NOTES OF THE WEEK.

After “exploring every avenue” the Premier comes forward in the House of Commons and tells the nation that trade recovery “does not depend on the Government.” And this when he declares in almost the same breath, “Credit is the oxygen of trade”! Has he not yet grasped the fact that the Government is necessarily the one and only ultimate wielder of the total real credit of the nation, and that it cannot evade responsibility for the way in which it allows credit to be controlled. He made much play by exposing the evils of Budgets by the printing of paper “is only indirect taxation of a most ruinous character.” But it is, if you simply leave it at that. But the most serious and responsible advocates of the expansion of the currency always insist that it is imperative that it should be accompanied by price-regulation, and that they are prepared with a thoroughly scientific plan for keeping down prices. What hypocrisy is all this talk about “exploring every avenue,” when the one really fundamental proposal in the field is carefully never mentioned! Everything else that is advocated in unofficial and unorthodox quarters is dragged into the light and mercilessly if deservedly ridiculed. And it easily can be; for everything else is either a wild-cat scheme, or it is a mere fragment of a closely articulated policy of which the very keystone is the Just Price. The Premier cannot be ignorant of this proposal. Either he has not examined it, in which case he is grossly violating his pledge to “explore every avenue,” or he has found some fatal flaw in it, in which case it is his duty to inform the nation of it. The plain probability is that the word has been passed round from those mysterious circles that really govern us that the public is to be kept in ignorance that there is any such proposal in the field. We are continually meeting evidences of a deliberate and well-organised conspiracy of silence on this matter. It controls with an iron hand the Press, including Socialist and other professedly anti-plutocratic organs. It exercises a strict censorship over all lecturers and public speakers who receive the stamp of recognition from influential “society.” Its dark forces even penetrate into the most unlikely circles of social service and religion, when syllabuses and questionnaires are being drafted.

The Prime Minister himself has no doubt not taken the trouble—and very likely has not had the time—to try to understand the proposal, and readily accepts the assurance of the higher powers in whose hands he is that he need not take it seriously. At any rate he is evidently held completely within the static view of these economic issues. The whole point about an expansion of the currency, accompanied by scientific price-regulation, is that it would set free our potentialities of production to make the most of themselves. It would open up a vast untapped fund of potential wealth. Out of this fresh development of our resources national needs would really be paid for. The paying for them would mean of course a slight rise on the price of every commodity, as compared with what, given all the other conditions, it would have been if a particular expense had not been incurred. But any such rise would take place on the basis of a far lower general level of prices than the present. Further the policy would mean a régime in which normally prices were continuously falling owing to increased efficiency and the advance of invention. Thus the relative “rise” caused by some larger expenditure on public services in a particular year might show itself as an actual fall in prices, though a smaller fall than it would otherwise have been. In any case, such a method of payment is automatically self-adjusting and spreads itself evenly over the whole field. Also, it eliminates all the waste through the expense of a machinery of collection, involved in ordinary methods of taxation, direct or indirect.

For the rest, Mr. Lloyd George’s speech was dominated by the usual hysterical emphasis on export trade, and vitiated by the usual assumption that prices can only be reduced by cutting down costs. Naturally among the items marked down for reduction, wages bulked largely. There was also the inevitable reference to “Economy”—this time with an even larger “E” than usual. Indeed this passage was done in Mr. Lloyd George’s very best twopenny-coloured style. What he said of the crushing burden of taxation was true enough, but this must be lightened by methods which do not involve a wholesale withdrawal of purchasing power. Otherwise we are robbing a host of Peters certainly and immediately for the sake of a far more contingent benefit to the expectant Pauls. With such presuppositions, need we waste much space in a detailed criticism of the Government’s actual proposals? Export credits, of course. Also, 25 millions to be devoted to guaranteeing loans for business enterprises, particularly in the engineering industry. It was still primarily foreign orders that were in question. But
it is a slight sign of grace that "the guarantee will also be available for undertakings in this country"; such things as railway extension seem to be chiefly intended. We ought perhaps to be grateful for even so slight and grudging a recognition as this of the existence of a home market. But we must point out that this kind of assistance to industry is a very slight thing not a direct stimulation of commodity-production; further capitalproduction is a matter of immediate urgency. Then there are to be relief works—totally unnecessary, if the problem of reviving normal industry was seriously tackled. Also a great encouragement of emigration—of ex-Service men! Evidently the "land fit for heroes" is "off"—on this side of the ocean, at any rate. And this string of quack remedies is the best that our statesmanship can do, after "exploring every avenue"! Meanwhile the doles are to be slightly increased by miserably inadequate allowances for wives and children, and these for both the workers, many of them on short time themselves, and on hardly pressed employers. Why this clumsy form of selective taxation on classes precisely among the least able to afford it?

Mr. Clynes can always be trusted to take full advantage of every opportunity for following the wrong scent. He hailed with joy "a turning-point in the history of the country," in that Parliament hencenow was pledged to the responsibility to "providing the masses of the people with employment." Can he not see what is even now happening, in spite of the immense obstacles which our financial system opposes to industrial efficiency? The progress of invention is tending steadily to push more and more of the workers out of industry. And what does Mr. Clynes suppose would happen, if the scientists should, within say, the next five years, really get the atoms to work? In such conditions the "Right to Work" would be as ludicrous an irrelevance as the "Right to the Whole Product of Labour." What the nation can, in modern conditions, and ought to, guarantee to its members is income. That would leave us free to devise, undistracted by individual vested interests, the most effective way of ordering industry with a view to delivering the goods. We need not worry them who were "employed," and who was not. But Mr. Clynes' line was a great deal worse than futile. He went on to rejoice that "Parliament had come to accept the great obligation of entering into the general trade affairs of the world in order to secure work and to keep the people employed." He could not have more thoroughly endorsed the basic presuppositions of the capitalists. But that is not the worst. For our Government to "enter into the general trade affairs of the world" in order to secure all the markets possible with the object of "providing employment" for our people—that is the whole essence of Economic Imperialism. Deliberately endorse this as the Government's proper duty, and we are committed to that sinister policy; and the end is war. The Labour Party as the firebrand of a world conflagration—that may well be the issue of its infatuation for "employment," as an end in itself.

The Labour Party as a whole made but a poor show in the debate. Even Colonel Wedgwood, who generally assumes the light task of intellectual leadership of the party, was disappointing. Some of his criticisms touched the point, but he concentrated his chief attack on rings and monopolies. He called on the Government to "break" them. That is easier said than done. Why not demand that the power of price-fixing shall be taken out of the hands of the capitalists altogether, thus effectively draw their sting. That done, trusts, rings and cartels might even be very desirable, as making for the efficiency of industry. The workers should rather aim at being taken into real partnership in these combinations than at breaking them up. Mr. J. H. Thomas remarked very truly that the country was not suffering from over-production, but from under-consumption. That, we should like to point out, is easily thought, but is strangely insisted, "There was no one simple remedy." On the whole, Mr. Ben Tillett made perhaps the best speech. It was certainly vigorous, and unsparing in its denunciation of the Government. And on the constructive side, he did not bank on things as railway extension seem to be chiefly intended. Why did the "Daily Herald" omit this, by the way, though the capitalist "Times" singled it out for record?

A steady stream of propaganda continues to pour forth from influential quarters, all in one direction. The same catch-phrases occur again and again in speech after speech, and article after article. "Rigid economy in all branches of life," "maximum production," "removal of restriction," "reduction of prices by reducing costs," and so on and so forth, keep droning through our ears" like a tale of little meaning. Has Lord Midleton not always to the fore, when a "big push" in this kind of thing is called for. He has been having another heart-to-heart talk, this time with the British Engineers' Society. We have heard it all before—too often. "There is a definite amount of foreign trade available, but we are not getting it." Well, we often point out how we can easily secure as much foreign trade as we really need; even with no reduction of costs, we could compete with any price, however low, that obtains in the world-market. But once more, why not think first of what potential demand, checked by excessive prices, there may be at home? He proceeded to trot out his favourite scheme of maintaining the weekly wage level by longer hours at a lower wage rate. Lord Midleton, in a letter to the "Times," expresses this still more ingeniously: "The great fall in wages, which at present appears inevitable, could, no doubt, be modified by a return to longer working hours." We like the idea that to pile a second grievance on the top of an existing one may be expected to modify" the irritation of the latter. Has Lord Midleton really not yet understood that the workers want short hours for their own sake, and not merely as an ingenious device for securing more wages in proportion to work done? Lord Weir, in his address, went on to make an all-round attack on Trade Union regulations. "Scrap the lot!" appeared to be his watchword. These rules may sometimes be short-sighted, and the Unions are undoubtedly pig-headed enough in maintaining them. But what can the average man be expected to be but pig-headed, when he is forced to fight, like a rat in a corner, to maintain his standard of life?

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It is high time that Labour awoke to the realities of the situation. The fact is that our industry cannot carry on along the present lines. There are only two alternatives. We can transfer the whole enterprise on to a new basis, so that wages would no longer be governed by prices, nor prices by "supply and demand." But, if we do not do that, wages must come down, hours go up, and probably Trade Union regulations be scrapped wholesale. But it is perfectly possible merely to ramp and rave against these things in the manner of the "Daily Herald," to stoke up the resistance of the workers, to call for a "great fight," and all the rest of it. It is no good crying for the moon, when it is economically impossible for the moon to emerge from the clouds. That sort of thing may be magnificent, but it is not sane. If the workers try it, they will but fight a series of rearguard actions, every one of them issuing in partial, even if not always in complete, defeat. Unfortunately, too, they will alienate middle-class opinion still further, and rally practically the whole non-wage-earning portion of the community
behind the employers, and behind the real manipulators of the puppet-employers, the financiers. The nation will be rent asunder by a continually more embittered class war.

The public will be well advised to keep their eye on the coal industry. There is a grave risk of its being blanketed by the more immediately menacing spectre of the unemployed. We warned people from the first that the crude piece of patchwork, which could not "settle" anything. Already it is breaking into gaps and leaks at every point. Various collieries are closing down on the plea that they cannot pay the wages of their men. There is a grave risk of its being an incidental and contributory factor in production.

"The Moving Finger Writes—".

By C. H. Douglas.

II.

The factor most destructive of progress to the Labour Party and most useful to the forces opposed to its legitimate aspirations, is its incorporative abstraction from reality—an abstraction which is quite probably the result, amongst other things, of generations of "religious" instruction specifically directed to the preaching of "other worldliness," and to that extent also an instance of the direction of Labour thought by financial influences. It is rampant in every sphere of Labour political action; from the lionising of Mr. George Lansbury, an honest citizen who would like to apply his conception of the Sermon on the Mount to the game of cut-throat poker, to the instantaneous success of Mr. Tawney's title for his book "The Sickliness of an Acquisitive Society." I have not read that book, which is doubtless excellent, but its title suggests that the average man ought to work with the specific object of not getting to be a millionaire; a precisely parallel line of argument to that of the orthodox capitalist who insists that the major object of industry is to send goods away from those who made them, by export, or otherwise, so that "employment" may never fail.

Put shortly, the psychology of the Labour Party is a psychology of failure. To be poor is to be virtuous; to be well off is to be wicked; and the objective of all action is to replace the wicked by the virtuous. As a result, the official Labour Party is alwaysaverse to a policy of attack, of levelling down, and is bound to be opposed, sooner or later, by everyone with any conception of the possibility of levelling up, as well as by those who have anything to lose.

It is no pleasant thing to have to criticise that party in these pages. There was a period when organised Labour appeared to be the hope of the world, but that hope is now very dim, not only from the causes just outlined, but because the power given to it by the circumstances of war has been dissipated. Not a single proposition of the capitalist system has been even challenged by it; every strike has been a fight for position in the system, a claim either that the office boy ought to be General Manager, or at any rate ought to control the General Manager, combined with lurid threats to the firm's customers that, in the happy days to come, Labour would "larn" them what it was like to be an office boy. A very alluring programme. R.I.P.

While the Labour Party has for all practical purposes devoted its attention to a mechanical and unreasoning claim to power on the grounds of virtue, the financiers have not been so immobile. So long as it was possible to keep the subject of credit away from public discussion it was done, and done well. But merely negative opposition, in the nature of things, being bound to fail, a positive line of action has been elaborated and is now well under way—the exploitation of public credit for export purposes. Apart from the Ter Meulen and Mountain schemes, the Government (i.e., Zaharoff-Sassoon) proposals for dealing with "unemployment" are based fundamentally on an export credit scheme buttressed by relief works at home, the latter to be financed out of taxation.

Now, it is our contention that the use and control of credit is absolutely the vital issue of the present era. It is a force and can be used like other forces to destroy or to build, and it is quite possible that in this Government proposal we are faced with a new crisis in the history of civilisation. If it is put into force, we are committed to a line of action diametrically opposed to that urged in the pages of this review, and it is therefore vital that it should be understood.

The proposal involves the pledging of public credit to the extent of (at first), say, £25,000,000. It should
be particularly noted that Mr. Lloyd George explicitly says: "It is not consumable goods of which the world stands in the most urgent need. What it stands mostly in need of is equipment to start its trade—machinery, transport and short credits are of no use when you are dealing with heavy goods of that kind. We have come to the conclusion... it is desirable that we should extend credit for five or even six years" (Hear, hear).

That is to say, although the productive capacity of the industrial nations was so enormous that it overlooked the wastage of a four and a half years' war in eighteen months, so that two and a half millions are unemployed in this country, and probably six millions in America, the energies of the nation are to be employed, not in obtaining the maximum benefit from its existing plant, but in producing still more plant to be exported in competition with countries similarly situated.

This £25,000,000, then, will be paid out in this country as wages, salaries and dividends, entirely unrepresented by any goods for which the general public has any demand whatever. The money so paid out, therefore, represents pure inflation, and, being unaccompanied by any method of dealing with prices, means the inevitable result of pure inflation—a rise in prices. In other words, the goods exported under these conditions are paid for by the general public through the agency of a general rise in prices, but not delivered to them, but the credits, if ever repaid, are repaid not to the general public, but to the banks who will finance these credits. And as the same time these exports will be in fierce competition with similar goods from, say, America, preparations for the coming war will naturally be accelerated.

(To be continued.)

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

May I make a suggestion in elementary Economics?

All men capable of discussing the present situation at all or willing to discuss it honestly see, of course, that we have the mechanical power in England, and the manpower, to produce in abundance such manufactured articles as can be wholly produced within the country. In that sense it is true that poverty in such things can naturally be accelerated.

And the cost of the costing will go into cost.

Chorus (of Real Creditors):

So fill up your forms with a carbon beneath,
To check all your figures we're armed to the teeth;
For never a scrap of efficiency's lost,
And the cost of the costing will go into cost.

If your credit is real we will find you the cash;
With your income quadrupled you'll soon cut a dash;
By the rule of capital you'll no longer be bossed,
And the cost of the costing will go into cost.

JOHN HELSTON.

THE WHITE POPLARS.

Swift beauty climbs the engine-steam, and shows Halves of hushed nightingales to flying sound
And the incursive light upon the train,
And then as swiftly goes;
And the leaves with whispers settle to repose;
And the clear singing comes to life again.

But on the midnight lingering still
The lifted leaves' last gestures pale divide
The darkness from the echoes on the hill,
And woe a man with their ghostly will
From the dark banks of suicide.

H. BELLOC.

[The answer to this goes right to the root of the difference between the existing economic system, and that advocated in these pages. The whole trend of orthodox capitalism is to make men cheap and to keep goods dear—in other words, to make work ("employment"), not to deliver goods with a minimum of work. The result of this is that the productive capacity, say, of these islands has never been exploited to produce and deliver consumable goods until war forced us on some elementary flashes of reality. It has always been assumed that we must import enormous quantities of wheat, for instance, paying for these by manufactured goods, and before the war we imported about 42 out of 52 weeks' supply. Under the pressure of the German submarine menace we raised our wheat production in two years, with most of the agricultural labour out of the country, to over four times the pre-war figure, and there is no doubt whatever that we can easily produce the whole 52 weeks' supply in this country. But that would be slow; the price would become uncommercial, and the supply would have to fall off to raise the price or keep it at a "commercial" level. That is exactly what has happened, and in consequence 1,000,000 acres of British wheat-land have gone out of cultivation since the war. While, under any economic scheme, exports and imports would obviously be desirable, and for all practical purposes essential, the existing system makes us a forced seller, with the result that a quite disproportionate amount of our exports are paid for by the raw material for further exports.—C. H. D.]

"COUNTING THE COST."

Tune: "Bonnie Dundee."

To the highbrows of Labour 'twas Douglas who spoke—
The man that you need's the statistical bloke;
Then none of 'em, or I'm afraid from whatever other cause. In the same way if we see a man fasting with food all round him we should have flashes of reality. It has always been assumed that any goods for which the general public has any demand whatever. The money so paid out, therefore, represents pure inflation, and, being unaccompanied by any method of dealing with prices, means the inevitable result of pure inflation—a rise in prices. In other words, the goods exported under these conditions are paid for by the general public through the agency of a general rise in prices, but not delivered to them, but the credits, if ever repaid, are repaid not to the general public, but to the banks who will finance these credits. And as the same time these exports will be in fierce competition with similar goods from, say, America, preparations for the coming war will naturally be accelerated.

(To be continued.)
Towards National Guilds.

The particular attention of discerning readers is called to the articles on the Douglas Scheme now appearing in the "Irish Theological Quarterly." They are, as might be expected, exceedingly thorough and acute; but, over and above that, they are exceedingly friendly. The writer, Father P. Coffey, has plainly made such an examination of the theory as only too many students profess but fail to make, an examination involving, in the first place, a map of the theory itself and, in the second place, a practical understanding of the exemplary scheme based upon it. Father Coffey’s main conclusion, it should be carefully observed, is that the credit-control proposed by Major Douglas is, to say the least, not contrary to Catholic economics. Being, as it is, "distributist" in its intention and effect, while at the same time allowing for the "natural instincts" in regard to private property, individual initiative and the like, the proposal is, in fact, in direct accord with a good deal of Catholic doctrine, and particularly in regard to the "Just Price." It is a fact that one of our learned readers with access to a good historical library would not have failed to find the medieval world teemed with controversy on this subject. Our impression is that the controversy must have been inconclusive on logical grounds, in the absence of the analysis now put forward in "Economic Democracy" and "Credit-Power and Democracy"; in other words, that the logical demonstration of the practical morality of the Just Price has only now been made by Major Douglas, and that the medievel economists failed to anticipate it. The importance of the discovery, if it be a fact, is, however, obvious; for never at any time, with or without the logical demonstration, has the Catholic Church abandoned its claim on behalf of the Just Price. If, therefore, the claim has now been substantiated on logical grounds, and is explicitly recognised and established in the Douglas Scheme, Catholic support for the Douglas Scheme ought to be able to be taken for granted. Father Coffey’s articles in the "Irish Theological Quarterly" are, in fact, the first evidence of it.

It would be interesting to consider the possible consequences of a general and semi-official endorsement of the Douglas-New Age proposals by the Catholic Church. Would they, on the whole, be favourable or otherwise to the adoption of the plan? Would they make it more enemies than friends? Careful readers must have realised by now the deliberate order in which our propaganda has been carried on, and the successive steps that have been taken to get the proposals carried out. In the first place, we addressed ourselves to the group of Socialists naturally adapted to the reception of the Doughs idea, that is to say, to the group of National Guildsmen of whom we ourselves were part parents. Thanks to the inconceivable stupidities and jealousies of several of the leaders of the League, the dynamic and practical complement of the theoretical views of the original Guildsmen was incontinently rejected. The next addressed ourselves to the Executives of the Trade Unions in the hope of finding among them an individual or two capable of thinking out afresh the problem in which Labour is engaged. There again we met with failure and the advice to appeal to the wider franchise of the Labour movement as a whole. This course we next pursued with results which if they need not be regarded as a failure certainly cannot be ranked as a success. It has taken three years to persuade the Labour Party to appoint a hostile sub-committee to inquire into the Douglas proposals. Baffled in that direction, we flew a series of kites in the face of the Liberal Party and Press, before Abingdon Street and the offices of the "Nation" and the "Daily News." If an alternative Government was to be created, we argued, it could only be upon an alternative economic policy, one based, in short, on a different economic from that which forms the common platform of the Coalition; an economic policy of Distribution in contrast with the prevalent policy of more and more Production. Such an economic policy would of itself create a new political party; and since it would certainly appeal to the vast majority of the economic interests, it could not fail to be a winning political policy. Abingdon Street, however, was sente, and the "Nation" was never endowed with surplus vitality; and the result was that our kites passed unnoticed. Still later we turned to the Church of England, an institution for which we have a good deal of respect, though more in anticipation of its possible failure than on account of its actual past and present. Undoubtedly we have achieved a certain measure of success in interesting Churchmen in the Scheme. Several bishops and other dignitaries have openly recommended the reading of our literature, and many of the clergy are active in its propaganda. It is perhaps the case that the time-sense of the Church, as of most English institutions, is deficient in the realisation of urgency. Urgency in respect of time is scarcely understood by the English mind; and since time is the factor upon which success depends in the face of the industrial crisis of the next world-war, it is altogether too slow to enable the movement to catch up with, let alone to overtake, the enemy movement. Long before the English Church, at its present rate of progress, will have begun seriously to attempt to affect the industrial situation, the industrial situation will have developed into the feverish crisis of the next world-war, from which, we can safely say, the English Church will scarcely emerge with its life.

The order of things just indicated represents the order of our wishes in the matter, what we would have had as first, second, third choices. But, in the end, we are prepared to accept with gratitude the aid of any instrument capable of carrying the Douglas proposals into effect, be it this, that or the other. If our own people fail us, as his did Paul, we shall say with him: Henceforth, we will turn unto the Gentiles. That there are embarrassments to be encountered in certain associations we are only too well aware. Co-operation in a common policy of a limited character by no means connotes complete co-operation in ultimate aims or even in present methods. Contrast the conduct of the Allies during and after the war, and even their conduct during the war alone. Friends in adversity can all too easily be reminded that they are also enemies in adversity. But the paramount virtue of man is work done, and, in the end, we shall all be judged by what we have effected for our day and generation. Have our readers the spiritual energy to get the Scheme adopted, if not by one means then by another? Are we equal to the demand that time makes of us? Well and good if we are; but, if not, then assistance must be accepted and sought from any quarter.

The foregoing rather obscure but not meaningless discussion is intended to recall certain groups of Douglas students to a sense of the importance both of the time and intensity of propaganda, and to remind them to the Executives of the Trade Unions in the hope of finding among them an individual or two capable of thinking out afresh the problem in which Labour is engaged. There again we met with failure and the advice to appeal to the wider franchise of the Labour movement as a whole. This course we next pursued with results which if they need not be regarded as a failure certainly cannot be ranked as a success. It has taken three years to persuade the Labour Party to appoint a hostile sub-committee to inquire into the

NATIONAL GUILDSMEN.
New Values.

The longer one listens to the voice of the new psychology the more firmly one is forced to believe that the road of human progress is not the road of morality; that the great virtues are qualities not moral, but strange as it may seem, artistic; and that the destiny of mankind is "beyond good and evil." The province of our lives which can be called moral has always been small, but the discoveries of psychoanalysis, by revealing a New World of immaturity, have made it still smaller. Our emotions, we know, are perfectly immoral; our very thoughts are immortal. So long as we possess the courage of them; and now in the unconscious psychologists are discovering the last, the ineluctable immorality. Even if you find a man who has never committed an immoral action in his life—we know sufficient to say that he has always been immoral, and that he could never have been anything else. For Life is immoral and there is no escape from its immorality. Existence is the story; what we call morality is nothing more than the "moral at the moral." The moral system is simply a collection of these tags—catalogued and numbered—drawn from the inexhaustible story book of life. And the analogy between the moralist and the fabulist is equally striking. To the fabulist—except when he allows an immoral imagination to run away with him—the story is the means whereby he can devise an illusion of life, and to the moralist life is valuable only as the reservoir of morality. The charge which Nietzsche drew up against morality, that it is the enemy of life, is perfectly valid; for the moralist is simply an exploiter of life, and he exploits it for the sake, not of life, but of morality.

But it will be said: Is not the "moral" necessary? Can we have the story without it? And if we can, is the story of any use, for is not the "moral" its meaning? Well, there is a story without a moral and by no means without a meaning: there is art. Art is not only the greatest achievement thus far of man; it is the promise of human achievement. In art, as we know, there should not be a moral; in the story of man, perhaps, there shall not be a moral. The progress of man is to be sought—if we are to believe the truths of psychology—not in increased submission to morality, but in the more complete practice of art. When art is perfect it renounces morality: when man is perfect—that is, humanly perfect—he will renounce morality. Whoever can practise life as an art, in other words, has no need to the dictate of necessity, sacrifice his life to their own. Beyond them there is Nature herself, indifferent, and at the same moment fickle and inexorable. Would not one expect that his virtue would be crushed down with terror? The astonishing thing is that he is not. A fact so extraordinary, however, needs for its explanation a cause as extraordinary; and it is this assumption that in his own person the individual can master the world. Courage is nothing less than the assertion that the soul is as great as this planet—perhaps still more than this, that it is as great as the universe itself. The mystical doctrine of the immanence of the Self in its full power in every soul is almost implicit in it; the one is a metaphysical statement of the other. But a virtue so clearly not the child of imperfection, morality, for its essential character is that it is a transmutation. The mere will to live has been transformed into the will to preserve the soul, and in being transformed it has been lifted up into a superhuman region, a region of art. No one who has studied tragedy, for instance, can fail to see how similar are the implications of tragedy and of courage. Both tragedy and courage are transformations of actuality.

Progress, then, is not in the last resort discipline—although discipline is necessary to it—but transformation. All other progress is merely discipline or legalism; not the mixing of order out of chaos, but the establishing of order in chaos. The order established is, moreover, arbitrary, provisional, imperfect, just as the transformation of art is necessary, perfect and, in a sense, eternal. Possessing these qualities, the discipline of morality is bound to have, in addition to its salutary effects, effects by no means salutary. And it has: it has the mark of all things not the best, to have evil fruits as well as good. Whoever has practised self-discipline before he has possessed self-knowledge must know that it alone can come near to the spirit. But morality is simply a discipline—a necessary one, alas! There seems to be no escape from that evil—which we impose unless self-knowledge awakes. It need not be dangerous in a high degree, however, so long as we recognise that it is not enough. It is a malady with
which we are inoculated to save us from a worse. We have to do with something that is true, and the moralized can become virtuous; but without suffering from it virtue may never be ours. Nevertheless, virtue, the transformation of evil into good, is, now that we have listened to psychology, the smallest goal we can set before us.

Edward Moore.

**Drama.**

By John Francis Hope.

If I may judge by the complaints of those critics whom Mr. Fagan invited to the first night of "Heartbreak House," his invitation is not necessarily a friendly invitation. They had to sit and wait for over four hours; I went at my own expense on the second night, and the performance lasted only three hours and twenty minutes. Moral: don't judge of things. To the believer in the permanence of human nature, the Psalms: "So teach us to number our days, that we may consider the time of our coming to the end."

Awareness of appalling possibilities appallingly near is very much with us. "Every year I expected death, and it was a poor house on the second night." On these two points I may reassure the public: the performance when it settles down may even take no longer than three hours (a good deal depends in this respect upon Miss Grey and Miss O'Malley, neither of whom is yet remarkable for speed without haste), and the acting is well worth seeing. Of Miss Edith Evans, as Lady Utterword, and Mr. Brember Wills as Captain Shotover, I cannot, at the moment, find words to express my admiration; they must be seen to be believed. But I was particularly pleased to notice that Mr. James Dale, whose Larry Doyle in "John Bull's Other Island" deserved a martyrdom, played Hector Hushabye to the life as I conceived him. Mr. H. O. Nicholson, as Mariette Shotover, is too, a perfectly realized study; and the other parts are as well realized, although the nurse hovers uncertainly between Irish and a Lancashire accent. Guinness comes from Dublin. The performance even when I saw it had not the performance of a first night. Moreover, I went at my own expense on the second night, and the sense of approaching catastrophe that the audience that laughed at Ellie Dunn's remark, "It can't go on for ever," expressed seemed to me to depend upon the spectator's general awareness of the necessity of "Heartbreak House," and the fact that our aspirations bare from the air, that evil remains. It is from this point of view that the play is to be judged. It really is, when we look at the state of things to-day, with Europe in ruins and the Western countries choking themselves to death in their refusal to learn the art of government.

It is from this point of view that the play is significant. It shows us a civilization upside down, like a tree with its roots in the air; everybody cut off from his natural sources of supply, denied his natural outlet. When an inventor is told that "living at the rate we do, you cannot afford life-saving inventions," it is not a joke; it is a calamity, and not a fanciful one either. England and Europe poured out money on science during the war for purposes of destruction; but I gather that we as a nation spend less on science in peace time than private firms do in America and Germany. A civilization that can only pervert knowledge to the purposes of destruction is in process of committing suicide; it poisons creation at its very source.

When Hector says that the Foreign Office toffs and the financiers are "too stupid to use their power," the retort comes pat: "Do not deceive yourself, they do use it; and, better half of ourselves every day to propitiate those who are there to render all our aspirations barren prevents us from having the aspirations. And when we are tempted to seek their destruction, they bring forth demons to delude us, disguised as pretty daughters, and singers and poets and the like, for whose sake we spare them." But Apollo did not serve Admetus for ever.

Or take the other type, Boss Mangan. "Achievements? Well, I don't know what you call achievements; but I've jolly well put a stop to the games of the other fellows in the other departments. Every man of them thought he was going to save the country all by himself, and do me out of the credit and out of my chance of a title. I took good care that if they wouldn't let me do it, they shouldn't do it at all. And I may not know anything about my own machinery; but I know how to stick a ramrod into the other fellow's." To pretend that this is any more than the literal truth about politics would be to join the Suicides' Club of "Heartbreak House." It is a comedy not only of manners but of ideas. Mr. Shaw builds up his picture of a civilization that has gone mad, of men who, in Emerson's phrase, "are so sharp-sighted that they can neither work nor think; neither read Plato nor read him." A world in which mischief-making, monkeys and sentimental fools lord it over men of genius, in which women govern the men, and do not know what themselves or the men really want, or what the nation really needs! Yet the mystic word is caught up from the old madman; "life with a blessing! that is what I want," says Ellie Dunn. But how to obtain the blessing, is the problem; as Macbeth said: "I had most need of blessing, and amen stuck in my throat." Mr. Shaw has really got back to Christian values, and on that basis condemns the civilization we live in. When I know my countrymen, or marry Mr. Mangan, there would be no blessing on our marriage. There is a blessing on my broken heart. There is a blessing on your beauty, Hesione. There is a blessing on your father's spirit. Even on the lies of Marcus there is a blessing; but on Mr. Mangan's money there is none. What is it but the Apostle's saying: "The love of money is the root of all evil?"

But how to get out of this quagmire, that is the problem. Certainly, we must get "religion" if we would have life with a blessing; but we do not get religion from Churches. Even the wipping out of the "two burglars," the housebreaker and the financier, does not settle the problem; for there is no new impulse guidance; he has tried to put into us that "fear of the Lord" which is "the beginning of wisdom," to convey to us a timely sense of our danger, to warn us, in Captain Shotover's words, "to lay a course and stand on the bridge and steer it," for "one of the ways of Providence with drunken sleepers is to run them on the rocks." He has done this in a play which will be valuable as an historical document even to the next generation, in a comedy not only of manners but of ideas. Read the critiques, and see them staving off what the evangelist calls "conviction of sin"; and judge by the fact that the Playgoers' Club of the "Heartbreak House" Armageddon that is already prophesied for 1926.
Readers and Writers.

Three or four new journals have reached me recently, of which the most imposing in appearance is one called "Broom"—an International Magazine of the Arts published by Americans in Italy. The price is two shillings and sixpence a copy, and it is to be obtained from the Editors at 18, Trinità dei Monti, Rome. It is a magazine of ninety-six large pages, containing several excellent reproductions, and, so far as the arts of publication go, altogether an excellent half-crown's worth. I doubt only (1) its necessity and (2) its effectiveness. Under the first head I find it too obviously a duplication of the aims of "The Dial." There must, from the nature of human intelligence, be a very limited market for a commodity of this kind, and "Broom" and "The Dial" will inevitably end by fighting each other for that market. The commodity itself is also very scarce and so intensifies the competition. At present "Broom" seems to have superior guns in the shape of paintings and drawings—a Picasso, a Derain, a beautiful still-life by Juan Gris, a good design by Gleizes—while the "Dial"—with, of course, the impetus of an established reputation—exceeds in its literary material. But despite its "Broom" doesn't shoot very far, which is my second complaint. As a motto I find this quotation from "Moby Dick" printed on the cover: a deadly trap to set for a Moby Dick enthusiast:

What of it, if some old hulks of a sea captain orders me to get a broom and sweep down the decks? What does that indignity amount to, weighed, I mean, in the scales of the New Testament? Do you think the archangel Gabriel thinks anything the less of me because I profane and thoughtlessly obey that old hulks in that particular instance? Who ain't a slave?

Now one normally sweeps the deck with a purpose in mind—in short, to leave it free for positive action of some kind. But I don't find the least hint of a purpose in this medley of diverse and discursive contributions. These artists and writers lack the motive of a common discipline, and are devoid of any cohering creed. They all speak with separate individual voices, and what a feeble quavering it all amounts to! Can't they find something more in keeping with the breezy motto they adopt, than the rather faded reputations of James Stephens, D. Beresford, Amy Lowell and Walter de la Mare? Is Europe empty of all but these thin prose sketches, these barren lyrics? And the best of the lyrics are not European, but translated by Mr. E. Powys Mathers from the Chinese of J. Wing—such as this one:

The breakers far to the left at night,
Foreign cannons splintering long ago
Bamboo junk of the two-sword men.

Lines of black slaves
Running up the beach,
To fall exhausted forward.

They carry bar-silver against their breasts;
It drags them down in this Spanish sea all night.

That is a definite evocation—exact, vivid, and true. It is an image that remains in the memory. Images, however, sweep no decks—or only very indirectly, and when used on sensitive ships. Brooms should rather, as in our fairy tales, be wild by furies with a will to sweep the moon out of the sky if need be. But I don't see Americans in Italy in the rôle: I can only see them as goldfish out of water.

"Fanfare" is edited by Mr. Leigh Henry (whom I remember as a contributor to "The Egoist") and is to be published every fortnight by Goodwin and Tabb, Ltd., 34, Percy Street, W. 1 (price sixpence). The first number is rather scrappy and too full of self-explanation, but I am to some extent "intrigued" by its possibilities. It is primarily "a musical causerie," but the editor likes to see music in a general perspective of all the arts—a very pleasant change from the esoteric conceit of most journals of this type. An article by Th. Lykiardopoulos, the secretary to the Moscow Art Theatre, is, I think, the most interesting contribution to this first number. It relates the origin and history of "La Chauve Souris"—the display of Russian artists now playing at the Apollo Theatre, London. La Chauve Souris is not my pigeon, so to speak, but in the general perspective, as "Fanfare" would have it, it is a very significant production. When I first saw the entertainment, I was impressed by two qualities: a sense of native spontaneity in the artistic offer in support of such subtle mockery of European traditions. It now appears that the company actually is spontaneous in origin—a thing born of camaraderie, jollity, and suppressed energies. In Russia, the curtain may have fallen on such scenes now and for a time; but a society that can devise an art of this kind—art that makes our English masques and mimics seem tired and outworn—is animated by a vigour significant beyond its manifested sphere.

The Dial comes "Barricade"—a Paper of Progressive Art and Literature, appearing every two months, price eightpence (2, Marlborough Court, Carnaby Street, Regent Street, W.1). It is edited by Mr. Sherard Vines, who so far transends the manifesto habit as to contrive an editorial and a critical effort. I cannot help but hear that "Barricade" is to "deprecate the loose, valueless criticism that tattles in a pseudo-Sainte Beuvine way about the artists' morals, that judges according to imagined qualities and association"—Mr. Robert Lynd on Keats, may I suggest by way of a concrete illustration? I rejoice still further when Mr. Vines declares, in no roundabout fashion, that "it will soon be our pleasure to celebrate dynamically the extinction of romance in contemporary art (even if it cannot be smoked out of our bourgeois English homes), and to take part in inaugurating an era of intellectual creative effort in which colossal developments from the present hopeful beginnings in expressionism may occur, disowned and abominated more than ever by the unprepared."

There is something positive about these ideals, but, without entering into details, I may say that I am hardly satisfied with the material offered in support of them. That may be due to the fact that the editor has not yet had time to "break in" the wild horses of his youthful team. However it may be, I do not mean to be discouraging—far from it, for it seems to me that there is more potentiality in this inconspicuous broad-sheet than in all the floral display and stuff of Messrs. Allen and Unwin. The price will be seven shillings and sixpence. The selection will cover only a comparatively short period of "R. H. C.'s" long and happy penal servitude; from 1918 to 1921, in fact; and this will leave, in the event of a sufficient demand for more, at least three further volumes of selections, carrying the series back to 1912 or 1913, when they were begun. To add to this pleasant news I am permitted to divulge the fact that the "R. H. C." of "Readers and Writers" turned out to be the Editor of The New Age himself. The forthcoming volume will be published under the name of Mr. A. R. Orage.

HERBERT READ.
Views and Reviews.

GRAND GUIGNOL HISTORY—VII.

Mrs. Webster has failed so completely to demonstrate her case in the beginning that I do not intend to follow her in the development of it. Her method is simply the method of vilification; thus she accuses Robert Owen of being an Illuminatus, declares that "it is in the matter of religion that Owen most clearly betrays the source of his error"—thus, by his campaign of militant atheism be explained" (p. 99). That Robert Owen was not an Athist, but an enthusiastic Spiritualist, Mrs. Webster does not tell us; and if every man who objected to the historical consequences of priestcraft in religion is to be regarded as an Illuminatus, Mahomet, who founded a religion without a priesthood, the Quakers, who have done likewise, must also fall under the stigma—which is absurd. Christ Himself, if we follow the Gospels, must have been an Illuminatus or Mrs. Webster's reasoning; for He certainly founded a religion, but whether or not He founded a Church is so much a matter of dispute that an historian of religion like Loisy can say:

"They do not seem to see that the divine institution of the Church is a matter of faith without historic proof, and that the apostolic tradition, rightly understood, supposes that this Church was founded by Jesus rather than by Him ("Autour d'un petit livre," p. 161)."

Take another case: Mrs. Webster mentions (p. 230) that "in revenge Mesenteaff, head of the Third Section, was murdered by Kravchinsky (alias Stepniak) on the Nevsky Prospect." Is that, I ask in the name of common decency, an adequate description of Stepniak? is it any proof that he was an Illuminatus, working on a plan of World-Revolution? Read his "King Log and King Stork," read his "The Russian Peasantry," read "The Russian Storm-Cloud," and the impossibility of identifying this sober advocate of a United States of Russia with the maniacal absurdity that Mrs. Webster calls Illuminism is apparent. Certainly he shot Mesenteaff, with more justification than the Borgia Pope poisoned Cardinals; but instead of preaching the method of Terrorism outside Russia (as Mrs. Webster's Illuminatus would do), he repudiated it.

Terrorism has no raison d'être on European soil, and will therefore not succeed in forming for itself the indispensable surrounding of a mass of sympathisers and supporters. ("Terrorism in Russia and in Europe.")

He continues, and I make no apology for quoting the passage in full:

"The conditions of European life have certainly produced revolutionists and Socialists, but these are not driven to put themselves beyond the law in order to work for their ideals. They remain citizens of their respective countries, and will certainly not sacrifice willingly the possibility of appearing in public, and speaking freely and openly—the only means by which men can seriously influence their fellow-citizens in Europe.

But if the adoption of terrorism as an organised system of political warfare is absolutely impossible in Europe, what is the meaning of those acts of terrorism that occur now here, now there? We are very far from approving of them. On the first page of the number of the "Narodnaia Vоля," published shortly after the death of President Garfield, the following declaration appeared:

"While expressing profound sympathy with the American people in the death of President James Abram Garfield, the Executive Committee feels itself obliged to state in the name of the Russian revolutionary party against all acts of violence like that which has been perpetrated. In a country where the liberty of the subject allows peaceful discussion of ideas, while not only the people not only makes the law but chooses the person by whom it is adminis-

ter—in such a country as this political assassination is a manifestation of the identical despotic tendency, to the destruction of which we are devoting ourselves in Russia. Despotism, whether wielded by individuals or by parties, is equally condemnable, and violence can only be justified when it is opposed to violence" (No. VI, October 3, 1881).

This declaration sums up the feeling of Russian revolutionists in regard to the real terrorism in Europe, and we can but endorse it.

Stepniak then goes on to warn the European Governments against "the unlucky inspiration to adopt the methods used by the Russian Government in struggling against its opponents."

But where, in such a case as this, can one detect the great plan of Illuminism—the springing to life again of that "formidable sect," the original Illuminati of Weishaupt, of which Mrs. Webster speaks on p. 234? Either Illuminism does not mean what she says it means, or the men she accuses of being Illuminati were not members of that "formidable sect."

I confess to considerable suspicion of the thesis and evidence of this book. Practically all Mrs. Webster's chief authorities are Catholoes, Abbés, and Monsignores; the persistent anti-Semitism is a Catholic practice (she accuses Karl Marx, a Jew, of some deep-laid conspiracy of silence concerning the Jews' responsibility for Capitalism; while at the same time she derides his authority in economics because he knew nothing of industry by experience, but was limited to the literature of the subject in the Museum: simple ignorance seems a better explanation than a plot begun at Golgotha), and the general scheme of life that one can infer from her criticism is the Catholic one of submission to pastors and masters. But even here there is inconsistency; for while she lauds Dr. Weishaupt, she attacks the various failures of Communist experiments, from Robert Owen onward, she imagines that they prove the failure of the Communist principle. The existence of the Catholic orders, on the other hand, proves the success of the abolition of property, which is supposed to be the original teaching of Weishaupt; the difference between the two is limited to the questions of authority and sex. Poverty, chastity, and obedience, is the rule of the Catholic orders; and for the sake of an epigrammatic antithesis, I am willing to say that poverty, free love, and rebellion, has been the rule of most communal experiments. I express no opinion at this moment on free love and rebellion; but I may remark that chastity has sometimes been strangely interpreted in Catholic orders, and rebellion, too, has not been uncommon. The history of the early Christian Church, and even the epistles of St. Paul, throw some light on the subject; and if we are to suppose that communism, concubinage, and contumacy, are Illuminist doctrines, we must certainly trace the origin of Illuminism to the foundation of the Christian Church—but the phenomena, of course, were observed long before that.

The analogy between the "six points" of Illuminism and the implied, if not always professed, teaching of Catholicism is so close as to suggest identity. The façade of mysticism is common to both; and if there is any reality in this "menace of Illuminism," we do not need either to exaggerate the evil, as Mrs. Webster does, or to minimise it. Right Hon. Winston Churchill will agree. She is nothing but a plan to exterminate one-or two-thirds of the population of France, she declares (p. 72) that "Babouvisme and Bolshevism are identical," and the Right Hon. Winston Churchill is working for the suppression of facts to score her points, as when she says (p. 270): "But it will be noticed that neither Syndicalists nor Guild Socialists ever propose to start industries on the lines they advocate"—although the existence of the Building Guild in this country, to say...
nothing of the various Italian Syndicalists' attempts (the Glass-workers and the Agriculturalists are examples that I remember), give the lie to the statement—but that will not worry Mrs. Webster.

A. E. R.

Reviews.

Trial by ordeal. By Evan Morgan. (The Bodley Head. 7s. 6d. net.)

We are not sure what meaning Mr. Morgan attaches to his title; trial by ordeal was the invocation of a miracle to prove the innocence of a man who was taken red-handed, or on whom the stolen property was found, and could not therefore "wage his law," and was not prepared to fight his accuser. The Church definitely abolished the judicial ordeal at the Lateran Council of 1216. Mr. Morgan's study of a modern poet, novelist, and student of psychical phenomena, who fell in love with one of two famous members of the Smart Set, and was not quite certain which, has no obvious connection with trial by ordeal. We are by no means clear what the ordeal was; we cannot discover that Tancred was ever accused of anything but being a hermit, and the trial by the ordeal of love certainly did not prove his innocence. As early as the twelfth century it had become clear that a resort to the ordeal practically meant certain condemnation. Apart from this Mr. Morgan's style presents formidable difficulties to the reader; when he describes a scene, and he does it far too often, he presents an inventory: "Overhead, in the high trees that sheltered the house, the rooks kept up an incessant cawing and ever and anon two or three would plane away down in the light wind in search of more comfor-

the brakes and copse below, the cooing of turtle-doves and the more insistent love-note of the wood-pigeons ascended with the harsh chatter of jays and the sharp cry of a cock pheasant from the hazels." And so on for a page and a half. When his people talk, they quote Davies as they are about to enter a motor; and indeed he is right:

"I love Davies," replied Tancred to the quotation. "He is one of the most simple, but one of the most effective of our modern living poets, don't you think so, Miss Blond?" "Do you prefer him to Yeats?" He laughed [what at, God knows]. "Comparisons of genius and beauty, true beauty that is, are impossible, they are both the gifts of the gods and above criticism or comparison." I agree," she said; then after a pause, "Well, goodness, Tancred," she answered, "if someone is answered, they are."

But Tancred, after the long silence of a preface, had replied: "Goodbye, Miss Blond, goodbye, Miss Pamela, goodbye, Captain, good luck with your work, Evan, and send me a wire when you want me." When Tancred soliloquises, he achieves this description of Christ Church, Oxford: "Ah! sickness! Acedalma! and on thy fields how many eyes near greeting the Unseen turn to this city, all radiant half in dream—a memory of happiness that's past, a paradisial herald to the city of happiness that's to come, a preface that he once wrote a book about one street of London; but these short swallow-flights will, we hope, serve the better purpose of awakening Londoners to the knowledge that they live in a wonderful city. The book is illustrated.

The Resurrection of Shagpat.

By Denis Saurat.

II.—COUNCIL AT THE VIZIER'S.

"O my betrothed," Noorna began, careless of the gloom these two masculine souls had struck out one of the other, flashes of dazzling darkness as though a sombre steel had descended upon the flint stone of ultimate night to produce and scatter sparks of obscurity; but Noorna, the Maid of Exaltation, felt that carried in her bosom that maketh into light the very blackness of Erebus;—"O thou youth of impenitency! thou comest ready for the Event, even though thou knowest it not. Not for the reasons thou weenest art thou fit; indeed, thou art to wash out all that great conceit of thine, before thou canst handle or even see the Sword of Mastery which alone can shave Shagpat."

But the Adviser of the Folk rebuked her, saying, "Speak thou to the purpose, O Disturber of the Mind. How can the youth shed his own conceit? It shall be peeled off him by the knife of facts. Indeed he is sufficiently abased, having no passport nor the wherewithal to get a passport. And indeed he is right to think highly of himself, for there is one standing within him who is great."

So Shibli Bagarag interrupted them, shouting in extempore verse to Noorna:

"Miserable me! When I look upon my darkness and consider all thy light, and remember all my weakness as I gaze upon thy might, I would change the flood of speeches and to profit make it tend, for what matters it what tools think and what matters it what fools sink, as long as the work is done and One fool achieves the end!"

And the two laughed, and the Adviser of the Folk said, "He rebuketh us rightly, and he turneth verse neatly, this youth of thine: verily there is much in him, and we do wrong to speak slightly of him."

But Noorna looked upon him fondly and replied:
"Indeed, I think no evil of him, this youth! He speaketh well. Thou Father of the lovely Maid, explain thou to him the end to be gained and the means thereto. For thou art ever good at advising."

But here Shibli Bagarag groaned: "Cannot this be spared me, O adviser of the Folk, even if I pay them off?"

And Noorna said severely: "No, for it is written."

So Shibli Bagarag asked, "In the stars, O reader of Destiny?"

And she said: "Between the lines of the papers of news, O youth of Despondency, for we no longer read the stars nowadays, having found they dwelt but in relative Space. Between the lines of the papers of news is the absolute. But consider, O youth of Enterprise, thou art to have allies, it is true; but there is compensation for thee; for thou shalt have the pleasure of sacrificing thy enemies against them and annihilating them at the end."

The youth answered in the voice of meditation: "There is indeed comfort in that thought."

So Feshnavat continued: "Also there is much merit in the manner of acquiring those allies. For thou art to sacrifice to the Spirit that keepeth the Sword, and he is a Spirit of Reason: One Sophist of the Lord; One Analyst of the Spirit: One Child of the Zohar."

But here again the soul of the youth broke down and he said: "Who are they, O Chief of the News? And what Names of Terror thou namest?"

So Noorna put the arm of comfort, slender and strong and soft, round the youth and cheered him, saying: "I shall take thee to them, betrothed of my life, and aid thee!"

And Feshnavat the Vizier of old went on with the terrible tale, while the arm of comfort stayed around the weakening figure of Shibli Bagarag, and there came from it that which made him bear up and gather his courage together, and feel mighties in might, even as the terror increased."

"Thou art to do battle against the Sophists of the Lord, and get one of them as a prize. Thou art to be delivered gagged and bound and helpless to the Analysts of the Spirit as a prey to work their wicked wills on, and govern-them as a ruler—if thou survivest. Thou art to become as one of the Children of the Zohar and wage war in their ranks and at their side, and suffer defeat with them and as one of them; and then take one with thee as a servant. But thy fourth ally is the most dangerous of all; for he is to be the Unique Specimen, difficult to find, well nigh impossible to discover, Unique, and yet a Specimen! But once found he will come with alacrity and follow thee."

Shibli Bagarag had set his heart and said only: "These be hard conditions, and they only preliminary, O Adviser of the Folk!"

But the Vizier: "Hard they be, and yet, O favoured youth! they might have been harder. The one harder condition would be to have to convince one single one of all their tribes that ever he err eth on one single particular; yet if thou survivest, thou art to become as one of the Children of the Zohar, and wage war in their ranks and at their side, and suffer defeat with them and as one of them; and then take one with thee as a servant. But thy fourth ally is the most dangerous of all; for he is to be the Unique Specimen, difficult to find, well nigh impossible to discover, Unique, and yet a Specimen! But once found he will come with alacrity and follow thee."

So Shibli Bagarag was lost in amazement and said, "That were indeed an impossible condition to fulfil. For though I have the Eclipse of Reason by my side and on my side, of what use she? For she would find nothing to eclipse in them, I ween, nought to work on! And how is it, O man of knowledge and the printed word, that this last impossible condition has been spared me?"

And to him Feshnavat the Vizier of old, lowering a little his left upper eyelid, even as his left underlid rose a little: "Because she that standeth here by thee has sworn to it that thou hast mastered an Event already in the days of yore."

So the youth turned to her with a look of love and wonder, and could say nothing until the Spirit of Admiration left him, and he rushed into verse, not betraying his secret thought:

You that would master an Event
Have you ever done it before?
All your forces will be spent
Ere you get what the days of yore
Can you give, and your battle's won;
For 'tis difficult to do it unless it's already done.

Noorna smiled at him with the protecting smile of inferior love, and took up the fallen threads of speech:

"There's danger enough in this enterprise as it is set, O youth that pleaseth the heart and the mind, O feeder of the body and the soul! For there are four dangers in the getting of the Allies, dangers to be kept firmly in the mind, to be stepped through with the step of wariness, to be looked upon with the penetrating eye of coolness. And as thou comest into contact with the Sophists of the Lord, with the Analysts of the Spirit, with the children of the Zohar, and the Unique Specimen, the four dangers that encompass thy soul and thy enterprise, they are: to laugh and to burst into laughter; to be wroth and burst out in wrath; to believe and die of belief; to sleep and never to wake more. Such are the dangers of the soul in these encounters. O youth of my love! And they are to be overcome only by having at thy side a woman, a woman whom thou desirest, a woman of the flesh, one that can bear thee babies and feed them too, one that can drag thy soul down into the strengthening mire of reality and keep it in thy mind that laughter and wrath and belief and sleep are not to be wasted on them of the Tribes of Nought, that laughter and wrath and belief and sleep are sacred to those that know Woman and what she is; and that they are to be indulged only on Woman and with Woman, behind the close-folded doors of Love!"

And rapidly she had drawn down over her face the veil of modesty, to hide her blushes and the light of her eyes. But Feshnavat the Vizier added, to help her out of the high bushes of entanglement, and allow the sun of blushes to set into her heart again: "For there is only one subject of laughter and only one subject of wrath, and only One that deserveth belief, and only One that causeth sleep in the end, and that is Woman! But that subject you two together may be trusted to exhaust and be exhausted by, and yet he knoweth but one fragment of the Block of enterprise, the Youth!"

So Shibli Bagarag shouted eagerly, "Tell me all, O Man of many words!"

Then the Vizier Feshnavat: "When thou hast possession of the four Allies of the sacrifice, thou shalt gain access to the Sword of Events, the Sword of old, that can cut through illusions and men and worlds, that is necessary to this second Shaving of Shagpat. Of old, indeed, as is recorded in the Tale beloved of Noorna, it would cut, the Sword, through rocks and towns and Identicals; but the Sons of the Sharpening that sharpened it ever, they have gone on with their work, and now the Sword can cleave through relative Space, and cut the furthest stars from their deep moorings in the Gulf of Ultimate darkness; yea, now it can split the rays of the Light into multitudinous fragments, and for straightness it is such that when it is levelled with the Sun the beams of radiance even are seen to be crooked and deviate. And indeed one of the great causes of the trouble of the world is verily that Sword. It is too sharp. Relief will come upon suffering mankind, as a welcome cooling wave of the sea rushes upon the hot bathers in the afternoons of swelter, when the Sword is sheathed at last; and that cannot be, alas, until the Event is mastered."

But Shibli Bagarag grew impatient as a ravening
And he was answered, thus: "She that single-handed, they must talk well first."

And watching over the Scheme, the Sword of Achievement, the Dagger of Desire, watching over the New Age, that it is not born yet, but struggleth still in the Womb of that which may bear it and bring it to light. Thus he slept on her bosom that night.

Here the Youth was abashed, and said: "And what or who will preserve me from the like fate, O Adviser of the Needy?"

And he was answered, thus: "She that understandeth not, yet giveth understanding, O Betrothed of my daughter! Doubt not, but thou shalt get the Sword, helped by such a one!"

So Noorna laughed her laugh of silver and pearls, silver from the graceful throat and pearls from the delicate teeth, and Feshnavat the Vizier he grinned like the cat of old, and he said: "Thou art apt in rebuke, O Youth of Impatience. But the telling that seemeth long to thee, it is less long, thou wilt find, than the doing; and they that would do well, unless they can do single-handed, they must talk well first."

"But Shibli Bagarag waved his hand and urged him on, saying, "On, on! O Vizier of syllables, out with thy talk, and pour it forth rapidly!"

Then Feshnavat wearily: "Well, the Sword of Events, now it is called the Scheme, the Scheme that it may become effective, even as the oil of the weed that cleareth the body of all its humours, as the oil of taste that purges the distempers of the body of mankind—who is that Swallower of the Sword that must be sickness and made to Swallow the Sword so that it rippeth him up from the inside to the outside, we know not, we know not, we know not at all!"

And the man of words, the Master of the printed sheet, the Adviser to what is not to be advised, having no more to say, he ceased. Also the weed of fragrance between his fingers, it had been blown out, and the fire of it extinguished by the vehemence of that which came between his lips in the force of his lamentation. Therefore he said the printed sheet had need of him and he left the two.

Then she set herself to drag the Soul of the Youth down into the strengthening mire of reality; and she took him into a small room, with a low ceiling, and dark. But she touched an excrescence against the wall and lo! from a globe at the top of the room there burst out a flood of light. The youth saw a large hollow stone, and above it there was that jutting out of the wall from which water came at a slight twist of the hand of Noorna; and many vessels there were, some flat, and some hollow, some round and some square and some oblong, and many of the instruments that carry double, and of those that pour the beneficent soup down the gladdened throat, and many more, and all dirty with their past exertions, coated with the remembrance of their work. So the Maiden of Lowliness put them under the flowing water, and into the heat of fluids and under the bristles of brushes and the rubbing of soaked cloths. And she armed the youth with a sheet long and thick and woolly and bade him carefully to exclude all drops of liquid whatsoever that remained on the vessels after her operations, and one by one, the vessels of need and the instruments of usefulness, they took their place, shining and alluring and inviting and satisfying to the eyes and the soul of the stomach, on long wooden rows from the heart of white trees, and into open chests of darken oak, and the two were well pleased.

Then she took him out into the open air of the coming night, on to a balcony of the dwelling, well arranged with couches, and inviting to the body. Low below them they heard the feet of men going hurriedly to and from the usual works of men; and they saw wave upon wave of the roofs of the innumerable houses of the great city, as of an inefficient sea that could not close together, occupied the whole of the upper world, doming from the zenith to the infinite horizon. And the youth let himself go to dream of the hard days to come, and he was happy at last to have found the Setter of the Work. Thus, softly at rest on the bosom of the beloved, it seemed to him he had to take one by one all the houses and the trees below, all the stars and the planets above, and they all had need of being washed and made clean of the error of the world, redeemed from Shagpat and the slime of Shagpat and the slime of long use under the clear waters of sweet reasonableness, and he was putting them back in their shining rows; alluring and inviting and satisfactory to the soul, with the help of Noorna bin Noorka, the beloved, in this back kitchen of the World.

Thus he slept on her bosom that night.