

THE NEW AGE

A SOCIALIST REVIEW OF RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND ART.

No. 1510 NEW SERIES. Vol XXIX. No. 16. THURSDAY, AUG. 18, 1921. [Registered at G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] SEVENPENCE

CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
NOTES OF THE WEEK	181	READERS AND WRITERS. By Herbert Read . . .	187
WORLD AFFAIRS : The End of a Dispensation. By Volker	183	EINSTEIN'S THEORY OR PURE THOUGHT? By Francis Sedlak	188
WHAT IS WRONG WITH LABOUR PHILOSOPHY? By Harold Lister	184	VIEWS AND REVIEWS : The Answer to Malthus—VII. By A. E. R.	190
OUR GENERATION. By Edward Moore	185	REVIEWS : The Acquisitive Society. Original Sinners	191
DRAMA : Back to Methuselah. By John Francis Hope	186	THE LABOUR PARTY INQUIRY	191

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

PREPARATIONS are still going merrily forward for staging the great Peace scene at Washington. The piece is sure to be produced with the most artistic finish, and no doubt all the actors will have got their parts word-perfect and will carry things off with an air. But nothing that any diplomat could venture to utter at a public performance of this kind can bear much more relevance to the vital issues than such a propagandist melodrama as "The Right to Strike" bears to the realities of the industrial problem. Japan evidently knows what she wants. She is striving for such a hegemony over China as would put the whole resources of that country at her disposal; and she holds that her relations with her unwieldy neighbour are a private matter which concerns no third party. This view, however, is by no means shared by China, which is anxious to seize every opportunity of appealing to the Powers in the character of an oppressed nationality. This attitude of bullying dictation to weaker nations is of course only a normal incident in economic Imperialism. Because we have our own economic-imperialist interests in various parts of the world, we are being steadily drawn into Japan's orbit and willy-nilly we shall necessarily become accomplices in her oppression—unless we have the good sense to contract out of all such entanglements by declaring for economic democracy in our home concerns.

* * *

The affair of Upper Silesia is of exactly the same character at bottom. The immediate cause of trouble here is France's neurotic clamour for "security." She feels insecure, because she is held in the grip of an old-standing economic rivalry with a neighbouring nation, half as numerous again as herself. The methods of current capitalist enterprise fling her into competition with Germany for markets at countless points. They also drive her into seeking to annex from her rival mines and industrial centres, wherever any pretext can be found for claiming them. This in turn means a competition in armaments. And that once more intensifies the strife for industrial resources, the basis of armaments. Hence, having once entered on this woeful path, France is irresistibly impelled to seize every chance of restricting Germany's sources of wealth-production, whether directly or indirectly through Poland or any other convenient agent. However, these troubles are comparatively a storm in a tea-cup; the Franco-

German question will soon be swallowed up in vastly greater world-movements. Already our own apparent support of Germany against France is probably not unconnected with the selection of our team for the *real* international Test Match. There is no doubt that our rulers are pursuing a steady policy of "preparedness"; and quite rightly, if they and we have not the sense, or the goodwill, to adopt the only alternative. Mr. Churchill's naval speech in the House must have expressed the mind of the Cabinet. Indeed, its governing formula had been endorsed by the resolution of the Imperial Conference. And, while insisting on our having an adequate naval basis of our own, Mr. Churchill hinted by negatives at the use of our power to create and lead a coalition of nations. If we choose to adhere to plutocracy, we must accept its implications in foreign policy; and if we serve that master, it is eminently desirable that we should do it well. Granted the premises, we are committed to the Balance of Power on a wider scale than ever—as formerly against the European hegemony of Germany, so now against the threatened world-hegemony of another Power.

* * *

One of the complications of Economic Imperialism is illustrated by the case of Kenya Colony. The question at issue there is whether the natives are to have a recognised right to live on their own land in their own way, or whether they are to be exploited without limit for the benefit of white capitalists. Lord Milner in the House of Lords last year laid down for Crown Colonies and Protectorates the principle of trusteeship in the interests of the peoples of those countries and not for our own advantage. Unfortunately the Report of the Economic Commission in 1919 urged the very contrary policy. The Commissioners desired to destroy (for every effective purpose) the native reserves and held up to scorn the statement of the Chief Native Commissioner "that he did not see why a native should turn out to work for Europeans, if he wanted to develop his own land." We are glad that Sir George Cunningham Buchanan, writing in the "Times," defends the natives' right not to work for a white master. He mentions, with evident sympathy, the view that "we should give the tribes inalienable titles to their land and carry on a vigorous system of industrial and agricultural education within the reserves," while boldly proclaiming that "in that case they will prefer to work for themselves rather than as paid labourers to white people." His ideal is "all in good time a population of coloured producers capable of taking a

part in administration." The Economic Commission, on the other hand, urge the flooding of the country with European immigrants "in order to raise the native population to the desired degree of economic efficiency and to diffuse among them the benefits of modern civilisation." We should detest the diffusion among the African tribes of "the benefits of modern civilisation" as at present enjoyed by our industrial proletariat—the more so, in that it would be in the interest solely of profiteers of another race and colour, that they would be compelled to enjoy these "benefits." We would say, keep the "inferior races" out of industrialism at all costs, until we have transformed this into a humanised and humanising system of co-operative activity.

* * *

The state of Russia is appalling; the best that can be hoped for is that it will prove possible to carry aid in time to mitigate appreciably the worst horrors of the famine. We would not have chosen such a time to attack the Bolshevik Government, had not M. Lenin so dogmatically challenged criticism. In face of the notorious facts, it is too colossal an audacity even for a Communist to attribute the failure to grapple with the drought to "superannuated farming methods." Those methods were at any rate good enough to produce a vast output of grain, until he and his Marxians broke them up by destroying credit and so undermining the confidence and enterprise of the peasants. Nor have the counter-revolutionary designs of "the capitalists of the world" (including our own blockade) been such serious intensifying causes as the blunders and incompetence of his own Government. It is ridiculous for him to talk as though "the situation of the Russian workers and peasants" were an ordinary case of the sufferings of the people "under the yoke of capital." His outburst has merely enabled our own capitalist Press to cover up the terrible pass to which the economic life of this country has come, by crowing, "Ah, at any rate, we have no famines under our capitalist civilisation." And the wretched regime which he has inflicted on his crucified nation places a formidable obstacle in the way of foreign help, however great the goodwill. No one, we presume, but the "Daily Herald" would trust M. Lenin's Government to distribute relief fairly to the whole mass of the Russian people. The formerly excellent organisation of the Co-operative movement would have provided an obvious machinery, had not the determined centralisation of the Communists turned this, like the Trade Unions, into an executive organ of the Government. No voluntary co-operation, no independent Trade Unionism, no opposition parties—no place of refuge, in short, from an all-pervading militarist and bureaucratic tyranny—is now the watchword in Russia. We commiserate with the Russian people in having such a Government, just when the changes and chances of Nature have smitten the country so severely.

We must confess to a good deal of sympathy with the Dukes who are groaning under the unfair pressure of taxation on landowners. We do not, of course, contemplate the present system of land-holding as a permanency. But we hold that the bottom can, and must, be gently knocked out of the existing land-monopoly, as of all other monopolies, by the socialisation of credit. Given that, land and all other means of production, whatever their nominal ownership, will in fact be used and administered fairly for the general good of all. But, beyond that, the change would no doubt bring about a much better distribution of the actual ownership of land, as it would in the case of capital. Further, the monopolising of huge areas of land for the sake of sport or of privacy—one of the most glaring evils of the present system—is entirely relative to and dependent on plutocracy. The true cure for it lies in going straight for the basis of the latter. Meanwhile, no one is prepared with an imme-

diately alternative to the present administration of the land. Even the Labour Party, though it is committed to land nationalisation in the vague, has not yet (thank goodness!) produced any plans for a gigantic Ministry of Land to take over the whole duties of all the landlords in the country. The latter, at any rate, do not make so bad a mess of it as would a centralised Government office. On the other hand, there are no agricultural Guilds in existence which could undertake the administration of rural land; nor is there any large class of peasants anxious and able to take over, as individuals, the ownership of their native fields. It remains that the landlords must carry on for the present. If that is granted, it is most unfair to harry them with crushing taxation. The only practical result that can be thus accomplished will be to drive them to sell their estates. These would necessarily be bought by millionaires, all of them vulgar, and most of them Jews. Such men would display, in their methods of administration, far less human kindness and public spirit than do the old-established aristocrats. The "Daily Herald" seems pleased at the latter's discomfiture; but it always proceeds on the simple principle that any injury or annoyance to any section of the upper classes is something to rejoice at. For ourselves, we dread the crushing out of the aristocratic and land-owning class; we shall need the help of its best representatives if the new plutocracy is ever to be dethroned.

* * *

The Anti-Wasters, encouraged by their victory in St. George's, Hanover Square, are now assaulting the other division of Westminster. As we have said before, we are quite with them, when they denounce real waste such as our insane sabotage in the Middle East. But their whole idea is to cut down the expenditure on everything to the lowest possible limits. We insist once more that far more ought to be spent on such things as housing and education. The utmost amount that could be saved by genuine economies is trifling compared with the demands of the financial situation. In any case, the Anti-Waste programme is a purely negative one. If even an admittedly unnecessary Department is scrapped, it did at least serve, in however clumsy a way, as a machinery for distributing purchasing power to a considerable circle. What is to be done with these people? Your Anti-Waster attempts to answer to this. He seems to think that, if only public waste is checked, production will flourish of itself and everyone soon be employed. But the experience of every day gives the lie to this. When the great cry is for consumers, how can matters be helped by putting existing consumers out of action, without having the foggiest notion how you are going to set them to work again to earn money in order to restart consuming? You are involved in a vicious circle. You cannot employ people unless you increase consumption; and your very "remedy" in itself curtails this. The whole "Economy" philosophy rests on a radically false basis—the Great Lie of "far poorer than before the war." The glaring absurdity of the idea that we "cannot afford" this, that, and the other is shown by the fact that the producers dare not let the machines run freely. By their own admission they are constantly practising a deliberate restriction of output, and cannot get rid of their products, at any price *which it will pay them to charge* under the existing system. Already the mines, so recently reopened, and that with a reduced staff and with 130 pits closed down, are outrunning the *economically effective* demand. Surely only a wilful blindness can fail to see the truth. Yet everyone seems to be rushing frantically about, beating the bushes and starting dozens of the maddest hares, while the true solution is simply tumbling out at our feet. Someone, one would think, cannot help tripping over it by accident before very long.

* * *

What are these Economy-stunters going to do about unemployment, we should like to know, if they do get into Parliament? How tragic the lack of employment is

has been carefully concealed from the public by the newspapers. Even the Labour Press has been comparatively silent about it of late. But the truth was dramatically revealed by the recent riot in the East End. Our splendid instruments of production, the things that should have been for the people's wealth, have, through our monstrous system of finance, been so made to them an occasion of falling that a blind hatred of real capital has possessed many of the workers. The "Labour News" points this out in connection with the new machines used in repairing the London street pavements; "Another job gone west!" was the comment of a workman watching one of these. Who can blame him? But what a tragedy that the application to human needs of useful inventions should have been allowed to be so mishandled! Economists have persisted in the dogma that the "provision of employment" is one of the primary ends of the industrial system; and employment—in the absence of the possession of capital (always treated as a privilege reserved for the few)—has been insisted on as a precondition of the enjoyment of purchasing power. But science, by a purely unconscious and unintentional urge, is always striving to push more and more people out of employment. And what harm in that, if only we could get out of this habit of thinking of "employment" as a kind of useful commodity? If the needs of all were supplied, we need not trouble about how many could be industrially employed. The rest might be left to find the most fruitful way they could of filling in their time. And how easily could the machines enable all to live in decency and comfort! They do not, simply because they are not used with that intent, but as counters for financiers to gamble with. Machinery is solving, too, the bugbear question of the anti-Socialist, "Who is to do the dirty work?" One of the dirtiest and most menial of all forms of work used to be that of a street-sweeper under the old conditions. Now, in the most progressive boroughs, that functionary puts in his time joy-riding on a jolly little motor, which quite incidentally, of its own accord, sweeps the slush into the gutter. Many a schoolboy on his holidays would enjoy whiling away a good many hours at an occupation like that. We can establish, then, without the least fear, a really free society, in which no one would be under any compulsion, either economic or legal, to work.

* * *

In connection with the winding-up of the "Globe," it has been publicly stated that this paper, under its recent management, was conducted by a London bank, in order to push industrial concerns in which the bank was interested. This is an extreme case of the financiers going into journalism; but it is only an *extreme* case. The tentacles of the banks are pushed out far and wide through the Press and have practically all the journals firmly in their grip. Even Labour and Socialist journals are not entirely free. One has only to watch from week to week the columns of almost any paper one chooses to take up, to convince oneself of this. The Press—the most influential pulpit of the present day—is thoroughly tuned; and naturally it is tuned by our real rulers, the financial plutocrats. It would be interesting, too, to know how many of our Members of Parliament are, in reality, definitely members for the Banks. Still more should we like to have similar figures relating to all the candidates adopted for the next election. We fancy many simple-minded electors, especially among the Labour Party, would get a terrible shock, when they found the name of their favourite politician in the blacklist—if only some Day of Judgment could suddenly reveal all the underground intrigues of the money-power.

* * *

[As will be noted from the Monthly Air Force List for August, Major C. H. Douglas has relinquished his commission in the Royal Air Force, with the usual permission to retain his rank. As he does not wish to avail himself of this for general purposes, letters should in future be correspondingly addressed.]

World Affairs.

THE END OF A DISPENSATION.

A DISPENSATION has come to its end. Poetry and painting and sculpture and music have reached their last frontiers, where no further spring forward can be taken. For we have proved that the meaning of art is to symbolise and to signify; but have brought the form of art to that highest, superb, apocalyptic style, which squeezes out the noisy end of all things finite; and over which style there is no way out. To-day it is no longer a question of this or that art, manner or "school." To-day Art itself is confronting us as a mystery and as a challenge. And whilst we try to apply this newly-won, apocalyptic style to the whole of existence, we lose the belief in a special, holy-day kingdom of Art, which has become a lie; for which, in our modern culture, all inner and outward conditions are lacking; which has become a lie like the untouched, Sunday Kingdom of Heaven which hovers over the world, and which we are supplanting to-day by means of the new, steely Transcendentalism, and the mysticism of all things real. And at the end came also Science. We no longer believe that in Thought and in the Senses we have organs of touch which can grasp an absolute, objective Truth; and that a "true," absolute, authoritative Thing has become a picture to us, which is borrowed from the lowest, every-day philistinism. For we shall no longer find the Absolute in a "One," but in the divine glow of highest and experienceable life. Thus to-day science is less a method of attaining Truth, than a freeing of the mind from the shackles of the conditional. Nevertheless, Verihood, the Unconditional, the Absolute, will come as new over us to-day; as burning and explosive as ever. Science has not solved the riddle. On the contrary, Science has multiplied the Mysteries and Miracles immeasurably. And all experiments of a material, mechanical significance, of these heaped-up marvels, are folly, nothing but folly. For not "truth" but *technique* is the product of the scientific mind. And Technique has in our day transformed our lives with the force of an elemental catastrophe, such as has scarcely hitherto been seen. So that up to the blossoming of Technique in the middle of the nineteenth century, the former centuries—at least in the outward necessities of life—appear, in comparison with our own day, almost the same. But this intoxicating conquest has crushed us almost more than our former impotency in regard to Nature has ever crushed us. It has clearly robbed us of our last hope of happiness. And although it has made us greater heroes and stoics, yet it has also made us more tragic and more deeply unhappy than did all earlier times. And whilst our bodies have become pampered and sentimental, our spirit becomes more savage, coarser, and masculine. We have destroyed all authority, from the highest peaks of Metaphysics down into the life of the State and of Society. The State stands for robbery to us. The Family becomes only an animal in proximity to us. And all reforms are proving themselves vain. All knowledge proves itself a delusion. Art becomes lies to us, and heaven becomes a lifeless thing. We have not only discovered that morals are relative and conventional, but we have even put Morality, like Science and Art, in question. We have recognised the necessity, the beauty, the strength of Evil; and the moral and the good is often for us the stupid, the dry, the weak, the "incapable-of-life," the mediocre, the philistine.

A consuming irony has come over all our actions. And this world-scorn has reached its grandiose, most terrible strength, its explosive unfettering, in the Critique of Language, in philological-critical disposition. Speech is coming to an end. Speech hangs in the void, over abysses. It no longer stands on solid

ground. Our separatives, our conjunctions, our verbs, our substantives, our adjectives, do not signify the "All." They comprehend nothing. All these things are symbols, signs pointing towards something that is far more than a word, and is only concealed by speech. Our words are the driving-force of action, signs for immediate, practical necessities. They are not metaphysical realities or prototypes. The concrete, to which words apply, is a point only, only a point; but we do not seek only the pointed, sharp, fixed end of speech. We seek also its mystical heights, its loosening in the incomprehensible. For words free themselves only when lifted upwards into the Impalpable. All speech looses itself in the mystic heights, and in the limitless, vast, flowing, impalpable life into which the world itself goes; which, loosing and freeing, cannot be expressed in words.

For we should not translate life into words, but words into life. We seek the transcendental re-interpretation of words into the essence of life, into the non-material, living universe. All words which are only sound, if we seek the "Thing" in them, become clear if we incarnate them and live them. The riddles of speech solve themselves in deeds. Words must not be meant literally. They are like weak planks on the sea of infinity; everything has become ever more mysterious to us. Nothing has become more clear for us. And therefore the fact that to-day we are becoming dumb is the key of all problems and the primary saving truth.

There is also no way out through philosophising. We can see that the great philosophic thoughts are exhausted. There can be no more new philosophies, for philosophy and eschatology combined play with abstractions, and offer no further possibilities. Thought is ending. All combinations of Subject and Object, Mind and Body, Experience and the Beyond, Relative and Absolute, and the parts of the soul, Thinking, Feeling, Will, have already been employed. To-day we look down on this play as a whole from above. We no longer take part in the professorial disputes between half-truths and one-sided philistine dogmas. The bare opposition of Here and There, or Mind and Body, is no longer sufficiently profound for us. Omni-being is deeper than this dissension or any monistic brew made from it. We desire greater depths. And we desire impetuously to taste the depths bodily instead of only philosophising about them. Therefore we no longer philosophise. In vain we long for the childish land of the old divinity; the only thing which profits us is to seek the new, electrical divinity which we shall find to-day. Not only Jehovah, the old thundering God of Menace, but also the God of love and fatherhood and his obedient Son have become only a childlike fancy, a fairy-tale of longing and dream. Tao, the all Formless One, the all Primitive Cause, is at last dissolved into mist in the bleak abstractions of philosophy, in the "Thing-in-Itself."

From the German by VOLKER.

What is Wrong with Labour Philosophy?

I.

ABOUT twenty years ago I was invited to a small meeting "to discuss the need for a first cause, for and against." Quite recently I was asked by one of the promoters of that same meeting if I would care to attend a discussion on "about it and about." It shows a type of mind that attains maturity at ten, and never gets beyond fourteen years of age at the most. No wonder the Jesuits could say, give us the care of the child for the first seven years. Psycho-analysis has taught us the great length of the apron-string, and its soporific effect on mentality.

But Labour, so it thinks, has thrown off the trammels of religion. Labour, really, has brought forward

all the old inhibitions and compounded them with the evolution complex, the supposition that evolution always has been and always will be a movement making for progress. After swallowing many "ifs" Labour has gone on to the "therefore," as better men have done before them. But there is this great difference. The easy acceptance of the idea of the supposed upward movement of evolution has raised hope to the *n*th power, and the ultimate result to-day is the hopeless creed of Fatalism. Labour sincerely believes that it has only to wait long enough and power will inevitably accrue to it. Inevitably! And the English people are the most patient on earth! Unfortunately, this waiting attitude—a symptom of impotence—is a drag on the wheel; it is a hindrance to the very coach, evolution, that is to carry Labour to its destiny. Unfortunately, again, this do-nothing attitude is reactionary.

Because, in the first place, of faulty religious training, and especially because of the teaching of that sophoric untruth that the meek shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven in the great Reversal, it has been an easy step from that stage to the whole acceptance of the fatalism that an equally faulty understanding of evolution and its implications has brought about.

Labour, realising only too bitterly its lack of ideas, falls back on the belief in numbers, and looks to a simultaneous rise of peoples to overthrow their respective governments. Moreover, these embryo Prussians, who have learned nothing and forgotten nothing, do not understand the full implication of such a state of mind, or that this attitude is one of sheer negation. Negation of the very will to understand what we need most to cultivate, and consequently the utter negation of any idea that would help them or us. Children by birth and predilection, in politics they see only force at work in evolution. Needless to say they are materialists to a man; and their only idea of government is that of substituting one force, themselves, for another.

Another tenet of Labour belief—Labour has not yet heard of finance—is that the capitalist is the only person who stands between them and their kingdom, and that in a given period, and given a still greater number of "trusts," it will then be a matter of comparative ease for them to "take over" and trustify the lot. This precious gem "take over" is Labour's, for Labour still sincerely believes that capitalism is the hydra-headed monster of the early Socialist fairy-tale.

Labour's belief in numbers is pathetic, and is due mainly to the same belief in evolution. Faith in numbers is stoutly believed in in spite of the fact that the majority never has ruled and never will for the good and simple reason that the great majority lives in a tiny little world of its own that is of necessity indifferent to anything so abstract as the thing called Government, which is as metaphysic to them, and not to them only, alas.

The common people the world over have one wish and that is, to be left alone. It is only a few muddle-headed fanatics who want to control the reins of government, and who brandish the majority whip in order that their particular cartload of votes shall be dragged along. Labour, totally ignorant of psychology, has not yet learnt that the common people in this country vote not with any idea of greatly profiting thereby—they are not such fools as all that—but mostly to please some fancied candidate. That is why they mostly vote for a "gentleman." They are still unsophisticated enough to take words at their face value, and still have the sentimental belief that a gentleman is always a gentleman.

II.

It is not to be wondered at that after years of discussion on descent—or the popular belief in the monkey element in evolution—by men who really imagine themselves to be educated, that Labour should step in where the fools leave off and continue the parable as though all

the premises had been settled instead of being merely shelved because of a lack of topical value. That there was anything profound in evolution was not grasped and is still not realised by either the minority or the majority. The average mind longs for something "practicable," and having got it, or what seems like a good imitation of it, it likes nothing so much as an anchorage. That a few have gone past this anchorage does not disturb these plodders. They have retired.

Of that aspect in evolution that is implied in continuity they know nothing. The monkey element does seem to hold out the promise of something tangible, it is true, but the idea in continuity is an abstraction, and abstractions, like ideas generally, are abhorrent to the common man. He does not realise, and Labour leaders do not realise, that in continuity is wrapped up the history of man.

If men would leave those things alone that float on the shallows on rafts of long-standing words and confine themselves to the thing that is immediately under their own noses, what a lot of trouble and disappointment they would save themselves. For the thing that demands consideration is that self-knowledge which merges itself into the knowledge of man, the history of man.

From the time of Aristotle down to to-day there is one theme, and one theme only, in spite of all the shouting and the din, that threads through life like the red strand in a climbing-rope: the desire of man towards the "good." It is this desire towards an immediate and very tangible good that was blotted out by that comfortable, mouth-filling pad "the survival of the fittest." This phrase came in the very nick of time when the fortune-hunters of the early nineteenth century were hard put to it to find a moral sanction for their ill-gotten gains. Darwin was their salvation just as he was to be Labour's damnation.

It is mainly because of Labour's early Wesleyan training that it is full of a sentimental will to believe, and the utter lack of anything so fine as a sense of logic, of a cool, analytical sense, or even common sense. Labour has sung "I will believe" so long and so persistently that any politician, or even one of their own leaders (!) has only to speak, to appeal to them with the right revivalist flavour, and they are bowled over at once. I heard a Labour leader of sorts say, only the other day, that "the Government has appealed to us to come in and save them." And I knew at once by the mud-guard of a moustache on the face of him that he had been saying that for twenty years, and that he would go on saying it for as long as he could get a crowd of gobemouches to listen to him.

The born tub-thumper is a born blatherskite. Not to one man in a million is it given to be an orator and at the same time a man of action. If Labour generally could grasp the full significance of this it would stone to death the men who bawl at them in the old ra-ta-ta-ta gabble. Labour is in the position it is to-day because of its ingrained pew and pulpit state of mind, and that other picture, always at the back of their mind, of themselves in the pulpit bawling as loud as any. Life to them is one continuous P.S.A. with an occasional change when one brass-lunged tauter gives place to another.

For the appeal to numbers is tainted by the implication that the applicant, in spite of his whiskered bulk, is at heart a coward and wants nothing so much as a push, "a push, a big push, altogether, boys, and we'll do the trick yet," to help him along to his goal of political revivalism.

And just as Darwin gave one class sanction for their irresponsible greed and petulant irritation at any suggestion of restraint—witness the objections of the good bishops to the Factory Acts—so has he cut the grass from under the feet of the band-of-hopers by having led them to the belief in the ever upward progress of evolution.

HAROLD LISTER.

Our Generation.

THE correspondent who last week tried to inveigle me into metaphysics this week attempts to lure me into theology. Ah, one knows—or rather one does not know—how far a theorist will go when she is in search of co-efficients, antitheses and such like toys. I had the temerity to speak of the necessity for exceptional men to have an influence not altogether disproportionate to their talents. Just see where it has landed me; not only into a discussion upon dualism and monism, but into an argument about God and the devil, in which my correspondent complains that theologians "cannot join up God and Devil as two aspects of one Being, and they *do* not join up Good and Evil as action and reaction of one motion." This, of course, is true, and it is to the discredit of theologians. Modern European philosophy is moving towards a conception of absolute immanence "which may be called indifferently Absolute Idealism or Absolute Positivism," as Signor de Ruggiero says in his book on "Modern Philosophy." But my correspondent insists so earnestly on the necessity of thinking synthetically, keeping both antitheses, or, as she prefers to conceive them, co-efficients, in one's mind, that she has no time left to think synthetically. Even in the midst of a tirade against dualism, she commits without noticing it the most obvious mistake in dualism: she divorces spirit from matter very completely by ignoring matter altogether, especially the matter in hand. This point is of interest because it is one in which many, perhaps all, of us err in company with her. I quote a few sentences to show how sound one may be in theory without effecting anything. "Even a positive man cannot without hypocrisy or suicide deny or eliminate (1) his *own* negative values and (2) negative values not his own on which he reacts and lives." "Feeling and Thought (which may or may not be expressed as Speech, another *action*) precede and determine and are inseparable from 'actions,' behaviour, achievement, personality, individuality, etc. Now leaders of thought habitually make a conceptual schism which denies the action and reaction necessary to life. Their own physical life, *vide* 'A. E. R.,' and our (mediocrity's) intellectual life is thereby sterilised. We are apathetic." "Positive men are evoking 'action at a distance' by repudiating corporate responsibility." This is all true; I agree heartily with it; my objection is simply that my correspondent, while insisting that Feeling and Thought are inseparable from "actions," does not descend (or ascend, as the case may be) for a moment into the world of action, where actions are so much needed. She is concerned not with problems but only with theories. For example, she says that "Positive men are evoking 'action at a distance' by repudiating corporate responsibility." But what is the most deadly falsehood by which positive men repudiate corporate responsibility? It is to-day the falsehood that their responsibility is no greater than any other man's, that they, in the same sense as the least of voters, are "democrats," that the fact that they are more clear-sighted than the others imposes upon them no obligation to lead. Read any journal, of "good will" or otherwise, and on any subject, politics, economics, religion or literature, and you will find no man who would not think it presumptuous to *speak out*. Alas, "their own negative values and the negative values on which they react and live" are too well known to them; they know nothing else, and least of all themselves. And in spite of this they "make a conceptual schism which denies the action and reaction necessary to life." They do it very easily, fatally easily. For when they have lost whatever life is in them in becoming democrats irrecognisable from every other democrat, how is it possible that they should not "deny the action and reaction necessary to life"? They have denied it in

themselves. "Our (mediocrity's) intellectual life is thereby sterilised." Well, it might be. No one can give rich gifts who is as poor as everybody else. But we impoverish ourselves that we might receive as much as our neighbour, and we call it public spirit. To return to the consideration of theories which are mere theories; these are bad because they are truisms, that is truths into which the breath of life has never entered, truths which are stillborn.

"We are all psychologists nowadays," said the "Outlook" the other week. "On no other hypothesis can one account for the mass of literature which pours from the Press on this subject; for presumably the publishers do not issue books which nobody reads. It is in some sort a new religion, a sign that we are anxious about our soul, when we spend such pains to discover its mechanism." There is no doubt about it; we may call our souls nerves, complexes, libido, or the collective unconscious, but what we are concerned with is in one form or another the question of salvation. This, psychologists, who have explained the various "neurotic" and "hysterical" phenomena of religious experience in severely psychological terms, will themselves admit. But can psycho-analysis be called, and is it desirable from any point of view, except that of credulous sceptics, that it should be called, a new religion? Heaven postpone the day when it comes to be a thing to be believed in and not to be practised and criticised. The writer in the "Outlook," however, complains dolorously that psychologists nowadays, though they are concerned with the soul, never use the term. Even Hume, a terrible sceptic, as we all know, was not afraid to call a soul a soul, but since William James passed the word by no psychologist has dared to mention it. "For fiddle, it seems, is diddle," as Swinburne said, "and diddle, I take it, is dee." What does it really matter what words we use when we write about the human spirit? So long as these words are understood by us, knowledge is increased and salvation is brought nearer. If it gives us a greater sense of reality to use "libido" for "spirit," "repression" for "guilt" and "abreaction" for "conversion," and if it works better to do so, then the omission of the word "soul" from the working out of salvation is only a point for professors and professing Christians. Only the pedantry of the "saved" can be in question. What psycho-analysis has done has been to indicate in terms more exact than ever before realities which for ages had only been adumbrated in symbols. The difference this must make for humanity is signal. Salvation can never, perhaps (but who knows?), be made easy; it will always have to be worked out in fear and trembling; but it can now be worked out less in the dark. Religion and science are by no means reconciled yet; but here, at any rate, they do co-operate, if to religion we give its oldest signification as the art of salvation.

It is incredible, but the "Saturday Review" does not appear to have read Matthew Arnold. To what purpose were the "Essays in Criticism" written when this sort of thing can appear in a respectable—or, at any rate, a respected—English journal to-day? "Were Lord Curzon to go to Washington," we hear, "America would quickly recognise in him the most distinctly British type of statesman she has yet had an opportunity of meeting. Admiration and acclaim, not untouched with wonder, would attend his progress; the impression of power, dignity, culture and character he would leave behind him would be such as no Briton would have any cause to apologise for." Are we nothing better than a nation of public schoolboys that blatancy can utter itself so complacently as this without being greeted with a universal roar of laughter? "Search where you will, I defy you to equal it." But of what use will Lord Curzon's "power, dignity, culture and character" be to America when they are of none to us?

EDWARD MOORE.

Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

THIS is perhaps not the proper place to review Mr. Shaw's latest work*; it has very little significance for drama, as little as Mr. Wells' "History" has for literature. The evolution of both Mr. Wells and Mr. Shaw has run a parallel course; Mr. Wells has worked through the art form of the novel into history and prophecy, Mr. Shaw has worked through the art form of the play into historical speculation, and prophecy. Both feel that art is a blind ally of human endeavour, or, at best, a discipline and training of the senses and intelligence, having a relation to life similar to that of the "War Game" to real war. Both feel the necessity of handling life more directly than art allows, not for the purpose of creating beauty (the symmetry of mathematics is the supreme art-form of the universe, and like all art is selective), but for the purpose of living life. Both are chiefly concerned with the maintenance and development of the contemplative life; unless democracy makes the world safe for the thinker, the world ought not to be made safe for democracy. The Roman soldier spearing Archimedes would be to both, I think, the essential type of tragedy; certainly the war has inspired both to an attempt to find the way out of the impasse in which the contemplative life is at the mercy of the merely active. The different forms into which each has cast his thought is indicative only of the personal difference of the two writers: Mr. Wells is primarily a scientist, who wants to make even government an exact science; Mr. Shaw, with more of the artist-nature, is primarily an individualist who, in the last resort, wants government to be either instinctive or unnecessary, and to free the individual from all the restraints that impede contemplation. Both alike are repelled by catastrophic evolution, both believe that human will can direct life to any desired end; but Mr. Wells' interest in what Mr. Shaw calls "Circumstantial Evolution" makes him more concerned with the communal arrangements for preserving and developing life, while Mr. Shaw's interest in what he calls "Creative Evolution" limits his sphere of operations to the human will, to the Christian teaching of the miracle of faith. "Have faith," says Mr. Shaw, "and all things are possible unto you"; you may even become Uncle Fire-heads, if your taste leads you in that direction.

But Mr. Shaw has not so completely broken with his art-form as has Mr. Wells. He uses his stage conventions even in the Garden of Eden; what is his Eve, with her "Co-ee!" and her virginal innocence but the ingénue of the modern stage? As biology, the stage direction when the serpent instructs Eve in the secret of procreation is simply nonsense: "Eve's face lights up with intense interest, which increases until an expression of overwhelming repugnance takes its place. She buries her face in her hands." Eve may not have been Mrs. Pithecanthropus Erectus, but she certainly was not the English stage flapper implied by the text. Even when Mr. Shaw projects his imagination "as far as thought can reach," to 31,920 A.D., it is only to use an old, old stage trick to represent the process of birth. How often have we seen, in pantomime and similar entertainments, that huge egg pulled on, and smitten open to reveal a pretty girl! That is the midwifery that Mr. Shaw asks us to accept in 31,920 A.D.; that is biology as it will be. Wilde's statement that life imitates art has never received a more promising exposition; "if only we could have children—without women," cried the decadent Greeks, and I imagine that by 31,920 A.D. we shall have discovered how to

* "Back to Methuselah: A Metabiological Pentateuch." By Bernard Shaw. (Constable. 10s.)

have them without eggs. On the stage, the girl is usually made of "sugar and spice, and all that's nice"; and albumen and lime and lecithin are not so agreeable a specification. Besides, they do not rhyme.

Mr. Shaw's later work, with its reference to religion, certainly has the effect of reviving youthful memories. These five plays, in spite of the preface in which they are shown to spring from Lamarck (Mr. Shaw's eternal use of the giraffe does not reveal any extensive acquaintance with Lamarck's work), seem to me to spring rather from the hymn:

Could I but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er.

But whatever Moses saw from Mount Pisgah (and according to Col. Ingersoll, Moses made mistakes), I am certain that he never saw "The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas." This wholly delightful libellous treatment of two well-known politicians is a "mutant"; *Natura non facit saltum*, but Mr. Shaw is an improvement on Nature in the art of saltation, and this leap from the Garden of Eden to Hampstead at the present day is the longest leap on record. "The wicked flea, when no man pursueth but the righteous, is as bold as a lion"; and the leaders of the Liberal Party are righteous men. But here the theatrical memories revive; one can see Mr. Fred Kerr walking out of "The Grain of Mustard Seed" to play Lubin, and Mr. Randle Ayrton, I think, playing Burge (? Bilge). In other words, the characters are well-marked theatrical types. The Brothers Barnabas (who talk interminably, like Mr. Shaw's Undershaft and Lady Britomart) could be played by anybody, as could the young parson and the Fabian flapper. Mr. Shaw has not got away from the theatre in this play; he has only set his characters talking about biology and voluntary longevity instead of all the other questions that have been discussed in his plays. The Brothers Barnabas are as dull as all other of Mr. Shaw's expositors; it is his Burge and Lubin, with their everlasting play, who have the spark of life. If the first proposition of Nietzsche's aesthetics is true: "What is good is easy; everything divine runs with light feet": these deadly dull biologists must be wicked. If we must go back to the Garden of Eden, I seem to remember that the Gods turned man out "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever," and put an angel with a flaming sword "to keep the way of the tree of life"—and the biologists do not laugh at the shaking of the sword. They preach to the politicians as St. Francis did to the fishes. The Garden of Eden, I feel sure, was not the birth-place of creative evolution; and Burge and Lubin have more Bios than have the Barnabi, or whatever is the plural of Barnabas. They ought to have been called Barnacles.

The next play, three hundred years after, is chiefly remarkable for its experimentation with cinematographic effects. Sir James Barrie used the cinema in "Rosy Rapture," and even "The Man Who Stayed At Home" used it for scenic purposes; but the use that Mr. Shaw makes of the cinematograph and telephone (apparently he has not heard of the wireless telephone yet; he uses the procedure of the automatic telephone exchange but asks an operator not to "cut us off, please") is more reminiscent of Bellamy's "Looking Backwards." Mr. Shaw's imagination is not so active with scientific instruments as it is with scientific theories, and he is interested in scientific theories only so far as he can create a religion from them. But a religion is simply an attempt to maintain power by fossilising science; a religion may satisfy the desire to believe (it has failed somewhat during the last half-century) but it cannot satisfy the desire to know. A religion at its best can only offer us what has been known, while science, and life itself, go on to what can be known. The Little Bethelism of Mr. Shaw's preface is in conflict with the speculative intelligence of the plays—but I shall have to return to the subject.

Readers and Writers.

I HAVE already referred to Mr. Mencken, and since he might often usefully act as a reference point in a critical survey, he is worth definition. He is one of the most provoking phenomena that ever came out of (or, rather, stayed in) America. I find him as obtrusive, though not so fulsome, as a showman outside his booth. He has admirable qualities besides—he is joyous, incisive, and, for what it is worth, he has a theory of criticism. It is the business of the critic, he says:

to provoke the reaction between the work of art and the spectator. The spectator, untutored, stands unmoved; he sees the work of art, but it fails to make any intelligible impression on him; if he were spontaneously sensitive to it, there would be no need for criticism. But now comes the critic with his catalysis. He makes the work of art live for the spectator; he makes the spectator live for the work of art. Out of the process comes understanding, appreciation, intelligent enjoyment—and that is precisely what the artist tried to produce.

That is perfectly clear as a method of criticism and as a function for the critic. But is it adequate? Does it even accurately describe Mr. Mencken's own criticism? You have only to turn over the page I have quoted from "Prejudices: First Series" (Jonathan Cape) to find practice at variance with precept. Mr. Mencken is writing a lamentation for "the late Mr. Wells" and this is the conclusion he reaches:

He seems to respond to all the varying crazes of the fallacies of the day; he swallows them without digesting them; he tries to substitute mere timeliness for reflection and feeling. And under all the rumble-bumble of bad ideas is the imbecile assumption of the jitney messiah. . . . A novelist, of course, must have a point of view, but it must be a point of view untroubled by the crazes of the moment, it must regard the internal workings and meanings of existence and not merely its superficial appearances. A novelist must view life from some secure rock, drawing it into a definite perspective, interpreting it upon an ordered plan.

That is good criticism, but is it merely "catalytic"? Of course not; rather it is a taste of Judgment Day itself. Here, at any rate, Mr. Mencken is exercising a function for which he has not provided in his theory of criticism.

* * *

Mr. Mencken is guilty of the current confusion of aesthetic and criticism, falsely derived from Croce. But in a commending reference to the doctrine "preached with so much ardour by Benedetto Croce and his disciple, Dr. J. E. Spingarn, and by them borrowed from Goethe and Carlyle—the doctrine, to wit, that every work of art is, at bottom, unique, and that it is the business of the critic, not to label it and pigeon-hole it, but to seek for its inner intent and content, and to value it according as that intent is carried out and that content is valid and worth while," he does, you see, let the cat out of the bag. For what are the words "value," "valid" and "worth while" doing in Mr. Mencken's critical vocabulary? They did not appear in the catalytic theory and one can only conclude that that theory was far from being either sincere or fundamental. It was evolved in a spirit of "Well, if you must have a theory, here goes!" and it has no necessary relation to Mr. Mencken's actual practice, which is arbitrary, emotional, will-o'-the-wispish, and only occasionally justified.

* * *

The devil may favour the pot-shot critic, but science is ultimately surer. Mr. Shaw is a test case and on this subject I find Mr. Mencken full of cocksure inadequacy. Mr. Shaw is a figure for mockery, an "Ulster Polonius," "a master of the logical trick of so matching two apparently safe premises that they yield an incongruous and inconvenient conclusion." "Man and Superman" is merely a trite comedy on the theme "that women are well aware of the profit that marriage

yields to them, and are thus more eager to marry than men are, and even alert to take the lead in the business." The preface to "Androcles and the Lion" is so commonplace, according to Mr. Mencken, that it would not worry a bishop (it would not, of course, be so wonderful if it did). You see the "romantic" drift of this kind of criticism: it fixes on the incidental "interest"—the personalisms and plots—and neglects the fundamental meaning. It is typical of Mr. Mencken's roving method that personal relations are the only relations cast within his mind. He sees men against men—some bright, some puritanically dull—but his imagination cannot throw men against man. That is why he is blind to the particular value of Mr. Shaw's method which, threading its way through madness, does lead to a conception of the universal man. That is why "Man and Superman" is something more than a marital intrigue; and why "Back to Methuselah," despite the reviewers, is the play in which, as he claims, Mr. Shaw attains his "natural function as an artist." Apart from its irrelevant embellishments and topicalities, it is a courageous experiment in philosophy. It is, in fact, the most serious philosophical drama since Goethe's "Faust." (Well, can you name another worth more consideration? Not one of Shelley's, or of Hugo's, or of Claudel's. Perhaps, with a stretch of the term, "The Ring and the Book"; but my net is not so extravagantly wide.) Mr. Mencken, to return to my spring-board, is not, I suspect, fond of anything in the nature of a serious attitude in life: that way lies comstockery; and so it is enough for him that Mr. Shaw should possess some belief to which he disciplines his thought and imagination. Mr. Mencken has all the romantic hatred of mental discipline. Mr. Shaw is, of course, an ethical artist: his beauty is moral. But Mr. Mencken does not distinguish between moralists: they are all tin-pot evangelists, jitney messiahs.

* * *

A reviewer of "Back to Methuselah" in the "Times" Literary Supplement does seem to have a more direct sense of his subject: he realises that the critic must rise, when Mr. Shaw is the occasion, to a somewhat metaphysical plane, but unfortunately he relapses into the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas (or is it merely Emerson? At any rate, I am sure Mr. Mencken would call it "lavender buncombe"), damning Mr. Shaw for his heresy to the Absolute. It is quite true that Mr. Shaw seeks the divine in man and can only find it by the elimination of all human qualities; it is a doctrine of pure immanence and this critic condemns it as such. It is none the less the logical dogma of evolution: the superman is superhuman, but the seeds of that superhumanity are embedded in man. In this sense Mr. Shaw carries clarity to a degree until it is no wonder the critics, along with Mr. Mencken, confuse clarity with the commonplace. And in exchange for this clarity of idea and expression they can only suggest—if, like the critic of the "Times" Literary Supplement, they go to the depths of suggestion—a "transcendent" they do not offer to explain (for fear of making it commonplace, we must assume) and a "mystical union" of this transcendent with the immanent. I have no doubt that this kind of thing passes, in the "Times" Literary Supplement, for philosophical criticism, but but it is a kind of philosophical criticism that goes back beyond Methuselah for its original fashion. It is merely criticism of the present in terms of the past. A more significant philosophical criticism would be the criticism of the present in terms of the future—if that were possible. But it is rather old-fashioned to take the future so seriously, and such is our main complaint against Mr. Shaw. His philosophy is not merely humanistic (in that it is relative to man), but is more narrowly anthropocentric, and quite unwarrantably he constructs a theory of nature of which man is the axle and the apex, the centre of time and of space. This is the vanity that is Victorian science. There is

no evidence whatsoever in reality that the past is a continuous stream emerging in this present moment of sense awareness, or that the future is the "will be" of the phenomena we now experience.

The past and the future meet and mingle in the ill-defined present. The passage of nature, which is only another name for the creative force of existence, has no narrow ledge of definite instantaneous present within which to operate. Its operative presence which is now urging nature forward must be sought for throughout the whole, in the remotest past as well as in the narrowest breadth of any present duration. Perhaps also in the unrealised future. Perhaps also in the future which might be, as well as in the actual future which will be.

I quote from Professor Whitehead's "Concept of Nature," and I am tempted to add one more sentence from the same source: it is given as the motto that should guide the life of every natural philosopher—"Seek simplicity and distrust it." Mr. Shaw is a natural philosopher engaged in the problem of simplifying human life, but he does not distrust his solution. The problem of life, however, like the problem of immortality, is the problem of time, and that in its turn is a problem of which, by nature of our physical limits, we are profoundly ignorant. Because it does not account for this unlimited area of our ignorance, Mr. Shaw's religion, which is a religion of science or knowledge, is at best a dogma. It may, for all we know, be a heresy. HERBERT READ.

Einstein's Theory or Pure Thought?

In a previous article I tried to show that Einstein's theory of relativity is meant to dispose of a dilemma which really does not exist. That the mystifying nature of his argument is invariably due to a conflict with ordinary common sense and pure reason comes out more particularly in his frequent lectures on the presumed impossibility of establishing a simultaneity of events and herewith of a measure of time. The slipshod nature of his reasoning becomes patent at once when in support of this surprising assertion he simply states that "when two rays of light strike the observer simultaneously, it is impossible to say that they set out simultaneously."

If two men are approaching, the simultaneity of their arrival at my place is, surely, in no wise dependent on the simultaneity of their departure from their respective starting-points. Who would dream of the possibility of establishing *this* simultaneity from the simple fact of their simultaneous arrival at a particular place? One feels uneasy in suggesting that anyone could be troubled with such problems. Nevertheless, the implied impossibility, on the ground of insufficient data, becomes to Professor Einstein a sufficient ground for the inference: "It is, therefore, impossible to establish a simultaneity of events." The fact that, instead of two moving men, he conjures up before his listeners' vision vast spaces traversed by light emitted by different luminous points and additionally proceeds to draw a distinction between a state of rest and movement of the meeting point of the emitted light-stimuli, does not, of course, affect the nature of the argument one way or the other, but is, perhaps, only meant to impart to the otherwise often inately trivial subject-matter a kind of halo of mysterious transcendentalism.

And, indeed, he succeeds in the end in impressing his audience. After all, unless deliberately provoked, the ordinary man is self-effacingly modest. "Surely Professor Einstein is likely to know what he is talking about!" so he is ready to grant, and attributes the curious obscurity of the argument to his own denseness, especially when he finds that even people like Lord Haldane are enthusiastic about Einstein's theory, and

that papers pour out columns about its epoch-making significance. It is difficult to stand out against universal glamour. But when the fit of temporary gullibility wears off, as of course it is bound to sooner or later, the presumed impossible establishment of a simultaneity of events once again becomes a simple matter, and one finally only wonders that it should have been possible for anyone to make one feel anxious about it.

Fortunately, ordinary common sense and pure reason go together, the only difference being that the envisagement of positions held by common sense in the light of reason carries with it the awakened self-consciousness as a thinker. After all, we are born thinkers and herewith ab initio instinctively rational beings. Pure thinking only brings this our fundamental character to our full consciousness. Lack of space forbids a complete exposition, but granting, as in the end grant we must, that the idea of truth implies perfect agreement between a conception and its object, or, in Hegelian language, unity of Thought and Being, it follows that the display of universal Energy in natural laws is equally graspable as the objective aspect of what subjectively comes to our knowledge in the self-regulative potency of purely logically prompted thought, i.e., of pure thought. From the fact that the two forms of Truth, God, Ultimate Reality, call them what you like, are in fundamental unity, it also at once follows that the system of pure thought must be of objective significance as the original plan of Creation and the manifested Universe, in turn, of subjective significance in reference to its original plan in pure thought, there being no Knowledge apart from a Knower and the Known. Sound common sense grants this position in its own general predisposition—until we find ourselves under the sway of the intellect and its superstitions of abstractions—to view the World as created by God from Nothing. But inasmuch as pure thought is meant to convert this our fundamental, because always only temporarily disputed, conviction into a fully grasped truth, it is incumbent upon the pure thinker to vindicate the claim he is making on behalf of the system of pure thought. If this claim is to hold good, he must be able to prove, for instance, that the measurable features of the Solar System admit of a priori derivation, i.e., admit of being deduced from that plan of Creation which he maintains is recoverable from the Divine Mind by pure thinking. But that there is then no question of doing away with the *raison d'être* of observational astronomy is, of course, obvious from this, that its results are needed as a check on the correctness of the results reached a priori, the idea of truth implying, precisely, unity of Thought and Being.

Now, I cannot be expected to explain in this short article the kind of reasoning which leads to what at first sight appears well-nigh miraculous. When one confronts, I find, even a Hegelian student with the possibility of ascertaining, say, the dimensions or axial rotation of the sun without even looking at it, and without the use of telescope, but purely and solely by a mental effort, one is apt to be looked upon as fit for Bedlam. This is, perhaps, the reason why my achievement, put on record in a book called "Pure Thought and the Riddle of the Universe,"* has, so far, passed with little notice, although the book has been published for some time. I must, therefore, refer those interested in my present remarks to its pages for further enlightenment. What I am mainly concerned with at present is only the light thrown by pure thought upon the question of standards. And in this respect it must be said that pure thought sides altogether with "classical mechanics." Einstein's insistence that standards used for measuring time or space intervals depend on the condition of movement of the body of reference, so that a yard stick ceases to be of the same length when

used on a moving train, or a second is changed in its duration under changing conditions of movement—this standpoint is vetoed by pure thought for the simple reason, as explained in my previous article, that Einstein's theory is a mere *invention* in solution of an *invented* dilemma. Seeing that pure thinking is prompted and governed by logical necessity alone and all through remains of objective significance or in harmony with *actually observed* facts (it is becoming necessary to draw a distinction between genuine and spurious or simply fancied facts!), it follows that a standpoint which has neither notional nor empirical justification cannot even come up for treatment in the system of pure thought, except as an illustration of the results of the sway of intellectual eccentricity or in the same way as is accorded by my exposition to the positions of non-Euclidean Geometry. The possible objection that pure thought sanctions classical mechanics by simply borrowing its positions falls to the ground directly one becomes aware that the essential feature of pure thought is an absolute refusal to take anything for granted except its own spontaneity; which means that a pure thinker depends upon his own capacity for pure thinking, and hence communes with his own self even when his results *pari passu* are of objective validity.

As against Einstein's assertions concerning the presumed impossibility of establishing absolutely fixed standards of space and time, I wish, therefore, to draw attention to this, that pure thought not only insists on such standards in the sphere of measurability, but de facto itself ushers them upon the scene. This comes to the front in the formulæ set up for the measurable features of the solar system: several of them imply a relation of powers, e.g., the Sun's Equator represents the *root of the product* of the spaces traversed by Mercury's and the Earth's equatorial velocities in their respective sidereal periods. This shows that the evaluation of the formulæ in question presupposes a unit of spatial measure of *notional* origin. In this respect, we could not avail ourselves straightway of the results of observational astronomy because we could not be sure that the standard insisted upon by pure thought is identical with the standard employed by observation. The system of pure thought insists that the standard to be employed must be the same part of Venus' polar circumference as this circumference is of the Earth's orbit. Curiously enough, the resulting unit *exactly* coincides with the British Statute Mile, and in my book I am equally attempting to explain how this coincidence comes about in spite of the apparently purely accidental fixation of the statute mile at eight furlongs.

But what concerns us is the fact that the notionally determined standard is valid for *all* the measurable features of the solar system, and hence utterly independent of the condition of movement of the body of reference. Whether we refer to the Sun, the Earth or any other planet, the standard is absolutely fixed once for all. And it is further found that the same applies to time-units. In this respect, pure thought insists not only on the introduction of all the current units employed in the sub-division of a day, but also of the century and the millennium. Thus, we find that Mars' day lasts as many *minutes* as there are miles in Mercury's equatorial radius. Or the mean revolution of the nodes of the Moon is the same amount of her synodical revolution as Venus' sidereal period *less one hour* is of her own mean solar day. Again, the square of the amount which the Earth's equatorial diameter is of its polar compression, of its difference from the polar diameter, represents the amount of *seconds* in its sidereal day. Let it be emphasised once again that any possibility of these units having been originally surreptitiously borrowed from empiricism is utterly out of the question. In any case, let those who doubt put themselves to the trouble of disproving the genuineness of my results.

Einstein is very proud of the shadow of empirical

* Allen and Unwin. 18s.

confirmation hovering over his theory, and on the strength of this shadow finds wide hearing. Is the most conclusive vindication of the hoary belief that God created the world from Nothing to remain, in a Christian country, a vox clamantis in deserto? I do not, I cannot believe so. As Hegel says in the Preface to his "Phenomenology": "We may rest assured that it is the nature of truth to force its way to recognition when its time comes, and that it only appears when its time has come, and hence never appears too soon, and never finds a public that is not ripe to receive it."

Magna est veritas et prevalebit!

FRANCIS SEDLAK.

Views and Reviews.

THE ANSWER TO MALTHUS—VII.

MR. PELL concludes, as everyone else who studies the subject concludes, that "what we need is an intelligently regulated birth-rate."* He has demonstrated that the variations in the degree of fertility under the influence of the environment do obey a natural law; Charles Richet showed, in 1916, that a notable maximum of births occurs between February 15 and March 15 in most countries of the northern hemisphere, and in the southern hemisphere between August and October. Westermarck, quoted by Mr. Pell, says the same thing:

In the northern parts of Europe many more conceptions take place in the months of May and June, when the conditions of life are rather hard, than in September, October, and November, when the supplies of food are comparatively plentiful. In the north-western province of Germany, as well as in Sweden, the latter months are characterised by a minimum of conceptions. Among the Kaffirs, more children are conceived in November and December than in any other month, although, according to the Rev. H. T. Cousins, food is most abundant among them from March to September. And among the Bateke, the maximum of conceptions falls in December and January, although food is, as I am informed by Dr. Sims, most plentiful in the dry season, that is, from May to the end of August.

But there is no need to multiply facts; a high degree of fertility does not coincide with high living, whether among men or animals.

But an "intelligently regulated birth-rate" obviously cannot be obtained by Malthusian methods. Malthusianism only offers us induced sterility in the very classes from which everyone demands fertility, and intensifies the difficulties caused by the differential birth-rate. But what we need to know, if birth-control is to be intelligent, is how to induce fertility. Pythagoras' immortal phrase: "Impious mortal, abstain from beans": possibly has some reference to the subject. For it is a fact that cannot be gainsaid that the average consumption of foods rich in proteids and fats has increased during the last half-century in European countries; and some experiments carried out by Dr. Chalmers Watson indicate that a purely meat diet produces sterility more or less complete in animals. It is even probable, I may add, that diet influences the sex-proportion; it was in 1846, I think, that the Corn Laws were repealed, and the Registrar-General shows us that in the quinquennium 1841-5 the proportion of male births to every thousand female births was the highest since registration began. It was 1,052 during that quinquennium; in the next, when England was feeding on cheap corn, it fell to 1,045; during the quinquennium 1896-1900, it fell to 1,035 [since that time the cost of living has steadily increased], and it has never reached the height at which it stood in the five years before the Corn Laws were repealed, in the "hungry 'forties." As, in other countries, the ratio most commonly returned is between

1,050-1,060 to every thousand females born, the importance of diet in sex-determination should not be overlooked.

Mr. Pell argues:—

To obtain an intelligently regulated birth-rate, we must first acquire a clear insight into the laws which govern fertility, and devise some means of overcoming at will the rapidly increasing sterility now making itself manifest through all classes. Seeing that such vast increases in the fertilising power of the sperm cells and in the fertilisability of the egg cells can be obtained by such slight and simple means as shown in the experiments of Loeb and others, the possibility that we may find some simple means of ensuring fertilisation in the case of human beings is by no means a forlorn hope. The task may prove unexpectedly easy. It seems to be merely a matter of bringing these influences temporarily to bear on the germ cells.

He instances the work already done on the endocrine glands as indicating a possible mechanism of regulated fertility; and their inter-relations, as well as their known effects upon growth, certainly support his contention. The "vitamines," too, those substances not yet isolated which make the difference between what Dr. A. White-Robertson calls "quick" and "dead" foods, undoubtedly have an effect; Mr. Pell quotes McCarrison to the effect that:

An exclusive diet of milled rice causes, after about thirty days, a complete suppression of the function of spermatogenesis:

and also that:

One of the most remarkable results of a dietary deficient in so-called "anti-neuritic" (?) vitamines is the constant and very pronounced atrophy of the testes in males and the similar but less pronounced atrophy of the ovaries in females.

I do not know what the "anti-neuritic" vitamine is, unless it is a misprint; but the principal sources of the anti-beri-beri vitamine are in the germ and husk of the grain, and white flour contains very much less of it than whole-meal. The anti-rachitic vitamine may be easily destroyed by prolonged boiling, as in the case of milk, or stews, or by the commercial methods of canning meats and vegetables. The anti-scorbutic vitamine is easily destroyed by heat and deteriorates under most forms of storage. I take these facts from an article in the April number of "Science Progress." The increased consumption of "refined" and "preserved" foods during the last half-century has probably not been without effect upon fertility, as it certainly has not been without effect upon disease, notably cancer.

Mr. Pell also suggests a systematic enquiry into the effects of intellectual activity. Enquiries have been made:

But they are scrappy and not arranged to throw any real light on the relative proportion of completely sterile marriages in comparisons between different countries, different periods, and different social classes, which is the kind of information needed.

Finally, an understanding of the problem "will have to include a solution of the economic problems involved." Malthusianism calls itself "a crusade against poverty"; but as induced sterility has no necessary connection with a redistribution of national wealth, as Miss Eleanor Rathbone is, even now, advocating that not the employer or the State, but the bachelor working-man, should subsidise even the small family with his wages, the poor would certainly not be any richer even if there were fewer of them. The Wages Fund theory is the background of all Malthusian argument; there is only so much to be shared, and the greater the number of sharers, the smaller must be the portions—that is the assumption. But as man is a producer as well as a consumer, the argument is a non sequitur; and the distribution of national wealth is not determined by simple division. The Malthusian law of population is not a crusade against poverty, it is a crusade for the

* "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.)

extension of poverty, and it never has risen, and never will rise, above the level of its origin. The spoliation of the monasteries, the dissolution of the guilds, the enclosure of the commons, these were the origins of poverty in this country; and Malthus, with his advocacy of the abolition of the Poor Law, wanted to deprive the working-man of this country of even the substitutes that had had to be provided. He invented a law of Nature that is nowhere seen in operation (the geometrical progression of population is never observed), the only effect of which was to justify the tendency of the rich to become richer and the poor to become poorer.

A. E. R.

Reviews.

The Acquisitive Society. By R. H. Tawney. An analysis of the deeper causes of social and industrial unrest. (Bell. 4s. 6d. net.)

Mr. Tawney believes that "poverty is a symptom and a consequence of social disorder, while the disorder itself is something at once more fundamental and more incorrigible." It may be true that the mal-adjustment of our economic life is merely one aspect of a world out of joint; but to seek a cure for poverty in the sphere of morals is like trying to shoot a buck with shafts of satire or boil a kettle with the warmth of affection. Mr. Tawney contends, truly enough, that "the burden of our civilisation . . . is that industry itself has come to hold a position of exclusive predominance among human interests"; but this he looks upon as a moral error, whereas it is the necessary consequence of economic error. To reverse his own metaphor, society's digestive system is seriously out of order, and, far from being "hypo-chondriacal," we are foolishly neglecting to apply the proper remedies. The cure Mr. Tawney proposes is a further aggravation of the disease. Admitting that the end of industry is life, he would yet organise society as though the end of life were industry. He would "turn all men into producers," and abolish those who "merely spend"; forgetting that life is the process of spending, and that it is precisely the importance of spending and the value of the consumer which our commercial age has overlooked. Indeed, Mr. Tawney himself suffers from the obsession of the importance of "work," for he accepts the capitalist picture of the present and future poverty of the world and the need for increased effort. The non-worker is "too expensive a luxury." "Payment without service is waste." These are the very economic fallacies which serve to prop the existing financial system. Mr. Tawney makes them the text of an attack on private property divorced from service. He sees that ownership of land or plant is naturally connected with its use. He also sees that such concrete ownership is now relatively unimportant, because "the greater part of modern property has been attenuated to a pecuniary lien or bond on the product of industry." He does not see that this very fact has made it possible to claim property (in the shape of a "share" in the national business) as the right of all instead of the privilege of a few. The conception of individual rights, subordinated by Hegelians and Collectivists to the rights of the social organism, is rejected by Mr. Tawney in favour of the idea of function. But if his definition of function were widened (as in justice it should be) to include that of the consumer, there would be little to distinguish it, as a practical basis of organisation, from the sounder theoretical basis of rights.

Original Sinners. By H. W. Nevinson. (Christophers. 6s. net.)

The eight short stories in this volume exhibit Mr. Nevinson's versatility without really impressing the reader. The last, "In Diocletian's Day," is the most successful, for in the form of soliloquy (it is chiefly soliloquy) Mr. Nevinson evokes the sense of character. But "Sly's Awakening" ought to be an Elizabethan

joke, and Mr. Nevinson has not the Elizabethan humour; it falls very flat after "The Taming of the Shrew." The study of Nero as artist is barely adequate; Mr. Nevinson judges in every line instead of creating. There are several modern stories which are really no more than elaborated anecdotes, sometimes with a moral. The professor of ethics who, in a crowd, slipped his hand down a woman's blouse, and drowned himself at Niagara Falls just before the miscreant had been identified as "a Large Employer of Female Stenographers," indicates that would-be suicides should wait until their sins had found someone else out. "A Life on the Ocean Wave" indicates that a failure to commit suicide may result in introductions to some charming people. "A Transformation Scene" shows us that even fishermen may mend their morals when they discover that their wives take to prostitution after desertion, while "Sitting at a Play" adopts Hamlet's technique, as the quotation shows, to reveal the spiritual infidelity of politicians. "Pongo's Illusion" contrasts the brutality of man with the desire for knowledge and adventure of a wild chimpanzee, to the detriment of man, of course; and the whole series is introduced by a preface on Original Sin and the Fall of Man of which we can understand very little. Mr. Nevinson asserts that these two doctrines are contradictory, and then proceeds to show that they are really complementary, but that man falls upwards from original sin into humanity. The intellectual difficulty of all such "world-views" is that they have only linear dimensions, that they see succession only in one direction. But original sinners and original saints have always been contemporary, just as anabolism and metabolism constitute the rhythm of physiological processes; and as it is by no means certain that the search for truth is governed by the same laws as the desire for happiness, the moral judgment determined by the effects on happiness is not obviously applicable. Anyhow, Mr. Nevinson's philosophy does not make his stories any better.

The Labour Party Inquiry.

IN view of the approaching publication of the Report of the Committee appointed by the Labour Party to inquire into the Douglas Credit Scheme, we here publish the correspondence that passed between Messrs. Douglas and Orage on the one hand and the Labour Party and Committee on the other.

34, Eccleston Square, S.W.1.

May 24, 1921.

Dear Sir,—At its first meeting to-day, the Committee set up to inquire into the Douglas Credit Scheme asked me to **invite you** to attend its next meeting, to be held on Wednesday, June 1, at 4.30 p.m., in order to discuss the Scheme. The members of the Committee have read "Economic Democracy" and "Credit-Power and Democracy," and they leave you to decide whether you think it desirable to submit any memorandum for the consideration of the Committee.—Yours faithfully,

(Signed) ARTHUR GREENWOOD,
Secretary.

38, Cursitor Street, E.C.4.

May 26, 1921.

Dear Sir,—We are obliged by your letter of the 24th inst. and note that a Committee has been set up to inquire into what is generally known as the Douglas-NEW AGE Scheme.

This Scheme has two quite distinct aspects: one is social, and is concerned with the results of putting it into operation; and the second is technical, and is concerned with its feasibility, and the theory on which it is based.

Before accepting the invitation contained in your letter, we should be glad to learn from you:

(a) Which of these is the subject of your inquiry,

(b) The full personnel of the Committee. In any event, we regret that the short notice of your meeting makes it impossible for us to be present on the date you mention, as we have a prior engagement.

Yours faithfully, C. H. DOUGLAS,
A. R. ORAGE.

34, Eccleston Square, S.W.1.
May 27, 1921.

Dear Sir,—Thank you for your letter of the 26th inst. The Committee which has been set up is concerned with both the theoretical and practical side of the Scheme.

The members of the Committee are as follows: C. D. Burns, F. C. Clegg, G. D. H. Cole, H. Dalton, A. Greenwood, J. A. Hobson, F. Hodges, C. M. Lloyd, Sir Leo C. Money, R. H. Tawney, S. Webb.

I regret that you are unable to attend the next meeting of the Committee, but I hope that it may be possible to arrange a later date which will be convenient.

Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR GREENWOOD,
Secretary.

38, Cursitor Street, E.C.4.
May 28, 1921.

Dear Sir,—We are obliged by the receipt of your letter of the 27th inst.

You will agree that the value of a pronouncement of such a Committee as is contemplated by your terms of reference, in connection with a Scheme which admittedly has far-reaching implications, is dependent to a large extent on its composition.

Without in the least questioning the qualifications of the gentlemen whose names are covered by your letter, to pronounce on the social aspects of the Scheme if put into operation, it will not, we suppose, be contended that, with the exception of Mr. Hodges, they have, any of them:

(a) Any direct knowledge of coal-mining, the exemplary case to which the Draft Scheme applies.

(b) Any experience either of the concrete problems of business management, or of the operations of practical finance.

Further, a number of the members of your Committee, as at present constituted, are, by their pronouncements on the Labour Committee on High Prices, already pledged to the support of economic dogmas which are expressly challenged by the theory of the Scheme.

At least three members have publicly pronounced against it, and at least two members are prominently associated with the propaganda of schemes of social reform which contemplate dealing with industry by the elimination of any non-active beneficiaries, without reference to its decreasing requirements in respect of active labour.

Under these circumstances, we feel sure that you will agree that your Committee, as at present constituted, would suggest to an unprejudiced observer a strong tendency to take, as in the case of the Committee on High Prices, certain orthodox financial propositions as manifestations of natural law; a position only contestable to persons familiar with their origins.

As we agree most unreservedly that an investigation by a suitable Committee of a Scheme claiming to offer a solution of the present difficulties is in the highest degree desirable, we would suggest the formation of such a Committee on the following lines:

(1) The Committee to consist of twelve members, six to be nominated by ourselves, and six by the Labour Party.

(2) It shall be an indispensable qualification for membership of such a Committee that they shall have been, within the last five years, actively engaged in some branch of productive industry or the administration of it; and shall not be publicly committed to any specific scheme of social or industrial reform.

(3) The officials of such Committee shall be elected by the Committee.

In the event of such a Committee being constituted, we shall be entirely at its disposal for the most complete investigation of both the practical and theoretical aspects of the Scheme.

Yours faithfully,
C. H. DOUGLAS,
A. R. ORAGE.

34, Eccleston Square, S.W.1.
June 3, 1921.

Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 28th ult., from which I understand that you are not prepared

to give evidence before my Committee as at present constituted.

In these circumstances the Committee must rely upon the various published statements relating to the New AGE-Douglas Credit Scheme.

Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR GREENWOOD,
Secretary.

34, Eccleston Square, S.W.1.
June 3, 1921.

Dear Sir,—Mr. Greenwood has handed me your letter of the 28th May, in which you take exception to the personnel of the Committee which is inquiring into the New AGE-Douglas Credit Scheme, and suggest the formation of a new committee.

As regards the first point, I wish to say that the Executive Committee of the Labour Party has the fullest confidence in the Committee which it has appointed.

Your second point, referring to the establishment of a joint committee of inquiry, is one which my Committee could not accept. The Executive Committee of the Labour Party claims the right to carry on its work in its own way; and, in any case, it could not be expected to approve the appointment of a Committee the Labour members of which "shall not be publicly committed to any specific scheme of social or industrial reform," whilst the members nominated by you would be definitely committed to the scheme under consideration. It is, moreover, obvious that the condition you attach would rule out from membership every member of the Labour Party. The second qualification—that members "shall have been, within the last five years, actively engaged in some branch of productive industry or the administration of it" would exclude economists, whose existence is essential in dealing with the theoretical basis of your scheme.

Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR HENDERSON.

38, Cursitor Street, E.C.4.
June 4, 1921.

Dear Sir,—We are obliged by the receipt of your letter of the 3rd inst.

If you will kindly refer again to our letter of the 28th ult., addressed to Mr. Greenwood, you will see that we did not suggest that the members of the joint committee to be nominated by ourselves should be any more "committed to the scheme under consideration" than the members to be nominated by the Labour Party. The same qualifications were to apply to all the members of the committee, however nominated. On the other hand, in view of the desirability of an impartial inquiry, we equally suggested that, if none of the members of the committee should be committed one way or another regarding the scheme, neither should they be committed to any scheme specifically antagonistic to it.

Regarding the co-operation of professional economists in the Inquiry, while their evidence as witnesses might be valuable and we should welcome its inclusion, their title to act as judges is not, we think, admissible. This is much rather the function of such a Committee as we have proposed, consisting of men without theoretical commitments, and with practical knowledge of both the problem to be solved, and the actual means available for solving it.

We do not think it is necessary to stress the increasing gravity of the social and industrial situation, in asking your assistance to the end that the suggested Inquiry shall, if held, give due weight to the facts, and consideration to the proposals submitted to it, without reference to any other than the public interest, and, as far as possible, shall be representative of that interest, rather than of any one section of it.

Yours faithfully,
C. H. DOUGLAS,
A. R. ORAGE.

We defer comment on the foregoing correspondence until the Report of the Committee has been published.

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