

THE NEW AGE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE game of "will you, won't you, join the dance" appears to possess an infectious fascination for politicians. The Premier and the Labour leaders have been playing it over unemployment, with as fine an eye for every possibility of getting at cross-purposes as was displayed by both sides over the Irish Conference. As we do not consider that Labour has anything worthy to be called a policy on this issue, we cannot profess any great interest in the question of how far it can safely "co-operate" with the Government and the employers on the matter. But if it had a real policy, and one radically different in principle from the official programme, it ought to seize every opportunity of publicly discussing the issues with the other side. There is no more effective way of demonstrating the soundness of one's own position than by criticising that of one's opponents—that is, if one's position is sound. Perhaps it is a secret doubt on this head that makes Labour so reluctant to discuss any alternative policy. Further, if it had felt sure of itself, it might quite well have provisionally joined an advisory committee along with representatives of capital—announcing plainly that it would resign from it if the committee failed to agree on a policy which it could sincerely accept. However, we are gravely suspicious of the motives and objects of political Labour in the whole business; and Mr. Henderson does not tend to reassure us when he states that "the present national emergency emphasises the importance of everything possible being done to ensure the success of Labour at the next general election." Evidently to exploit such an emergency with a view to extracting from it the utmost possible electoral capital is not compatible with striving for the best possible immediate solution of the problem. If the present Government were, by any strange chance, to solve it, it would necessarily prove the deadliest blow to the Labour Party's hopes at the polls. Meanwhile the unemployed are throwing the London police authorities into a state of something like panic.

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A very sinister plot is on foot, emanating from the Federation of British Industries. It is adumbrated in a memorandum approved by the Executive Committee and submitted to the Prime Minister. This urges (very rightly) that the Cunliffe policy, committing us to a protracted period of deflation, should be reconsidered. Yes, but by whom? Sir Peter Rylands gave

the answer in a "watch that space" speech at Glasgow the day before the launching of the memorandum. He urged the calling by the Federation of "a conference of some prominent bankers and financial experts." In keeping with this his Executive has appointed a special committee to consider the memorandum in consultation with "other interests" (that is, evidently, the banking and financial interests). As British policy in the matter could not be decided apart from that of other countries, and as, for an indefinite period, universal agreement could not be hoped for, "one or more of the other great commercial Powers" should be approached. This little financial Entente could then "impose a common currency policy on the world." The means suggested thereto throw a flood of light on the powers which cosmopolitan finance can wield. Withholding of credits, manipulation of existing national debts, reparations payments; if necessary, an economic boycott—such are the weapons in the armoury. It is a pleasant little scheme; a secret conclave of industrial magnates and financiers are to formulate a policy for this country (it is apparently taken for granted that the Government will accept it); then the Government is to secure a powerful ally or two, and finance is to be set free to impose by overwhelming economic force its will on all the other countries, particularly on the "small nations." It was rather cynical perhaps to publish the plot so openly beforehand. The general lines of the policy to be thus forced on a reluctant world are what they would be, emanating from such a quarter—cessation of inflation, balancing of budgets, and arising out of these, stabilisation of currencies and "re-anchoring them to gold." There is only one way of defeating this dangerous conspiracy. We must have a public inquiry by a Commission representing all the interests concerned, including Labour and, above all, the ordinary consumer. If the people want it, they can have it, and if they are half alive to what is going on, they must inevitably want it.

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As regards our own home policy, the F.B.I. manifesto is little more than a barrel of red herrings. "The balancing of budgets" figures prominently. We do not desire to see budgets balanced. As long as the deficit is not made up by raising a loan at interest, but is simply left unbalanced, this would be a beginning of the policy to which (or to disaster) we must come, the abolition of "taxation" (in the ordinary sense). As fresh paper to the amount of the deficit would have to be printed, this of course means inflation. But that would

do no harm (indeed very much the reverse), if prices were simultaneously regulated. And that is a proposal towards which so many considerations converge, that no line of policy whatever can succeed without it. The memorandum urges an "immediate and substantial reduction of direct taxation." That is all right, as far as it goes. But no explanation is suggested as to how this is to be done. Only two alternatives seem to be left open by the terms of the document, either indirect taxation, which is a little worse even than direct, or wholesale "Economy," which is a particularly vicious form of social sabotage. The memorandum does make one sound proposal—a lowering of the Bank rate with a view to stimulate trade expansion. But this is a little difficult to reconcile with the great emphasis on the cessation of inflation, and ought again to be accompanied by regulation of prices, if it is not to prove an expensive benefit. But the two lines in quack remedies which the Federation are chiefly pushing are emigration within the Empire, and cost-reduction. What a shameless abdication of their responsibilities on the part of our public men, that they should be so ready to proclaim that they can find no way to provide for our population in their fatherland! (Was there not a war-poster, depicting a typical English country-side, with the inscription "Is not this worth fighting for"?) Yet our national estate is barely half developed (witness the more than 1,000,000 acres gone out of wheat cultivation since 1919), and we have unemployed men and plant everywhere. We have not yet come within the most distant sight of a *real* "pressure of the population against the means of subsistence." Under the other head, the memorandum insists on further capital development; but this "requires time to effect," and "the expenditure of capital which the war, present taxation, and the diminution of the world's capital resources will render extraordinarily difficult to supply." The immediate contribution therefore (it is discreetly implied) must come from the Labour side. There is an air of curious detachment in the coldly impartial demand for "either an increased efficiency of labour, or decreased remuneration without a decrease in efficiency." What these people are capable of is shown by a kite that has been flown, forecasting an allotment, apparently quite unconditional, of 12 millions to the Banks, "who will act as agents for the Government" in granting export credits. The "Evening Standard" very naturally remarks that "the placing of public money in the hands of private firms, over which Parliament has no control, is an unprecedented step." We hope it will continue to be so.

Sir Peter Rylands, in his Glasgow address, betrayed a typical inability to make up his mind whether he wanted people to consume less and concentrate on production, or to consume more in order to stimulate production. He declared that "another direction in which some relief might be found would be provided by an increase in the purchasing-power of the community." That sounds very promising. But then he finished up by insisting that "first and foremost, they must have the strictest and most rigid economy in the Government and among the people." Now a Government department, however useless in itself or however over-staffed, does at least serve as an agency for distributing purchasing-power. Of course, it would be far better to employ superfluous civil servants at once in some productive way. But simply to scrap such a department, when you have no method to suggest of immediately reviving industry, can have no effect except to reduce demand still further and thus to intensify the problem. Similarly self-defeating is economy on the part of private persons. If an increase of purchasing-power is desirable, it necessarily follows that it is equally desirable that people should use to the full such purchasing-power as they have. Yet this confusion of mind meets us at every turn. Everywhere "Economy"

is preached without limit; and yet many of its preachers themselves go about lamenting that our customers cannot afford to buy our goods, or complaining of a "strike of consumers." And these are the very people who are always setting up as heaven-sent instructors of the working-class in "economic laws."

The Labour and Socialist movement is undoubtedly awakening to the supreme importance of credit. A curious instance of this is afforded by the "Guild Socialist." Last month it editorially swept the matter aside as a *chose jugée* for the National Guilds League, with all the pontifical obscurantism for which, on a memorable occasion some five years ago, Mr. G. D. H. Cole hurled a Pygmalionesque epithet at the Fabians. This month it prints without a comment a remarkable article on industrial maintenance. The writer lays down that two things are essential, the payment of wages during unemployment, and that the money so issued should not be absorbed by a rise of prices. He concludes that the first necessitates the public control of credit, and the second the control of prices in the public interest. Except that we do not like the term "public" control, this describes accurately the two heads of a sane policy. Again, the "Labour Leader" devotes the whole of its front page and some of its second to a letter on "The Great Money Mystery," raising the question, "Is communal control of credit the key to present problems?" The writer does not appear to have completely made up his mind, but he poses the issues with great clearness and ability. He refers expressly to the writings of Mr. C. H. Douglas and to THE NEW AGE. The most gratifying feature of the incident is that the Editor invites correspondence on the subject.

The "American Review of Reviews" has a startlingly outspoken article on the Washington Conference. The writer points out with commendable frankness that it is a question of foreign markets. And special circumstances have practically reduced these to China. "There is not enough purchasing power to go round, not enough market for all that the world can produce; and if our products are sold, those of Britain and Japan will remain unsold and British and Japanese labourers must starve or migrate." "We have invited the Japanese to discuss with us what is for them a matter of life and death." The article appears to hold out no hope whatever. If we accept as unchangeable our present economic methods, what hope indeed can there be? The article appears to take these for granted as though they were laws of nature. But on the writer's own showing, it is merely a question of distribution. He traces the trouble to the very ease with which super-abundant production can be brought about. That the nations best equipped for production should starve, just because the world as a whole is so amply stored with all the needs of human life, or with the means of instantly supplying these, is, one would have thought, too grotesque a situation to be endured. Surely the nations must see the obvious way out, before the crash comes. And yet, will they?

Ill fortune seems to dog all efforts to smooth the way towards the Conference. How explosive the situation really is, is revealed by the tense nervousness on this side as to the possible effects of the clumsy, but evidently inadvertent, official blundering over General Pershing's tribute to the Unknown Warrior. And now it seems doubtful whether our delegation will appear in full strength in time for the official opening of the Conference. In such an electric atmosphere an incident of this kind might have the most serious effects. The graver economic causes of quarrel, too, lie always very near the surface. The jealous suspicion on these matters, which prevails on both sides of the Atlantic, is continually betraying itself. The very same material is turned into a ground of complaint on both sides.

Thus eminently pacific sections in America have been bitterly complaining of an alleged sinister twist given, in our interests, by English influences to the policy of the United States Shipping Board. Yet immediately on the top of this comes the announcement of the Board's decision to grant American coal-exporters the use of their unemployed ships, on "bare-boat" terms, for a purely nominal charge. It is doubtful indeed how far this constitutes any real threat to British shipping interests. Yet there is plenty of opinion on this side, ready to seize on it instantly as a deliberate and "unfair" attempt to undercut us. So abundant will occasions of war always be, should the deeper causes which sway the world-situation sweep us into a direct confrontation with America. They are living in a fool's paradise who, on purely sentimental grounds, declare that war between the two nations is out of the question. It is the dominating, if silent, question of the whole world at this very moment.

* * *

Those elements in the Churches, which demonstrated on behalf of social justice in Hyde Park last July, have now followed this up by a well-attended indoor meeting. It is difficult to say whether any particular good ever comes of this sort of thing. The obvious comment on the affair was, "This is not getting us anywhere." Bishop Gore seemed to feel the futility of the present Christian Social movement; "and yet nothing happens," he pathetically exclaimed. He promised to end with a practical suggestion, but it proved to be merely a scheme for linking up, and organising locally, the elements of goodwill. That could only lead to a further expansion of this mass of admittedly ineffective idealism. There are amply enough people already, with the right moral attitude and with any amount of emotional intensity, to get something big done, if the reforming zeal could be linked up to a sound practical programme. At the moment what is chiefly needed is common sense and economic realism. Far more good would be done by an intellectual enlightenment of those who already are morally converted than by any amount of increased output of changed hearts. The problem is as purely technical a one as a main drainage system. That does not mean that it is not also a moral and religious one. Kingsley and his colleagues thought that drains had a great deal to do with the Kingdom of God. But to think and teach that the economic problem will be solved merely by everyone trying to behave in a thoroughly Christian way to his neighbours, is to class oneself with those who used to try to fight plagues with litanies and Processions of the Host. The other speakers at the demonstration were not much more helpful. Father Vincent Macnabb could only recommend "Back to the Land." It is true that any sound reconstruction must involve an enormous development of our agriculture, but obviously we cannot all go back to the land. If the proletariat simply desert the factories for the fields, most of them must either emigrate or starve; probably very large numbers of them would do the latter. The Roman Catholic Mayor of Greenwich undertook to address himself to a practical programme. He wished to "abolish the capitalist system." He did not explain what he considered to be the essence of capitalism; but he appeared to have in mind the abolition of all personal ownership of capital and of the individual employer. He did not explain how this was to be done; and in the end he found himself compelled to hand over the responsibility to the theologians of the various communions, whom he implored to come together and draft a programme. Miss Margaret Bondfield took a shorter cut. She roundly claimed that every Christian must be in favour of crude Socialism or Communism. That is the old fallacy of the "either-or of the abstract understanding"—the prevailing vice of the Labour mentality. She even demanded that every member of the Churches should be also a member of the Labour Party.

On Foreign Affairs.

By Hilaire Belloc.

VI.

We have stated the necessity and value of giving educated Englishmen an educated daily Press such as the Continent enjoys.

That, and perhaps that alone, would stop the rot in foreign policy.

Very well, what are the obstacles to the foundation of such a Press? We all know them: the whole of this social activity has come, through being competitive and commercial, to the following state. An English newspaper is produced at the expense of good paper—much better paper than any of its Continental contemporaries. Then there is good clear printing—much better printing than any of its Continental contemporaries; there is a great mass of matter, "acreage" as it may be called: five, six, or ten times more than you will find in any of its Continental contemporaries. The paper and the printing have nothing to do with the intellectual matter expressed, but they will influence even the best judgment. Good paper and good printing would seem to connote something great, at any rate something better than bad paper and bad printing. The size also has its effect, comically dissociated though such a factor is from any question of intellectual merit.

With these conditions the New Press which I am assuming could not compete. The modern big London newspaper costs a great deal more to produce than the sum for which it is sold. The difference—and the profits—are made up by popular advertisement. Popular advertisement is of service only in very large circulations, appealing to the great mass of the people who do not, and never will, care about the realities of the world outside their own country; or at least, never will care for it so long as Europe remains divided and bereft of a common religion, as it now is. The experiment which I suggest would have no such economic basis. Its first daily newspaper would necessarily be restricted in "acreage." It would have to use cheap paper. Its presentation as a sheet, its printing and arrangement would not be as good as that of those whose object is a large, quite uninstructed, circulation, and who, to do them justice, show great talent in securing the same.

The problem is to produce a daily sheet which shall sell, say, 10,000 copies at the very most, at 2d., and the cost of production of which would not be more than 2d., a copy. The thing could be done, as it is done all over the rest of the European world, *if*—and in that "if" lies the whole crux—there is an educated public large enough to provide even so limited a circulation.

We have it to-day, of course, in the case of two or three weekly newspapers, comparatively high-priced, often in acute financial difficulties, and appealing to small though powerful chapels. These weeklies are *The Free Press* (and the only *Free Press*) in England to-day. *THE NEW AGE* is of them. They alone to-day in England give an educated view of the world; they do not merely drone and repeat, they influence opinion; they correspond to the *daily* European organs which have such great political effect abroad. But they appear at too long intervals. What we now want is a *daily* Press of the same sort.

The difficulty of getting the necessary circulation for it is, I take it, fourfold.

1. The expense of marketing under modern conditions. You must let people know that a thing exists, or they cannot get it; and you must have enough momentum behind the sale to make the middleman handle it. It must be a sale regular enough to be worth his while—and that is a difficult matter when dealing with small amounts, for modern distribution in large towns is organised for bulk.

2. The difficulty of educating even an informed public to the presentation of ideas and news worth having in a mean form: for a mean form it would have to be.

3. The crowd of special difficulties which the Free Press now finds attached to it even in its weekly form; difficulties legal, social, and political, but especially legal. Telling the truth on public affairs is a danger carefully watched by the lawyer politicians, and when they can manage it such indiscretion is punished in forms which destroy the truth-teller by large fines or damages, and even by terrorising through criminal proceedings. Further, a paper of this sort would suffer the difficulty of a rigid boycott. Again, in such a society as ours, where educated men confine their remarks to conversation, and may not discuss real public interests in the popular Press for fear of giving away the show, a breach of that convention spiritually handicaps those who are compelled to break it for the sake of truth and of serious discussion. There is a personal boycott as well as a Press boycott.

4. Lastly, and in my opinion most formidable of all, is this difficulty; the fact that in the beginnings of such a movement you necessarily appeal to strong conviction, and therefore a very limited body of readers. That is a difficulty which the free weekly Press has felt, and can amply testify to on this paper, THE NEW AGE, and on all others of the same sort. Not the boycott, not the threat of legal persecution, not even the economic difficulty, nor the dread of breaking convention is so formidable a handicap, as this handicap of what I have called "The Chapels." Educated men, dealing with serious matters, proceed to judgment. What they have to say is necessarily strongly coloured, as is the corresponding conversation.

But in conversation one has discussion. Every day I have occasion to speak of what is happening in Europe with my fellows, to hear the news, and to give and hear *judgment* upon that news. But the process is not one of spouting, it is not a monologue, it is a clash of opinion and information, critical and creative. A says, "This is the state of affairs in Berlin; I have just come from it." B says, "I was there not so long ago, and I got this different impression. C supports B with a piece of news unknown to either A or B. D inclines, but no more than inclines, to the opinion of A, and brings in corroborative news, not from Berlin but from the Foreign Office. E, in some other conversation, later in the day and elsewhere, confirms, by accident, this new piece of evidence, and so on. At the end of the process, and by the multiplication of such processes, the people who are in touch with European things get a general view. A fairly sound general impression is produced for *them*. I could, for instance, point to fifty informed people who said, privately, when Weygand went to Warsaw that it was all up with Bolshevism: though all our financial Press was shouting that the Jewish Soviets would be in Warsaw at once. And apart from accurate convictions and judgment, there is all the wealth of approximate judgment, and of judgment in suspense but well informed. But this information on Europe only works for to-day, in London, through conversations and for a very few. The Press read by their fellows of less opportunity, and forming for these the sole source of judgment, is worthless.

Now, unfortunately, the first experiment in the way of a new Press, such as I have described, must necessarily be of the monological type. You do not get the clash of opinions and the formative and creative results therefrom until many organs have come into existence. In Europe they have long existed. Thus in France a man will read the "Action Française" and also the "Humanité," and if he is wise, many another sheet, and between them he learns what is toward. He does the same thing in Italy; he does the same thing in Germany. If ever an informed and educated Press re-rose in this country, it could only be of

general value when a number of disputants and informers were present; and yet—that is the paradox of the situation—the first experiment would have to be addressed to a chapel.

None the less, I think the thing could be done, and that with very little capital.

I would suggest for difficulty (1) the obtaining a solid subscription list as a basis. That is what corresponding organisations do abroad. The numbers who would so subscribe in this country are less because our social customs are different. We used to have a good Press which was purchased in detail everywhere; and that advantage, now lost, has weakened the habit of subscription. Nevertheless, I think the thing could be done.

(2) Is a difficulty the strength of which could only be proved by trial. Either the absence of "acreage" and the rest of it will be too strong for our present habits, even amongst educated men—or it will not—I mean too strong at the inception of the experiment. Once the habit is formed of reading a good newspaper with indifference to its bad quality of material and printing, that quality passes almost unperceived. When I read a well-written article in the "Idea Nazionale" in Italy, or in the "Humanité" in Paris, or get the translation of one from the "Red Flag" or the "Frankfort Gazette" amongst the Germans, or when I read an article on foreign affairs in the "Temps," or one of those powerful political essays by Maurras in the "Action," I am quite indifferent to the bad paper and the indifferent printing, and still more indifferent to the size of the sheet. But that is the result of habit. When I was a young man the Continental Press seemed to me ridiculous because it was badly printed on small sheets of flimsy paper. It was not until I had experience of the world and discovered how useful the reading could be to me, that I overcame that prejudice, which I now find to have wholly disappeared. This difficulty is simply a matter for trial. People will accept the drawback or they will not. If they will not, of course the experiment will fail.

(3) The group of difficulties under the third heading is more formidable, especially the legal difficulty peculiar to this country, with its aristocratic tradition of political judges, whereby the criticism of public men is not only criminal, but made economically as difficult as possible by the threat of confiscation. The other difficulties—those concerning convention and the boycott and the rest of it—are also formidable; but it must be remembered that the free Press in its weekly form has taken the measure, after some fifteen years' of experience, of all that group. We feel the restrictions, of course; we have to be perpetually on our guard; we have to limit what we say and think twice over every sentence, lest some awkward truth should lead to the suppression of the paper by the politicians and by capitalists through their lawyers on the Bench. But we know pretty well by this time how to deal with that difficulty in our present Free *weekly* Press, and we could deal with it, I think, in a daily one. We can also hope for a circulation precariously maintained, in spite of the difficulties of distribution and the rest of it; and we know, what is a great comfort, the enormous effect of truth even expressed upon this scale, and the comparative insufficiency of the boycott. That we have amply proved. These articles (for instance) will not be quoted in the Capitalist Press. The boycott will work. But I shall find their very phrases repeated in a dozen bewildered articles: for though the Free Press is not quoted, it is read and copied.

(4) With the fourth difficulty I have already dealt, save in one particular, and that is the question of capital. I suggest that the capital required is small and could easily be estimated thus. You would plan a *format* deliberately restricted and get prices for paper which you would deliberately choose for its cheapness; for your printing bill you would get an estimate. You

would—as is done now in the weekly Free Press—cut down editorial expenses to a minimum, trusting on free copy for a large amount of your space; lastly (a heavy item) you would have the agency subscription for news—but it would need careful selection.

Let all this come to so much for a given unit of time. Your capital must cover *all* that sum, without trusting to any receipts at all. Then, and then only, are you safe. But you can make your time-unit as short as you please to suit your capital.

Next you tout for and obtain some kind of subscription list as a basis. Advertisement subsidy you must deliberately rule *out*. You would announce that the experiment was for one year or six months, or whatever the length of your time-unit might be, and that would depend on your capital. You would also announce your programme, for you would have to be an organ not of mere information, but also of judgment, as the "New Witness" and THE NEW AGE, for example, show. You must have an editorial policy, and an editorial policy must be defined and therefore combative.

On such a basis you would find that the paper, without a single advertisement, would cost so much to produce, and would bring in on such and such a circulation such and such a sum of money. It is essential that, no matter what the sacrifice in paper and general appearance, the cost of production for your estimated (and later ascertained) sale should be *less* than the selling price of 2d. You would have, of course, to go about the affair as the Free weekly Press now does, without hope of earning interest, let alone profit, but, on the other hand, you must not sell at a loss, for if you do, the more you sell the more you fail. You might form very low estimates for a small paper of this sort, so printed and presented, and it is the experience of all of us that capital in these moderate sums is forthcoming in support of truth. I make the suggestion, therefore, knowing well that it is one made against odds and especial perils, because its articles would appeal to a very small number; but I propose that it is worth making, and certainly if a Free Daily Press could be established upon these lines it would be a definite and constructive step in reform, and the beginning at least of reaction against the deplorable situation to which we have fallen.

Money for Nothing.

There is absolutely no future for inefficiency as a cult. "The whole promise of a brighter, probably a very bright, future for the world lies in doing the best possible things in the best possible way."—MAJOR DOUGLAS in "Economic Democracy."

FROM the dingy dust-laden terminus the steady stream of workers sets City-wards. They are greeted by a blare of instruments, by which the unemployed blazon forth their distress to the world, demanding alms from those who may to-morrow share their sorry plight. To this dreary spectacle succeeds another—closely allied and equally indicative of the creaking of our social machinery. Gangs of road-makers are repairing the streets. To dislodge the worn stones, one man holds an iron bar in the interstices. With regular intermittent strokes three of his fellows bring down their heavy hammers on the bar, until their end is attained, and the stone is removed. In such wise the slaves may have worked on the Pyramids. From the bridge one may see the crane—man's arm lengthened and strengthened by his brain—raising huge weights from the lighters to the warehouses with meticulous accuracy. The contrast is striking and grievous. The delicate mechanism of four human bodies is wrenched and racked to move a

stone, while yonder machine swings gracefully round and performs a giant's task with the utmost ease.

But no one notices. The crane is there, embodying man's power to lift himself above debasing mechanical toil, but it speaks no message to the office worker trudging stolidly onwards to his dull prison, nor to the road-mender engaged in his brutalising labour, nor to the unemployed, who beg as to the manner born. Whatever may be their inward thoughts, no one betrays by any sign that any change is possible or even desirable. So servile is the prevailing psychology that it appears the people will bear any change imposed upon them from without, but have lost all power to transform their own circumstances. They have even lost the will. Passive endurance is the prevailing characteristic. Unemployment is accepted as a necessary evil; harassed by that dread nightmare, the majority ask nothing more than to go on.

Even those few who are led to question by the juxtaposition of the unemployed, the antiquated methods of the roadmen, and the scientific working of the crane, will find it difficult to get light. We are tangled in what Weininger called "organic lies." They are so deeply enwound in our lives that we cannot perceive them as lies. People are so unconscious of the sinister forces controlling their fates that they attempt to explain action in their own terms. Only to one who is familiar with Major Douglas's analysis of modern industry can these phenomena be intelligible. Why, with all the resources of modern science at hand, does man still toil like the slaves of ancient Eastern kings, or sink into the slough of unemployment? Why this eagerness to "make work"? Not even the most ardent upholder of the "inestimable advantages" of labour could maintain that such methods are anything but costly and inefficient. The result attained is totally incommensurate with the needs of the community. Humanity is like a fussy housewife, picking things up and laying them down, but neglecting to get the dinner ready.

Major Douglas explains this "elaboration of every action so as to involve the maximum quantity and the minimum efficiency in human effort" as due to the fact that if production stops, distribution stops also. In other words, if full use were made of all the known resources of science, there would not be enough work to go around, and as purchasing power is only distributed as payment for work, the people would starve unless they worked. Since "work" is thus made a condition of living, the wheels of industry are clogged by the unfit and inefficient. What matter that the expenditure of a little brain-power could turn out a mechanical contrivance which could break up the roadway in a better and more expeditious manner? At least the present method enables the man with the hammers to "earn" a living. But this is not an isolated instance. On every hand efficiency is sacrificed because the powers that control industry will grant purchasing power only in return for "work." And for all inefficiency the community has to pay.

To produce the fullest efficiency in any given work two things are necessary—a liking for it and a thorough knowledge of the method by which it is to be accomplished—in other words, natural aptitude and skill. Carried out under these conditions, the work done fulfils a double objective, satisfying both to the community and the individual—it renders the world more habitable and it gives scope to the creative faculties. This may well seem visionary on looking round at the distasteful and uncongenial tasks which occupy the energies of most men. The artist alone at the present day may experience the satisfaction of the fulness of life, which means that our actual conditions are such as to stunt and thwart us. We are poor in the experience of joy. The measure of the misery endured by mankind may be

judged by contrasting the richness of our language and literature in describing sorrow and pain with the colourlessness and languor in depicting happiness. We have become expert in the handling of woe but we are not familiar enough with the secret of joy to master its cunning. Milton's "Paradise Lost" and Dante's "Inferno" are infinitely more vivid and real to us than the "Paradise Regained," of the "Purgatorio" and "Paradiso." These latter are comparatively fleshless and spectral. Why are "our sweetest songs those that tell of saddest thought" but that life spells limitation to us? To create—to find self-expression—is the driving desire, conscious or unconscious, of every organism. And in his daily work, which fills the greater part of his waking hours, man is denied this satisfaction.

How is it possible to reach the "bright future which," according to Major Douglas, "lies in doing the best possible things in the best possible way"? The primary obstacle appears to be the incapacity of the average man to form a mental picture of the desirability of such a state. "A mad dream, "An impossible Utopia," are some of the kindest things with which an effort to visualise such a possibility is welcomed. We have lost the Dionysian faculty of affirming—or we do it with such drawn and blenched lips as indicate our lack of faith in anything but suffering. And resentment plays a large part in our negation. "What! shall my neighbour be relieved from the necessity of work?"

But the way has been shown, and humanity will never again lose the light which glimmers now only for a few. The first step is to divorce purchasing power from "work." The logic of facts is rapidly forcing this as a practical measure into everyday life. The payment of unemployment doles is familiarising the community with a grudging recognition of this necessity. It is brought home to those still in work in other ways. The man who does not work but only consumes is conferring more benefit on his fellows than the thrifty, industrious character beloved of Victorian moralists. At the Conference of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, recently held at Kingsway Hall, the piece-work system was condemned on the ground that in this manner men were earning from £6 to £8 per week, while others were unable to obtain a living. "The only way," said a speaker, "to prevent unemployment was to regulate or restrict the output of the individual." Such are the expedients to which the workers are driven to help maintain each other. But these makeshifts are in their very nature temporary. To attain a permanent solution, a constructive policy towards industry must be envisaged with the communal nature of credit as its basis and efficiency as its aim. If the artificial bond between "work" and purchasing power were removed, the question of unemployment would not enter into industry, which would be developed with the sole aim of "delivering the goods." There would no further be any motive for economic sabotage either on the part of masters or men, but improvements in process and machinery would be adopted without delay. Drudgery would then be eliminated or reduced to a minimum. Each industry would retain in its ranks only those with a natural aptitude for their work and he who failed to reach a high level of proficiency would be dismissed from the "aristocracy of producers" to rejoin the "democracy of consumers." Freed from the encumbrance of slow and unwilling workers, the wheels of industry would move smoothly and rapidly, production being in the hands of technical experts thoroughly fitted for their task. *How* production is to be carried on would be their province, but *what* is to be produced would be decided by the needs of the consumer. Mazzini's denunciation of Carlyle's gospel, "Do the work that lies nearest," is more than justified. Clear thought must precede action and only thus can "the best possible things be done in the best possible way."

FRANCES PREWETT.

Our Generation.

THE "Daily News" is well known for its humanitarianism; it performs a service to English journalism by maintaining, almost alone, from day to day, a humane attitude in a world on the whole insensitive and hardened. But it has recently carried its humanitarianism, surely, a little too far; applied it a little carelessly, almost absent-mindedly, as if it were not a virtue but merely a habit. We are thinking of an editorial which appeared the other week, entitled "What is Wealth?" Taking up a statement made by Dr. Orchard that "people only want to get individually rich because there is no corporate possession of the fundamental necessities," the writer replies in effect: "Ah, yes. If man were a perfectly reasonable creature this would be true." And he proves (how fashionable it is becoming nowadays to prove this—and what does it prove after all?) that man is not a perfectly reasonable creature, and from that assumption the conclusion seems somehow or other to be drawn that man should not even try to be perfectly reasonable. *Some* men, certainly, the writer agrees, would be content if their fundamental necessities were guaranteed. "But this is one end only of the scale. There is another. Scores of rich men labour not to acquire enormous wealth, only a very small portion of which they can really enjoy themselves—they know this, and they are not fools—but for the excitement of the game of getting. Where these succeed, hundreds and hundreds, with incomes quite sufficient for ordinary comfort, stake all and lose. How is that 'felt want' to be supplied by 'corporate possession?'" Now this question, if we look at it twice, is really astonishing. It implies that society *should* be organised to supply rich men with the opportunity of enjoying "the excitement of the game of getting." It implies that, or else it implies nothing in particular. But why society should frame itself to sanction this purely egoistic impulse, this desire to enrich oneself without enriching society, and even sometimes by despoiling it, the "Daily News" does not say. One thing we know, that in society all the impulses of men are not allowed to express themselves. Men living in communities make, not because they choose, but because they must, a division among the impulses; some they call good, and these are permitted; some they call bad, and these are prevented, so far as the machinery of society can prevent them. These are truisms; but the assumption of the "Daily News" is so abysmally wrong that truisms must be cited to refute it. Man may not be "perfectly reasonable"; yet it is certainly his only safe course to make society as reasonable as he can. This is so indubitably true that one can say there is no other course possible. The assumption of the "Daily News," then, we quarrel with, because all men must quarrel with it. But there is another assumption which it makes, which, if less naïve, is equally hateful. It is that there is "romance" in the sordid struggle to amass wealth; that there is something "fine" (in the newspaper sense) in "the game of getting." It is really less difficult to fathom the souls of big financiers than the "Daily News" imagines. There is simply no mystery in their acquisition of "enormous wealth only a very small portion of which they can really enjoy themselves"—for the very obvious reason that, however great the wealth may be, they *can* enjoy it themselves. We are not so naïve as to assume with the "Daily News" that wealth to be enjoyed must be eaten or thrown on one's back. Money is power: *that* is why rich men find so much excitement in "the game of getting." They desire to gain power and always more power—for themselves. We may, with the

modern world, romanticise this as much as we like; we shall never manage to add to it one trait of natural or of human greatness. The great man, the man in whom natural power dwells, gives because he has to give; he feels no need to acquire power for himself, but only to dispense what he has. But the "self-made" men whom our time has sentimentalised as heroes of will are more really wretched than the poorest workman; for he is at least content within himself, and is, to that extent, rich by the will of nature. It is because they have nothing that a few men strive to gain everything for themselves. It is the terrible deeds of weaklings, and of oppressed and despised—outwardly and inwardly despised—people, which have become omnipotent and have enslaved catastrophically in our time the strong as well as the weak to a common economic and financial tyranny. A disease of the will, and not plenitude of will, raises men to wealth, and gives them power for good and evil. The vulgarity of our values, therefore, is shown in nothing more disastrously than in our attempted sentimentalisation of successful men; for these men are not only not great, they are the antithesis of all that can be called great.

How many mighty institutions flourish around us—I mean the general public—without our knowing anything about their beneficent work. We feel the effect of their activities, but we do not dream that if one of them were suddenly to cease to act we should not be quite so happy—oh, so happy—as we are. Yet it is so; in fact it is a platitude. But there is one who knows the names of all those institutions; we mean, of course, Mr. Lloyd George. He will not let us forget that we possess an organisation so majestic as our system of Sunday schools. We confess we had forgotten it; but the Prime Minister tells us opportunely that "Great Britain is deeply indebted to the memory" (whatever that may mean) of two gentlemen: Raikes, we think, Robert Raikes, was the name of the one, and Charles that of the other (Charles was a Welshman), both very good men, so far as we can make out. We are "deeply indebted to their memory," it seems, "for the great work they did in founding Sunday schools, which have done so much to build up British character. The moral training," Mr. Lloyd George proceeds, "of our people was our strength and stay in the trials of the Great War. It is the only sure foundation for the future well-being of our race." And our Sunday schools have made us the moral paragons we are. Those sentimental young women who relate a rose-coloured version of the Adam and Eve myth to bored but polite youngsters are not so idle and so futile as they seem: they are laying the foundation of our national characters. Well, perhaps they are, for we have noticed that our countrymen carry into their adult life an aptitude for falsifying reality, which cannot be merely the result of a natural gift for falsification. We are a wise people; we lie better than we know.

In our celebration of the tercentenary of Dante's death, we have shown once more how perfunctory is our interest in the things of the intellect and of the spirit. Even the smallest and most backward States in Europe have been more intelligent than we have been; have shown more clearly that they realise that they are heirs and partners in the culture of Europe. While the newspapers of Germany have been full of thoughtful and serious essays on Dante, ours have been content, generally, to give journalistic descriptions of Dante celebrations. Only in so far as, after six hundred years, Dante happens to have become an item of news, are our newspaper editors interested in him. The Dante celebration, simply as a celebration, without its meaning, without an understanding of what it is all about: that satisfies them. But they are adepts at rendering "Hamlet" without including the Prince of Denmark; in fact, they prefer "Hamlet" in that state.

EDWARD MOORE.

Readers and Writers.

MR. BASIL BLACKWELL has recently published in one volume (4s. 6d) reprints of Peacock's "Four Ages of Poetry," Shelley's "Defence of Poetry," and Browning's "Essay on Shelley." The idea of the volume is a good one, for Shelley's famous Defence was a direct answer to Peacock's attack, and these two at any rate should be bound within one cover. There is not the same excuse for Browning's Essay, which was written as an introduction to a spurious collection of Shelley's letters, and does nothing to enhance the reputation of Browning or to further the understanding of poetry. It is written in an execrable style, of which the following sentence is a not unfair example:

Greatness in a work suggests an adequate instrumentality; and none of the lower incitements, however they may avail to initiate or even effect many considerable displays of power, simulating the nobler inspiration to which they are mistakenly referred, have been found able, under the ordinary conditions of humanity, to task themselves to the end of so exacting a performance as a poet's complete work. As soon will the galvanism that provokes to violent action the muscles of a corpse, induce it to cross the chamber steadily: sooner.

Was there ever such a stilted avoidance of the puddles of cliché? A poet who writes prose of this kind is no artist; and, therefore, presumably no poet; for, as Shelley says, "the distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error." But leaving the more exact anatomy of Browning for a future occasion, let us turn to the exhibited action, and interaction, of two very virile minds.

* * *

Peacock's Essay on the "Four Ages of Poetry" is delightful—an epithet I use exactly and am inclined to apply to all Peacock's work. This present essay reminds me of nothing so much as of one of Mr. Shaw's Prefaces, and I begin to wonder if Peacock also belongs to the now numerous company of Mr. Shaw's masters. There is quite a similarity, too, now I come to think of it, between Peacock's novels and the more socio-satirical of Mr. Shaw's plays. But Mr. Shaw would never, of course, quote Petronius to the extent of Peacock's custom, and for this I think we may on the whole be thankful. The least taint of scholasticism would have spoiled Mr. Shaw.

"Poetry, like the world (writes Peacock), may be said to have four ages, but in a different order: the first age of poetry being the age of iron; the second, of gold; the third, of silver; and the fourth, of brass." For the characteristics of the first three ages I must refer you to the essay, though the description of the poets of the iron age is worth quoting if only for the reason that their souls seem to have transmigrated into the bodies of modern politicians, for "a skilful display of the little knowledge they have gains them credit for the possession of much more which they have not. Their familiarity with the secret history of gods and genii obtains for them, without much difficulty, the reputation of inspiration; thus they are not only historians but theologians, moralists, and legislators: delivering their oracles *ex cathedra*, and being indeed often themselves (as Orpheus and Amphion) regarded as portions and emanations of divinity: building cities with a song, and leading brutes with a symphony; which are only metaphors for the faculty of leading multitudes by the nose."

But the real interest in this essay lies in Peacock's analysis of the age of brass, which I fancy we still live in. "This is the second childhood of poetry, which, by rejecting the polish and the learning of the age of silver, and taking a retrograde stride to the barbarism and crude traditions of the age of iron, professes to return to nature and revive the age of gold." Peacock imagines an enthusiast of this age "ratiocinating" in the following manner:—

Poetical genius is the finest of all things, and we feel that we have more of it than anyone ever had. The way to bring it to perfection is to cultivate poetical expres-

sions exclusively. Poetical impressions can be received only among natural scenes: for all that is artificial is anti-poetical. Society is artificial, therefore we will live out of society. The mountains are natural, therefore we will live in the mountains. There we shall be shining models of purity and virtue, passing the whole day in the innocent and amiable occupation of going up and down hill, receiving poetical impressions, and communicating them in immortal verse to admiring generations.

"That egregious confraternity of rhymsters known by the name of the Lake Poets" is in pillory, but make the scenery a little less traditionally romantic (the *bergerie* of a more domestic order), and you have the adequate confession of any poet in Mr. Squire's anthology.

* * *

Peacock's wit is very good fun, and it is the instrument of a very acute intelligence. But Shelley's answer, conceived in intellectual passion and expressed with severe dignity, completely eclipses the lustre of even Peacock's wit. Shelley's prose, unlike Browning's, is perfect. This essay, I dare say, is one of the most beautifully sustained and modulated pieces of English ever written, in that style which I think we should call Platonic, for it is a transfusion of the imaginative force of that first of philosophical poets, and is quite distinct from the style of Swift, for instance, which is native, or from Johnson's, which is Latin. This essay is, of course, more famous than Peacock's, and there is no need to expatiate on its arguments; but one or two sayings strike me freshly on reading it through—such as this psychological perception, which reads like a sentence from William James:

A child at play by itself will express its delight by its voice and motions; and every inflexion of tone and gesture will bear exact relation to a corresponding antitype in the pleasurable impressions which awakened it; and it will be the reflected image of that impression; and as the lyre trembles and sounds after the wind has died away, so the child seeks, by prolonging in its voice and motions the duration of the effect, to prolong also a consciousness of the cause.

And I find this quite definite support of Mr. Flint's theory of verse, which I mentioned a few weeks ago:

The popular division into prose and verse is inadmissible in accurate philosophy.

* * *

Shelley's particular defence of poetry rests on a distinction between reason and the imagination—a distinction which I find extremely difficult to define in *concrete instances*, though abstractly it is obvious enough. But Shelley's premiss admitted, it is but an inference to claim, as he does, that poetry is "the centre and circumference of all knowledge"; that it "turns all things to loveliness"; and that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." But psychology has yet to make us individually aware of our own reason and of our own imagination, each distinct in their operations. Then Shelley's claims for poetry will become visible truisms. Meanwhile there is more actual appropriateness for the present condition of our knowledge in that part of his defence which describes the imagination as the instrument of moral good:

Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void for ever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb.

This is, I think, the first modern psychological conception of the mechanics of poetry: it is, in effect, poetry conceived as psycho-synthesis, which is, as more than one writer has pointed out in *THE NEW AGE*, the specific need of our time. There is an ancient conception of the same process—the Aristotelian theory of catharsis—which gave rise to an eternal controversy

which John Morley has described as one of the disgraces of human intelligence, a grotesque monument of sterility. I am not anxious to revive that controversy in its old metaphysical arena, but I believe the problem has passed into the psychological arena, and that there it must be solved, or we perish.

HERBERT READ.

Drama.

By John Francis Hope.

THE Everyman Theatre, Hampstead, opened what promises to be a most successful autumn season on October 4. There were speeches before the performance by a representative of the theatre, and the General Secretary of the League of Nations Union, under whose patronage this "international" season has been arranged; but they were of no dramatic interest. The representative of the theatre looked for words around his toes, and the secretary of the League of Nations Union, appropriately enough, had his hands full with a report of a Council, or Congress, or whatever it is called. Both of them would be improved by a few lessons in elocution and deportment; as it was, they contributed nothing to my entertainment. The company has certainly been strengthened by the inclusion of Miss Jean Cadell, whose performance in "Diff'rent" all lovers of good acting should see; and Mr. Milton Rosmer, even if he did sometimes think that he was playing for the films, is certainly not a source of weakness. But more about the actors later; they were very interesting.

Eugene O'Neill's "Diff'rent" is really two one-act plays, with an interval of thirty years. The first takes place two days before the marriage of Emma Crosby and Caleb Williams. Emma Crosby has always believed that Caleb was "diff'rent" from other men; and in spite of his protests, she kept him on the pedestal she had erected for him. When she discovered that, under great provocation, he had yielded to the solicitations of a native woman, her silly little romance was shattered. He was not "diff'rent," and therefore she would not marry him. No; she was not jealous, she forgave him freely, she quite understood, she wanted still to be friends—but she would not marry him. He (having nothing better to do) swore to wait thirty years for her if necessary; but perhaps he thought that it would take her all that time to learn sense; women are queer. But what had really happened was that she, who had wanted to marry a romance, not a man, had had that romance shattered; and instantly created the other romance of herself as the virgin with a secret sorrow. The men might well have been a little rougher, a little heavier in their realism; but within the limits set by themselves they were adequate. Mr. George Merritt, as Capt. Crosby, was, for a brief space, quite a hearty and bluff old salt; while Mr. Perceval Clark, as Jack Crosby, and Mr. Leslie Banks, as Alfred Rogers, made the sniggering, guffawing lubricity of their young minds apparent. Miss Jean Cadell showed that she could play the young sentimentalist convincingly; and Miss Margaret Carter (whose work throughout the evening was at a higher level than I have ever known her to keep) was quite adequate in the part of Harriet Williams.

But the real acting came in the second act, thirty years after; and it was a triumph for Miss Jean Cadell and Mr. Leslie Banks. Emma Crosby had dyed her hair auburn, made up her face, disfigured her throat with that silly wisp of tulle that middle-aged spinsters think engaging, put on a silk dress that was not more than twenty years out of fashion, hung butter-coloured curtains, and even installed a gramophone. For whom? Another romance, Benny Rogers, the young American soldier. With him, she was at least teachable (I was right; it took her thirty years to learn sense); she wanted to know all about the French girls, and pressed for details of the "good times" of which Benny spoke.

What was a "sport"? Aunt Emma wanted to be a "sport" if she knew how. It was pitiful to watch the old fool dithering about a "life" of which she knew nothing, trying to lure Benny away from the harlot of the village (not really a "nice" woman) by the offer of free beer; she even played with the idea of financing "a good time" for Benny with a pal in town to the tune of a hundred dollars. Benny, of course, was only leading up to the "grand touch"; all his apparently aimless discontent with the "boobs" of this village, his carefully revealed moral recklessness, his protests against his "tight-wad" uncle (Caleb) and the general scandal that the village talked about him—anyone but Emma could see what the scallywag was driving at. Mr. Leslie Banks got him to the life, with his lurching superiority to the virtuous "guys," his leering reminiscences of his "good times," his mean little chuckles of contempt, and his unabashed "scrounging" and "mumping." It was a performance full of detail, perfectly conceived and rendered; and the degenerate monkey played dexterously with the sexual insanity of the aged virgin. When he was kicked out of home for stealing money, he was not satisfied with her offer of a home; he made love to her, and promised to marry her to-morrow.

When Caleb returned and expressed his surprise at the change in her appearance and surroundings, she blurted out her opinion of Caleb's treatment of his nephew and her hopes of happiness with Benny. When he told her what sort of person Benny was, she retorted that he was only "jalous." He told her bluntly that she was making a fool of herself; and rather than lose her he was prepared to offer Benny more money than she had got to leave the town. Benny, hiding in the kitchen, heard this, wondered whether the old man meant it, and told her, with his simple a-moral cynicism, that, of course, it was only her money he was after, that he had not the slightest intention of marrying "the old guy." Gosh! Hoo, hoo! Fancy you believing that "bunk." While she was sobbing her heart out, word came that Caleb had hanged himself—and she went to the barn to do likewise. It is not easy to sympathise with such a character; she ought to be in a home; but Miss Jean Cadell's acting was wonderful to watch—one could almost smell the camphor from that silk dress. The whole performance was so consistently fine that it is difficult to remember "scenes"; but the flirtation scene with Benny, and the spinsterish passion with which she attacked Caleb, were memorable. Mr. Milton Rosmer kept Caleb too smooth, too refined, throughout; and thirty years after, played for a silky, silver-haired sentimentality, when one wanted a touch of flint in him. Miss Margaret Carter had little to do except suggest thirty years after, but she did it well.

But what really got the audience was a Freudian farce in two scenes, "Suppressed Desires," by Geo. Cram Cook and Susan Glaspell. Here Miss Margaret Carter was at her best as the "intellectual" who was psycho-analysing everybody, and waking her husband every five minutes to know what he was dreaming. Miss Hazel Jones was very pleasing as the normal young wife whose suppressed desire was to elope with her sister's husband; and Mr. Leslie Banks objected to being "psyched" very well. The dialogue was very bright, and full of point; and on such a subject an Everyman audience might almost be called a selected audience, and not one of the points was missed. But the same players, I believe, could make it go anywhere, although a more vigorously farcical treatment might be necessary with a more general audience. But it is a delightful skit on a dangerous craze; and the players deserved every "curtain" they got (and they had several) for the real pleasure they gave the audience. This was finished work, and I am happy to add my tribute to the players concerned. I may have to "suppress my desire" to see it again, but I shall enjoy my memories of it.

Views and Reviews.

GRAND GUIGNOL HISTORY—VI.

THE impossibility of discovering any consistent plan in the history of the French Revolution, or of discovering any congruity between Mrs. Webster's exposition of the teachings of Illuminism and the political activities of those whom she calls Illuminati, justifies me in adopting towards this so-called "plot" the attitude of the Governments of Europe. Mrs. Webster has told us (page 25):

The fearful danger presented by the Illuminati now [1786] became apparent, and the Government of Bavaria, judging that the best manner of conveying a warning to the civilised world would be to allow the papers to speak for themselves, ordered them to be printed forthwith and circulated as widely as possible. A copy of this publication, entitled "Original Writings of the Order of Illuminati," was then forwarded to every Government of Europe, but, strange to say, attracted little attention, the truth being, doubtless, as the Abbé Baruel points out, that the extravagance of the scheme therein propounded rendered it unbelievable, and the rulers of Europe, refusing to take Illuminism seriously, put it aside as a chimera.*

Let us consider our own country. No reader of the Hammonds' history of the period 1760-1832 can believe that the Government of England was ignorant of the state of internal affairs. Nor could there have been much secrecy about whatever revolutionary activity there may have been in this country, since Burke, in his "Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings of Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event" (November, 1790), was able to name these bodies, one of which was called the Constitutional Society, and the other the Revolution Society. Mrs. Webster tells us (page 73):

England had entered largely into the projects of the conspirators; no less an adept than Cato-Zwack himself had, as we have seen, visited this country after his expulsion from Bavaria [1786], and spent a year at Oxford University, which, less receptive to illuminated doctrines than it is to-day, accorded him scant appreciation.

That seems to me a strange way of "entering largely into the projects of the conspirators"; but the history of Illuminism is full of these anomalies. One smiles at the little dig at Mr. G. D. H. Cole and the "Guild Socialists," in the reference to Oxford to-day; Mrs. Webster cannot leave them alone. Mrs. Webster continues:

But the efforts of his fellow-countrymen, Röntgen [not the discoverer of X-rays], Ibiken, and Regenhardt who followed, met with some degree of success, and Robison, himself a Freemason, admits with regret that a certain number of British masons were won over by the German propagandists. Amongst these was the celebrated Thomas Paine [I think it was Lord Brougham who called him "scurrilous"], who was later on to betray his connection with the Illuminati by his work, "The Age of Reason," written in France whilst the "Feasts of Reason" were taking place in the churches of Paris.

Let us stop here for a moment. Like Dr. Parker, of the City Temple, and many another, I read "The Age of Reason" when quite young, with bated breath behind closed doors; and was sadly disappointed that the Devil did not appear to claim my soul. I felt sorry for poor Tom Paine, because, if I remember rightly, he was in gaol when he wrote "The Age of Reason," daily expecting to be tried and sent to the guillotine. Anyhow, the fact that he wrote it contemporaneously with the "Feasts of Reason" shows that there was no causative connection between the two events; and as Tom Paine was a Deist, not an Atheist, it is difficult to see how his book betrayed any connection with Illuminism, which Mrs. Webster asks us to believe included Atheism. Moreover, Tom Paine was one of the first advo-

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

cates, if not the first advocate, of Old Age Pensions, which imply the existence of the State; and cannot therefore be credited with adhesion to a plan for "The Abolition of Monarchy and all Ordered Government." He and Lafayette had helped in the American Revolution, without proceeding to such extremity; and nothing in his subsequent history suggests that he ever went beyond Republicanism in political theory. Indeed, Mr. Julius West, in his "History of the Chartist Movement" (page 20) says bluntly that Paine's "Rights of Man" was "far less revolutionary than Mary Wollstonecraft's reply [to Burke] and is to-day frankly out of date." However, Mrs. Webster continues:

Largely, then, owing to the instrumentality of Paine, several "illuminised" lodges were started in England, which Robison, writing in 1797, declared to be still in existence. . . . The real aims of Illuminism were embodied not in the political revolution devised by the Whigs to bring themselves into power, but in the social revolution organised by the middle-class [Paine, "the rebellious stay-maker," middle-class!] malcontents, Paine, Price, and Priestly, and their allies among the disgruntled manual workers. It was by these men that, after the Revolution broke out in France, revolutionary societies were started in England, the most important being the London Corresponding Society, founded in 1792 by a shoemaker named Hardy, with branches all over the kingdom. . . . "These societies," writes a contemporary [Clifford, "Application of Barruel's Memoirs"] "were formed on Weishaupt's corresponding scale," with a "Grand Council" to direct operations.

The late Julius West, in his brilliant history of "The Chartist Movement" (his discovery at the Hendon annexe of the British Museum of the 28 manuscript volumes prepared by Francis Place for a Chartist history makes West's volume particularly valuable), quotes the following from "The London Corresponding Society's Addresses and Resolutions" as an example of that "enticing Utopianism which, in the long run, was to destroy the Chartist movement."

Numerous as our grievances are, reform one alone and the others will disappear. What we must have is:

An Honest Parliament,

An Annual Parliament,

A Parliament where each individual will have his representative.

Soon shall we see our liberties restored, the Press free, the laws simplified, judges unbiased, juries independent, needless places and pensions retrenched, immoderate salaries reduced, the public better served, and the necessities of life more within the reach of the poor.

I can detect nothing here of a desire to abolish "all ordered government." Nor can the English Government be supposed to have been blind to the "menace"; for "on May 21, 1792, a royal proclamation had already been issued against 'seditious practices,' 'all proceedings tending to produce riots and tumults,' and 'seditious writings,' but no deliberate efforts at repression were made for over a year." Mr. West, after reading the report of the State Trial of the five members of the "Convention" called by the L.C.S., who were tried, and transported, for sedition, concludes:

It seems fairly certain, from the line taken by the prosecution, that the Government of the day had overestimated the quantity of revolutionary sentiment, and sincerely believed that it might overflow and plunge the nation into confusion.

With a Government as alarmed as Pitt's was, putting "Illuminism aside as a chimera," I can only conclude that it was a chimera.

For after all, what does all this twaddle about "the plan of organisation" being simply "that of the Illuminati" amount to? Mrs. Webster tells us (page 8) that Weishaupt's "early training by the Jesuits had inspired him with a violent dislike for their Order" (the Parlement of Paris must have shared this dislike, for it decreed their suppression in France and confiscated their property on August 6, 1762, when Weis-

haupt was 14); Mrs. Webster tells us (page 11) that "the grades of the Order [of Illuminati] were a combination of the grades of Freemasonry, and the degrees belonging to the Jesuits. Weishaupt, as has been already said, detested the Jesuits, but recognising the efficiency of their methods in acquiring influence over the minds of their disciples, he conceived the idea of adapting their system to his own purpose." We are justified, then, in saying that the secret societies, so far as they resemble the order of Illuminati, are modelled on the organisation of the Jesuits, and may, for aught I know to the contrary, be inspired by them. It is certainly strange that what is usually declared to be a Jesuit axiom, "The end justifies the means," should have been used by Weishaupt, who was educated by the Jesuits.

A. E. R.

Music.

" . . . THEN Trimalchio, who, by the way, was beastly drunk, ordered in the cornet-players, and propped up with cushions, 'Imagine I'm dead,' says he, 'and play something touchy.' . . ."

The modern Trimalchio differs from the old one in that, drunk or sober, he lays out other people, and not himself, to inspire the cornet-players. He places his victim on the cushions, and "Imagine he's dead," says he, "and play something cock-a-hoop." For our modern Trimalchio does not believe in playing or writing "something touchy" over any death, real or imaginary. "I'm here," says he; "I, the one and only genuine Trimalchio, and I, or my slaves and imitators, can satisfy all demands. And if you want something that we can't provide, then you must be either mad or senile. Therefore, my cornet-players, imagine that the Titans are dead, and that their works are dead with them, and play something cock-a-hoop."

If it is true, as one writer has said, that music creates a spiritual world in which the spirit cannot live and move without contracting habits of emotion, then it is important that composers of music should make sure within themselves just what kind of world they are helping to create. Without emotion, music is without magic; but if the emotion is false, then the magic may be there, but it will work evil. Not every creative artist can steal fire from heaven, but let no man deny that there is such fire to be stolen, nor let him decry those who, though they could not grasp the fire, have yet seen it burning, and can at any rate give a reflection of its flames in their work. There is, however, a great mass of music being produced at present, very little of which even reflects the glow of the fire from afar, let alone the flames themselves. As we read the list of names in the many musical catalogues and programmes sent us, we are somehow reminded of what we saw outside a poulterer's a few days ago. On one side of the door were exposed pheasants, grouse, and chickens. On the other side was a big wooden box filled with feathered corpses on the top of which lay a cardboard ticket with the simple epitaph "Birds" inscribed on it. Perhaps the items of all musical catalogues and many concert programmes might with advantage be sorted on similar lines.

We would like, nevertheless, to call attention to certain musical events of the near future. Mr. Eugène Goossens is giving an interesting series of orchestral concerts at the Queen's Hall, the first of which takes place on Thursday, October 27, and Mr. Anthony Bernard announces a second series of concerts of the London Chamber Orchestra. This Orchestra, in which there will never be more than twenty players, will do a good and useful work in giving certain compositions in their original form, and in restoring to our sense of sound a subtlety of distinction which many of us are in danger of losing.

H. ROTHAM.

Reviews.

What Woman Wishes. By Anthony M. Ludovici. (Hutchinson. 8s. 6d. net.)

Those who have read Mr. Ludovici's book on Aristocracy must regret his rather persistent efforts to express his conclusions in fiction. Precisely because he has a policy to advocate, his interest in personalities can only be didactic or, at most, illustrative of a thesis. The example of Disraeli is not an easy one to follow, for he had wit as well as a profound knowledge of politics and personalities. Mr. Ludovici, like Disraeli, believes in a sort of Tory Democracy, does actually in this book bring a Labour leader, a member of the Transport Workers' Union, to the footstool of grace, to the feet of a young Tory peer. Some of Mr. Ludovici's political comments are decidedly interesting, notably his attack on "the Cecil monopoly" of Tory ideas. But as his general policy of patriarchalism simply means going back to a state which implies the existence of certain types who, in the course of history, have been moved from their relative positions, his task is as impossible as that of making a current flow without establishing contact. Tory landlordism never was, and never will be, a solution of the problems of civilisation; if we must go back to the manorial system, the peasantry must be re-established in their status as holders of common land—and Tory landlordism is no more willing than Liberal landlordism, so far as we know, to restore the common property of the people to the people. Until it is done, the agricultural worker is as much a serf as the industrial worker is a wage-slave; both alike have nothing but their labour to sell, and no alternative to the sale of it. If Mr. Ludovici really believes that Pure Bread and Pure Beer (no other details of his policy are given) will bring Labour to the heels of country squires, he has sadly miscalculated the Labour part of the problem. The country squires can be induced to believe anything, we know; did not they rally to "die in the last ditch" in opposition to the passing of the Parliament Bill? But did they die? Three dies make dice; *jacta est alea*, and the "last ditch" now looks like Houndsditch.

Mr. Ludovici is not happy in his nomenclature: his real live aristocrat is Viscount Chiddingly, who married a Culpeper and fell in love with "Jimper" Perkins. Jimper's uncle is named Solomon, sufficiently Hebraic to suggest that the surname was really Gherkins. With Chiddings and a little Culpeper, the working man should be able to enjoy a good meal. Mr. Landrassy, author of "The Vindication of the Rule of the Best," has some autobiographical suggestion; but we do not expect anything from his "Friends of Law and Order" different from that provided by other Tory organisations, such as the Middle Classes Union, or the National Party, or the Tariff Reform League. We know what Tory organisations are, and they all profess the same object—to fight "the spirit of Revolution and Disorder." It is true that, in this case, the method proposed is "by spreading sound and healthy ideas about humanity and civilisation"—but Tories like to "spread" ideas by steam-rollers and tanks. Besides, as "the object of this body would be to reinforce, consolidate and save the Constitution and the Empire, and incidentally the Conservative and Tory parties," we are by no means convinced that it would serve the purposes of Law and Order. Law and Order are conditions of growth, growth necessitates Constitutional changes, and "consolidation" is the political equivalent of ankylosis in the joints, or better still, the closing of the sutures. But as Disraeli said of the foundation of the

Conservative Party: "The question at once arose; 'What will you conserve?'" What will "The Friends of Law and Order" "consolidate"? What Constitution will they "save"? The present, or pre 1832, or the Constitution of Charles I, who reigned eleven years without a Parliament and lost his head as a sequel (there is a legend concerning Charles I in this book): or must we go back to the Ptolemies, for whom Mr. Ludovici used to profess a profound veneration? We are not interested in what he calls the "Luvv" story of this book (with its fight à la Mme. Defarge and Lucy Manette's housekeeper); but we should like Mr. Ludovici to come down to brass tacks in politics.

Spinoza and Time. By S. Alexander. (Allen and Unwin. Cloth, 2s. 6d. Paper, 1s.)

Spinoza, the greatest Jew in Christian history, transcended Jewishness altogether. In him the essential Semitic intuition was re-expressed upon the level of pure thinking. He declared that the world is known in two ways: it is known as Extension and it is known as Thought, and it is the same Thing which is known to us in these two ways. He wrote one of the greatest systems of European thought; and whoever has experienced the inspiration and beatitude of that system knows that its splendour is in its conviction that Reality and Thought are one, that God has not veiled Himself impenetrably in the over-woven web of Nature. That web is indeed His expression, and in its endless outsideness, which is everything including our own bodies, we do see God and partake of Him. But in our very selves, in thinking Being, we no less *are* God and experience His essence. God *is*, in these two ways, or, in Spinoza's own terms, possesses these two attributes of Extension and Thought, the outside and inside of life. Professor Alexander, a Jew lecturing to Jews, proposes a gloss upon Spinoza's system. The importance of Time in philosophy, he says, is a recent discovery, and was unknown to Spinoza. Considering his system in the light of our present knowledge of Time, it is possible to suggest an improvement. Substitute Time for Thought, and let us call Extension (or Space) and Time the two attributes of God. Now we shall not have, like Spinoza, two entirely different and perhaps irreconcilable ways of knowing the ultimate thing, or Substance. The Substance of things is now simply Space-Time, the infinite mode of motion. Space-Time is the one reality, and Thought is deposed to a merely empirical importance. This works very well: but Professor Alexander seems not to realise that Spinoza is simply ruined by such treatment. It makes of God merely the total objective reality; the whole system is Semiticised again, and the intellectual love of God, the finding of God in thought—which is the very essence and ecstasy of Spinoza, the cause of his writing—and of all men's reading him—is now merely an exalted but subsidiary sentiment. It is quite right, and very desirable, to re-interpret the great thinkers, if by doing so we revive their essential force in present discussion—quite wrong and misleading if we only ally them to modern scientific hypotheses. Professor Alexander's gloss is an application of the system he has elaborated elsewhere in his "Space, Time and Deity." As Archibald Allen has taken Space for the ultimate reality, and Bergson has taken Time, so does Professor Alexander take Space-Time as the true and irreducible Substance. But he should have gone further. He should have taken, not the addition of Space and Time, but their *synthesis*, which is Causality. This is a philosophic labour which remains to be done, and is the most important for our age—the affirmation of Causality itself as the only reality, at once the natural, intellectual and intuitive reality. For in truth we do not know anything else. Space and Time are abstractions which we make, analytically, out of the one indivisible causal experience which we live and which we are.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

INDUSTRIAL LIFE INSURANCE.

Sir,—Amongst the social problems calling for redress loom the mutterings of the working class against the present extortionate system of industrial life insurance. The demand for a Government inquiry led to the appointment of the Commission under Lord Parmoor. To those who followed the evidence given to that Committee it was soon apparent that something was materially wrong; but the report, when issued, must have staggered even those who had some slight inner knowledge of what was going on. A brief summary of that report may be of interest at this juncture. It stated, *inter alia*, that the working expenses were 44 per cent. of the premium income, including heavy payments to directors, managers and shareholders. The appendix to the report gives details of these payments. One instance alone will illustrate this—the largest company of its kind. In the ten years 1909-1918 it paid to shareholders (income tax free) £5,230,000 on a capital of one million. The dividend up to the war was 60 per cent. and during the war regularly 40 per cent., all tax free. Other equally startling figures fill the appendix and the Report itself. Lord Sydenham, in speaking of these figures in the House of Lords, described them as being “almost beyond the dreams of avarice.” Another finding was that five millions of these poor people’s policies were annually lapsed, involving a yearly loss of £500,000 in premiums. It has been estimated that these huge figures are now, owing to unemployment, more than doubled. The Committee found that the poor and often illiterate were induced by canvassers to enter into contracts they did not understand and could not ultimately carry out. Hence this huge loss. Lord Parmoor urged upon the Government the urgent need for immediate and drastic action. The report issued in March, 1920, resulted in the tardy introduction into the House of Lords last August of a Bill to deal with these evils. Having passed the second reading it is now held up until next session, its introducer (the Earl of Onslow) stating that it was not intended to pass it into law that session but in the meantime all concerned in the matter might give their views thereon. As the many millions of policy holders can only voice their grievances through the Press and by their Parliamentary representatives it is to be hoped these channels will be freely opened to them.

CHARLES ELTON.

Pastiche.

FROM THE NAN-HOA C’THENN-KING.

ELIMINATING THE SUPERFLUOUS.

The butcher of Prince Hoi of Leang was quartering a carcase. Methodically, without effort, steady as a pendulum, the edge of his knife stripped the skin, pierced the tissues, separated the articulations of bones. “You are highly skilful,” said the Prince, watching him at his work.

“All my craft,” answered the butcher, “consists in thinking of nothing but the principle of cutting. When I began I used to think about the carcase; it was not until after three years of practice that I began to forget the object of my work. And now, when I am dismembering a beast, there is nothing in my mind but the cutting itself. My senses are inactive; my will alone operates. Following the natural lines of the ox, my knife penetrates and divides, piercing through the soft flesh and contouring the bones, until the whole falls asunder naturally and without an effort. And all this without blunting the knife; for it never attacks the hard parts. A beginner, O Prince, uses up a knife in a month: a goodish butcher wants a knife a year; but this knife has lasted me twenty-nine years. It has cut up thousands of oxen and is as good as new, for I make it go nowhere else but where it can go.”

“Thanks,” said the Prince Hoi. “You have taught me how to make life last; by using it only for what does not use it up.”

THE ART OF SCULPTURE.

K’ing the sculptor carved a belfry for a peal of bells.

The harmony and beauty of it astonished everybody. The Marquis of Lou, having come on purpose to admire it, asked K’ing how he went to work. “Thus,” replied K’ing; “when I had received the commission to execute this belfry, I began to coil up all my vital power, to gather myself into my own Source. After three days of this exercise I had forgotten the praise and payment which would accrue to me from my work. After five days I no longer hoped for success. Also I no more feared for failure. After seven days, having lost thought of everything, even to the motion of my body and limbs—having entirely forgotten even your Highness and his court, every faculty being entirely swallowed up by my object, I felt the moment for action had arrived. I went into the forest, and set myself to contemplate the natural forms of trees, the bearing of the most perfect among them. When I felt thoroughly penetrated with this inspiration, then, at last, I set my hand to the work. It was that which directed my labour. It was by the fusion into one, of my nature with that of the trees, that this belfry acquired the qualities which make it so much admired.”

PERFECTION.

The artisan Choei used to trace circles with a free hand as perfect as if they had been struck with a compass. This was because he had come to do it without thinking. His circles were perfect, like any other production of Nature; for his mind was coiled up in itself, without preoccupation or distraction. A shoe is perfect when the foot does not feel it; a belt when the waist does not feel it. A man’s heart is perfect when, having lost the artificial notion of good and evil, it acts virtue spontaneously and naturally abstains from the evil. A mind is perfect when it is without perception of anything within and without tendency to anything without. Therefore perfection consists in being perfect without being aware of perfection.

After WEIGER by P. A. MAIRET.

A NONSENSE RHYME.

The Prince of Lemon and Turkey-Stone

Bade me go and dress my hair :

“For this is the great festival

Of Parroqueets in air :

They chatter down from every tree,

Yellow, green, and laughing red,

And after that each motley bird

Will stand upon its head.”

I ran to gather a laurel branch;

Binding it upon my brow,

I cried : “It is a jovial bird!

What will you I do now?”

The Prince of Lemon and Turkey-Stone

Bade me go and deck my gown :

“For this is the great festal day

Of Elephants in brown :

They lollop here from every part,

Clad in darkest corduroy,

And each has perched upon his head

A little Heathen boy.”

I decked my gown with a pearly thread,

Clasped it with a golden kiss :

“And dost thou think these strange, old beasts,

Fair Prince, will notice this?”

The Prince of Lemon and Turkey-Stone

Went frowning down to his fair white throne.

M. G. SHIELDS.

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