intoning his phrases and dropping his voice at the end of every sentence with the solemnity of a priest reciting the liturgy. Miss Maire O'Neill was unusually grave, too, an Emma Bovary turned hierophant." This is an exercise of the mythopœic faculty, which demonstrates that the writer found the truth too painful to contemplate. Certainly, the performance was ceremonial, but the ceremony is known to actors as "walking through it." Even the cadences of the speech had no poetic beauty when delivered with no more feeling than Polonius puts into his delivery of Hamlet's verse.

That, I think, is the real basis of my dissatisfaction with the Irish Players. They have made a convention of literalness which some of our critics are disposed to accept as the fine art of Irish realism in acting. Any one who has ever heard the ordinary poet read his own poetry, or, worse still, has heard a cold, unimpassioned speaker like Sir John Simon quote poetry, or, to bring the matter nearer home, has ever himself derisively quoted such a poem as Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," knows how easy it is to drag poetry down to prose, and falsify all its values and destroy its effect. The old cliché about seeing "Hamlet" without the Prince of Denmark is realised when it is played in the mood of Polonius; Sancho Panza cannot express the dramatic reality of Don Quixote, and the Irish Players have made the words of Synge of no account by their traditions. Listen to the hesitating laughter at the Court, and you are aware of a bewildered audience, one that knows that the play is a comedy but cannot see what the joke is.

Although for all I know to the contrary, the performance of the Irish Players may be true to life in County Mayo, it is not true to Synge. Synge is no more an Irish dramatist because he wrote the "Playboy" than Shakespeare was a Danish one because he wrote "Hamlet"; and there is no presumption that the Irish Players have any advantage over English in interpreting his works. Nationalism in art is an absurdity; the average Englishman cannot play Shakespeare; for example, the only two Shylocks that I care to remember are Moscovitch and Bouwmeester, the most memorable Othello was Grasso, although for quite different reasons I remember Oscar Asche and Forbes Robertson. But there is no need to labour the point that nationality is not a guarantee of interpretative ability; if it were, de Pachmann, a Russian Jew, would not be so fine an interpreter of Chopin, a Pole. If the Irish Players reduce Synge to the dimensions of a repertory theatre writer with a talent for "local colour" (as they have done), obviously they are not his best interpreters. I could cast the play better among the younger actors on the English stage, and would forgive much of the probable mispronunciation of names for the sake of the lilting spirit of comedy that they would get into it. If I suffered from the disadvantage of having read the play before seeing the performance, the Irish Players suffer from the disadvantage of having known the author, and are therefore unable to see the work for the man. Ben Jonson, we may be sure, never enjoyed Shakespeare's work as we do; he knew him, and could not see his work with that feeling of the "pathos of distance" that so affects us. The knowledge of a man is usually a disqualification for understanding his works; he is more than his work, and that more is usually irrelevant to his work, and the reactions aroused by his personality only complicate the effect produced by his work. The artist in the flesh is not an artist, but a human being, usually with a bundle of domestic troubles; and the man-to-man relation has no necessary connection with the artist-interpreter relation. If we want to see Synge's work, we must rescue it from the Irish Players; they knew him, and do not understand it.

Views and Reviews.

THE ANSWER TO MALTHUS—VI.

SOMEONE has kindly sent me a copy of "The Malthusian," dated July 15, 1921; and I have read with particular interest some data concerning Japan. Japan, as we know, really began its career as what is called a "civilised" Power after the coup d'état of 1867, which abolished the Shogunate and restored the Emperor. It is interesting, in view of Mr. Pell's argument, to learn from "The Malthusian" that:

from 1723 to 1846, according to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," the population remained almost stationary, only increasing from 26,065,422 to 26,907,625.

Whatever the birth-rate may have been, it was obviously almost exactly balanced by the death-rate; and the "contraceptive" argument, which has been adopted to explain the general fall of the birth-rate since 1876, has obviously no relevance here. For from 1872, five years after the coup d'état, the population increased by 10,649,990 in twenty-seven years. Also:

during the period between 1897 and 1907, the population received an increment of 11.6 per cent., whereas the food-producing area increased by only 4.4 per cent. . . . According to Professor Morimoro, the cost of living is now so high in Japan that 98 per cent. of the people do not get enough to eat.

Mrs. Margaret Sanger is going to Japan to preach birth-control!

I have already quoted Mr. Pell on this point, but as one correspondent, at least, seems to have overlooked the passage, I repeat it here:

At the beginning of last century there occurred in England an enormous dislocation of the old home industries, owing to the introduction of the factory system. The effect was disastrous to the working classes, and led to a serious lowering of the standard of comfort among them. It also led to the employment of women in the factories on a large scale. The resulting effect on the birth-rate is described by Nitti. "In England, as in every industrial country, the wages of the women and children supplemented the insufficient wages of the adult. Then the labouring classes, impelled by necessity, abandoned that prudent foresight which it had maintained for centuries and multiplied itself without bounds and without order." No evidence can be produced as to the exercise of a "prudent foresight" in previous centuries; but it seems certain that there was an immense increase in the birth-rate. Much of the apparent increase may have been statistical, and due to improved registration; but the rapid increase of population seems to show that much of it was real. ["Whitaker's Almanack" summarises the census figures and percentages thus: 1801-11, increase 14 per cent.; 1811-21, increase 18.06 per cent.; 1821-31, increase 15.80 per cent.; 1831-41, increase 14.27 per cent., and so forth. The highest rate of increase was in the decade 1811-21.]

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 of the population." No doubt a good deal of this apparent increase is 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.*

* "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.)

It is impossible to believe that the Japanese used contraceptive measures during the "barbarous" period 1723-1846, when the population remained stationary, and ceased to use them after the coup d'état of 1867, when contact with the outer world was enormously extended. We are confronted with a biological fact; fertility varies under the influence of the environment.

To settle this point beyond all dispute, I will make another quotation from Mr. Pell's book:

The theory implies that in the fluctuations of the fortunes of a race periods of depression will show an increasing birth-rate and periods of prosperity a decline. Nitti remarks of the French that this race, which has now become so sterile, "was able in less than three-quarters of a century, from 1715 to 1789, to increase from eighteen to twenty-six millions." This was the period in French history of great wars, of profligate extravagance and of abominable oppression, which culminated in the French Revolution. Nitti further says: "Generally speaking, countries which have a great mortality have also a great birth-rate, and vice versa; we might almost say that death calls for life, and that there is something unconscious and fatal in the vicissitudes of things. Wars, famines, and epidemics are generally succeeded by years of a very high birth-rate. [According to Malthus, these are positive checks to the increase of population.] In France in the two years preceding 1870 the birth-rate was only 20.5 per 1,000, but after the very high death-rate produced by war and small-pox in 1870-1, the birth-rate rose in 1872, and for some years following remained at 26.7. In Prussia, while for two years preceding 1870 the birth-rate was 39, it increased and remained at 41.5 for the three succeeding years. In 1868 Finland suffered from a terrible scarcity, which increased the death-rate, but a remarkable fecundity during many years filled up the gaps." Wars, famines, and epidemics produce periods of hard times which show their effects in the increased birth-rate. The jump in the birth-rate which usually follows a war, however, seems to be largely due to the fact that the war has taken a large proportion of the men away from their wives and led to a general postponement of marriage. With the return of the men there is naturally an increase of both the marriage and birth-rates. Europe is witnessing such a temporary rise at present, but its duration will probably be only a matter of months.

It is perfectly clear that the "contraceptive" theory does not apply to these variations; to do so, we should have to assume that whole populations habitually practise birth-control, habitually study the variations of the death-rate, and maintain the potentiality of fertility unimpaired. If it were so, the Malthusian League would have no scope for propaganda, and the differential birth-rate would give no cause for alarm. A. E. R.

Reviews.

Some Contemporary Novelists (Women). By R. Brimley Johnson. (Parsons. 7s. 6d. net.)

Mr. Brimley Johnson offers us studies of May Sinclair, Eleanor Mordaunt, Rose Macaulay, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Ethel Sidgwick, Amber Reeves, Viola Meynell, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, Stella Benson, E. M. Delafield, Clemence Dane, Mary Fulton, and Hope Mirrlees. His work is little more than précis-writing, with an introductory chapter of summarised conclusions. We learn, for example: "One might say, in fact, that for the most typically 'new' women novelists, creation has become merged in self-expression. They write, they present life, because they must deliver their message. They offer us themselves, not the children of their imagination." As he reveals them in his précis, they seem singularly undesirable females, everlastingly trying to discover how many devils of egotism can dance on the point of the needle of love. Apparently they try to enjoy love—without men; they want, like Miss Richardson, to live an inner life. "Life would be an endless inward singing until the end came . . . no more books. Books all led to the same

thing. All the things in books were unfulfilled duties. *And no more interest in men.* They shut off the inside world. Women who had anything to do with men were not themselves. They were in a noisy confusion, playing a part all the time. . . . The only real misery of being alone was the fear of being left out of things. It was a wrong fear. It pushed you into things, and then everything disappeared." This homophobia seems to afflict most of them, and is symptomatic of a well-marked neurosis which has more medical than literary interest. That these women "seek Beauty and find it, in a vision of the immortal soul," we can well believe; apparently they have discovered Hell already, and love it. But Mr. Brimley Johnson overstrains our credulity when he asks us to believe that "they have penetrated, if 'through a glass darkly,' into the absolute realism that is spiritual—of the Soul, wherein dwell Faith, Hope and Charity." In solitude, remember! Their creed begins: "I believe in nothing that I see, in nothing that I know by experience, and in nothing that anybody ever told me." Therefore they invent a hermitage, wherefrom they nag their disappointments through the megaphone of the novel. These "acidulous vestals," as Stevenson called them. Luckily they only write for women.

The Black Peril, or the Path to Prison: An Autobiographical Story. By George Webb Hardy. (Daniel. 7s. 6d. net.)

We protest against this mingling of fact and fiction. It is impossible to regard such a book as a work of art; on the other hand, one can never be sure whether what seem to be facts are really put forward as facts. The "colour problem" of South Africa is difficult enough and urgent enough to justify Mr. Hardy in saying directly what he has to say about it—and he has much to say about it that is both illuminating and shocking. But there are arguments on points of law, accusations of political corruption, criticisms of the prison system of South Africa, scattered through this book; and it is impossible to know whether the "facts" are as legendary as the hero, or whether the hero is as real as the "facts." If these things are true, the proper medium of expression is political agitation, and the fictional form is misleading; if they are not true, then one can only say that Mr. Hardy does not rank as an imaginative artist, and has failed in his use of the fictional form. A monograph on the colour problem is the only satisfactory medium of expression for what Mr. Hardy has to say, and may be compelled to prove.

The Philosophy of Love. By Elinor Glyn. (Newnes. 2s. net.)

We do not expect philosophy from Elinor Glyn—and we do not get it. But, after all, if people will lead up to and pass through a ceremony wherein they swear "to have and to hold" each other, it is as well that they should be reminded, in such terms as are comprehensible to them, that they must make and maintain their own attachments. It is a little crude, of course, to analyse what is really no more than common courtesy and tact, and inform both parties that they must discipline themselves to these practices if they wish to live even a tolerable life; but so many people are crude that there must be a large public open to such instruction. It seems incredible that people should suppose that, *because they are married, they ought to be happy*—although they do everything to prevent it; but that there is this child-like faith in the efficacy of ceremonies, and a marked disposition to demand as a right what is really a re-action, anyone acquainted with a few ordinary people will know. If Elinor Glyn can convince her public that the art of living a married life has its technique like any other art, and requires, like every other art, sincerity in the artists for its efficient performance, her little book will have been worth the writing.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

THE LAW OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS.

Sir,—I need hardly say that I accept the correction offered by Mr. Pell in your last issue. I was at the moment more concerned with what I may call the "drama" of correlation than with its natural causation; and consequently blundered into the silly assumption that the variation of the birth-rate should follow that of the death-rate at an interval of nine months. An epidemic, of course, is only a crisis, the general causes of which have been operative for an indefinite period; and fertility generally is so obviously subject to various causes that a mathematically exact and regular correlation of birth and death-rates is not to be expected, and as Mr. Pell says, is not desirable. A. E. R.

GUILD CREDIT AND PRICE CONTROL.

Sir,—In last week's "Notes of the Week" I read, not without surprise, that "We gladly note that Mr. S. G. Hobson now admits (even though without express acknowledgment) that THE NEW AGE has been right. 'He prophesied that the time was coming when the Guilds and the Trade Unions would have to create their own credit and if necessary their own currency.'" This is tolerably steep. I see no point in "admitting" that what I wrote and published in 1912-13 is true. Any reader of "National Guilds" can verify for himself that Guild Banks and Guild currency are specifically advocated. Moreover, in "National Guilds and the State" the same proposals are even more emphatically urged. Both these volumes appeared serially in your columns long before Major Douglas's contributions had appeared. If, therefore, "acknowledgments" are called for, they should be sent to my address and not to yours.

Nor has your point as to the correlative importance of price-control escaped our notice in giving practical shape to the Guild idea. We have begun—only begun, please notice—(a) by rigidly adhering to exchange at cost; (b) by reducing overhead charges to their bare cost in production; and (c) by pressing strongly for the control of production, basing credit on labour and not on commercial profits. S. G. HOBSON.

[Mr. Hobson cannot have it both ways. If he wrote and published and emphatically urged our present credit proposals long before Major Douglas's contributions appeared in THE NEW AGE, why did he ostentatiously set out to oppose them, as soon as they began to be reformulated? And if, as we know, he did not, what harm is there in admitting that he did not foresee everything during his association with THE NEW AGE? It is evident, moreover, that Mr. Hobson is still without a proper appreciation of either the meaning or the correlative importance of credit and price-control as defined by Major Douglas. Not only is the creation of its own credit still a matter of prophecy for the Building Guild, where it should have been the first act of its life; but what the Guild has now only "begun" to do in the matter of price-control is no more than to take a leaf out of the capitalists' book, by reducing costs in the hope of thereby reducing prices. At best, however, prices can be reduced only fractionally by means of a reduction of costs, and, as a general rule, every reduction of costs is at the expense of Labour. The Douglas-NEW AGE proposal is the exact opposite of that put forward by Mr. Hobson and Capitalism: it is to reduce prices substantially at once, and to leave costs to follow suit at their leisure.—EDITOR, N.A.]

PRESS CUTTINGS.

Consider this sorry spectacle: Millions of people starving for the want of goods which their own country as an industrial unit has the physical and mechanical power to supply in abundance. Nevertheless the factories, though acutely anxious to employ to the full their ability to produce, lie idle. The essential link of purchasing power which alone can ensure the flow of goods is broken. Why? Major Douglas has set out to give the answer, and he reaches several startling and original conclusions. What is credit? Real credit is the ability to deliver goods as and when and where required. This ability is utilised by means of money, i.e., financial credit, largely in the form of overdrafts and credits allowed by the

banks, who control the flow of purchasing power by means of the bank-rate. But real credit is without question communally created: it is largely a legacy from untold generations; it is always being created and enlarged by the efforts of hand and brain; the consumer pure and simple—worker or non-worker—aids by the mere process of demanding goods. (You may have a factory that cost £50,000, but its real credit is nil if no consumer can be found for its product.) Since the community creates real credit, says Major Douglas, it should itself control for its own good the financial credit which actualises that real credit. At present this is done by private finance for its own anti-social ends. The consequences to the community are dire. Take the case, for example, of the proposed erection of power stations on the Severn, and assume that their construction occupies twelve months. During their building wages and salaries will be regularly paid to the workers by the promoters, who will get the necessary money very largely by means of credit or overdrafts from their bankers. Now, since prices at present are regulated by the ratio of purchasing power in circulation to goods for sale, it is obvious that the money distributed during the twelve months postulated above, since it is distributed in respect of work which has not during that time resulted in more goods coming to market, will inflate the currency and consequently depreciate the value of the purchasing power already in the hands of the public. In justice, therefore, when the power stations are supplying their commodity, the public should be compensated by means of price for the loss they have already sustained. But, in fact, they are calmly called upon to pay the whole cost of the wages and salaries hitherto distributed to their discomfort because the promoters must include in the price they charge the whole sum standing to their debit in the books of the bank. In other words, the public is doubly penalised for the development of real credit which they have been instrumental in creating. Major Douglas estimates that at the very least 75 per cent. of the activities of the nation are devoted to development work or means to output, and not more than 25 per cent. to actual output itself. The argument runs thus, therefore: If in any given time 100 units of production are effected by the work of the community, probably 75 of those are development activities which during that time bring no fresh goods to market; 25 will represent ultimate products ready for the consumer to buy. Supposing £100 in purchasing power be distributed in respect of the work; as seen above, this whole £100 will be charged as the price of the 25 units of ultimate products alone, leaving the 75 wholly to the credit of the capitalist, upon the real credit of which the financier will create fresh financial credits. And so the merry (?) game goes on. Under the practical and simple scheme which Major Douglas advocates £25 only would be the price charged for the 25 units of ultimate products, thus leaving the community with £75 with which to draw upon the fresh productive capacity of the 75 units devoted to further production. This means that the community would be credited with development work instead of being—as at present—penalised by it. In other words, instead of price being fixed by the ratio of money to goods, it would be fixed by the ratio of total production to actual consumption. Major Douglas's contention, therefore, is that price should be but a fraction of cost, as cost is now calculated. This is so novel a plan for multiplying the purchasing power of our incomes a great many times that it sounds absurd, but the scheme proposed in these books is being carefully considered by economists of every school with the exception of bankers and Labour leaders, the former rejecting it because they understand well enough the menace it contains to their own activities, and the latter because they don't understand it at all. Major Douglas's proposals must be of intense interest to those of naturally conservative instinct who nevertheless feel that a radical remedy must be the solution of our present industrial distresses.—J. A. F. in "The Isis."

Major Douglas will lecture at the
Liverpool Rotary Club, Compton Hotel, August 18,
at 1 p.m.,
London Rotary Club, Hotel Cecil, August 24, at
1 p.m.