THE NEW AGE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE semi-officially inspired communiqué from Gairloch on unemployment reveals something of the attempts of a Government to evade the acknowledgment of the truth, against which relentless facts are forcing it. It still deals largely in banalities. The Government are gallantly doing their bit in "economy"; Labour Exchanges are being broken up and panel doctors are having their remuneration cut down—as a contribution to the problem of distributing more purchasing power! Still, it marks a decided advance that either the Government or the "Times" correspondent should proclaim that "The question of credit is intimately associated with the revival of trade and the recovery of industry." Naturally all the proposals, trenching on credit, that are so far adumbrated, are carefully devised in the interests of the banks and the financial rings. Thus, to meet the immediate necessity of maintaining the unemployed, the Treasury will help the Guardians to raise loans, involving a further tribute of interest from the community for a term of years. Again, though "the conservative and . . . . over-cautious policy" of the Big Five in financing industry is unfavourably commented on, it is actually proposed to remedy this by the Treasury guaranteeing them, in whole or in part, against losses incurred through their taking greater risks. It has been discovered that industry can only be set on its legs by bringing to bear the nation's total credit, and yet this is to be used to enable the very banks that have thus demonstrably failed the nation to make still bigger profits. A later explanation hints that this Government assistance will be limited to production for export. The crying necessity is for the national credit to be drawn on in aid of the home consumer. Why this continual talk of the poverty-stricken foreign customers gazing in at our shop-windows? Why is it always assumed that consumption must begin on the other side of the water? After all, someone must start, and Continental rulers and financiers have just as much reason for expecting us to do so. And so all the nations may wait indefinitely, like Sir Richard Strachan and the Earl of Chatham on a celebrated occasion, for the other fellows to begin. The countries in question have certain lines of goods that they can produce, and that they would be only too glad to sell to us. Put our people into a position to consume and they will demand these foreign products, whose producers will then be able to buy what they need from us. Of course, if a particular nation is so down and out that it cannot procure necessary raw materials or plant through the ordinary channels of credit, we ought, in co-operation with other nations or otherwise, to afford special assistance towards its recovery, but this must be secondary to the supply of the most imperative needs of life for our own people.

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Press and platform have been pouring forth suggestions on the crisis, most of which vary between the hopelessly futile and the thoroughly sinister. But the most amazing proposal we have yet heard of has been published by the "'Manchester Guardian' Commercial Supplement." It points to the slackness in the machine-tool trade and complains that the clearance sales of the Disposals Board are intensifying this. It then declares, nakedly and unashamedly, "The general opinion seems to be that the wiser policy of the Government would be to scrap the lot and reduce the dole payments by creating more employment." Why not, while we are about it, bomb Manchester and London to pieces with a thousand aeroplanes, blow up the Vyrnwy Dam with high explosive, and scuttle a few of the biggest liners across the Mersey Bar? There is not the slightest difference in principle, and, if we are to go in for deliberate sabotage in order to "make work," we may as well do the thing thoroughly. But it is a strange idea, when the problem can be summed up in the one word "poverty," to think to cure this by making ourselves still poorer. Possibly the people who wrote this sort of thing have become so wedded to the Great Lie that they wish to take practical steps towards turning it into a truth. They cannot bear the sight of the splendid instruments of production which have made us (despite the factitious poverty in which we obstinately choose to live) a far richer nation potentially than before the war; away with such hateful things from the earth! And yet, if one once accepts the presupposition that "employment" is an end in itself and the supreme need, the rest is logical enough.

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However, the Labour people themselves are coming out of the current discussions none too creditably. The Government having at any rate got to the foot of the right mountain, however ill-traced its proposed route to the summit, Mr. Jowett does his best to head the expedition off to an assault on a menacing molehill. He was quite right to protest against facilitating still further the exactions of financiers, but he should have pointed out that the root-evil lies in conceding to capitalists the function of price-fixing and that, if the credit-issue is tackled, it ought to be precisely with a

view to depriving them of this power. Instead of that, he seems in effect to say, "Credit be hanged!" and wants to switch the whole discussion back into the reduction of costs by cutting down rents, profits and interest. We are tired of pointing out that, however low we succeed in making costs, the problem will remain, unless we adopt a radically new relation of price to cost. The "Times" was naturally not slow to retort on Mr. Jowett the paragraph as to "the national credit" in the Labour manifesto. This is unexceptionable as far as its wording goes. But it needs an authoritative explanation in the right sense. In the absence of this, the "Times" is justified in interpreting it as identical, in both objects and means, with the Government scheme, and can thus reduce the difference between the two parties to a question of State trading versus private trading. Even in principle we greatly prefer the latter; but in any case, to meet a pressing emergency, we must obviously rely on the normal and established machinery of industry. Even a convinced Collectivist must recognise that the needs of the unemployed cannot wait till we have threshed out all the thorny problems of nationalisation. Mr. Duncan Carmichael seems to have overlooked this little difficulty when he declared that "complete State control or nationalisation is the only method of removing the present evil." This is a pity, as in many respects he talked very good sense. He severely criticised the Labour manifesto for its insistence on "credits for other nations instead of credits for our own people." He insisted that, "What we need is the restoration of the home exchanges." We are glad to see that, unlike most Labour leaders, he so strongly enforces our main point; we only wish he had read the subject with sufficient diligence to grasp the only practicable method of achieving the goal of his desire.

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Mr. Norman Angell has been adding to the confusion of tongues by inventing an eccentric "Economy" stunt of his own. He wants the Government to "stop expenditure on luxuries, forbid racing, limit petrol, and cut down in 50 and one ways," in other words, he wants us all to "consume less." This is just the most fatal thing we could possibly do. Production can only be stimulated by our all spending as freely as such purchasing power as we are lucky enough to possess will enable us. Mr. Angell, however, clamours for production at all costs without troubling himself as to how the product is going to get consumed. Apparently his idea is that the Government shall itself initiate and organise production on a grand scale—the more the merrier. He seems to be aware that only a fraction of the output could be bought up with the wages so issued. The Government might have "to pile up things which our own people did not need" (that is, could not effectively demand). It would then create credits to enable the foreigner to buy these; not a word about credits for our own consumers! He lays great stress on "improving the productivity of the country." We are all in favour of improving to the utmost our national estate; but this is not, at the moment, the urgent matter. Our productivity is quite good enough as it is. What is wanted is to make full use of this with a view to actually delivering the goods to those who need them. And that is simply and solely a matter of endowing our people with purchasing power. Mr. Angell indeed himself insists that in the question "are involved the proper adjustment of consumption to production, which involves, of course, the problems of credit, banking, currency, inflation." He is getting warm; but, like so many Labour politicians, he remains so near and yet so far.

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A squalid morass in which we are miserably weltering—that is our politicians' and financiers' fulfilment of the promises of a "new England," "fit for heroes," of which we heard so much less than three years ago. Does the ordinary reader of the "Times" remember the things he heard all round him, and which he was probably saying himself, during the war? It was a commonplace of conversation among the comfortable classes that "things will never be the same again," "the workers will never go back to the old conditions." Never again, everyone was vowing, should discharged soldiers precariously beg their bread, or be driven to the workhouse, as after every previous war. Now the "heroes" are tramping the streets by thousands in search of work, and Guardians are prohibited by a Government Department from granting them full subsistence. Bishops, when the great world expected it of them, gushed over "the lads from Hoxton," and declared it unthinkable that they should be allowed to return to the same Hoxton with its slums and squalor. A totally new environment was, at any cost of effort and sacrifice, to be prepared for them. Now the word has gone forth from high quarters that we "cannot afford" to abolish slums or to provide a liberal education; and the same bishops are preserving an impenetrable silence on industrial questions, and throwing their energies into such safe matters as temperance. Finally, the Prime Minister himself exhorted Labour to "be audacious," to "get a quite new world." Since then he has been fighting every effort of the workers to follow his advice. It is true that Labour, through the self-satisfaction and lack of imagination of its leaders, took a fatally wrong line; it pursued a producer policy in fighting what is essentially a consumer grievance, and thus gratuitously alienated middle-class opinion. But it was the business of the statesmen to give a lead in breaking out from the vicious circle. The industrial unrest was from the first the result of their obviously not intending any radical reconstruction. And the contests of the last year have been purely defensive against an organised effort to force the whole working class below, and in many cases far below, the 1914 standard. Yet Mr. Churchill at Dundee the other day had the insolence to declare that Labour unrest, and particularly that of the last year, was a main cause of the Government's failure to carry out its promises of reconstruction. Even if the actual sequence of events did not plainly refute him, the fact remains that, had there been no interruptions from strikes, the Government could not have accomplished anything worth speaking of; for it definitely did not intend any radical new departure in policy, and the orthodox financial system had got to the end of its tether.

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The position is so amazing as almost to make one despair of either the intelligence or the goodwill of mankind. Here are we, the nation that (with the exception perhaps of America) have come best out of the war. We are equipped with far more numerous and efficient engines of production than in 1914, and even at that date our productive powers had been multiplied many times over during the preceding fifty years. Everywhere at the present moment we see, at one and the same time, unused land, plant, and materials, unemployed workers, and people in dire need of the possible products. The three lie apart, helpless, at three corners, as it were, of the social field—a tragic Triangle of Impotence. The problem is only to bring the three together, to join up the sides of the triangle. Nothing could at bottom be simpler. All the necessary factors are given. Some will say indeed, that "money" or "capital" is needed in addition. But the only capital that seriously matters is the *real* capital, the instruments of production. Money capital is nothing but credit; if one has the *real* credit (the power to deliver the goods), as ex hypothesi we have, financial credit is merely a convenient means of visualising this, and its provision is only a question of a machinery of currency. We are not, we would explain, advocating any State or other kind of collective organisation of the workers

on forms of production determined by a central authority. All such methods are at best clumsy and artificial, and they involve all kinds of highly undesirable reactions. The natural play of demand can be relied on to set in operation the natural and normal channels of production, if only *real* demand can be made economically effective. This is simply a matter of the proper organisation of credit; it is the business of the credit system to see that all real demand can satisfy itself, so far as it is technically possible to produce the goods demanded. There is at present a perfectly definite hold-up in the machinery of credit; sweep the channels clear, and credit, that atmosphere of reasonable and confident expectation and mutual reliance which is the breath of life to every society, will dispel the present fogs and diffuse health and vigour to all.

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At this crisis, the need for a genuine National Inquest, of the most public kind, into the whole matter is an urgent necessity. We have already more than once advocated a fresh inquiry into the questions of currency and credit. This should now be given the widest possible scope and connected in the closest way with the whole problem of unemployment. We notice that Mr. Churchill, in his Dundee speech, pleaded for an international conference on the subject of foreign exchanges, as even more urgent than one on disarmament. If such an assembly is to be held, it would be well that we should first have thoroughly threshed out within our own nation the kind of financial policy which we wish to urge at Washington or Paris, or wherever the venue may be. Such an inquiry as we are urging would incidentally serve this purpose, while devoting itself primarily to seeking a way out of the appalling impasse in our internal affairs. We ask, therefore, for the immediate appointment of a Royal Commission. But two conditions are essential. In the first place, the composition of the Commission must be genuinely representative of all the interests concerned. And, secondly, it must take all its evidence in as open and public a manner as did the Sankey Commission. It must be a truly national body sitting and investigating in the full light of day under the eyes of the whole nation. In that case, even if the findings were not at all to our liking, we should have no fear as to the total effect of the inquiry on the public mind. On these two conditions we are prepared to give such a Commission our heartiest support, and to render it any assistance in our power.

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Mr. Stephen Leacock deserves the gratitude of us all for his contributions to the gaiety of nations. Unfortunately, annexed to the Jekyll of Mr. Leacock, the inimitable humorist, is the more Hyde-like figure of the Professor of Political Economy at McGill University. The latter has been expressing the terrible opinion that the "one course open for salvation is the restoration of the gold standard as we had it before the war." In connection with this, he betrayed the curious facility of the typical economist for denying facts which do not square with his theory. He asserted that "the apparent advantage" of the depreciated mark was merely "the outward sign and symbol" of the low standard of living of the German workman. "No matter what the mark might be worth, this cheaper production must give the advantage in trade, and without this the depreciated mark could not give any possible advantage." The simple fact is that, for a considerable time, the mark had not depreciated, relatively to commodities in Germany, nearly so much as in regard to foreign exchange. A subsistence wage in Germany was one on the exchange-equivalent of which the same worker could not have subsisted at all in this country. Even if the German workers had insisted on the same standard of living as the English, the labour cost of production in Germany, reckoned in our money, would still have been considerably less than in this country.

World Affairs.

THE fact that the world-situation of to-day is capable of definition and that humanity can be viewed as a whole is the proof of the singleness and indivisibility of the human problem of human destiny to-day. The world is one at least in travail in the universal spasm and suspense. For the breath and rhythm of the world's psyche and of the world's body and instrumentality are suspended and convulsed. This suspense is ubiquitous and painful; and the world is shaking in its every part. What is the instrumentality and the material cause of this involuntary but enforced unity of the world in this high moment? For our Æon is a pinnacle, a towering mark of the evolutionary ebb and flow of the divine comedy of the Anthropos and Geon. Infinite and boundless is the breath of Duration. History is going on, the history supernal of the self-expression of Godhead in the second hypostasis of God. Time or reason or consciousness is this second modality of the one Pleroma. God is Pleroma and the meaning absolute, the value absolute of Deity. Of these things everlasting we deem it necessary to speak. East is overwhelming West to-day and femininity is surmounting Christ and manliness to-day. The pre-Aryan block of humanity, the races embodying the unconscious of the Anthropos—this block, with its immense and cosmic power and inspiration, is rising and becoming conscious and fully born. Asia and Africa are once more preparing to push the world into a new Æon if not to lead it into it. The providential perfection and pan-humanness of the East consists in the fathomless knowledge of Duration of the eternal and transcendental process of things.

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But the gnosis of Eckhart and Hegel, of the Athanasian statement and of Solovyov's synthesis—these revelations pleromic and surpassing are as much human and as much divine as the apocalypses of Tao, of Parabrahm and of Nirvana; as much as the apocalypses of Zervan Akarne, of Osiris resurrected and of Dionysos reconstituted. In truth, they are more divine. For the Logoic miracle and revelation, the incarnation historic of Adam Kadmon, of Universal Man, is a more pleromic miracle than the doctrines of the youthful and ancestral humanities of the East. The organisation and organism of the world, the order and the self-realisation of Geon and of its ruler, of the human race as a whole—this ideal and this historic purpose, the incarnation of Sophia of the Eternal on earth, is a new and yet higher cognisance and self-attainment of man. And what is the cause and the necessity of the powerful Eastern push in this era? The over-reaching of the Western function and the completion of the Western purpose. Machinery was this purpose. Mechanism was this function. Europe and the West had to create reason and the logical and Logoic aspect of things. Individualism is the Logoic aspect of the human life. Materialism is the logical aspect of the universe. The East is invading the world and imperilling the balance of all things western because Europa and the Western hemisphere have imposed machinery and engineering, the poor and ridiculous magic of the West, upon humanity. The Male has provoked the revolt of the Female in the West. Woman is an insurgent and a Prometheus in this era. The West as a whole has caused the insurrection of slaves and of the injured and humiliated. The East, therefore, is swelling mightily and terrible in its menace. The instrumental, material cause of the world's unity to-day, the fatal and providential, inevitable, awesome cause of human unrest and of the world's suffering, is the mechanisation of the world.

Reason and matter rule in this blind hour and because the West has conquered both the hemispheres and all humanness, because the Logoic hemisphere of the earth has penetrated both the body of the Geon and the spirit of the Anthropos, because it has essentially penetrated them, a change is happening and must happen in the human state. Both Russia and the immensity of Columbia lead mankind towards the superhuman state, towards a super-conscious and supralogical and glorious level of existence. The supra-conscious and spiritual world of Slavdom carries the human whole to-day and leads it in a clairvoyant and fanatical way towards the Superman's level. Russia and the spiritually enlightened world of Slavs gives birth to the super-human or Sophian soul, to a new and seraphic disposition of humanity. The birth of Humanity Universal itself and of the ecstatic guidance of life will be and is from the Slavonic race and from the holiest and radiating explosive Russia; from the continent of crisis and synthesis; for the Slavonic function in history is the embrace and the crucifixion, the synthesis and fulness of the East and the West, and the crucifixion and torture incumbent upon the heroism of impossibility, upon the intermediary between the East and the West.

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We have spoken of Friedrich Nietzsche and of the sublime work entitled "Siderische Geburt." Of the avataric character of Dostoevsky and of his æonian work we have not spoken until now. The truth concerning this Avatar is that the pan-human deed of Dostoevsky's announcement is the greatest event in human history since the deed of Jesus the Messiah and since the foundation of Universal Humanity by Him Who shall ever remain and now is and must have ever been the Universal Man. Dostoevsky, it is true, discharged his providential function in Universal humanity by the inferno of his illness; Saul, however, the founder of historic Christianity discharged his own function and greatness with the same wrath of God. Epilepsy is the symbol of Russia and the abyss and womb of Dostoevsky's ever-living strength. In darkness and in martyrdom, in the curse of the Father and in His grace Russia is rooted. From his descent into hell and from his complete understanding of the satanic and of the divine soul of man, Dostoevsky's authority is derived. What is the message of this Ezekiel of martyrdom and love and of H. P. Blavatsky of universality and understanding? Simply this: Salvation and the perfection of men is ecstasy or the universal consciousness. Superman is the goal of evolution and of history. Only in pan-human consciousness, only in Universal Humanity can a man become a Superman.

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The human race is the meaning of the earth and Universal Humanity is the divine and organic, spiritual, and proper order of the life of the whole human realm. Universal Humanity is the organic order of the world. It is the purpose of history. For the Eternal is. The Holy Trinity is. God is. Universal Self-consciousness is. The Soul and her divinity, God and His humanness do exist. Life is the fulness and is the everlasting value. Holiness is. Christ is. Freedom and omnipotentiality do exist. Holiness and purpose do exist. Creation and human species have a meaning and purpose. It has become necessary to speak and to affirm what is primordial and obvious in the infuriated and mad hemisphere, in the frenzied and anti-human hemisphere of the West. The West has become anti-human and anti-functional in the world. The immanentist and personalist West, the hemisphere of the Logoic religion and of individualist incarnation has not only completed its divine purpose but has overreached it. Reaction must follow. The Sophian or collectivist incarnation and verification is the need of the world. Asia must be perturbed and must show that the unconsciousness of the world can destroy its consciousness. Slavdom is in the world in order to reconcile the East and to re-establish the West, to inaugurate the synthesis of history and to give a soul and humanness proper to America's synthetic function. For America is lifting the world up into a physical pan-humanity and into an existence never experienced before.

M. M. COSMOI.

On Foreign Affairs.

By Hilaire Belloc.

IV.

IF you turn to the Greek imbroglio, you have exactly the same hopeless lack of co-ordination between direct British interests and the policy, or lack of policy, apparent. The few Continental critics who still believe that our foreign affairs are conducted under the old, highly intelligent and thought-out system which made them the best and the most continuous policy in Europe, ascribe to our support of the Greek expansion all manner of far-reaching and subtle designs. They say we are creating a sort of Greek Portugal, a dependent maritime State which will be under our domination and even fight our battles for us as Portugal could never do. One or two go so far as to imagine that part of this deep-laid plot is the handing over of Constantinople to the Greeks in trust, as it were, for ourselves. They may ease their minds. There is nothing deep or subtle, or even coherent, in the whole affair. It is a mere scutter and welter.

The Greeks, indeed, know exactly what they are at. They are acting for the greater advantage of their race; they desire to make their country as strong as possible, to enlarge the Greek State and enfranchise the Greek race in the Levant. They have behind them the vast wealth of Zaharoff and his consistent patriotism, and their scheme and its objects are those of people who are considering the good of their own country. But Britain does not come into this anywhere; our politicians merely bow to the foreign millionaire and let England slide.

With an immediate preponderant interest in the goodwill of the vast Mahomedan world, much the greater part of which is directly, or indirectly, connected with our power, we allow the Greek, whom the Mahomedan hates, distrusts and fears, to get the upper hand; and as for the future, those who for our sins are conducting, or are failing to conduct, foreign policy, shut their eyes to it. To-morrow, no doubt, we shall have a sudden change of front, and as much energy expended in trying to restrain Greek effort as has already been expended in supporting it. No one will be able to tell you then, any more than they can tell you now, what the direct object of the new policy may be.

Even where the most obviously vital interests are involved—interests so vital that every schoolboy appreciates them—there is the same incoherence. To remain not merely at peace with, but supported by, the United States in our international position is a matter of life and death; everybody appreciates that, and appreciates it to nearly its full value. It is true there is no corresponding desire or necessity on the *other* side; but there is both the necessity and the desire on *our* side to maintain that connection; yet, if you will follow the tortuous relations of the last few years with the United States, you will despair of reducing them to any formula which makes sense.

During the war purely domestic considerations arising from the Marconi business compelled the politicians to grant leave of absence from the Bench to a colleague of theirs, a Judge who ought never to have been made a Judge, for he was a tainted man and his position on the Bench was an anomaly: Marconi Isaacs. He was naturally uncomfortable on the Bench so he was made an Ambassador, *and of all places in the world*

an Ambassador to Washington! An Ambassador to the country in which the Marconi ramp had been worked, and where the whole filthy scandal had been analysed, exposed and denounced in detail to millions! The country of those unhappy shareholders at whose expense the scandal had been worked and who had been the chief victims of it! Our public was, of course told nothing of public opinion in the United States upon so astonishing an Envoy.

Again, in the clash between Japanese and American interests, we stood bewildered; we still so stand: because an Ambassador of such a sort warped all our relations—and has left a trail of suspicion and contempt in the American mind which we cannot be rid of. On his return—in too great haste—it was urgent to get him off the Bench: it was still urgent, very urgent, for it was impossible for a man with his record to sit there. It was first proposed to send him to Paris. That insanity was happily nipped in the bud. Failing Paris, the Viceroyalty of India was thought good enough. This absolutely vital appointment was decided on—not from general considerations of national policy, but from personal considerations of shameful cowardice acting upon a little, obscure, and very nasty world of professional politicians.

Now I say that all this incoherence is of such gravity that everyone who appreciates the vast perils it has created, and already perceives the beginnings of disasters which it cannot but produce, must do his best to find a remedy.

If we cannot prevent the machine running away downhill, at any rate we may try to devise some brake, however slight, upon the pace of the rush to the brink. It is probably already too late, and of course, if we are, as some think, over the edge of the precipice, it is manifestly too late. Still, it is the business of everyone to do something, however gloomy he may be as to the prospects of success.

Some little time ago an effort would have been made at the centre. Since the origin of the whole affair lies in the breakdown of the House of Commons (which had been for two centuries and more the one great national organ of government) and the appearance of disreputable professional politicians in the place of statesmen, the apparent remedy was to cure the disease at the core—to restore the House of Commons to its old dignity, and to attempt the creation of a Government organism comparable to that which England enjoyed throughout the Victorian period.

We ought, it would seem, to attempt such a restoration, because, were it to succeed, the old co-ordination of functions in the State would also be restored. Above all the Foreign Office, to the traditions and trained science to which we owe nearly all our great positions abroad, would come back to its own, and would conduct affairs which ought never to have been taken from its purview, or allowed to fall into the hands of incompetent outsiders.

That, I say, is the obvious policy in theory. Unfortunately in practice it is impossible. The disease has gone too far. There is no remedying the political organism at home. Sooner or later it must be replaced. If the crash comes with sufficient rapidity, replaced it will be at once, and sharply, by some other organ of government, which must in the necessity of things be monarchical. If, as is more probable, the collapse goes on by gradual degrees, so that we become accustomed to it, then there will be a progressive decline. At any rate, the sanification of Westminster is impossible. That organism is far gone in death. What then can we do?

I suggest that there is one thing we can do by way of experiment. The experiment is, of course, most uncertain; the odds against its success are heavy; but still I think the experiment should be tried. That experiment is the founding of an educating and informing *Press*. (*To be continued.*)

Our Generation.

THE paralysis of thought and feeling in this country has reached a stage at which everything that should quicken it to action seems to have a contrary effect, and to make the general helplessness more helpless. The question of unemployment—the question of starvation—knocks more and more menacingly at the door of our mind and our heart; but the more loudly it knocks the less we attempt to answer it, and it will soon have become one of those customary noises without which no civilised man can sleep soundly. Picturesque demonstrations have been made at Poplar and other places; but these, well-meaning and necessary as they are, have had the wrong effect: they have drawn public attention to the demonstrators and not to the unemployed; they have given one more opportunity for banal wonder to the British public. That something will be done at last (when it is too late), we have no doubt; but it is a matter no longer for indignation but for grief that now, when there is still time, still barely time, to avoid the avoidable, slow misery of millions, the nation should neither see, nor feel, think, nor act. There is of course a reason—an unconscious reason—in this madness. There *is* wisdom of a kind in ignoring nationally the national plight, in living as if all were right with the world, or with England, or, failing that, with London, or, failing that, with Brixton, or, failing that, with oneself. It is a method of meeting the evil; and there have been people in all ages who have had much to say for it. But none of us who knows anything at all of modern psychology can deceive ourselves any longer about it; it is the passive, slavish, sub-human way of meeting the problem, and it is the expression of an extreme spiritual poverty. We have nothing—not even a thought—to give to the necessity of our time; and what vitality we have we clasp to us, living in ourselves, as if the world did not exist. England has never been noted for its enthusiasm for ideas, least of all for new ideas; but its disregard of a practical solution to a practical problem demands an explanation more solid than the citation of England's traditional carelessness about ideas. The public—I mean the thinking public—are taking an insufficient interest in the Douglas-NEW AGE Scheme at present, simply because they, too, immersed in theories of society instead of in society, are hiding from themselves the urgency and the intensity of the nation's misery. The difficulty of getting a remedy for the disease of society adopted to-day is tremendous and easily understood. Before people will think seriously of the remedy they must first acknowledge that a remedy is needed; and against the acknowledgment of this they fight with unconscious desperation. It is more bearable for them to be miserable than to own that they are miserable, and to set about saving themselves. Therefore all remedies are to them still "theoretical"; a matter for intellectual gossip, not a matter of life and death. Anything, even a qualified approval of the remedy, rather than acknowledge that the hour of need is come, and that the remedy must be immediately applied. It takes courage, of course, to screw oneself up, whether one is a nation or an individual, to face a disagreeable necessity; but courage is a quality which no one has denied the English. Meantime it is a question whether England is only asleep or whether she desires to remain asleep.

The spiritual poverty, the failure in realisation, of our time is illustrated once more in the discussion on "The New Woman" which has been proceeding recently in the "Daily Telegraph." Various women writers of note have taken part in it, and their attitude is expressed best, perhaps, in an article by Mrs. Beatrice Kean Seymour. The article is thoughtful, serious, sensible—a score of sober epithets might be

bestowed on it; but in reading it one is conscious of something very important that has been left out, and the lack of which makes Mrs. Seymour's truest observations false. It is an attitude which falsifies these observations, and that attitude is false because it is narrow. It appears to us that Mrs. Seymour's philosophy of feminism is wrong because she considers woman merely as woman, without regard to existence, to the universe, to the world of reality which we know by intuition and in which we live and move and have our being. For instance she says that "The woman who has really a 'new' outlook upon life has learned at least one thing very thoroughly. She has learned that women are essentially the outcome of their training, and that if you teach a girl to regard marriage as the raison d'être of feminine existence it is scarcely to be wondered at that she should bend all her energies to attracting men. Neither (since it is an exhausting game) can you expect her to have much time for the apparently quite superfluous occupation of mind-cultivation. The really new woman has her eyes less on some problematical husband than on the achieving of her own career, the building up of her independence and self-respect—two qualities not over-appreciated by the critics who call her hard and 'unwomanly.' . . . . To me nothing is clearer than that the efforts the modern girl has so far made towards this achieving of independence have already strengthened her character and given her a wider view of life than she could ever have obtained through the tedious allurement of men." So this is all that is in feminism! "If you teach a girl to regard marriage as the raison d'être of feminine existence it is scarcely to be wondered at that she should bend all her energies to attracting men." But whether they are trained to it or not women will always "attract" men, and be attracted by them, and that attraction is not something small and mean, something merely physical, it is one of the chief realities in living experience, and it has a spiritual significance (for we are not mere animals), which is not to be lightly spoken of. The word "attraction," itself as sordid as it is common nowadays, falsifies the whole question. The implication one makes when one uses it is that Love is either a thing by exploiting which one gains an advantage for oneself from the opposite sex, or else that it is a mere expedient for securing the propagation of the species. This has actually been believed, actually is believed, in our time; and the incredible thing is that people should give it an intellectual sanction. For either it is wrong, or everything that artists and religious thinkers have said about love is untrue. The consequence of a belief of this kind is, of course, a disgust with love, and a secession to those forms of activity from which love can be most completely banished: to "the achieving of a woman's own career, the building up of her independence and self-respect." Certainly men, and especially at the present time, have to realise that woman is a spiritual being, who must have her human "independence and self-respect": humanity is hardly humanity where this is not recognised. But the "independence and self-respect" which woman will attain by denying love will be barren because it is fragmentary. Men and women must live together in the world; there is not therefore a problem of man and another problem of woman, but this one problem which must be solved by both on terms which acknowledge the dignity of humanity and of the spirit. Our need is such that partial truths are no longer of use to us. The theory that love is only an expedient for maintaining the species is a partial truth, that is a lie; and the contrary theory that women must eschew love and attain a barren "independence" is also a partial truth, a lie. Love is a condition not merely of procreation but of the highest human life. It is amazing that truisms such as these need still to be said.

EDWARD MOORE.

The New Russia.

By Huntly Carter.

II.

BOTH in and out of Soviet Russia the friends of The Movement declare that the great miracle has happened. A vast land of 150,000,000 barbarians has been modernised and humanised within three years. And Lenin is the man who has done this. And yet that great master of modern revolution behaves as though very little has happened, and even sighs in his latest mood for fresh worlds to conquer. He behaves in fact as though Russia is merely back to scratch. A great deal, if not the whole, of the mechanism which the so called advanced political, industrial and commercial economics of Western Europe superimposed upon the primitive economics of Russia has been swept away. These higher economic formations which, as Trotsky plainly sees, were placed upon the elementary yet advanced economic process with a view to concealing and impeding it are to make way for something more worthy and constructive. It is to take the form of the electrification of Russia. The new Electric Russia is really Lenin's dream. Within ten years Russia is to be completely regenerated, and the mass of peasants who form 95 per cent. of its population are to be industrialised by electricity.

I have before me another propaganda poster taken from Soviet Russia. Like the one already described, it tells its tale very effectively. In the centre is a blue motor-power station. Copper cables convey light and power from this electric installation to five great centres of activity which are pictured separately. In one corner the current is harnessed to the farm, in another to the colliery, in another to the railroad, in another to the agricultural implement with which a gigantic peasant is irrigating his broad land, and above it is harnessed to the service of the Utopianised village. In the latter picture tall arc lamps, similar to those that set the Place de la Concorde ablaze nowadays, look down upon modest wooden shacks from whose windows comes a glow of light that tells of the electric life within. Of course, this poster is no more true than the one of Trotsky's soldier. It is a symbol and a prophecy. As the soldier poster shows a fertile land to be won by force of arms, so this tells of the great source of natural energy to be extracted from the sun, the soil and the sea. The poster is intended to awaken desire for this new public servant, and it serves the purpose of carrying the mind forward ten or twenty years. Anyone who likes can picture Russia unbound and rebound by Lenin's motor. Towns and villages are liberated to the pleasures and pursuit of such rural refinements as electricity can confer. The return to the land is accelerated by the lure of the attractive village and the heightened pleasure of rural occupation. Likewise the exodus to the town is arrested. And all parts of Russia are brought together and united by electric communications. The results of such a development seem self-evident. One would think that such a liberation to more natural occupation must lead inevitably to the discovery of energy value laws and their conscious application to actual life.

But the poster is also a symbol. It symbolises Lenin's attitude towards Marxism and the peasants. He has accepted the Marxian theory of scientific socialism which promises the liberation of the world alone through the working classes. He is anxious to liberate Russia and his means are the development of technique which shall take its highest form in a single automatic mechanism which secures the raw materials out of the womb of nature and throws them at the feet of man in the form of finished articles of consumption. He is anxious to liberate the world and his Russian stock-in-trade of human implements consists of three kinds (a) the professed and raw Marxians, (b) the populists, (c)

the peasants. These are the resources of Soviet Russia. For the populists he has no use. They are negligible. The peasants in their raw state are of no immediate use to him. But they are far too numerous (95 per cent. of the population) to be neglected. Either they must be led to assimilate his ideas or they will devour him. He must educate and unite them, and make them something like the instrument of liberation designed by scientific socialism. He must, in short, achieve by hook or by crook the proletarisation of the peasant masses. And some of us know how he is going to set to work. As a matter of fact Lenin's great scheme for the electrification of Russia is when all is said and done a subtle scheme for the proletarisation of the 95 per cent. of peasants.

This scheme is never absent from Lenin's thoughts. It is his fixed idea. He hardly ever speaks in public without referring to it. His latest utterance on the subject is contained in his pronouncement on the Agricultural Tax. It has little or no actuality as yet. I have searched high and low for evidences of its actual existence. But beyond the great wireless station at Moscow, electric station at Schaturskaya, a turbine in the water-mill of a village or two, the establishment of equally rudimentary installations at outlying districts, signs of a determined search for water-power, and facts on the discovery of a service of possible power in Lake Ladoga, about 60 or 100 versts east of St. Petersburg, nothing has rewarded my search. I have discussed the scheme in all sorts of places with all sorts and conditions of men, with no result except that of obtaining a general opinion that the undertaking is full of immense difficulties, owing to the size of Russia, its primitive condition as opposed to the advanced conditions presupposed by a modern scheme of electrification. Then there are the great distances between towns, the lack of proper fuel, water-power and so on. Soviet Russia has lost extensive coal-fields to Poland, it has no water-power unless rivers and lakes can be utilised. There may be water-power in the Urals, in which case installations could be established to throw electrical current 1,500 miles either side, to St. Petersburg or to Siberia. This, however, would be a very costly undertaking. Finally, it has big peat fields, but peat is a very difficult medium. The subject of the difficulty surrounding liquid and solid fuel in Russia of to-day would fill a book.

Moreover, assuming, for the sake of argument, that the scheme is practical and Lenin is fully justified in believing that ten years and a new generation of young Russians will see it in full operation, let us ask what part will it play in the production and consumption of real as opposed to mechanical energy, and which instruments of credit it will produce—those of energy or money credit. Lenin proposes to regenerate Russia by setting up central power-stations in the great peat fields so as to use the peat on the spot for the purpose of the complete electrification of railways, industry and agriculture. Each station will circulate currents of mechanical energy, and all will unite to cover Russia with a network of industrial, commercial and social linkages so that not only will the remotest parts of Russia be bound together and made aware of each other's hourly life, but there will be a continual, immediate and indispensable flow and interchange of ideas, raw materials and goods. The proposal has both a good and a bad side. There is no doubt that under modern conditions of life the moderate use of mechanical energy and its implements has useful results. Currents of mechanical energy applied to the village serves to liberate human enerby. Natural expenditure of electricity reduces mechanical labour and sets the users free to an increased utilisation of their own vital energy, and free to a great extent to their own initiation and individual genius. And there is no doubt that the inherent wisdom of the peasant (Lenin himself has lately declared that the peasant is not a fool) will seize upon the immense importance of these currents of mechanical energy to the life not only of each local community, but to all communities in common. He will recognise that the first aim and ultimate object of such currents are co-operation, not domination. Electricity is the public servant of the new age, not the master. Its true function is to enable the user to see and realise that life is wealth and wealth is life. In the hands of the peasant, rightly used, it would lead to an increased and reasonable production of consumable goods. He could dig his plot of ground, sow his seeds, prepare his food, build a hut, furnish it, make clothes, means of transport, and instruments of recreation with a conservation of expenditure of his own vital energy, much of which could thus be reserved for credit-goods, that is, goods in which he could bank his surplus energy. Such credit goods would be assets or dividends derived from his Capital investment of real energy in the means of production. Working outward with his currents of mechanical energy, in this way, he would attain, if necessary, a union of money and life economy. The wealth which, with the aid of the magic currents he had extracted from field and garden, from workshop and mill, would, minus his own consumption, and the consumption set up by exchange, be handed over to the local Co-Operative Society and Credit Association and thus used through these and other approved channels to improve environment, and education, individual and social life. In short, mechanical energy rightly applied would enable the peasant to make his own goods, deliver to himself as much as he needs for his own consumption, and to place the remainder to his own credit by a system of exchange of commodities to each item of which is attached a correspondent credit. As his Credit Association would be linked with similar Credit Associations throughout the nation his own real credit would be nation-wide. So electrification would promote energy credit.

The bad side of the proposal would appear in an unnatural expenditure of mechanical energy by which the peasant would be turned into an industrial worker fettered with the restrictions of serf-workmen in capitalistic or State-owned factories. This seems to be the implication of the statement that Lenin is for restoring Russian industry by means of electrical power, that is, he seeks to change the peasant to an industrial worker. His aim is said to be to break down individualist agriculture and the individualist in the peasant. The use of electrically driven machinery in the village and the field would put a swift end to primitive methods of farming and lead to the adoption of big-scale co-operative or communal farming. Mr. Brailsford has put the matter in these words: "The power of Lenin as a statesman lies in this, that he understands the possibility of transforming men's minds by changing their outward conditions. With the machines he can recruit his teams; from his teams he can make Communists." In short, give Lenin machines and he will proletarianise over 100,000,000 peasants. If this is true one feels sorry for Russia—and for Lenin. The pre-war civilisation of Russia was far preferable to the electric civilisation as interpreted by Mr. Brailsford. But I think Lenin has sufficient wisdom to know that he cannot regenerate Russia by starting with conditions alone, whatever Marx may tell him to the contrary. His own common sense must tell him that a natural inclination in human beings towards change must come first. He must know as well as anybody that the Russian peasant is passionately attached to the soil and the village, and expresses himself naturally in village industries, and no amount of electric machinery will change his mind to that of an industrial worker. To-day in Soviet Russia the proletariat are returning to the villages to work on the land, and thus breaking all ties with the factory. This is surely proof that the peasant will out even in the best-regulated industrial community.

Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

IN writing of Mr. Norman McKinnel's production of "The Love-Thief" at the Comedy, "D. L. M." of the "Nation" raised the question: "Can the tragedy of violence and blood-letting survive much longer in the modern theatre?" He quoted Anatole France and "A. B. W.," two writers who, both by age and temperament, are incapable of giving an affirmative answer to the question. But the experience of the war and what we know of psycho-analysis suggests that the tragedy of violence *ought* to survive for the Aristotelian purpose of katharsis. Mr. Shaw, in one of his prefaces, I think, confessed that there were about a dozen people whom he would like to murder; and a man would be fitter for Heaven than for earth if he did not want to have his knife in somebody. I never forget that Cain, the first murderer, was a vegetarian—like Mr. Shaw; and I have recently come across a reference to another vegetarian, Oswald, the English Jacobin, who during the French Revolution proposed that every suspected man should be put to death. Thomas Paine remarked quietly: "Oswald, you have lived so long without tasting flesh that you have now a most voracious appetite for blood." The "ape and tiger" do not die because we pretend to ignore them; and it seems better to indulge the tiger a little instead of letting him run amok with ferocity, and eat, say, one baby a day, as Napoleon was supposed to do, rather than have a holocaust of victims over a whole continent. In other words, it is better to express our primitive instincts in art than in reality. We ought to have tragedy for the good of our souls; and Schadenfreude is better on the stage than on the battlefield.

But although "D. L. M." apparently holds the opposite opinion, we are at one in our judgment of "The Love-Thief." "Sem Benelli's flamboyant Florentine tragedy never impresses us as real. It is picturesque, romantic, ingeniously conceited—what you will, but never actual," he says. It is perfectly true; the fault is to some extent in the play, but more in the choice of players. The sober pages of an historian like Villari contain more tragedy in a paragraph than Benelli puts into his whole play; indeed, the central situation of his play is a ludicrously impossible one in any age. No woman of normal mind could possibly mistake one man for another in the sexual embrace, no matter how dark the chamber was; if she could, Tarquin need not have stifled Lucrece and taken her by force. You might as well try to deceive a woman with her baby as with her lover; and when the men are of such different types as the gross, sensual bully Neri, and the cowardly, sensitive, poetic Giannetto Malespini, the impossible becomes the preposterous. Shakespeare was wiser when he made Iachimo steal Imogen's bracelet, and convince Posthumus by this sign that he had enjoyed Imogen. It never occurred to Shakespeare, who lived nearer the Medici period than Benelli did, that a simple substitution of men could successfully deceive a woman: Iachimo had only to deceive the husband with evidence. If art is not more real than history, it cannot "compensate" for it; and what does not purge the system poisons it.

The play fails; but so do the players. They seem to have no knowledge of emotional values, to be ignorant of the means of producing emotional effects. They talk about themselves, instead of being themselves; they masquerade, and do not act. Miss Cathleen Nesbitt, as Ginevra, the courtesan, is hopelessly miscast; a woman like Miss Edith Evans (whose Aquilina, the courtesan, in "Venice Preserved" will not soon be forgotten), or Miss Florence Buckton, could have made this part seem real. But Miss Nesbitt, even if she had any idea of what a courtesan was, or what Renaissance women were like, could not play it; she is modern to her finger-tips, intellectual, a person who tries to express passion from her brain instead of her solar plexus. That hard, toneless voice, with its sagging, melancholy cadence, those feeble, half-arm gestures that make her look as though she suffered from hysterical drop-wrist, are all suitable to the modern "rotter" she played in "The Grain of Mustard Seed," but mean nothing in this context. Ginevra might be "sick of men"; courtesans usually are; but she knew how to keep them in play—and Miss Nesbitt kept me puzzling why three men at least in the play were bothering about her. Of course, if Ginevra was so stupid as not to know which of three men (for the trick is repeated in the last act) was lying with her, Miss Nesbitt's theory of her has something to support it; but in that case she would have been the common property of the town, not the treasured possession of the enemy of the Medici.

When one thinks of what Renaissance artists were like (was not Michelangelo's nose broken, I think by a poet, in the garden of the Medici?), one finds it hard to accept Mr. Ernest Thesiger's reading. A physical coward in such a period would have to make a better show than this infantile person does; the very boys would push him into the gutter. His revenge on Neri by sleeping with Neri's mistress shows that he had the sexual passions of a man, but Mr. Thesiger's poet was sexless. One sees Giannetto as a rather gallant person with women, but crumpling up in the presence of a bravo, and mad with himself because he could not nerve himself to hit back and make a fight of it, win or lose. Mr. Thesiger's peevish bleatings were not in this picture; he was neither hot with humiliation, nor deadly cold with malice, he was just conceited with his wit like a boy who is too clever by half—and his schoolfellows would have amused themselves by taking a running kick at him. When one thinks even of Shelley's speechless rages at Sion House Academy and Eton, how he lost self-control and became dangerous when teased—but Mr. Thesiger knows nothing of "the passionate heart of the poet."

Mr. Norman McKinnel's Neri is in a different gallery. Here at least we got bull-necked ferocity, the blind, butting brutality that charges over every obstacle —until we saw it in action. Then Mr. McKinnel's fighting was purely symbolic; one thrust and parry with a pike, and he was arrested from behind by a couple of measly soldiers. One expected him to back to the wall, or lay about him in a circle with three men hanging to him; but in the West End all is done decently and in order. When his rage at being bound should have blared and bellowed, Mr. McKinnel became merely ironic—and I thought of Snug the joiner's apology to the ladies for his lion. It will not do; we must have blood-curdling tragedy, but it must not be played in the manner of Shakespeare's clowns. But Mr. McKinnel's acting of insanity was well conceived and executed.

[It may interest my readers to know that the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead, will have an autumn season. Plays by Ibsen, Hauptman, Eugene O'Neill, a group of French one-act plays, one or two Spanish plays, and some one-act plays by Lord Dunsany, will be produced. Miss Jean Cadell and Mrs. Tapping have joined the company; and Mr. Milton Rosmer and Miss Irene Rooke will appear in some of the plays. The first production is now in rehearsal; and those readers who are interested may watch the Press for advertisement of the date of opening.]

Readers and Writers.

LAST week my enthusiasm for "Moby Dick" carried me into rather deep waters—somewhat seldom frequented they are too. I found myself, in effect, throwing doubts upon the genius of Mr. Conrad, and, in a more wholesale fashion, indicting the generally accepted theory of the novel. I was conscious at the time of merely dabbling in my subjects, and two or three friendly reminders of my limitations encourage me to make a wider splash. In the first place I am asked to be more explicit on the score of Mr. Conrad's effeminacy. I do not mean, of course, that Mr. Conrad is effeminate in nature or in personality: he is probably far otherwise. But I do think that he has been compelled by the unconscious drift of culture to share in the common appeal to the feminine mind. As a definite example of what I mean I take the following description from "The Arrow of Gold," which happens to be at hand:

> She listened to me unreadable, unmoved, narrowed eyes, closed lips, slightly flushed face, as if carved six thousand years ago in order to fix for ever that something secret and obscure which is in all women. Not the gross immobility of a sphinx, proposing roadside riddles, but the finer immobility, almost sacred, of a fateful figure seated at the very source of the passions that have moved men from the dawn of ages.

Now, in quoting this passage I do not think I am surprising Mr. Conrad off his guard. I would even say that he "habitually indulges" in this kind of fancy. But does a passage like this express what we might with our grandfathers call true manliness: is it male: is it in any sense sane, balanced and rational? Is it not rather almost diabolically designed to appeal to the deepest vanity of the female sex? Mysterious . . . . obscure . . . . almost sacred—does not every woman like to paint her shallows in such colours? And that "fateful figure seated at the very source of the passions that have moved men from the dawn of ages"! Ah! even a woman, I imagine, would look obliquely at that bogey; a sensible man would merely grin. But does Mr. Conrad grin—up his sleeve? Is it all an elaborate blarney? I confess I would like to think so and I half believe it is. If it is not, Mr. Conrad should at any rate see the theoretic consequences of his own works. Does not he himself in his heart of hearts know that when he approaches the male epic, as in "Typhoon" and "Youth," he approaches—yes, even achieves—greatness. But when he panders to effeminacy he debases his genius to the uses of all that is enervate in the world.

* * *

There are rumours and records of a general questioning in Germany of the most primary assumptions of art and civilisation, and now I see that this process has reached the very subject that concerns us here. In a recent issue of the "Times" Literary Supplement there was a review of a new German book entitled "Die Theorie des Romans," By Dr. Georg Lukács. I hope some courageous publisher will be inspired by that review to publish an English translation of the work, but meanwhile let us content ourselves with what we can glean from hearsay. Dr. Lukács deduces by historical argument a general correlation between society and its literary expressions, and then, on the fair assumption that the novel is the literary form expressive of our modern civilisation, he concludes that as the resources of our civilisation are already exhausted, so the modern novel is an outworn form. Dr. Lukács expects a renewal of civilisation from Russia, and this renewal will bring with it a new and living method of self-expression. I am not at present to be beguiled into a discussion of that part of the theory which the "Times" reviewer connects with the philosophy of Herr Oswald Spengler: one might fill many pages arguing about the presumed exhaustion of European civilisation, and many more about the reality of the Russian renaissance. But I will permit myself to quote the following representations of Dr. Lukács' more particularised theory, because they bear directly on our present line of thought:

> "The Greek mind knew only answers, but no questions." The most characteristic literary form which gave expression to this state of mind was the epic; and when this state of mind began to alter, then the epic, as a vital artistic form, disappeared.
>
> "The novel is the epic of the world without God . . . . and the first great novel of world-literature, 'Don Quixote,' stands at the beginning of the age in which the God of Christendom begins to leave the world."
>
> The novel will succeed the nearer it approaches the form and spirit of the epic.
>
> It is not until we reach Dostoevsky that we find a delineation of "that new world, far removed from all struggle against the existing order, regarded as a reality standing by itself. . . . They were not novels that Dostoevsky wrote, and the creative mind which is visible in his works has nothing to do, negatively or positively, with European Romanticism of the nineteenth century and with the manifold, equally romantic reactions against it. He belongs to the new world."

All this is very pregnant, as they say, and I would draw particular attention to the last paragraph quoted. It carries us beyond "Moby Dick." It proclaims Dostoevsky a discoverer of new fields for epic endeavour. The novel of the future is seen as a confluence of the hitherto separate streams of the novel descriptive of psychological relationships and the novel descriptive of physical actions: it becomes an epic descriptive of the actions of the hero-mind in the world of psychological realities. Herman Melville had some glimmering of such a fiction and Dostoevsky almost achieved it—he failed only to develop a perfectly expressive instrument. But I am convinced the secret is here. The epic world is within us. We lack only our epic bards. And in this connection you will not now suggest, as one correspondent has done, the names of Rudyard Kipling and Stephen Crane. They are not of this new world of epic necessity, but of a very old world. Their kingdom was in external things.

* * *

I do not, however, mean to dismiss Stephen Crane and Mr. Kipling as of no particular avail. Of Mr. Kipling the neatest and most final word was written by Henry James—it is in a preface that James contributed to some early American edition of Kipling's Tales, and is to the effect that Kipling's genius is the genius of an artist in the smoking room. I cannot trace the exact context: it may not have been so bald as I have represented it; but as baldly represented it strikes me as exactly true. I have more reverence for Stephen Crane: he wrote beautifully, and his style has had considerable influence upon a writer like Mr. Conrad, for instance. And "The Red Badge of Courage" is nearly perfect fiction: it is a male epic, like "Moby Dick." It is also a psychological epic, and lacks only a metaphorical reality (being rather unconscious of the fundamental dualism of life) to make it worthy to be placed with "Moby Dick" as a precursor of the new novel.

HERBERT READ.

* * *

To the Editor of THE NEW AGE.

SIR,—In "Readers and Writers" of your issue of September 29 you seem to suggest that before the appearance of the Oxford Press edition of "Moby Dick" there was no cheap edition of this volume. We should like to remind you that we issued "Moby Dick" in Everyman's Library in the year 1907, and that although it went out of print for a short time during the war, it has been in stock for some considerable time. We also include in Everyman's Library editions of the same author's "Typee" and "Omoo" which were published in 1907 and 1908, respectively.

J. M. DENT AND SONS.

Views and Reviews.

GRAND GUIGNOL HISTORY—IV.

WHAT was the plan of Illuminism in the French Revolution? I have already given the six points of the programme; and Mrs. Webster* asks us to believe that the methods by which the programme was to be realised were in fact put into practice. It is unfortunate that, on the main issue, Mrs. Webster should have been anticipated; Stepniak's essays on "The Russian Stormcloud" (my copy was published in 1886) begins:

Shortly after the Winter Palace explosion I remember having seen in an English satirical paper the following caricature: Two Nihilists are meeting amidst heaps of ruins. "Is all blown up already?" asks one of them. "No," answers the other. "The globe remains firm still." "Well, let us blow up the globe then!" exclaims the first. This was a graphical representation of the general conception about the Nihilists just in the epoch when their name was in everybody's mouth.

The Nihilists, like the Bolsheviki, the Socialists, the Anarchists, the United Irishmen, et hoc genus omne, were Illuminati, according to Mrs. Webster; and the plan is the same throughout up to, and including, "Guild Socialism." We are told (p. 33) that "there may be some truth in the Père Deschamps' statement that 'the cry of "Constitution" has been in all countries the word of command of the Secret Societies,' that is to say, the rallying cry of revolution"; and we must therefore believe that Mr. G. D. H. Cole's constitution-building (in which he was as prolific as the Abbé Siéyès) and the Webbs' "Constitution For The Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain," only mask a desire to "walk willingly with my feet in blood and tears," as St. Just phrased it, to the final destruction of the globe itself. I find it hard to believe that Mr. Cole is quite so naughty as this; but if he is, I must leave Mrs. Webster to bring him to reason.

But my difficulty is to discover to whom the execution of the plan of Illuminism was committed during the French Revolution. To the Secret Societies? No! On p. 34, we are told:

So complete had the organisation of the Jacobin Clubs now become that during 1791 and 1792 all the masonic lodges of France were closed down and Philippe Egalité sent in his resignation as Grand Master. This was held advisable for several reasons: the Jacobins, once the masters of France, could not with safety tolerate the existence of any secret association that might be used as a cover for counter-revolutionary schemes; moreover, as the great plan of Illuminism was by this time in process of fulfilment, what further need was there for secrecy?

But Mrs. Webster has told us the need for secrecy:

"The Illuminati," Professor Renner had declared before the Bavarian Court of Inquiry, "fear nothing so much as being recognised under this name," and frightful punishment was attached to the betrayal of the secret (p. 37).

Moreover, Weishaupt had written (p. 25): "this revolution shall be the work of the secret societies, and that is one of our great mysteries": and the Jacobin Clubs were not secret societies.

Mrs. Webster cannot have it both ways; if the Jacobins suppressed the Illuminised masonic lodges, they could not have been Illuminati, or Illuminism could not have been that "occult force, terrible, unchanging, relentless, and wholly destructive, which constitutes the greatest menace that has ever confronted the human race," as she says in her preface. The Jacobins closed the Illuminised lodges, and so did Napoleon after the fall of Babeuf (p. 82); there is apparently no difficulty in extinguishing Illuminism. If people will put their "light under a bushel," the accumulation of carbon monoxide will stop combustion.

But if the Secret Societies did not carry out the great plan of Illuminism, because they were suppressed by the Jacobins, what about the great personalities? We have already seen that Mirabeau, "initiated into the highest mysteries of the order" by Mauvillon, had worked to preserve the Monarchy instead of abolishing it. What about Robespierre? "Was Robespierre then not an Illuminatus?" asks Mrs. Webster on p. 38:

He was certainly a Freemason, and Prince Kropotkine definitely states that he belonged to one of the lodges of the Illuminati founded by Weishaupt. [Mrs. Webster does not give the reference to Kropotkine.] But contemporaries declare that he had not been fully initiated and acted as the tool rather than as the agent of the conspiracy.

But just as Mirabeau, who had been fully initiated, supported the Monarchy instead of abolishing it, so Robespierre, instead of abolishing all religion, hated Atheism, vacated his seat when the "Goddess of Reason" was brought into the hall where he sat with the representatives of the nation, and induced the Convention to decree that the nation recognised God and the immortality of the soul, and instituted the Festival of the Deity. It is no use looking to Robespierre for Illumination, although Babeuf, himself an Illuminatus, first fought against him and later adopted his programme.

We have to believe that the Revolution was made by the Illuminati, but that "amongst all the revolutionary leaders one man alone stands out as a pure Illuminatus —the Prussian Baron, Anacharsis Clootz." How does Mrs. Webster know that he was an Illuminatus? Because he never said so; in conformity with the rules laid down by Weishaupt. But he declared himself "the personal enemy of Jesus Christ," who, we are told on p. 12, "was to be represented as the first author of Illuminism." He preached "the Universal Republic," in which, we are told on p. 36, "the doctrines of Weishaupt are expressed with absolute fidelity."

"One common interest! one mind! one Nation!" cries Anacharsis. "Do you wish," he asks again, "to exterminate all tyrants at a blow? Declare then authentically that sovereignty consists in the common patriotism and solidarity of the totality of men, of the one and only nation."

I should have thought that a pure Illuminatus would have prescribed a dose of that "tea to procure abortion," or, at the very least, a compulsory reading of "Better Than Horus." But no; he only prophesied, like Mr. H. G. Wells (who is also written down in Mrs. Webster's book): "The Universe will form one State, the State of united individuals, the immutable empire of the great *Germany*—the Universal Republic." This idea existed long before Weishaupt; every Imperialism in history has had it, and the Holy Roman Empire also embodied it before Weishaupt was born or even expected.

What happened to Clootz, the pure Illuminatus? On the 15th March, 1794, Hébert, Chaumette, and Clootz were guillotined by order of Robespierre and Danton. About a fortnight later, Danton and Desmoulins were guillotined by order of Robespierre, who was "the tool rather than the agent of the conspiracy." Who then cut off Robespierre's head? It ought to have been The Mazda Lamp of Illuminism, but it was only the Revolutionary Tribunal acting under the orders of a National Convention that was determined to end the Terror and restore law and order. It is difficult to discover any semblance of a plan, or of an "occult power," in these facts, but perhaps we shall have more success if we examine the conspiracy of Babeuf, which I intend to do in another article.

A. E. R.

* "World-Revolution: The Plot Against Civilisation." By Nesta H. Webster. (Constable. 18s. net.)

Reviews.

Boon. By H. G. Wells. Illustrated by the Author. (Fisher Unwin. 8s. net.)

Mr. Wells has acknowledged the-authorship in this, the second edition, of "Boon"; and reading it again, five years after, its undoubtedly malicious treatment of his contemporaries seems more justifiable. For Mr. Wells is the only English man of letters we can think of to whom the war was a revelation; he has definitely grown, or rather exploded, into another state of consciousness; of which his recently published "Outline of History" is a symbol. What men make of life, and what they might make of it, are the twin visions of his seeing; "nothing without knowledge," is his slogan, and the art of literature seems very small beer indeed compared with the problems of the art of life that now inspire him. "Boon," in all its explosiveness, its lack of form, its almost hysterical style, represents a transition and a farewell; if literature means what Shaw called the parlour-game of style, Wells has definitely refused to play it any longer. His parody of Henry James and George Moore is a final kick to those who are wasting time trying to create romance when reality is crying aloud for the creative mind. He manifests the same divine impatience with politicians and leader-writers, like those of the "Morning Post"; he writes in hot haste from a tortured heart, tortured not only by the suffering of the war but by the malignant stupidity of those who directed it. But he wrote with vision: "War is just the killing of things and the smashing of things. And when it is all over, then literature and civilisation will have to begin all over again. They will have to begin lower down and against a heavier load, and the days of our jesting are done. The Wild Asses of the Devil are loose and there is no restraining them. What is the good, Wilkins, of pretending that the Wild Asses are the instruments of Providence kicking better than we know. It is all evil. Evil. An evil year." From that eminence, with that sense of travail, of responsibility for the world's welfare, the attacks on his contemporaries are justifiable. No contemporary writer, we suppose, has more petty, personal vanity than Wells, but no one enlists even his faults in the service of his vision more effectively. He is our only phenomenon, the man who will "never cease growing till the life to come"; and perhaps his thin skin, and his squirts of sepia, are necessary conditions of his greatness.

Dead Timber, and Other Plays. By Louis Esson. (Henderson. 2s. 6d.)

These four one-act plays by an Australian writer have the Colonial vigour which confounds brutality with strength. They are presented with a minimum of art, as though brutality were a justification of itself, or, what is worse, as though it were unrelated to life generally. We can find in our own slums, among our own criminal classes, similar subjects to these; but it is the task of the artist to reveal the significance of his people and subject, not merely to exhibit them. The "eternal triangle" means no more when the woman is a prostitute and the men are thieves, one of whom is in addition a professional pugilist, a "beer-sparrer" and "a basher of women." "The Woman-Tamer" depends for its humour entirely on the discomfiture of a man described by the author as "fat and lazy, an unsuccessful thief, but a street musician, and a pessimist philosopher"—and we find it difficult to be interested in his slang, or his altercations with his doxy. "Dead Timber" is a study of failure and boredom in the bush, ending with the girl "driven from home" with her unborn baby, and the suicide of her father. It is a dreary, matter-of-fact statement of the affairs of people who, so far as we can see, matter nothing to anybody but themselves. "The Drovers" has a somewhat grim horror; a man injured in a stampede through the clumsiness of a new chum, is left to die, and accepts his fate with the sturdy resignation of a Stoic to the inevitable. "The Sacred Place" deals with the religious suasion of some Mahomedans applied to the purpose of inducing one of them to tell the truth. Muhammed is willing to perjure his soul concerning a debt in a British Court of Law, but when he is invited to take the disputed sum from the Sacred Place off the Koran, he confesses his lie. It is a more picturesque scene than the others, but we knew already that a man will not lie when he takes an oath that he believes is binding. It was lucky for the Mahomedans that Muhammed still believed in his religion; otherwise the test would have failed. But Mr. Esson does not make us feel that they breathe a "rarer air" in the Colonies; we can find equivalents for "The Sacred Place" at the Thames Police Court.

Fragments.

(From the note-book of T. E. Hulme, who was killed in the war.)

Always I desire the great canvas for my lines and gestures.

Old houses were scaffolding once, and workmen whistling.

The bloom of the grape has gone.

That magic momentary time.

As on a veiled stage, thin Anar
Trembles with listless arms hung limp
At the touch of the cold hand of Manar
Placed warning.

A sudden secret cove by Budley
Waveless water, cliff enclosed.
A stilled boudoir of the sea, which
In the noon-heat lolls in to sleep.
Velvet sand, smooth as the rounded thigh
Of the Lady of Avé, as asleep she lay.
Vibrant, noon-heat, trembling at the view.
Oh eager page! Oh velvet sand!
Tremulous faint-hearted waves creep up
Diffident—ah, how wondering!
Trembling and drawing back.
Be bold—the Abbé blesses—'tis only feignèd sleep.
Oh smooth round thigh! . . . .
A rough wind rises, dark cliffs stare down.
Sour-faced Calvin—art thou whining still?

The sky is the eye of labourer earth.
Last night late in the view he stayed.
To-day, clouds pass, like motes
Across his bleared vision.

When she speaks, almost her breasts touch me.
Backward leans her head.

Solid and peaceful is Horton town
Known is all friendship and steady.
In fixed roads walks every man.

A tall woman is come to Horton town. . . . .
In the midst of all men, secretly she presses my hand.
When all are looking, she seems to promise.
There is a secret garden
And a cool stream. . . .
Thus at all men she looks.
The same promise to many eyes.
Yet when she forward leans, in a room,
And by seeming accident her breasts brush against me,
Then is the axle of the world twisted.

In the quiet land
There is a secret unknown fire.
Suddenly rocks shall melt
And the old roads mislead.

Across the familiar road
There is a deep cleft. I must stand and draw back.
In the cool land
There is a secret fire.

Her head hung down
Looked fixedly at earth,
As the rabbit at the stoat,
Till she thinks the earth is the sky.

Oh God, narrow the sky,
That old star-eaten blanket,
Till it fold me round in warmth.

Down the long desolate streets of stars.

No blanket is the sky to keep warm the little stars.

Somewhere the gods (the blanket-makers in the prairie of cold)
Sleep in their blankets.
[" Religion is the expansive lie of temporary warmth."]

Raleigh in the dark tower prisoned
Dreamed of the blue sea and beyond
Where in strange tropic paradise
Grew musk. . . . .

Here stand I on the pavement hard
From love's warm paradise debarred.

Now though the skirt be fallen,
Gone the vision of the sea.
Though braced (abominable feeling)
By the cold winds of common sense,
Still my seaman thought sails hence.
Still hears the murmur of the blue
Round the black cliffs of your shoe.

O lady, to me full of mystery
Is that blue sea beyond your knee.

The mystic sadness of the sight
Of a far town seen in the night.

Her skirt lifted as a dark mist
From the columns of amethyst.

The flounced edge of skirt, recoiling like waves off a cliff.

This to all ladies gay I say.
Away, abhorrèd lace, away.

I lie alone in the little valley, in the noon heat,
In the kingdom of little sounds.
The hot air whispers lasciviously.
The lark sings like the sound of distant unattainable brooks.

The lark crawls on the cloud
Like a flea on a white body.

With a courtly bow the bent tree sighed
May I present you to my friend the sun.

At night!
All terror's in that.
Branches of the dead tree,
Silhouetted on the hill's edge.
Dark veins diseased,
On the dead white body of the sky.
The tearing iron hook
Of pitiless Mara.
Handling soft clouds in insurrection.
Brand of the obscene gods
On their flying cattle,
Roaming the sky prairie.

Town Sky-line.
On a summer day, in Town,
Where chimneys fret the cumuli,
Flora passing in disdain
Lifts her flounced blue gown, the sky.
So see I, her white cloud petticoat,
Clear Valenciennes, meshed by twisted cowls,
Rent by tall chimneys, torn lace, frayed and fissured.
Slowly died along the scented way.

In the city square at night, the meeting of the torches.
The start of the great march,
The cries, the cheers, the parting.
Marching in an order
Through the familiar streets,
Through friends for the last time seen
Marching with torches.
Over the hill summit,
The moon and the moor,
And we marching alone.
The torches are out.
On the cold hill,
The cheers of the warrior dead.
(For the first time re-seen)
Marching in an order,
To where?

The after-black lies low along the hills
Like the trailed smoke of a steamer.

Three birds flew over the red wall into the pit of the setting sun.
O daring, doomèd birds that pass from my sight.

Sounds fluttered, like bats in the dusk.

Sunset.
A coryphée, covetous of applause,
Loth to leave the stage,
With final diablerie, poises high her toe.
Displays scarlet lingerie of carmin'd clouds,
Amid the hostile murmurs of the stalls.

Musié.
Over a void, a desert, a flat empty space,
Came in waves, like winds,
The sound of drums, in lines, sweeping like armies.
. . . . . . Dreams of soft notes
Sail as a fleet at eve
On a calm sea.

Far back there is a round pool,
Where trees reflected make sad memory,
Whose tense expectant surface waits
The ecstatic wave that ripples it
In sacrament of union,
The fugitive bliss that comes with the red tear
That falls from the middle-aged princess
(Sister to the princely Frog)
While she leans tranced in a dreamy curve,
As a drowsy wail in an Eastern song.

As a fowl in the tall grass lies
Beneath the terror of the hawk,
The tressed white light crept
Whispering with hand on mouth mysterious
Hunting the leaping shadows in straight streets
By the white houses of old Flemish towns.

I walked into the wood in June
And suddenly Beauty, like a thick scented veil,
Stifled me,
Tripped me up, tight round my limbs,
Arrested me.

Madman.
As I walk by the river
Those who have not yet withdrawn pass me.
I see past them, touch them,
And in the distance, over the water,
Far from the lights,
I see Night, that dark savage,
But I will not fear him.
Four walls are round me.
I can touch them.
If I die, I can float by.
Moan and hum and remember the sea
In heaven, Oh my spirit,
Remember the sea and its moaning.
Hum in the presence of God, it will sustain you.
Again I am cold, as after weeping.
And I tremble—but there is no wind.

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