THE

NEW AGE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

The present plight of our national economy is a disgrace to us all as a nation and to our rulers in particular. Here are we with our magnificent resources, and with our real capital—in spite of the paper losses which frighten so many people into believing that we are poorer—greatly increased during the war. Yet we cannot contrive to supply a sufficiency of the barest necessities of life to our people; and at the same time nearly 2,000,000 of them are out of work and cut off from income, because there is no "demand" for the goods they would be only too glad to be making. The situation is grotesque enough for an ultra-Gilbertian comic opera, and grim enough for a masterpiece of the "tragic irony" of the Greeks. At such a time the world waits breathlessly for the authoritative voice from Inverness; and hears—what? That "anything we can propose must be of a temporary character." We must just wait for the world to return to "normal conditions." If we can expedite these, so much the better; but probably (the Premier seemed to imply) we cannot. What are statesmen for, if they cannot devise some effective measures for bringing us into a normal and healthy state of social life? Why wait on events in this fatalistic spirit, as though economic forces were dark and inscrutable forces of Nature in no way amenable to the human will? And, after all, what is all this talk about "normal conditions"? Under our present financial system, recurring crises of unemployment *are* "normal," and a crushing rise of prices is "normal" in the intervening periods of good trade. Thus a staggering failure to supply sufficiently the people's needs is so "normal" as to be absolutely continuous. That genuine prosperity, which is now so easily possible, is never known by the people.

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Mr. Lloyd George began to get near the root of the matter when he emphasised the point that we are only producing 80 per cent. of our pre-war output. Well, what is he going to do about it? He only adduced the point, in order to persuade everybody to be content to take less; apparently he accepts the fact, until such time as some mysterious dispensation of Providence removes it. Throughout his speech, the picture was completely dominated by foreign markets; he assumed, as though it were a truism too obvious to be explicitly enunciated, that we can only get production going by "trading" (which, in this parlance, always means trading over seas). But the most lamentable passage in his remarks was that in which he urged everyone to "save" to the utmost. No object could be served by this except to prepare for a great extension of real capital. Yet the whole difficulty is that the real capital we have cannot be used, just because the people cannot afford to consume enough. If Mr. Lloyd George had raised the slogan, "Consume, consume, consume!" he would have been far nearer the mark.

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At least it is to the good that the Government are now in direct contact with the subject of credit. The utmost endeavours will be made to canalise the strong public interest that is being aroused on this topic into the channels solely of export credits; and unfortunately the Labour Party is thoroughly obsessed with the same false perspective. Aid to exports means handsome profits for certain powerful manufacturing groups. But such export trade, unbalanced by any immediate imports, must of course produce a serious rise in prices. It is unfortunate that the Government's unemployment policy is under the chief control of Sir Alfred Mond. It is a mere matter of fact that he represents great manufacturing interests; it is too much to expect that he should be altogether unbiased in these matters. The Premier, on the other hand, is no doubt chiefly anxious (if only from electoral considerations) to achieve a popular success in handling the issue. It is stated that "he is exploring every avenue likely to lead to a solution." We have heard the formula often enough to have learnt to distrust it. Still we hope that this time he really is "exploring," and that he will insist on following up, quite independently, to the very end this clue of "credit" which he now has in his hands. He has often done better in action than his words of only a few days earlier; and he will have to do far better than the Inverness speech if he is to save his political future.

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At such crises Oxford dons are always ready to rush forward to enlighten a benighted public through the correspondence columns of the "Times"; what they really, in most cases, throw light on is solely the incredible stupidity of that seat of learning. This time Dr. A. C. Headlam, the Regius Professor of Divinity, has occupied a column in saying, "Produce more and consume less." He has constituted himself a private detective upon the incomes of the workpeople; not a farthing of

"excessive wages" can escape his eagle eye. He even deplores the exorbitant demands of such ill-paid sections as dressmakers and agricultural labourers. And, so soon after the recent cuts in the miners' wages, he has the hardihood to declare that their "continued high wages" are "most evil of all." We are not ourselves very anxious to question anyone's income; we prefer to follow the path of levelling up. But Dr. Headlam is simply challenging Labour to ask whether the "wages" of Regius Professors are not "excessive," and to insist on a deliberate policy of discovering the lowest figure which supply and demand render it economically necessary to pay for these functionaries. It is a dangerous game for members of so highly protected a class to challenge all "artificial" protection of a standard of life. Dr. Headlam deplores too "the provision of unemployment pay." He suggests no alternative; does he really mean that the unemployed should be left to starve? His whole attitude towards the working class is a little difficult to reconcile with his position as a priest of the Christian Church.

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The fact is that a "poverty-complex" has seized on the nation, in large measure in all classes. A "suggestion" has somehow established itself over their minds and wills that we are a very poor nation, that there is a strictly limited fund for distribution, and that this has somehow to be made to "go round." We must cut down expenses; we must consume as little as possible; we must save; we must all work very hard. We are oppressed by a general atmosphere of discouragement, of parsimony, of contraction. This is precisely the most fatal psychology that could prevail. Those mechanical causes of our troubles, to which we are constantly drawing attention, can only be remedied by a great effort of social *will*. People must believe that they are removable, and be determined to remove them. What is needed is a psychology of confidence, of a vigorous will to live, of expansion. We need to be continually telling ourselves that, as a nation, we are very rich in all that is necessary to provide an ample life for all. Our people should be filled with the conviction that such a life is possible *now* for all, and with an overpowering determination to secure it. If they saw clearly that our natural resources, our instruments of production, and our labour-power are ample they would be driven to see that it must be in the machinery of distribution, the money system, that the hold-up is to be found. They would never stop till they had got to the roots of this and would insist on sweeping away the obstruction. If a philanthropist desired to spend a million pounds in promoting the public welfare, the best use he could make of it might well be to put about everywhere, in the Press, in the tubes, on 'buses, on hoardings, a few vivid catch-phrases making for this expansiveness and hopefulness. "We are a far richer nation than before the war," "We *can* afford it," "Look after consumption, and production will look after itself," "Spend freely and stimulate employment," "Why not credits for the home consumer?" "The home market matters most," "Give the people purchasing power; the factories will deliver the goods," "We can produce £500 a year real income per family; see you get it"—such would be the saving truths of a real social evangelism.

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Sir Charles Hobhouse has been revealing, with singular frankness, the mind of the typical banker in an address on "Banks and Budgets." He claimed, in effect, for the banks a general censorship over the policy of Governments. They would only consent to take up an indispensable loan, if they were thoroughly satisfied as to its whole conditions. "Much would depend on their opinion as to whether the deficit to be covered was due to spendthrift extravagance." In view of the tone of opinion prevailing in financial circles, this would probably rule out any drastically democratic policy. Indeed examples in Queensland and North Dakota are actually showing, at the present moment, how such a proviso would be interpreted in practice. But what an outrageous topsy-turvydom the whole situation involves! The Banks are, in fact, at every turn the creatures of the Government. They carry on their ordinary operations by drawing, practically at their own discretion, on the Government's peculiar prerogative of creating legal tender. And when a special crisis occurs, the Government has to come to the rescue with extraordinary measures, and the Banks have to be shored up by bringing to bear the total resources of the national credit. Yet the bankers arrogantly assume the posture of being the sustainers of the Government, and, on the strength of this, claim an absolute veto over its policy; they even (as in a recent article in the "Financial Times") gravely rebuke Governments for not being sufficiently "deferential" to them. Yet their veto would not be so easy to enforce, as Sir Charles Hobhouse supposes, if a threatened Government really took its courage in its hands. The State, after all, through its sole power of issuing legal money, can wield the total credit of the nation. Sir Charles himself indeed glanced at this by admitting the possibility of meeting a deficit by the issue of "new and uncovered currency notes." His only real answer to this is that it would raise prices. He either has not heard of, or deliberately ignores, the proposal to regulate prices. Either hypothesis equally discredits his claim to speak with authority on these matters. He suggests that the Banks might refuse to accept or circulate the new currency, and that, in so doing, they would have "the sympathy of the trading population." But, if the issue were accompanied by price regulation, the currency would be enormously popular with both working class and middle class consumers and with the vast majority of "the trading population" themselves. There would be a pressure of popular demand against which even the Banks could hardly hold out. And, if they attempted to do so, it is possible that trade unions and various co-operative groups in other sections of society might, with surprising rapidity, start their own banks. Indeed, in any case it is surprising that the people should go on putting up with the monstrous dictatorship claimed by the banking fraternity. Surely they will before long see through the illusion of capitalistic finance, and start for themselves a democratic system of credit (need we explain yet once more that we do not mean the *nationalisation* of banking?)

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At such a time as this the "New Witness," of all papers, has, through its City Editor, rushed to the championship of capitalism in general and of the banks in particular. We have more than once drawn attention to the vagaries of this gentleman in his own column. But now our contemporary has given him the two prominent pages in the centre of an issue for an article in express defence of all the plutocratic illusions and abuses. He is alarmed that the Prime Minister has at last begun to think and talk about credits. We agree indeed that the particular kind of credits that are proposed are thoroughly objectionable. But, when he is getting on the right scent, it is the part of any genuine economic democrat to encourage him to follow it up and to point out to him when and exactly how he is going wrong. There are some indications that he is fairly open-minded and in an enterprising mood, and above all that he is not hopelessly tied to the Monds and the rest of them. But Mr. Radclyffe denounces all issue of credit, under any conditions, as a means of meeting the situation. He, of course, studiously ignores the possibility of price-regulation. He even resorts to the old trick of confusing a credit with a subsidy. He seems to think that things will right themselves sooner or later through prices coming down. Wages must come down too, of course! Also, "Great Britain lives upon her export trade." It is the

whole philosophy of plutocracy. His great complaint against the Prime Minister is that he suspects him of designing an attack on the Banks. Hitherto the real charge against the present Government has been the very reverse, their hopeless subserviency to the plutocratic interests. If it be the case that Mr. Lloyd George is personally inclined to swing over to the other side, that is a great cause for rejoicing. No Prime Minister can take any drastic steps for the economic liberation of the ordinary man, without risking the displeasure of the bankers. In view of the prominence it has given to this sinister article, in what possible sense can the "New Witness" be accepted as an anti-plutocratic organ? The affair is very puzzling, as well as disappointing. No one can possibly question the Editor's sincere hatred of plutocracy and all its works. Can it be that he does not know that the Banks are *the* engine of plutocracy?

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The "Daily Express" has devoted a large part of its front page to an article openly warning its readers of the extreme probability of a war between Japan and America in 1923. It points out the acute problems for the British Empire which would be raised by such a contest, and the great improbability of our being able to escape being drawn into it. Meanwhile the preliminaries for the Washington Conference are proceeding none too smoothly in America itself. The Senate is insisting on forcing forward the question of exempting American ships from the Panama Canal tolls—an issue which the President naturally wishes to leave open till the Conference. Congress is also very reluctant to sanction even the funding of the Allied debts; still less will it hear of any proposal for remitting them. What a mass of make-believe lies behind all these questions of international debts! Under our insane economic system no nation could afford to receive payment in full of its debt within any reasonable time-limit. We may yet be found insisting on a low figure for Germany's reparation to us, and Germany pressing on us a far larger sum. At any rate it is a pity that our Government does not hasten to call America's bluff in the matter of our debt. Our war experience proves that we could produce the 1,000 millions' worth of goods in eighteen months in addition to providing for the ordinary needs of our people. We are tired of pointing out the absurdity of asking where the money is to come from. One might answer, where all money always comes from. But—to treat the question more seriously—if we have (as it is proved we have) the necessary real credit, that is, if we are technically able to deliver the goods, that real credit *is* potential money. Let our Government boldly offer to pay the whole debt, in any kind of goods America may prefer, within eighteen months. It would mean, of course, a great rise in prices, unless these were regulated. But even so it would employ the unemployed. As, however, it would also destroy America's industries, we should not have to make good our offer. Still we should have knocked out of Washington's hands the big stick which it now holds over us.

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Nationally and internationally our civilisation totters towards collapse and red ruin. On every ground there is urgent need for a new "Sankey Commission" on finance in relation to unemployment. The Premier's refusal of an inquiry cannot be accepted as final. It is only a reason the more for all persons of good will to insist the more vehemently that it *must* be held. Nearly everyone is uneasy about our financial position, and very few profess to have any clear conception of the true policy to pursue. Such a life-and-death issue cannot be left to be settled by chance or by the private opinions of one or two persons of influence in the Cabinet. It only needs a little organisation of the existing demand and the Government would be forced to appoint a Commission. We would suggest Lord Milner as an admirable chairman for it.

On Foreign Affairs.

By Hilaire Belloc.

V.

IT is a point on which I have previously written frequently enough in these pages, and one of which my readers may well be weary; because, for all its obvious soundness in argument, the practical difficulties in the way are so great that nothing has yet been done, or apparently can be done. I do not say that anything can be achieved, but I do think that something can be attempted. The problem is very difficult; but it is not so hopeless as would be any attempt to change the morals of Westminster and to substitute for the professional politician, company promoter, and new peer, something more resembling statesmen. Let us consider what the conditions of the establishment of such a Press are.

At the present moment there is, you may say, no public opinion upon foreign affairs. There has, of course, never been a public opinion upon foreign affairs in the democratic sense, because we are not a democratic country. Indeed, the absence of any such public opinion has been of permanent value to England. One of the great advantages of the aristocratic spirit in the State is that the people are willing to leave the direction of their affairs to a comparatively small body, the members of which are all in touch one with another and, if they are worthy, far better capable of directing the national fortunes than can the loose and too general directives given by the great masses of the governed. But though there has not been a public opinion, in the democratic sense, upon foreign or domestic affairs for a very long time past, there was until quite recently a powerful directive afforded by what used to be called *educated* opinion. It was alive so lately that I think it can be called to life again.

The Press of this country was, until comparatively recently, the best informed in the world. Not only was it the best informed, but its judgment as expressed in leading articles and in foreign correspondence, was filled with a real knowledge of Europe and of conditions external to our polity. The change is so recent that even a man of my age can remember in his early manhood the necessity he was under, when travelling abroad, of seeing English papers if he would understand the European movement as a whole. To-day it is exactly the other way. An educated man has to see foreign newspapers: the London papers have become ridiculous. The "big newspaper" under the control and direct inspiration of uneducated men (such as the brothers Harmsworth and Max Aitken already mentioned) has replaced that London Press which was once everywhere regarded, and rightly regarded, as the centre of information for the world.

To-day if you want to know what is happening you must read the Continental Press. Our Press is no longer of use.

I could crowd this short examination with examples, but one will suffice. During the conflict upon Upper Silesia (a conflict not yet resolved), not a single English paper, with the exeeption of the "Morning Post," discussed the matter as educated men discuss it in conversation. The whole thing was treated either in the spirit of what is called propaganda—that is, advertisement for the masses, who knew nothing about the subject and cared less, or else in a spirit which showed a complete ignorance of values. One evening paper, which might pride itself on being read by the better educated in London, said by the way of propaganda that the decision according to the Treaty of Versailles *must be by a majority*! Others argued that the large majority against the Poles in the province as a whole had already decided the matter according to the Treaty; others, who supported the Polish claim, did so with so complete an ignorance of what that claim was, and upon

what it was based, that it was worse for the Poles—and for this country—than the direct financial attack. Meanwhile all organs without exception were conspicuous for this: that not one of them *informed* its public; not one of them did what all the chief papers of Italy, Germany, and France did, gave the history of the district, analysed the voting, showed by maps exactly how the situation stood, printed the relevant clauses of the Treaty, analysed the meaning of those clauses, and left its public to judge. No one reading the English Press attentively in those days could have passed an elementary examination on Silesia or the Treaty.

Yet, information is surely the chief function of a newspaper! The masses, of course, buy a daily paper in order to find out what horse has won what race, and to interest themselves in details of murders, divorces and things of that sort. But your educated man wants to know what is going on in the great world; and he wants to know each thing in its proper place and value. A murder case has its interest for him also; but the fate of Europe and the probable future of the world is of more consequence. Your educated man does not buy a paper in order to find out what its proprietor desires him to think. For that proprietor is as a rule a man whose opinion is worthless; a man with whom he could not carry on an intelligent conversation for five minutes. He buys the paper in order to know what is going on. If he is not told what is going on it does not warp his judgment, as such reading warps the judgment of the masses, it simply bores him.

In point of fact what educated men are now doing with our London Press is this: when they want to discover what is happening they buy a number of papers and note what has been left out, and concern themselves with the motives of these omissions.

For instance, when Colonel Guinness brought forward very cogently the position of the millionaire Zaharoff in the Greek affair, your reader of this sort was interested not so much in the actual speech—for he knows all about Zaharoff and about the attitude of professional politicians to foreign millionaires—but in the boycott to which it was subjected. He notes how, in every English paper here only the sacred name was omitted. He also notes with a smile the single exception in which it was thoroughly emphasised. He busies himself to discover why that particular newspaper proprietor broke the boycott.

He further examines our Press in order to find out from the absurdities of the Foreign correspondents a hint of what he should look for in the world of reality—just as a judge hearing a recalcitrant witness in the box notes some admission or chance phrase which gives him a clue to the truth, though the witness neither understood his own effect nor intended to aid the truth. But an educated Englishman does not expect in his reading of a newspaper to-day to come across a direct piece of evidence on important European matters, or even a discussion of the kind which he does find in private conversation amongst his equals. For that sort of thing he must go to the foreign Press. There he will find—especially if he collates various organs of Paris, Italy, Brussels and the Rhine—a fairly full conspectus of the modern world.

We have, then, in our policy, a void, and the point is, can that void be filled? A Press which discussed and informed, as educated men amongst themselves discuss and inform in conversation, would make a vast difference. It would create and sustain a sane and vigorous opinion, not perhaps throughout the mass of the public, but throughout that considerable class which does weigh things, even to-day, and which, when it has corporate power, is the best directive for the State.

But can it be done? Can just a paper be produced? I will conclude with an examination of that question.

(To be concluded.)

Our Generation.

THE misery of the unemployed and the inability of the Government to relieve it are not yet so patent as to enable Mr. Winston Churchill to see it. His recent modified justification of the Government's policy, or lack of policy, to a deputation of trade unionists in Dundee, is almost astonishing in the assumption—for surely there must be an assumption—which it makes. "It was not quite fair," he is reported to have said, "to suggest that the Government had done nothing to alleviate distress arising from unemployment. Some harsh expressions had been used upon that subject. As a matter of fact the Government, since the armistice, had spent on the relief of unemployment, through the agency of the insurance scheme, over £105,000,000, and much the greater portion had been a direct contribution from the Exchequer. It might not be equal to the distress that had been created, but it certainly was a provision gigantic in itself, unexampled in British history, and absolutely without parallel in any other country in the world, even in the United States, which was so much better circumstanced than we were. . . . Before the British Government was pilloried as being a monument of brutality, account might be taken of the efforts they had made, were making, and would continue to make." Now consider for a moment the phraseology of this extraordinary passage, for the phraseology certainly gives more away than the sense; in political speeches at present, indeed, it always does, for where nothing is said, and always the same nothing, the only concrete thing we can seize upon is the style, which no doubt is the politician. Well, then, it is *"not quite fair"* to say that the Government has done *nothing* to relieve the misery of its own citizens! It is almost fair, we are to assume; the Government has not *altogether* neglected the chief thing it exists for, the rendering of justice to every section of the people: therefore no one has a right to cast blame upon it. "Some harsh expressions had been used" about the Government. This is hardly the thing, we must admit; but then, when we remember it, is not the condition of the unemployed, too, harsh and hard to bear, and does not the impotence of the Government make it harsher? Is not the Government's action, or failure to act, more harsh than any "expressions" which can be used about it? We cannot be accused of inventing an intellectual subtlety in believing this to be so. But wait. The Government harsh? You will change your mind when you hear that it has given £105,000,000 to the unemployed, and *some* of that out of its own Exchequer. That is at any rate kindness, if it is not exactly self-sacrifice, and what conceivable emergency *could* arise that would make self-sacrifice to a British Government, or to the British monied classes, conceivable as a pressing necessity? Not, apparently, even the present distress, which is "unexampled in British history." But, after all, self-sacrifice should be the last way of dealing with a practical problem; we should only share our riches with the poor, after we have tried, and failed, to make the poor rich. And it is not their lack of charity, but their ineffectiveness, that makes the Government hated and despised to-day. The rejoinder of Mr. J. R. Clynes to Mr. Churchill's apologia is unanswerable. "The fact that the Government had spent £105,000,000 on insurance," he said, "was the most gigantic proof of its failure. The Cabinet should be something more than a body of relieving officers. Relief in the absence of any other possible solution they could regard as a distressing and costly, yet necessary, way of keeping the unemployed worker alive, but relief not as a last

step, but as the first and only step, was proof of the unfitness of the Government to deal with the internal economic affairs of a great industrial nation. What a boast to say that they had given away over £100,000,000, and not a stick of any kind of value left as a result of what they had done! That was called statesmanship." That, indeed, is called statesmanship; and the root of it is not finally a particular inability of the Government, but men's general willingness to exist in degradation, to permit their lives to be bestial, painful and helpless. A terrible weakness which will accept anything, which will accept evil and live content in it: that is what keeps human heroism and greatness of spirit from springing into existence in response to the abysmal need for it. It is heroism that is needed; heroism great enough to face and to strive with our problems, and if it fails, to sacrifice everything out of pity to those who are suffering most. The Government is too mediocre to do either; it neither deals with the misery of the people, nor does it sacrifice itself. It gives away £105,000,000, and boasts of it.

The discussion on "The New Woman" still ploughs along, throwing up much nonsense and a little sense, and effecting therefore—something. Mr. G. K. Chesterton has taken part in it, bewildering everybody, including, we imagine, himself; and the humbler fry have emitted the usual stream of refined and ridiculous sentiments. Where woman is the topic let everybody be insincere, most sincerely and solemnly insincere: that appears to be the tradition. But what everybody will acknowledge to be sense has happened once or twice in the symposium, and it happened most certainly in an article by Miss Estelle Blyth. "There is no woman's paper," Miss Blyth says, "to which anyone can go for really valuable and weighty comment, or summing up of ordinary politics, home or foreign; they seem to be unable to get away from the point, 'How does this affect women, and how will that'? This is paralysing to freedom of mind and judgment. Cannot the women, keen, enthusiastic, and cultivated, who run these papers set themselves to alter this, to widen the boundaries of women's papers, to make them papers which all educated persons of either sex can turn to and rely on, to relegate the eternal woman's question to its place as one of the hundred complexities that make our national and Imperial life?" And she recommends them to strive to attain "the historical sense," and in this way escape from the parochialism of their attitude. Now it seems to us that this diagnosis is perfectly correct; but we think, on the other hand, that the remedy is not the best, because not the most simple and direct, that can be found. The modern woman's movement has been less significant than it should have been for one simple and sufficient reason: it has been a woman's question and not a human question. This Miss Blyth admits. What then is needed? Simply that it should be made a human question; that it should concern itself not merely with the particular and sectional affairs of woman, but also with woman's relation to the universe in which she finds herself, including in this her relation to man. This is not a merely academic task; it is one, spiritually speaking, in which everything has still to be done, in which eternally everything has to be done. But we must return to this discussion again.

At present, when everything, including the very instincts, appears to be so helplessly *wrong*, it takes a great shock, a calamity of some kind, to restore one's realisation that humanity is human. So it becomes a significant thing when we read in a newspaper account of the disaster at Oppau that "French troops are lending great assistance." What else they could have done we do not know, yet that they should have done it is reassuring. To such an attitude have the events of the last few years reduced us.

EDWARD MOORE.

World Affairs.

THE principle at which we have arrived in our contemplations on the present world-crisis has been immanent not only in the method employed, but in the underlying Sophian desire; and it may be summed up as the strength of weakness. No other thread can lead us out of the Sophian labyrinth than the strength of pure spirituality, the power of weakness. But what is this saving and superhuman weakness? To answer bluntly, it is sacrifice. The most Sophian, the most heroic sacrifice, is not that of the strong and successful, but that of the weak and helpless. Their patience and faith are the highest sacrifice. Albion and the British Imperium are the greatest power and the greatest power for evil in the whole world of humanity to-day; they are also the greatest mystery and miracle. And it would be pragmatic as well as pan-human wisdom to accept this evil, and all evil, and especially all racial evil, as functional and providential in point of value. The imperialist and individualist policy of England is thoroughly evil. It is in conflict with the three supreme ideals and realities of humanity—with Aryandom and the White race, with Christian revelation and historic Christendom, and with Socialism, the seraphic human reality. It is in conflict with Europe, the central and most centripetal continent of the world; and it is in unequal conflict with Europe. But it is useless to attempt to force this England into an understanding of pan-humanity. For her essence is a mystery; and her providential rôle at this moment appears to be the very antithesis of the Sophian world-order. The very character of the English is significant in this respect; and its solid reality is one of the chief, if not the chief, of the factors of Destiny in humanity. The perfection of the English character is the incarnation of Fate in the world's organism; and it forms the fundamental negative value in the functionalism of the world. Negative value, be it understood—not a neutral or insignificant value. And it is the antithesis of world-order at this moment.

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World-statesmanship or Sophian politics should, we believe, begin with and be based upon this inexorable fact. Since the resistance of England has been providentially acquired, it must also represent a providential fact. There can be no evil or fatality in human economy that is not instrumental and functional. Thus there is antithesis only, instrumentality only, function only. In the Sophian view of things, the power of the British Imperium can only be a means to provoke and negatively to accomplish perfections of unimaginable splendour. Hope has a place here; hope as a theurgic power. The illumination of theurgic Faith has likewise a place here; Sophian faith in the divinity of humanity. Finally seraphic Grace is needed here; love and renunciation. We are not thinking of morality or politics in the ordinary sense, but of Sophia and divine fullness. Humanity is one; and since that is so, it may be that where Fate and Providence demand sacrifice, Freedom should offer it. It is, at any rate, our conviction that the weak must offer the strength of their weakness to Fate for the sake of the pleroma of pan-humanity; and in respect of the British Imperium first and foremost. The British Man is destiny, and the *Kama manas* of the world. At this moment of crisis, when an exchange of spirals is taking place, when evolution is becoming history, when the world as Man is becoming conscious, a new element is to be born into the world. It will be born of the crucifixion and descent into death of Western civilisation; and will mark the resurrection of Europe into pan-human life. The collapse of the superhuman deed of Lenin and of the communist revolution is a sign of how the new Dispensation cannot be born: it cannot be born of violence and destruction; but only by creative ecstasy in the spirit of Faith, Hope, and Love. And this ecstasy is pan-human consciousness itself: it is

communism itself; it is Sophia self-conscious of all her values. The end of the reign of violence is near; and henceforward super-consciousness alone must reign. Love and the incarnation of the Holy Spirit are conditions of super-consciousness. The transcendence of logic and egoism are conditions of super-consciousness. The struggle of seraphic giving is super-consciousness. Divine weakness is super-consciousnes. Thus the birth of the Superman is imminent; for he is only the coming into existence of Universal Humanity, the transformation of mankind into Man. The British Imperium may well serve as the solid foundation of this transformation. Being an image of Nature, substantial, inscrutable, continuous and stable, the British Imperium is a basic fact for the world to recognise and accept. Its acceptance is the condition of the coming epigenesis.

M. M. COSMOI.

Readers and Writers.

IF, as I suggested last week, we may expect the novel to develop into an epic of the mind, or a psychological saga, we must not on that account be too conclusive about the formal description of this imaginary *genre*. It may be—I hope it will be—like anything but a novel in appearance. The form, in perfect art, is so exactly adapted to the expressive needs of the mind or material beneath it that it follows as a natural effect. That is why a new age, with its new mentality, must always seek its own style, though that style is not necessarily very dissociate from its predecessors: I would rather say that a perfect style, like a perfect mind, develops traditionally—entering, however, this further caveat: tradition may leap centuries and disregard fashions. But style, in this sense, is not an easy thing to determine: the right essence of an age will be found rather deeper than mode or metre, which are but a surface to writing, and critical categories are in most cases deceptive. We must judge, in fact, by the intensity—or the dignity, as Dryden would phrase it—of the particular vision of life. The epic of the hero-mind, or of the racial mind, will not be the work of a Freudian psycho-analyst, but of a poet; and whether the form is categorically the "novel" or the "poem"—prose or verse—is irrelevant to the consideration that it will be the form typical of the age. The distinctive harmonies will be too subtle for a prosodist, and they will be found in many incongruous places, as a rhetoric infused into thought rather than into governed speech.

* * *

"Great poetry," writes Mr. Herbert Grierson in his Introduction to a recently published selection of Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century (Clarendon Press), "is always metaphysical, born of men's passionate thinking about life and love and death." "Passionate thinking" is a phrase much to my liking, and is the shortest definition of genius that I can imagine. It describes Lucretius and Dante; it describes Whitman; and if it does not altogether cover Shakespeare or Wordsworth, or Baudelaire or Goethe, or whoever you will, it does, I think, touch their most essential points. It is inspired by Donne, with whom Mr. Grierson is chiefly concerned, and I am the last man to grumble at this predilection. Donne affects me to complete enthusiasm, and despite a good deal of "coterie worship," I think he is still under-estimated. His mentality is too tough, and his utterance too rugged, for the suave canons of romanticism—and we still see all our earlier literature through the yellow fogs released some hundred years ago. A work waiting for willing hands is the revaluation of our literature in the measure of rational standards. Donne would stand high then; and many others now wrongly venerated would take humbler places. In what dimensions would Keats, for example, emerge from such philosophical criticism? But to do Keats a minor justice, how exactly his sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" fixes that emotion which most readers must experience once or twice in their lives—the feeling of "some watcher in the skies, when a new planet swims into his ken." This feeling I have felt at least twice in its full catastrophe—and catastrophe is an essential element of it. I felt it coming unawares to the reading of Blake, and again in the case of Donne. Whether the eccentricity of these two poets is the explanation of their effectiveness, I do not profess to determine, but they are both irregular additions to the flow of English literature, crossing the stream (though not without disturbing the current) rather than proceeding with it.

* * *

To be more precise in the case of Donne, I would say that he had two distinctive merits, one concerning the method of poetry and the other its material. In the first place he was the first poet to revolt against the monotonous tinkling that Spenser made the fashion. In another age he would have been called a vers-librist, so intentional is the evolution of his verse. Mr. Grierson observes that "in Shakespeare's tragedies the thought and feeling tend to break through the prescribed pattern till blank verse becomes almost rhythmical prose, the rapid overflow of the lines admitting hardly the semblance of pause. This is the kind of effect Donne is always aiming at, alike in his satires and lyrics, bending and cracking the metrical pattern to *the rhetoric of direct and vehement utterance.*" The words I have italicised are an admirable description of Donne's versification, and of all versification that is vital. And so Donne, far from deserving the charge of incompetence so often attached to him by romantic critics, is rather the first master in our literature of the subtler and more exact harmonies of expression. "His verse has a powerful and haunting harmony of its own. For Donne is not simply, no poet could be, willing to force his accent, to strain and crack a prescribed pattern; he is striving to find a rhythm that will express the passionate fullness of his mind, the fluxes and refluxes of his moods . . . ."

* * *

This "passionate fullness of his mind" is the second quality that distinguishes Donne's poetry. It is not merely that his intellect was "scientific"; nor is he passionate in a dogmatic way, like Whitman. His personal quality is rather a blend of passion and thought, of imagination and reason. And though he is uncommonly learned in the metaphysics of his age, his poetry rises out of his experience, and his learning is subservient to the expression and the exploration of that experience. I do not, however, mean that he is *just* a poet of experience, or a visionless realist. He is something more. It is not experience that makes the thinker, but the thinker that moulds experience into thought. It is the primacy of thought, and the use of experience, even to the extent of making the thought passionate, that establishes Donne as an all too solitary poet of reason.

* * *

I purposely call Donne a poet of reason because it is a phrase reminiscent of Mr. Santayana's ideals in literature; and Donne was, indeed, to my mind, potentially the ideal rational poet of Mr. Santayana's conception. He did not fulfil that ideal because he was a necessary slave to the philosophical environment of his age. But he has many of the attributes of the "most high poet," who "should live in the continual presence of all experience and respect it; he should at the same time understand nature, the ground of that experience; and he should also have a delicate sense for the ideal echoes of his own passions, and for all the colours of his possible happiness." Those ideal echoes were, I think, Donne's; but one is compelled to admit the lack of a sense for all the colours of his possible happiness. His absorption in "that subtile knot, which makes us man" caused too much perplexity of mind, leading to a dualism too contrastingly sombre, too

mediævally melancholy, too devoid of the serenity that accompanies a rational art. But as a vindication of the poetical quality of thought, as against sensation, Donne's genius is very significant. Let me, to define this distinction, quote further from Mr. Santayana's "Three Philosophical Poets":

> There is a kind of sensualism or æstheticism that has decreed in our day that theory is not poetical; as if all the images and emotions that enter a cultivated mind were not saturated with theory. The prevalence of such a sensualism and æstheticism will alone suffice to explain the impotence of the arts. The life of theory is not less human or less emotional than the life of sense: it is more tyrannically human and more keenly emotional. Philosophy is a more intense sort of experience than common life is, just as pure and subtle music, heard in retirement, is something keener and more intense than the howling of storms or the rumble of cities. For this reason philosophy, when a poet is not mindless, enters inevitably into his poetry since it has entered into his life; or rather, the detail of things and the detail of ideas pass equally into his verse, when both alike lie in the path that has led him to his ideal.

So philosophy entered into Donne's life, and was ingeniously amalgamated with sensation in his verse. I do not think this amalgam is achieved so perfectly by any other English poet, unless by Shelley. Not by Milton, who merely inlaid his thought; or by Blake, who was afraid of thought; least of all by Browning, who might seem to have some claims, but who really never thought at all.

HERBERT READ.

Towards National Guilds.

QUESTION.—A point we are anxious to clear up is whether the Scheme would propose to pay the agreed dividend on the present capital in perpetuity, plus dividend on the proportion of new capital, as set out in I. 8; or whether the dividend would be paid on the present capital less depreciation plus proportion of new capital.

ANSWER.—The general effect of Clause 5 of the Scheme is to obliterate within a short time any difference of interest between the shareholders who, by the process of replacement, bcome largely "consumer" in interest. Each Mining company would be carried on on a floating capital account of which the Capital (i.e Credit) required would be subscribed as suggested in the clause. The immediate concern is to see that the Producers' Bank holds the stock representing this credit for the benefit of its depositors; but in all probability the clients of the "Owners'" Banks would quickly follow the example. Whether the whole of the new credits subscribed should be issued as shares and thereafter, with all previous shares, be properly depreciated before the 6 per cent. is paid on them, or whether depreciation shall go into cost, is of small ultimate importance. In the first case, the "industry" bears the cost, and in the second case the "public" bears it as at present. When the credit of the industry is nationally distributed, it will be seen that the distinction is negligible.

Mr. G. D. H. Cole in an ancient issue of the "Guildsman" writes as follows: "My interest is centred on securing the democratic control of production, although I fully realise that Capitalist finance, so long as it continues, will keep the workers in subjection even if they are in control of production. My reason is that the control of production seems to me the essential condition of the overthrow of Capitalist finance, the first step without which—short of violent revolution—any direct tackling of the financial problem or any attempt to redistribute purchasing power under Capitalism, are so much waste of effort." It would be difficult to devise a more confused statement of a case than the foregoing or, for that very reason, one more difficult to deal with. Arguing with it is like having a rough and tumble with a blanket-spook. Fighting with wild octopi at Brighton aint a circumstance. What is "a democratic control of production" which is still subject to the control of Capitalist finance? Can production be said to be controlled democratically if the workers are still "in subjection"? Again, if the control of production is the first step to the overthrow of Capitalist finance, and yet leaves the workers "in subjection"—what is the value of the step thus taken; assuming, what is not granted, that even this "first step" can be taken while Capitalist finance is still absolute? And again, why postpone the "direct tackling" of the financial problem in order to pass through a phase admittedly futile, namely, a control of production that really is not control? Surely there is something a little too Fabian in the assumption that we must pass through a number of useless phases of development before directly tackling the real objective! Then it may be observed that Mr. Cole is back in the pre-Douglas epoch in assuming that the problem before Labour is the control of *Production*. Production, as our readers know, is doing very well, thank you. Neither Production nor the control of Production presents any real problem at all at this moment. The problem before Labour and the Community is not Production or the control of Production, but Consumption and the control of Consumption. Production is a mechanism in relatively good working order; it is equal to a hundred times the demand made upon it. But the corresponding mechanism of the distribution of purchasing-power or Consumption, being, as it is, in the hands of Capitalist finance, is altogether inadequate to the mechanism of Production. And what is, therefore, urgently needed, as the "first step" in any real Labour or Social reform, is the control of the mechanism, not of Production, but of Consumption. Mr. Cole proposes to think that the securing of the control of Production is easier than the securing of the control of Consumption or the distribution of purchasing-power. Useless in itself, since it would still leave the workers in subjection to finance, it is, nevertheless, necessary as a "first step" towards the ultimate control of finance. But, in the first place, is it more easy? And, in the second place, is it necessary?

The question of ease turns naturally on the calculation of the strategy involved. What Mr. Cole says in effect is that the workers will find it easier to tackle the problem of the control of Production before tackling the problem of the control of Consumption. The control of Consumption may safely be left until the control of Production has been secured. What, however, are the facts? They are that in the attempt to secure the democratic control of Production before controlling Consumption the "workers" are perfectly certain to range against themselves, not only the financial system (which, in any event, must be met), but the whole of the employing classes, great and small, and their dependents, and the whole of the community as consumers. In other words, Mr. Cole's "first step" requires Labour to antagonise the financial interests, the employing interests and the interests of the "public"—a piece of strategy which makes a present of the support of the employers and the public to the financial interests! The attempt to control Consumption, on the other hand, would, it is certain, *detach* from the financial interests the two great powers now associated with them. Instead of making the division between Labour and the rest of the community we make the division between Finance and the rest of the community. If it is not easier to fight Finance alone than Finance supported by the employing classes and the community, we are soused herrings and Mr. Cole is the Napoleon of little fishes.

NATIONAL GUILDSMEN.

The New Russia.

By Huntly Carter.

III.

That Soviet Russia has the foundations for a working model of a Credit Power State no one who knows the present-day country and the principles and laws of the new energy economics can deny. It has already lost a good deal of the economic world to go, and acquired a good deal of the economic world to come. To begin with it has lost gold, and it has found men. Gold has only a scarcity value, it has no vital value and therefore has no place in vital economics. Then it has lost certain other material possessions and found labour energy. Such energy is to be made plentiful by reasonable labour and in various ways to be treated as a vital force. Indeed labour energy is treated implicitly by the Russian Soviet Government as a most vitally necessary thing, indeed the most valuable necessity in their economics. This is proved by the great importance attached to the production, conservation and utilisation of labour energy. The first law of Soviet Russia is that everyone must work. "Who works not eats not," is exhibited everywhere. The second is that each worker shall be adequately fed, clothed and housed. The third is that he shall consume a part of his own production, and a part of the production of his fellow-workers, and receive credit for a part. Hence the system of compulsory feeding in St. Petersburg and Moscow designed to assure each worker an adequate supply of food in accordance with the dimension of output achieved by the worker. Thus he receives and expends so much energy. Under normal conditions each worker would receive food sufficient for his vital needs. In St. Petersburg, which is divided into food districts, there are 700 kitchens to feed 600,000 people. To-day, however, conditions are not normal, everyone is underfed and is losing vitality and consequent productive capacity. It is the same with clothing and housing, the well-made plans of the Government to provide proper clothes and shelter for everyone in harmony with duties undertaken having broken down under the pressure of present economic conditions. But the law of the production of energy is there all the same. Likewise the law of the conservation of energy finds an application in the protection of the worker according to the latest accepted principles of industrial economics, as applied by their chief advocates, the Government and Trade Unions. The law of the utilisation of energy is also active. The workers are supposed to own and consume all the products of their energy. That is, they are to decide the size, number and location of their energy plots, what form their energy products shall take, and whether consumption shall be in part or in whole. Energy is no longer to be measured by gold but by exertion. In other words, a premium is put on personal initiative.

I say supposed to own and consume, because much implied by the foregoing is theoretical as yet, and much more is hidden under a mass of obsolete legislative and other machinery which some of the slave-minded legislators and Trade Unionists are seeking to put upon the back of the worker, and which in Russia threatens to take the form of a degenerate bureaucracy. Some of the Soviet leaders appear to devote a great deal of their time and ingenuity to the devising of elaborate schemes of organisation, economic and other, which serve no other purpose than that of converting large areas into intricate networks of local organisations controlled from a distance by central authorities. I have in my possession a chart of one of these schemes. It resembles a Selfridge business organisation and suggests the same interlocking of departments and absolute dependence of everybody on the dictation of the central authority.

In some ways theoretically the Communist system as promoted by Lenin makes for a desirable energy release. But practically it is impeded by several things. Some of its Marxian theories are old-fashioned. Conditions first, and a peculiar synthetic technique capable of producing a motor-bound Russia put a tax on advance. Its phraseology impedes. Notions, ideas, conceptions, representations, sense, phenomena, modes, attributes, subjects, objects, spirit, elementary material forces, energies, these and many more philosophical and scientific terms crowd and confuse the view. Definitions are lacking. Communism, Socialism, proletariat, bourgeoise, State, economics, these and other formative words are used loosely or to mean nothing at all. It has historical limitations. "The working classes of 1921 in no way resemble the working class of 1841," says Trotsky. "The best evidence is the springing up of Soviets." Again, "What is good for Russia is not good for the rest of the world." If this means anything, it means that a system of industrial and social reform devised by Marx 80 years ago is not a system of industrial and social reform suited to the present day. And a system of government suitable for primitive Russia is not suitable for advanced Western nations. Its traditions and social limitations are also deserving of criticism. Finally, its peculiar Utopianism exposes it to unfriendly comment. The Garden of Eden ideal which exhibits the world as a workers' Garden of Eden with beasts of prey living peacefully with lambs argues an absence of psychological insight. And the work for work's sake ideal which assumes that the inner impulse to work is its own reward is not much better. Before the psychological impulse to productivity can be put in working order, the property instinct in man must be destroyed or the nature of external reward changed. A substitute for the latter might be found in Credit reward. This would form a bridge between the Old Adam and the New to whom Soviet Russia promises to give birth.

The system has the faults of its present-day promoters. Trotsky has not got beyond Marx as yet. Lenin is not beyond Sorel. Since Sorel's time there have been important developments in individualist Socialist idealism. There is National Guilds, for instance. And there is Credit Power. If Lenin and his Government would consent to bring themselves up to date by a consideration of the new economic ideas it would be all to the good. They might easily do so by inviting discussions with accredited students of these matters. If they would admit these students to Russia in place of the swarm of Marxian pilgrims and early Victorian Socialists, many of whom are attracted to Soviet Russia by curiosity alone, a new working model of an inspiring Communist Russia might be the result. In which case all the dreary talk of a renewed approach to Socialism through a revival of Capitalism would be at an end and the plague-spots of concessions now disfiguring the map of Russia would disappear. Non-Capitalist Russia is still the hope of the enlightened. The enemies of Soviet Russia believe that the next crisis will be the last for the Communists—when there will be no more gold left. The friends of Soviet Russia believe it will be the first step of a new life—when there will be no more gold needed. Before the war a rough approach at equity was secured by valuing all services in terms of gold. Currencies were so linked that so many ounces of metal equalled so many ounces of human energy. Then came the war to break down this monstrous metal standard of equity. Now something entirely new is needed. That something is an energy standard. Above the portals of Hell it is written: "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." Above the portals of the New Russia may it be written: "Abandon gold all ye who enter here."

Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

THE Playwrights Theatre began its new series of monthly matinées with the production of a Chinese fantasy, "The Bluebeard Touch," and a curtain raiser about King Charles, called "Shoeing the Mare." The latter was as exciting as that well-known barnyard drama, "shooing the chickens." One knows beforehand that as King Charles escaped after the battle of Worcester, he could not, without falsifying history, be captured by "the smith of Bridport." The only possible dramatic interest, then, could be in the adroitness with which he put this Sherlock Holmes of farriery off the scent. Mr. Graham Rawson preferred familiar stage tricks; the play opened with a drinking song by the smith, chorus by host and ostler, the burden of which was: "Up with the Parliament: down with King Charles." Comic business with stupid ostler, who sings: "Down with the Parliament: up with King Charles": and has a churchwarden broken over his sconce by the mighty smith. Enter King Charles and a Lord, disguised as Cavaliers with ringlets complete; "food and haste." Enter serving wench with food; "here is a serving wench; let's kiss it." Serving wench confesses, under oath of secrecy, that she is not in favour of the Parliament; King Charles, under similar oath, professes identical political sympathies. Serving wench permits political kiss. Enter "smith of Bridport" with hammer, and elaborate deductive theory of the origin of the mare. She has been shod in four different counties, one for each hoof; and his knowledge of the various styles of farriery enables him to say that she came from Worcester. Charles pretends to be a farrier from London (where the "smith of Bridport" was, he said, well known) who had been at the battle of Worcester, and had cracked a Cavalier's skull and taken his horse. "Smith of Bridport's" simple pride in his profession, and vanity of book-learning, being stimulated by flattery, he fails to look for the signs of the craft; a farrier's hands and wrists, for example, are rather well developed, but "the smith of Bridport" shook hands without noticing anything; and perhaps Mr. Tristan Rawson's clumsiness in letting his rapier slip out of the scabbard when he stooped helped to suggest that this was not a man trained to the use of arms. With mutual congratulations, and an invitation to the smith to come to London, they part; and the smith discovers that he has let King Charles, and the £1,000 reward, slip through his fingers. But as Mr. Tristan Rawson had neither the carriage nor the address of a king, the smith may be pardoned for his failure to extend successfully his deductive logic from the mare to her rider.

"The Bluebeard Touch," by Alma Faulkner and Oswald T. Curtis, was a rather more disturbing exhibition. In its main idea it was obvious; in some of its dialogue it was tedious, but in its production and performance it was excellent. Miss Alma Faulkner is to be congratulated on the production, which ran very smoothly; but the chief performers, Mr. William Armstrong as the Director, Mr. Laurence Hanray as the Emperor, and Miss Iris Hoey as the Princess, made the show.

There is nothing of import in the simple reversal of the Bluebeard legend by crediting the Princess with a passion for widowhood, and filling the House of Finished Works with the remains of forty husbands. Nor is there any particular point in the development of the idea; the Princess simply showed bad taste in her damnable iteration. If she had invented a new reason for death, or a new form of death, or a new style of mourning, one might have sustained interest in her; but her simple: "Do it again, daddy": was wearisome. The usual style of humour, too, was the simple interruption of ceremonial speech by references to commonplace facts. The Emperor arrives hungry, for example, and interrupts the speech of welcome with the remark: "Cut out the soft stuff: I want my dinner." It is the Cockney humour of: "Come off it": and it is not sufficiently resourceful or various to amuse one for long. The attempts at satire of the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Information were banal; the authors attempted to find reasons for the Princess's passion for widowhood, and dropped into tedious nonsense about time-sheets and a Book of Hours.

Yet the play kept the audience rippling with laughter; and Mr. William Armstrong was responsible for most of it. It was decidedly the best performance that I have ever seen him give, and it broke new ground for him, so far as my memory serves. Its reminiscence of "The Yellow Jacket" did not diminish the interest; Mr. Armstrong created this tired, bored, disillusioned Director, for whom there was no theatrical glamour, but only a tiresome series of jobs. There he sat smoking cigarettes, reading the prompt-copy, tut-tutting over the players who missed their cues or needed a prompt, explaining the change of scene and naming the characters as they appeared, and beating the gong for the funeral processions, peering into the wings to see how many more mourners were coming, sitting down and obviously regretting the fact that, as both his hands were occupied, he could not pick up his cigarette—and all with the bored air of doing efficiently a duty that had long ceased to interest him. Mr. Armstrong had got it to the life, even his manner of smoking a cigarette was in character, and one must congratulate him on an excellently conceived and executed character study.

Mr. Laurence Hanray contrived somehow to make the Emperor a fantastically whimsical figure. The stuff he had to deliver was most childishly banal, and its only humorous value was that of incongruity between his exalted position and commonplace sentiments. His interest in his food, his counsel to his daughter (her preference for widowhood was embarrassing him in his government by depriving him of his Court officials, and besides, people would begin to talk if she did not keep her husbands more than a week), all this was tedious enough in substance, but risibly titillating in Mr. Hanray's delivery. Miss Iris Hoey twittered and smiled archly as the Princess; while Mr. Eric Morgan, as the Ministry of Information, and Mr. John Clifford, as the Ministry of Labour (the two husbands whose death is accomplished in the play), made us devoutly grateful for "the Bluebeard touch." One could see possibilities in the idea, if only the Princess had limited her operations to bores; but one did wish that Mr. Francis Lister, as the cup-bearer, would have had enough pride, as a philosophic poet, to refuse to follow to the snare.

But in spite of the acting, it is not a play that is worth seeing twice. It has a few neat touches; for example, the Emperor announces that the Court will go into mourning for a minute and a half after the death of a husband, and one neat bit of business. The Ministry of Information dies on the strip of carpet before the throne, and when the order: "Remove the body": is given, carpet and corpse are pulled off together. But its inevitable repetitions, its general lack of significance, its lukewarm humour, suggest Laertes' "husbanding of means" so that "they shall go far with little." Yet it is possible, with a strongly contrasting play as makeweight, that it would take the fancy of a general audience; but it would require, I think, the same actors in the principal parts to make it a success. The Playwrights Theatre certainly manages to get better production and more finished performance than do most of the other subscription societies known to me, and some commercial productions as well. That is something to boast of.

Recent Verse.

BERTRAM LLOYD. The Great Kinship: an Anthology of Humanitarian Poetry. (Allen and Unwin. 8s. 6d. net.)

Before reading this volume one did not realise what a great proportion of modern poets have been conscious of their responsibility to the animal kingdom. Blake, Burns, Wordsworth, Shelley and Hugo come immediately to one's mind; but it is a temporary surprise to find Hebbel, de Vigny, Carducci, Swinburne, Arnold, Meredith, and a host of other poets included, and justifying their inclusion. Mr. Lloyd has restricted the field of selection to modern times. "Leaving aside altogether the great Eastern literatures," he says, "and confining ourselves to the Western world, it may be said at once that on the whole there is very little humanitarian verse . . . to be found until the last two or three centuries, but that from the eighteenth century onwards there has been a steady and rapid increase"—manifested most generously, it is good to note, in English literature. The decline of love for animals in the Middle Ages Mr. Lloyd attributes to "the rapid growth of official Christianity to power and dominion, its arrogant anthropocentricism, and utter lack of interest in the non-human creature," an attitude which has made Buddhists call Christendom "the hell of animals." The modern love for animals is the complement of the modern interest in animals; and Leonardo's saying that "great love is the child of great knowledge" is justified again. Yet in the poems in this volume there is hardly one sign af a clear comprehension of the function of animals in the world. Animals are pitied simply as creatures which suffer, and this mood inspires many of the most exquisite poems in the volume, such as Burns' "To a Mouse," and de Vigny's noble "La Mort du Loup." But Hebbel alone strikes a more profound note. Addressing "the beast," he says:

O thou art this harsh world's poor Caliban!
For thou hast shown to mankind each fair fruit
The earth brings forth, and thou hast made of Man
Thy God, and bowed thyself before him, mute.
To thee he owes e'en knowledge of the spring
Wherein he can renew his failing breath;
Yet since thy holy lamp, illumining
His path, first shone, eternal ban of death
He holdeth o'er thee—strange thank-offering!
This Being, æons since lost but for thee
(For thou didst guide him through that early night)
Rewardeth thee by every cruelty
His impulse may dictate—miscalled his Right.

This is more poignant than the other poems because it is more tragic, envisaging for a moment the whole tremendous drama of animal life on the earth. In the notes at the end of the book—which are almost the most interesting part of it—one or two illuminating entries from Hebbel's diary are given. "In the beast," he says, "Nature, helpless and naked, seems to confront man, saying, 'I have done so much for you; what are you doing for me?'" And again, "The beast was man's first teacher; in return for this man 'trains' the beast." These sentences might serve as the starting point of an inquiry which the modern world has still to make, which the scientific demonstration of the animal kingdom's part in evolution leaves it no choice but to make: that is, to discover how it should feel and act towards animals. One of the most feeling passages in the volume is Mr. Watts Dunton's description of a seagull which he found crippled and blinded by shot on the Norfolk coasts. "The poor bird was blind," he said, "and from the darkness it was listening to the beloved music of the sea." The account of the incidents from which the poems originated, given in the notes, is invariably more moving than the poems themselves. Mr. Scawen Blunt has the most sardonic couplet in the collection:

Assassins find accomplices. Man's merit
Has found him three, the hawk, the hound, the ferret.

LILLYGAY: An Anthology of Anonymous Poems. (The Vine Press, Steyning. 5s. net.)

The character of this collection of ballads and songs is prejudiced by a very precious "Prologue" and a very silly "Colophon." "Songs of ripe-lipped love and of honey-coloured laughter," said the first, "old lamps for new; ancient lights. . . . The rainbow and the waterfall, the waving Tree and the flaming Sword are one with Man, and these songs are songs of his soul," Is that very much to say? And the "Colophon" gives out at the end the most meretricious fumes that new lamps could throw off:

Pale lilies throned in silver jars
White stars in red-gold skies,
Slim olivine wild nenuphars
Blowing broad melodies.

Who would expect to find ushered in and dismissed in this fashion:

Burd Ellen sits in her bower windowe,
With a double laddy double, and for the double dow,
Twisting the red silk and the blue,
With the double rose and the May-hay.

or:

The gypsies cam' to our gude Lord's gate,
And wow! but they sang sweetlie;
They sang sae sweet and sae very complete
That doun cam'e the fair ladie—

or:

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Everie nighte and alle,
Fire, and sleete, and candle-lighte,
And Christe receive thy soule.

These are not "pale lilies throned in silver jars," but, if we must be forced into a sentimental phraseology, wild flowers. And they have been judiciously picked and deftly arranged, in a studied disorder which makes them give out their characteristic fragrance. There is something repellent in a collection of ballads arranged so ruthlessly, so statistically, as those in "The Oxford Book of English Ballads"—which, by the way, are mainly Scottish. We do not enjoy even the most beautiful of them as we should, when we find them conscripted into a position where their presence is almost a duty. The compiler of "Lillygay" has avoided this peril; he has managed to put his ballads in an order which is not expected, and the very surprise is a source of pleasure. His selection is daring; to include "Sick Dick," a richly comic drama of inebriety, is rash, but it comes off. There is only one objection to be made to his general choice; he should not have included "The Lyke Wake Dirge" in a collection mainly of romantic, gay and erotic poetry. It is too grand, too terrible, for such company. But on the whole, in substance, in arrangement, in production, the book is delightful. The woodcuts are quaint and unobtrusive.

SWIFT WINGS: SONGS IN SUSSEX. (The Vine Press, Steyning. 6s. net.)

It is a pity that so much good craftsmanship in production should have been wasted on such poor verse. To live up to the paper and the type would be difficult for any living poet; and the anonymous author of this volume is never within sight of his task. He begins, moreover, with one of the worst verses in the book:

Lithe shall be your lover;
Blithe shall be your breast;
How your heart shall hover
When your breast is prest!

The book convinces one that to be successfully meretricious requires talent and hard work; for while the author aims at the meretricious he never attains it. Everything is amateurish:

Wind on wild waters! Dreams in the dusk!
Bud-stars under the snow!
Grey and chill are amber and musk,
But the red heart cries below!

This cannot be criticised.

E. M.

Views and Reviews.

GRAND GUIGNOL HISTORY—V.

MRS. WEBSTER's general argument that the French Revolution proceeded "according to plan" may be countered by the evidence of a reliable contemporary witness. George Hammond, who afterwards became Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, wrote from Paris on March 25, 1791, to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs as follows :

No party in the National Assembly seems to be actuated by an adherence to a regular, well-defined system, which is, I think, pretty clearly proved by the contradictory decrees that are every day issuing out to answer the emergency of the moment, and even if there was a system, there does not appear to be any man of abilities so transcendent, or of patriotism so unsuspected, as to be capable of giving direction and energy to the movements of any compact *concentrated* body of individuals. This is a circumstance which separates the French Revolution from every preceding one in every other country, and renders it impossible to discover a clue to the present and future operations of that body, in whom all authority is at present centered.

Mrs. Webster (p. 31) on the other hand declares :

To whatever agency we attribute it, however, the mechanism of the French Revolution distinguishes it from all previous revolutions. Hitherto the isolated revolutions that had taken place throughout the history of the world can be clearly recognised as spontaneous movements brought about by oppression or by a political faction enjoying some measure of popular support, and therefore endeavouring to satisfy the demands of the people. But in the French Revolution we see for the first time that plan in operation which has been carried on right up to the present moment—*the systematic attempt to create grievances in order to exploit them.**

It is strange that a correspondent of the British Government, which, like every other European Government, had received from the Bavarian Government a copy of "The Original Writings of the Order of the Illuminati," could not see what is so clear to Mrs. Webster. The external history ought to be capable of correlation with the secret doctrines, if the one was the effect of the other; but as I have shown, there is flat contradiction between them. At the very least, one would suppose that with 266 lodges controlled by the Grand Orient, "illuminised" by March, 1789, there would have been a considerable body of, say, Republicans, following the precedent of America; but Desmoulins tells us that "there were perhaps ten of us republicans in Paris on July 12, 1789. These Republicans were for the most part young men, who, nourished on the study of Cicero at college, were thereby impassioned in the cause of liberty." The difficulty of making things fit seems insuperable.

To come to Babeuf. "The Reign of Terror," we are told, "was not only the outcome of Illuminism, but also the logical result of Socialistic doctrines." Robespierre, the Illuminatus, failed to carry it out successfully; Babeuf, the Illuminatus, tried again. The purpose of the Reign of Terror, we are told (p. 45), was to reduce the population of France either by one-third or to one-third. But instead of killing either eight or sixteen millions of people, the highest estimate of the number of victims that I can find in this book is that of Babeuf, who gives one million as the figure. Prudhomme gives 300,000 as the total number of victims, drowned, shot, or guillotined, all over France; while the only authentic figures, as distinct from estimates, are those quoted by Mrs. Webster from the register of the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris, which shows that about 2,800 of the people of Paris perished.

But what is the evidence that Babeuf was an Illuminatus? He never said so, of course; but at his trial he made this statement (p. 71) :—

I attest that they do me too much honour in decorating me with the title of head of this affair. I declare that I had only a secondary and limited part in it. . . . The heads and the leaders needed a director of public opinion, I was in the position to enlist it.

Mrs. Webster comments :

Who were the mysterious chiefs referred to by Babeuf? The Illuminati? The Order, we know, was still active and co-operated with the society of the Philadelphes, which, according to Lombard de Langres, secretly directed the Babouviste conspiracy.

But one moment. We know, because Mrs. Webtser has told us (p. 25), that the Illuminati were suppressed in 1786 by the Government of Bavaria; we know (p. 28) that by March, 1789, the 266 lodges of the Grand Orient were "illuminised" without knowing it, and that at least until March, 1791, no plan of any sort could be distinguished in the progress of the Revolution; we know (p. 34) that according to Robison the Jacobin Clubs "were organised by the revolutionary committees under the direct inspiration of the Bavarian Illuminati," and that during 1791 and 1792 (p. 34) all the "illuminised" "masonic lodges were closed down and Philippe Egalité sent in his resignation as Grand Master." When, then, did the Illuminati begin again?

We find Babeuf (p. 52) sent to gaol at the beginning of the Terror for "publishing a placard accusing the Comité de Salut Public of a plan to drive the people to revolt by means of a fictitious famine and so provide a pretext for killing them off." He was soon afterwards released, and "once more proceeded to attack the party in power, which was no other than that of Robespierre, Couthon, and Saint-Just." In the interests of sanity, I suggest that either Babeuf or Robespierre could not have been Illuminati at this period, and the Order could not have been active; if it were, either these conflicts would not have arisen, or we must believe that the whole secret society system, with its unhesitating obedience to orders issued by unknown superiors, is simply bunkum. After the fall of Robespierre, Babeuf transferred his opposition to the Directory, and declared (p. 53) that "the only hope for the people now lay in carrying out the unfinished plan of Robespierre for 'the common happiness.'" He declared that Robespierre was the one "pure" revolutionary of his day; and as Mrs. Webster (p. 36) tells us that "amongst all the revolutionary leaders one man alone stands out as a pure Illuminatus—the Prussian Baron Anacharsis Clootz," we must conclude that there is an indescribable difference between a pure revolutionary and a pure Illuminatus.

Babeuf called upon the people "to rise against the Directory and maintain the Constitution of 1793, founded on Robespierre's 'Declaration of the Rights of Man.'" For this he was thrown into gaol; "but while in captivity he encountered a number of kindred spirits, with whose co-operation he was able to mature his plan for a further revolution—a social revolution for 'the common happiness and true equality'" (p. 53). But if the Illuminati were still active, and secretly directed the Babouviste conspiracy, as Mrs. Webster (p. 71) says "we know," why should Babeuf (p. 54) have to "gather his fellow-conspirators around him and form an association on masonic lines by which propaganda was to be carried on in public places, the confederates recognising each other by secret signs and passwords"? Why, too, should they have begun with huge meetings of 2,000 people in the crypt of the Abbey near the Panthéon, and only later was it "decided to supplement these huge assemblies by small secret committees"? The Illuminati, we were told, began as a secret society, and only later blossomed into the open Jacobin clubs; Babeuf began with a sort of Jacobin club, and resorted to a secret society when Napoleon shut up the Pan-

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

théon. Why should Babeuf then have to form " a 'Secret Directorate,' the workings of which bear a curious resemblance to those of the Illuminati," if the Illuminati were active and directing his conspiracy? Mrs. Webster, like Aladdin, is always offering us "new lamps for old"; and every puff seems to blow out the light of Illuminism.

A. E. R.

Reviews.

The Captives: A Novel in Four Parts. By Hugh Walpole. (Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.)

Four hundred and seventy pages of minutely detailed description of people who, in real life, would be accepted or ignored without comment. Mr. Walpole's skill is chiefly exercised in keeping us interested and expectant; but he does not satisfy the expectation. He seems to be describing a conflict between religion and what we may call human nature, without any real sense of religion. He describes the chapel, he describes the congregation, he even gives us one or two "revivalist" sermons—but it is practically impossible to understand what he means by religion. Thurston, his charlatan preacher, says to Martin: "You're a religious man really—can't escape your destiny, you know. There's religions and non-religions, and it doesn't matter what your creed is, whether you're a Christian or a 'Ottentot, there it is. And if you're religious, you're religious. I may be the greatest humbug on the market, but I'm religious. It's like 'aving a 'are lip—you'll be bothered with it all your life." But what is "religious"? Thurston here seems to be hinting that it is a power of self-judgment by reference to an undetermined standard, a faculty for putting oneself in the wrong for no other apparent reason than that one is so constituted. But as he reveals it in himself, it is a desire for an audience which likes to be put in the wrong, which he despises for its willingness to be put in the wrong; in his case, it is the will to power over people whom a self-respecting man would rather not have power over. These revivalist sermons begin with an elaborate accusation of well-nigh all the vices directed at the audience, continue with a powerful assertion of the awful things that God will do to them, and conclude with the usual exhortation to repentance. Every member of the audience believes that everything that is said is true of everybody else, and appreciates the fact that not only salvation but condemnation is free, "collection at the door." Practically, his " religion" is a liking for these general accusations and threats; the Anglican Church begins at the other end, with a general confession of sinfulness; but both agree in inducing a bad conscience which they profess to be able to cure, just as the veterinary surgeon wanted to give Mark Twain blind staggers before he could cure him. Mr. Walpole quite obviously does not believe in this religion that he describes; he nowhere reveals any sense of its reality for his characters; he always gives proximate causes for their actions or their sense of "captivity." The house is damp, the aunt suffers from cancer, there is deliberate exclusion of everything pertaining to the life that people live, there is definite and deliberate circumscription of physical and mental activity. The girl calls this "being religious," and wants to break away from it; actually, the conflict is between passive and active life. It is wrong to be energetic, it is wrong to be self-reliant, it is wrong to put things to the test, to believe in people—whereas the fact is that it is simply laziness not to do these things, a cultivated ignorance of life pretending to superior knowledge of it. In spite of Mr. Walpole's skill in description, we are disappointed; there is no real conflict in his book to be resolved except that between boredom and activity. Whether Maggie is married to a man she does not love, or is in love with a man she does not marry, is not a question of supernal importance; Mr. Walpole's curious aloofness produces the impression of studying very ordinary people under the microscope. We see them, but have not the clue to their behaviour; and he describes violent, shocking things with an almost placid, matter-of-fact acceptance of them.

The Chartered Millions: Rhodesia and the Challenge to the British Commonwealth. By John H. Harris. (The Swarthmore Press. 15s. net.)

We can do no more, in these columns, than call attention to the publication of this book, which gives, in the author's words, "a plain record of the facts, which it is hoped will be pondered in official circles, by the Company's Directors and Shareholders, and by the public, in the hope that justice will be done where injustice is established—that amends will be made where they are possible. . . . The immediate necessity for this publication arises from the various claims which the British South Africa Company has set up against the British Crown, the Rhodesian settlers and the native tribes inhabiting the territories south of the Zambesi." It was claimed on behalf of the Chartered Company before a Board of Special References of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council that, "the whole of the land not already alienated to white settlers, that is the 70,000,000 acres, was their absolute property; that they had 'consistently maintained and asserted that the unalienated land of Southern Rhodesia was its (the Company's) property, and that it had the right to deal with it as it thought fit.' " The Crown, the white settlers, and the natives opposed this claim. Their Lordships' Report (not technically a judgment) was delivered on July 29, 1918, by Lord Sumner; and the author thus summarises its effect: "first, that legal title to the land reposed in the Crown as paramount in succession to Lobengula; second, that the Company completely lost its claim to commercial ownership upon which for over twenty years it had proceeded. The white settlers received but scant return for their efforts whilst the advantage to the natives was potentially incalculable in that by the decision they found themselves under the British Crown as trustee in succession to Lobengula. There was thus presented to the Crown, for the first time since the granting of the Royal Charter, the fullest opportunity to at last deal, if not handsomely, then at least justly, with the Mashonas and Matabele tribes, so cruelly wronged for a period of twenty years." But we have not yet done with the Company; for, failing to prove title to Rhodesia, they are claiming re-imbursement of administrative charges on the plea of agency, which claim is now being considered by Lord Cave's commission. It would seem that people who had no right to administer claim to be re-imbursed for the costs of administration, in addition to what profits they may have made from their illegal activities in the country. They dragged us into a war against the Matabele (Mr. Harris shows us how "Imperialists" prepare a casus belli), they have certainly intensified the native problem in South Africa by dispossessing 800,000 natives of their lands and cattle, they are setting up claims which, as Mr. Harris says, "are without precedent in British Colonial history, and affect, ultimately, not merely British Colonial statecraft in South Africa, not merely administrative policy in every British colony, but the traditions and principles upon which the British Empire has been erected"— and they are asking us to pay them for it. The intricacies of the case and its reactions must be studied in Mr. Harris's book; but it is a chapter of history that should make us ashamed, and fearful of the future if the injustice done is not repaired.

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