**THE NEW AGE**
A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, AND ART.

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**[During the current year THE NEW AGE will publish from time to time a single-page advertisement; and on such occasions, as a general rule, the size of the paper will be increased by 4 pp.]**

**NOTES OF THE WEEK.**

The Washington Conference has been one thing after another; but a recurrent note, of which the latest is struck by the question of submarines, has been the dissension between France and Great Britain. That France seriously or even by gesture contemplates war with England is a theme for Mr. Wells' fiction rather than for fact; and Mr. Balfour's diplomatic reference to the "menace" of the French proposition ought to be taken in connection with wider considerations than those of an impossible Anglo-French war; in short, with the prospect of "the next world-war." But what then is the explanation of the tendency of France to put sand into the political and diplomatic mechanism of England? It is perfectly simple. With or without complete justification, France feels herself seriously aggrieved by the failure of England to realise the insecurity of France's position in view of the probable and even certain rehabilitation of the economic and consequential power of Germany. It is all very well, France says in effect, to restore peace to the world, to limit armaments, and to insure the British Empire against attack; but, unless France is similarly insured, not against a world-war in which she would be only an auxiliary, but against a fresh Franco-German war in which she would be a principal, the Washington Conference has only a correspondingly minor interest for her. To reply to this, in the tone usually adopted, by a vague and general assurance that a new German dictatorship a threat to the world, is to repeat a tactic that has already failed. France is not in the state of mind to believe any such assurances. She wants something more substantial than words. And if she cannot obtain it by such means as alliances and specific pacts, she will reserve her right to build what submarines she likes for her own defence, and, at the same time, continue to express her resentment by creating friction wherever possible.

It is a dangerous game, but the dangers involved are at least as great for this country as for France. For the spectacle of the two chief European nations washing their dirty linen in public may be expected to isolate America more than ever from benevolent co-operation with Europe and the British Empire. On the other hand, nothing different could have been justly anticipated from the lamentable fact that England chose to attend the Washington Conference, not as a European Power friendly co-operating with the other European Powers, but as an independent and, so to say, non-European Power. The most elementary consideration of the situation, on the receipt of President Harding's invitation, would have shown the desirability of attending the Conference as Europe rather than as the British Empire; and since a prime condition of such a united front before American opinion would plainly have been to agree with France in a European policy, all the subsequent friction and resentment and possible ultimate failure of the Conference might have been spared. Suppose, for instance, that under the leadership of England, whose interests are both European and non-European, our European house had been set in order before the date of the Washington Conference, is there any doubt that the course of the Conference would have been different and better, that, in place of Anglo-French discords there would have been a European concord, and in place of American dictatorship a European-American union? The failure of France has its origin in the failure of England; and the failure of England arose from the fact that Mr. Lloyd George and his friends shortsightedly preferred the British Empire without Europe to Europe with the British Empire. The penalty already paid is weakness before the American giant—for nobody can fail to see that our policy has been dictated by fear—friction with France and the further disintegration of the European idea. And in the long run the penalties will accumulate, leaving the British Empire with only a few fragments of Europe with which to face a more or less united and hostile world.

We are not suggesting that British policy was called upon to speak French, and least of all the somewhat hysterical French of the Quai d'Orsay during the period since the Armistice. It is equally out of the question with the naive demand of our chauvinists that French policy should and shall talk nothing but English. Our suggestion is simply that vis à vis America, now by far the greatest potential world-power and not beyond a suspicion of rawness in the
method of using her hegemony, both the British Empire and France should have learned a new and common language, or, rather, revisited an old and common language—the language of Europe. Once again, let us imagine what the results might have been had this simple precaution been taken. To begin with, the restoration of European unity would have been brought about—a political and material instrument in the larger aim. Europe would have gone to Washington in a body. The reaction upon American opinion would in that event have been instantaneous. All the present perfectly justified sneers at our “dissensions” would have lost their standing-room; all the present American aloofness would have been the ground of the extreme improbability, if not impossibility, of an adequate gold production. Not long ago, the responsible director. Because she was, after the war, the leading-European Power, England owed it to Europe to send Europe and not only the British Empire to Washington. Her duty was to re-unite Europe and to address the American public in the European language.

Though the Washington Conference is drawing to a close, it is still not too late to mend Europe, and the Conference at Cannes this week provides another opportunity of retrieving the past. The French accusation that England is intent on trade for herself ought to be met by our demonstration that the revival of international trade is in the interests of all, and that the reception of Germany and Russia back into the European polity spells immediate advantage not only to England and France as separate nations but to their common association in a single credit-area. Unfortunately the scale upon which the politicians now assembling at Cannes are in the habit of thinking makes any such outcome of the Conference improbable. Actually it would cost as little trouble to make Europe a single credit-area and to distribute the resulting credit proportionately to the contributions as to effect a working settlement of the comparatively trifling question of Reparations. All that would be needed would be the creation of a European Credit Account capable of dispensing an international currency in recognition of real services rendered to the common credit and confirmed by the reduction of international prices; and even if the present Conference at Cannes could easily effect if only it had the idea. While, however, they are in the position of having at one and the same time to attempt to reduce prices in order not to ruin their industrials, their paradoxical situation is unresolvable by any conceivable compromise. From the Cannes Conference we can expect nothing fundamental; nor from the grandiose schemes said to be fermenting in Mr. Lloyd George’s brain. The best that can be hoped is the “expansion” of credits for exports by the nations best able to produce at once—a measure that simultaneously raises home-prices and enslaves the borrowing countries; while the worst to be feared and expected is another failure to agree which country shall have a preference either as regards lending or borrowing. Experts included, first and foremost, there is not a mind at Cannes of really European, still less of human, dimensions. The result will be either a compromise or a quarrel of competing traders.

Nevertheless, the necessity for foreign markets is driving our Government to take the lead among the Powers in pressing for the restoration of Russia, if not of European unity, the key to the constitution of the international relations. There seems no end to the misfortunes of that distressful country; and it appears to be clearly unable to extricate itself without foreign aid. Recognition of her de facto Government and some scheme of positive economic assistance are plainly called for. We can only welcome the actual facts by our Government and its endeavours to spread even more enlightened views among the other Powers. That only the hard teaching of experience as to the sheer demands of our own national self-interest has led our rulers’ to be sensible about Russia may be somewhat humiliating, but it is the kind of thing one takes for granted under the present conditions of world-politics. Again, it is an incalculable gain that Russia should be set on her feet economically. And, unless or until some more powerful nation or nations become convinced of the falsity of the “orthodox” principles, she can obviously only get on her feet by accepting standing-room on the established European platform. Hence it is useless to quarrel with the terms which our own and foreign financiers will impose as the price of recognition. Yet it is necessary to insist how very mixed a blessing any of these “benevolent” interventions in distressed countries must needs be under the present regime. That the arrangement must mean the definite renunciation of the original Bolshevik basis need not, of course, worry us. The methodology of the Revolution was fundamentally wrong. The Bolsheviks’ fanatical hostility to so deeply human an institution as property—a hostility which is a mere disease of capitalist society—and their deliberate destruction of credit could only produce a tainted despotism, openly employing coercion at every turn instead of inducement. It is reasonable enough to lay down the condition of the recognition of private property. Credit, too, must be, by some method, restored; there is no need to quarrel with the demand for “financial and currency conditions which will give reasonable security to traders.” But we know what this is actually interpreted to mean—“sound currency,” balancing of budgets, and all the rest of it. The destruction of the old system had at any rate left the ground clear for the rebuilding of credit on new lines, thoroughly controlled from the start in the social interest. As it is, Russia is to be forced back under the old irresponsible, centralised credit-control, which is rapidly becoming more closely consolidated than ever on an international scale. A European Financial Corporation (able, if necessary, to issue currency) is talked of. “It could lay down conditions upon which it would be willing to finance industries.” It could, and one might, without greatly daring, venture to guess in whose interests the details of those conditions would be shaped.

It might be said of the dark forces of cosmopolitan finance, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.” Yet there is encouragement in the fact that doubts will keep whispering themselves, in the minds of even highly orthodox observers. The “Times” Trade Supplement has made remarkable admissions from time to time. It has cast doubt on the gold standard—chiefly on the ground of the extreme improbability, if not impossibility, of an adequate gold production. Not long ago, too, it printed a significant article by the City Editor of the “Times” on “Finance and Trade.” Among a good deal of the conventional talk about Government “Economy” there were illuminating remarks looking in a very different direction. The writer condemned, as “a handicap to British trade,” the Government’s attempt to apply too rigidly the recommendations of the Cinliche Committee. Again he added that, it is true that “more liberal policy had inspired our financiers,” a year ago, the situation would have been much better. He expressed satisfaction that greater liberality in the issue of credit was now being shown, and fully accepted the necessity for our “now inflating credit for the purpose of meeting the demands for money.” It is true that he was speaking chiefly of foreign borrowers who required money “to pay for British goods.” Still, it is to the good that he emphasised the necessity for an
expansion of credit. Get that well into people's minds and it must soon become obvious that there are plenty of people in this country who could do with a little more "money to buy British goods," and who might be assisted in that laudable object by the resources of the national credit. The article went on to declare, "We would, of course, prefer a much bolder financial programme." After a reference to the Government's assignment of millions to capital for loans to local authorities, the writer made the remarkable statement, "It is well known that a much more striking programme was urged upon the Government, but the powers of orthodoxy prevented its adoption." There is hope for a City Editor with such large ideas and prepared to question the assumptions of "orthodoxy." He might even go the length, one of these days, of accepting such really "bold" and "striking" proposals as those advocated in our columns. At any rate he sees clearly that, "Finance is the handmaid of industry, and industry not the servant of finance."

On no point of economic reconstruction is there a greater concentration of public opinion than on the necessity of doing something about the land. No one is content that our agriculture should be allowed to become a mere appendage to industrial production. The acres of our countryside should be left lying idle, or be put to only the less remunerative uses. All sorts and conditions of people are affirming that, whatever else we do or do not do, a revival of agriculture and a full use of our land must form an important plank in any live social programme. The Labour Party not long ago issued a report on the subject. We cannot feel much enthusiasm for it. A distinctly bureaucratic and collectivist tendency colours nearly all its proposals. Again, while it does not advocate any such devices as an immediate and wholesale measure of "land nationalisation," yet it openly avows, "For the Labour Party the substitution of public for private ownership in the land . . . underlies in principle all its specific proposals." We can only say that we do not see the necessity; public ownership would be ineffective without other measures which, if adopted, would make it superfluous. Besides, there is no denying the strength of the sentimental appeal to many persons (and those not of the least desirable type) of the idea of owning an ancestral cradle for them in the mines or on the railways. These possess an immediate and wholesale measure of "land nationalisation," yet it openly avows, "For the Labour Party the substitution of public for private ownership in the land . . . underlies in principle all its specific proposals." 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Credit and Society.

It is surely the happiest of coincidences—if, indeed, we are justified in accepting it as altogether a coincidence—that the programme for the communal resumption of the nation’s credit, and the enfranchisement of the individual by endowing him with his share of the social dividend, should have been introduced to the world by a journal bearing the title of The New Age.

For this programme is nothing less than the basis of a new age which it is now within the power of our civilisation to inaugurate. This potentiality defines the social significance of the Douglasite proposals: a new age may dawn as a result of their application: it can never arise until that application is begun. To insist upon this point is essential; and those—to whom, it should be said at the outset, these notes are principally addressed—who embark on the propaganda of Social Credit, must never weary in their efforts to demonstrate the primacy of finance in the whole social problem. For in Labour circles the silly assumption is widely prevalent that the “Douglasite” is merely a product of “Reformism” in its latest guise, a Socialist meet; and that we would cheerfully appropriate from the official movements of “Socialism” at those points—what would be our action if a child in our charge, at those points only—at which the movements themselves touch reality; and so far as the matter of economic observation is concerned, such points are less irrelevant on the “Left” than on the “Right.”

The Communist is often able to perceive the “collapse of Capitalism” while his “comrades” are busy with the denunciation of some symptoms of it and confident predictions of their ability to remedy others. If the team-selectors of “the movement” insist on assigning to us the Extreme Right, we can reply that extremes meet; and that we would cheerfully appropriate from the more intelligent of the Communists the first halves of many of their speeches, while we should find at the orthodox Labour gathering nothing worth borrowing but the audience. If the Communist is helplessly wrong in his diagnosis of the disease, he is right at any rate about the scale and the severity of it. The Labour politician anticipates “business as usual” during his repairs to the existing economic fabric. It is to the credit of the more reflecting among our Communists that they see that business can never be “as usual” again.

While we are not concerned, then, to worry about any superficial verdicts which the conventionally minded in Labour circles may pass upon the nature of our activities, we should be at pains to see that the scope of those activities is accurately defined. And when we say that the proposals of the Social Credit movement furnish the basis of a new age, it is well to remember that the force of such a claim can be injured at least as much by over-stating as by under-stating the implications of it. Our proposals do not include the whole of what needs to be done in order to constitute a democratic commonwealth; it will be a misfortune, and to some degree a handicap, if the enthusiasm of propagandists should hurry them (as it sometimes seems to do) into such an extravagance. What we are right to claim on their behalf is in most circumstances no less significance, namely, that they are the next thing that needs to be done—so emphatically the next thing that no enduring social experiment on a large scale can be established until they are in operation. Not everything of social importance can be achieved by means of them: this we may admit, if a statement of such obvious common sense can be described as an admission. But with equal certainty may we declare that nothing vital can be done without them. Not by “revolution” nor by political organisation, not by trade union reconstruction, not by co-operative experiment (even though we christen this “the foundation of guilds”), not by goodwill or a “new spirit” can the consequences proceeding from the monopoly of credit and the power of price-fixing be eliminated. None of these is the “next thing”—however desirable some of their manifestations may become when the Just Price is established and the process of distributing the social dividend set on foot. Let us be content to claim for our proposals the honour of building the arena in which democracy may enter upon new tasks, which are now frustrated, and goodwill gain release for an ennoblement of social relationships, instead of finding its every opportunity stifled by the insane assumptions of our economic system.

The Social Credit movement, indeed, is in no little danger of finding its progress impeded by a fundamental misunderstanding in those very quarters where we might anticipate for it the most immediate welcome. Our idealists—religious and other—have become so accustomed to counter the mechanical flaws in our social structure with moral aphorisms that they are positively suspicious of any proposal that suggests for technical evils technical remedies. Yet the conviction that behind the material failure which our society exhibits lies a moral failure—a conviction which, though not without qualification, the present writer shares—still leaves two questions unanswered. On the one hand, is it necessary to postpone all attempt at material remedy until the moral failure be completely cured? And, on the other, suppose that a moral reformation should begin, how can and should the social objects it seeks be successfully attempted with a technique that is incompatible with them? To take the first point, let us ask ourselves—by way of analogy—what would be our action if a child in our charge, having broken into a neighbouring garden and gorged himself with apples, returned to us in violent pain from the results of his orgy. Should we, while he was still entirely preoccupied with his physical condition, attempt to impress him with a sense of moral guilt? No doubt there are plenty of people stupid, not to say inhuman enough, to do this, but the psychological error of accosting it, we might well be already on the threshold of a new age. And this, moreover, despite the fact
that no wholly tolerable alternative to the prevailing state of things has so far been presented to the consideration of the mass of our population. The social conscience of the Church of England—take but a single example—has reached a point when it is possible to fill the very largest buildings with crowds of men and women of every class who are fully prepared for any social change, however drastic, to which their leaders on such an occasion may summon them. But the trouble is that these leaders, "with the best intentions in the world," as the phrase goes, have no notion of the "next thing" to do, with the result that all this moral enthusiasm, all this "goodwill" is left to evaporate, or exhaust itself in channels of "agitation" which have no more relevance to the main issues than proposals to fix the date of Easter have to the tenets of the Christian creed.

It is the privilege of those who undertake the propaganda of Social Credit that they are able to offer to "men of goodwill" the means of translating aspiration into achievement. It is no doubt true that so long as society as a whole is consciously of opinion that its economic arrangements are, despite flaws, the best that can be reasonably expected, the idealist can only express his dissatisfaction in the form a moral protest. This is not to say that the thinking section of society needs to-day is the call to repudiate its economic assumptions no longer on moral grounds merely, but on intellectual grounds also. "Doughs- lites" need make no larger claim than that their proposals would, in proportion as they were carried out, give to the moral idealist and the political thinker an unprecedented enlargement of opportunity. We prepare the way for these; we do not supersede them. It is perhaps our first contention in seeking to establish "the relevance of credit control" that no large social changes can be relevant till this is accepted and action taken accordingly. Such a contention is no limitation of our objects, but the most effective means of giving reality to our proposals in the eyes of the public. And, in spite of our success in these crowded years, the need of doing this is more urgent than ever.

M. B. R.

EXALTATION.

Silence is on the hills. The eve is flushed, Faint with the conquering kisses of the sun. Slowly the red god sinks to rest. The glow Incarnadine fades from the evening skies To die—save for a solitary stain Like to the ebbing life-blood of a rose. Stilled is my heart. And all the air is hushed. Now are the glimmering waters cold and pale As Night moves slowly on her silent Wings, Shrading her face behind a shadowy veil, Dimsly there dawn a Presence in the air Stiring the heart to inarticulate prayer. Spirit of dream! Softly a faint mist falls Across the eyes—that gauze—the troubled eyes That weep once more, once more, though not in pain. Sudden, I know Thee! Unfettered now and free I grow immortal! Oh, Infinity Lying beyond the world of things that seem, My soul is winged this hour to Thee, above The jar and fret of earthly, trivial things, Like to the ebbing life-blood of a rose. This pulsing moment I am part of Thee! I thought I dreamed too great a dream. But lo, The glory I have sought so long is won. Out of the tumult and the stress of life, Away from clanging hands of human love There lies—beyond the toil and bitter strife— A hope for immortality of dream! I am Thine, oh Wonder. Thou hast called to me And lifted me above the common ground Bearing my spirit forth—and see, afar, The first faint gleaming of the evening star! The air grows cold and grey. The homestead calls.

ELSIE PATRISON CRANMER.

Our Generation.

The settlement of the Irish Question, euphuistically so called, is certainly the greatest event brought about by human effort and desire for decades upon decades; and coming at the present time, when human will and reason seem to be sunk into a state of almost unique helplessness, it is sufficient to shake the most pessimistic conclusions, the most justifiable conclusions. It is an event different in kind from which we have been accustomed for so long; it is not a terrible piece of necessity as the European War was, nor is it a mere attempt to appear to do something while doing nothing, nor is it a mere reaction to a difficulty momentarily overpowering; it is a creative act of the human reason, in which real evils are dealt with finally and not merely superficially. Now for many years before the war it was not the habit of statesmen to deal with problems in this way; it was indeed considered a mark of un wisdom to do so; it was against their tradition, their unconscious philosophy, the whole spirit of their vocation. They made bargaining the whole art of their statemanship, bargaining and nothing else; and even their bargains were made from day to day, with political revision and, indeed, with little care for what would come about the day after to-morrow. Opportunity was all their politics, and their opportunism sprang from their conception of life (shall we call it?) which was a conception not so much artificial as shallow. They did not believe in the great passions of mankind, but only in the small ones; the desires which can always be called out and brought into play when a small, insistent point is raised, a point on which both sides to the bargain feel only an immediate, diurnal emotion, which fades away indifferently in a little while whether one has come off as victor or as dupe. These men did not believe in the great passions of peoples, for good or for evil; it would be more exact to say that they did not even suspect them. The European War came upon us almost as an incredible thing because the politicians of Europe ignored the chief, permanent motives of governments and of people. And what happened before the war as a matter of course has continued to occur after it as a matter of fatigue. The game of adaptation to a changing environment which was comparatively easy and enjoyable—at least to politicians—before remedied when problems were not only on the normal and conceivable scale than they are now, has since 1919 been played with a sense of overwhelming difficulty and baffling inefficacy and with the automatic persistence of fatigue. Bewildered Ministers of the Crown have discovered that the usual moves have not given the usual results, and they have tried one timehonoured trick after another; they have legislated and refrained from legislation, promised and held their tongues, and seen the dawn and the sunset of a new hope on the same day, but the greyness of the Gotterdammerung has remained untempered and threatening. The shallow assumptions of the old diplomacy were dead, they could not even be used, but this the Governments did not realise: they did not know that at last there was no choice for them but to become fundamental. The significance of the Irish Settlement is that it is fundamental; that in one instance, at any rate, the statesmen of England have seen a problem steadily and whole, not merely as a political, but as a human matter, which must be faced. Justice is psychologically the capacity to look upon and to accept impersonally disappearances of evil; it is a state of mind to which one can deny that there are motives, other than her disinterested love of justice, which have actuated England in her attempt to settle finally with Ireland. But these are justifiable and salutary; and different in kind from those which brought about so much legislation before the war. There is in the terms of the Irish Settlement
an attempt to look beyond the day or the year, to build not for the lifetime of a Government, but for years, perhaps centuries, the criterion of a statesmanship which is not merely democratic but human. There is also an attempt to find a given problem its solution. This is the most thrilling thing about the settlement; for if the Government can seriously try to discover the solution for one problem, it can do the same with others. It is a matter of the attitude; hitherto it has not considered a problem a thing to be solved; to-day it does. Someone may object that the Government has not sufficient vitality to solve other problems; but, in reply to that, it can be said that it has proved its vitality; for to recognise the truth about anything is a sign of vitality, and to act upon that truth is a proof of vitality. There is another ground for hope: affairs are so bad in England, the problem of prices has become so menacing, that the Government will be compelled to solve it simply, because there is no other way of dealing with it. When we have come to despair there is only hope left.

The Art Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of Berkeley, California, have decided to form a foundation to help painters, composers and writers to exist without appealing directly to the pockets of the give but uncritical public. A part of the revenue of the foundation is to be spent in the purchase of "unremunerative" works of art, and the printing and publishing of literary works too good to have much chance of publication by publishers. One does not know which to admire most: the stupidity of the reading public which makes a venture of this kind necessary, or the enlightenment of a body of business men in an age in which business men are either frankly Philistines or else purely selfish connoisseurs of art who are willing only to enjoy it when they could do something for it, and in doing so would earn renown deservedly and cheaply. The new venture takes place, we hope significantly, in America; but the melancholy thing is that one could not even imagine it happening in England. In England we have Lord Leverhulme, and Lord Leverhulme is a whole bourgeois in himself, as it did not need his encounter with Mr. Augustus John to prove. Can it be that at the moment when all traces of an aristocracy are disappearing in England, a new aristocracy is forming itself in America? After all, it need not appear so incredible, for every aristocracy must have its beginning, and we know how much of our own began, in rather questionable circumstances, in the seventeenth century. It is, of course, nothing against it; the beginning of every aristocracy is something after which something goes.

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We are pretty safe in saying that Nietzsche's most clamorous impulse was the impulse towards power and exuberant vitality—precisely because he lacked both. Prompted by this craving he turned against religion all the more fiercely because he suspected in it a warm and easy rest-house for all who had been similarly buffeted by life. It is not for nothing, therefore, that he writes: "How much faith a person requires in order to flourish, how much fixed opinion he requires which he does not wish to have shaken, because he holds himself thereby—possession is nine-tenths of his power (or, more plainly speaking, of his weakness)." Most people in old Europe still need Christianity at present, and on that account it still finds belief; "America," he says, is "at the same stage of development at which Florence and Venice and Athens were before they blossomed forth. I see no reason for supposing that America will not become, as they did, a great centre of art and learning," and, looking at that vast and as yet spiritually unexploited people, one can only assert that some time it is inevitable that it should have a great literature: it is inconceivable that it should not. But the question is, When?

Edward Moore.
destruction, ruin and overthrow which is now imminent and inevitable. Then—in Nietzsche's opinion—man himself must perish or create his own values—the values of man-god. or as the madman exclaims:

God is dead! and we have killed him! how shall we be consol ed for this deed? who shall wash the stain of this blood from us? In what water can we be purified? is not the very greatest and most humilitating of all that thus has become.

Must not we ourselves become gods to seem worthy of the like of which has probably never taken place on earth before?

Or listen to his 'madman with the lamp' who also 'killed' god.

'Where is god?' he cries. 'i will tell you. we have killed him, you and i. we are all his murderers! but how did we do it? how did we despoil the ocean? who gave us the sponge to wash off the entire horizon? what did we do when we separated this earth from its sun? whether is it travelling now? whither are we travelling? away from all sun? is there still a height and a depth? are we not wandering towards everlasting annihilation? do we not perceive the indications of this immense void? is it not colder? is not the night becoming darker and darker? must we not light our lanterns at noon?'

II.

Nietzsche, none the less, accepts this 'murder' with all its logical consequences, which are far from being comforting. For as soon as we reject a higher purpose, all meaning, all sense in creation, our faith in a supreme justice and wisdom, our old spiritual values, hopes and yearnings—all these are annihilated, and we are plunged headlong into that immense void whose infinity may prove more frightful than infinity. oh, the poor bird that felt no chance, for the word 'chance' has a meaning. let us be on our guard against saying that there are laws in nature.

Now we have acquired good courage for errors, experiments, and the provisional acceptance of ideas—and for this very reason individuals and whole races may now face tasks so vast in extent that in former years they would have looked like madness, and defiance of heaven and hell. now we have the right to experiment upon ourselves! yes, men have the right to do so! the greatest sacrifices have not yet been offered up to know ledge—may, in earlier periods it would have been sacrilege, and a sacrifice of our eternal salvation, even to surmise such ideas as now precede our actions.

And again:

In fact we philosophers and 'free spirits' feel ourselves irradiated as by a new rosy dawn by the report that 'the old god is dead'; our hearts thereby overflow with gratitude, astonishment, presentiment, and expectation. at last the horizon seems once more unobstructed, granting even that it is not bright; our ships can at last start on their voyages once more, in face of every danger; every risk is again permitted to the knowing ones; the sea, our sea, again lies open before us; perhaps there was never such an open sea.

III.

This is, however, but the first and somewhat forced exaltation of one's self-will which does not yet realise that by escaping the 'tyranny' of god it must—sooner or later—arrive at another, more humilitating and more dreadful tyranny: the blind determinism of a 'mechanistic' universe. for if we assume that man is but a casual temporary 'bubble' in the play of blind cosmic forces, then our consciousness and our will with all their manifestations are determined in their minutest details. we will because we must, and all our apparent freedom is a self-delusion. so long as we shut our eyes to this we may safely preach the 'colossal' 'superman' with his transvaluation of values. moreover, the more seriously we take ourselves and humanity the stronger may become our endeavours to set up a new table of values, a new goal for ourselves as well as for mankind.

This goal would then be something that would depend upon our will and pleasure. provided that mankind in general agreed to adopt such a goal, it could then impose a moral law upon itself, a law which would, at all events, be imposed by their own free will: strictly speaking, men did not wish to impose this law upon themselves; they wished to take it from somewhere, to discover it, or let themselves be commanded by it from somewhere.

Nietzsche's greatest task was in fact to establish such a goal which mankind could adopt after having been daring enough to kill 'the old god.' and yet
the author of "The Grand Inquisitor" (in Brothers Karamazov), a work which in the main deals with this very problem, would surely smile at the "romantic" naïveté of Nietzsche in regard to the ultimate depths and essential nature of life. He would also probably remind him that in abolishing the tyranny of God he had not abolished the alternative tyranny of the Cosmic Machine. Nietzsche, too, came later to this impasse, but he did not solve it. Moreover, he made a curious effort to evade it. But before dealing with this attempt let us examine the moral "psychology" of Nietzsche.

The Nebular Origin of Life.

By Allen Upward.

III.

Meanwhile it must be remarked that the tendency of such embryonic satellites to group themselves in the regular form of rings would be subject to certain disturbing influences, some of which are pointed out by Procter in the case of the Saturnine swarms:

The investigation of the motion of a crowd of satellites travelling in rings about a central attracting globe is a problem of too great complexity to be exactly solved. If the motion of our moon is of so complex a nature that even yet all its inequalities have not been exactly determined, it will readily be conceived that a problem which deals with hundreds of bodies (rather than two) must be amply beyond the range of our most powerful mode of mathematical analysis.—("Saturn," etc., p. 141.)

After stating that Saturn's rings are subject to waves that may have parted, and have yet its flaming kindred in the burning impasse, but lie did not solve it. Moreover, he made a comment of vital importance to the present inquiry:

It appears obvious that among satellites near the inner edge, seeking smaller orbits, collisions must be much more frequent. . . and it is clear that a satellite which once begins to move in an orbit of considerable eccentricity must continually cause fresh disturbances, until either its orbit is altered to a form of less eccentricity or it falls upon the planet.—(Ibid., p. 145.)

Such considerations as these apply with vastly greater force in the supposed case of similar satellites attending the earth. The regular moons of Saturn are comparatively small and distant, so that their influence on the rings is almost a negligible quantity. But our moon is a giant among secondaries, whose attraction even for the earth itself is comparable with that of a twin star. The disturbing influence of this potent factor on the motions of any intervening fringe of satellites may be gauged by its conspicuous influence on the sea. Its attraction, operating from the outset, would certainly be adverse, and probably be fatal, to any symmetrical formation such as that of Saturn's rings. We should rather expect any such flight of satellites to be driven this way and that in confused tidal movements, until its units ceased to pursue any circular orbit, and, becoming lunatics in the full sense of the word, dispersed towards the earth's surface—"a scientific Fall of Man." Such is the view hinted at in more poetical language than we are here wonted from quoted from.

Whence came the Cell? It may be older than we guess. It may be of kin to the flame in the bowels of the earth, the Changeling may have been once a true salamander, that has fallen from its first estate, and forfeited its fiery shape.—("The New Word," XV, 2.)

If the foregoing reasoning be sound, we have now established a fair probability of the existence on the circumference of our planet, while still in a nebulous state, of minute cosmic individuals endowed with an energy of their own, similar in origin and character to that manifested in the rotary or vortical motion of the planets. We have only to ask next if such individuals could have acquired the characteristics of the simplest living organisms known to us.

Evolution of the Cell.

It is at this point, of course, that the problem becomes too complex for treatment in the way of mere speculation, and must be handed over to that process of patient investigation which only the specialist is qualified to undertake. My object has been merely to indicate a terminus of inquiry which has more to recommend it than the hypothesis of "living matter," or of the importation of life from another planet. The ancestor of the cell, I suggest, should be sought in the fallen satellite. Between the two there may lie almost an infinity of missing links, which I am wholly incompetent to discover. My concluding remarks can only have the character of speculative glimpses into the unknown.

It is necessary to start with some conception of the form of these irregular satellites at the time of their first contact with the still nebulous surface of the earth. On this question I have found little light beyond a remark of Procter's that the units composing Saturn's rings are not uniform in their size or density. I can only suggest, under correction from the physical astronomer, that, in the first stage of their terrestrial pilgrimage, these satellites must have been very far from solid, and were probably still incandescent. Such bodies, certainly of a flame-like character, must have been incandescent of the planet from which they had been severed by the birth of the moon, and to which they now returned. Thus we are in a position to reject a fundamental axiom of Schröder and other partisans of the spontaneous theory of life, as set out above, and at the same time to dispense with the importation theories of Kelvin and Archenius. It is submitted further that any such bodies must have developed a rotary motion of their own, on the analogy of the earth and moon. Having regard to their gaseous condition, such a motion would be sufficiently voluntary in character, perhaps, to justify their being named vorticells.

On its first arrival on the exterior of the planet I conceive of the vorticell as floating on the surface of the gaseous envelope of the earth, and by its vortical activity alternately absorbing and ejecting the gaseous material with which it came in contact. This would be the natural beginning of the functions of breathing and eating, which distinguish the living organism, as we know it, from non-living substances, more obviously than almost any other of its activities.

The subsequent history of the vorticell presents a series of processes of preservation of energy, and adaptation to environment. The first question to arise in the mind of the inquirer may be how the vorticell escaped the necessity of forming a solid crust, like the earth and moon and other cosmic bodies known to us. The answer I suggest is that its parasitism saved it. The crusts of other cosmic individuals are believed to have been formed under the pressure of the ethereal cold, with which they were in direct contact. From that pressure the vorticell was freed by its degradation from the rank of a true satellite to that of a parasite sheltering itself in the warm embrace of the earth. In the course of its subsequent history it has in fact acquired a skin, and in some instances a partial crust or shell, but not to the complete extent that would be fatal to its vital activity.

I should suggest further that the heat of the earth, added to the heat and light of the sun, afforded the vorticell supplies of energy sufficient to compensate the loss due to friction with its environment, until such time as it acquired the faculty of extracting energy from its food. And it cannot have escaped any intelligent observer that the tissue of the organism the vegetation need to nourish itself on other organisms, rather than on inorganic substances. The vegetarian may think himself able to draw a line, which Nature has not drawn, between the seaweed and the anemone, but he must adopt the diet of the humble worm before he can
boast that his life is not sustained by lower life. The power of converting such primal sources of energy as heat and light into its own energy remains one of the best-known characteristics of the living organism.

The modification of the original vortical, or quasi-vortical, motion of the vorticell into the analogous processes of eating and breathing does not seem to present any insuperable difficulty to the student. The intermixture, followed by the generation of one or more vapour became heat and light into its own energy remains one of the processes of eating and breathing does not seem to persist through successive changes in the character of its environment, as in the case of the whirlwind successively taking up water and sand and even more solid matter.

The law of natural selection would come into play in favour of these vorticells which absorbed the substances most conducive to their welfare; and it cannot be doubted that the survival of the fittest must have been a triumph for caninallism. In this way, the time the vorticell developed into a true cell it may have acquired a definite chemical constitution—"the physical basis of life."

Water is now the largest constituent of mistr organisms. It may be suggested that as soon as aqueous vapour became a prominent part of the earth's protective covering many vorticells must have absorbed it to an extent that added to their specific gravity, while all the time they became fitted for existence in a watery medium. Thus they would naturally descend with the water around them, on the formation of the seas, and would be found, where they have been found, on the ocean floor.

The only other suggestion I shall venture upon is with regard to the collisions which, on Procter's reasoning, must have been inevitable among the vorticells in the first period of their existence.

In the case of a collision between two bodies of unequal size we may discern, perhaps, the beginning of cannibalism and carnovacity. In the case of a collision between equals we may be permitted, perhaps, to anticipate the sublime consummation of marriage.

The result of a collision between two rotating nebulous bodies is a problem for the expert in dynamics, and keeps my attention, whereas at first I thought, "How could it be otherwise?" A year or two ago there were signs of movements among English writers. True, these were largely in verse, which is not always a sign of real vitality. Still, they were there. We had some poets, for example, who looked as if they were going to lead somewhere. We had some novelists, for example, among English writers. True, these were largely from the specialist. But if it be allowable to suppose that such a collision might bring about a temporary intermixture, followed by the generation of one or more new bodies having the same character as their parents, the process may throw some light on the origin of the reproductive activity of organisms, and on the nature of heredity.

However, I am conscious that I have already got out of my depth, and that I must be content if I have made out a case for consideration by better qualified investigators.

The spiritual and moral implications of this view of the origin of life are too vast to be touched on in this place. At least the imagination of the human race is lifted from colloidal slime to a more glorious nativity, and a meaning is given to the language of the Orphic passport, written on leaves of gold, and buried in Mediterranean graves two and a half millenniums ago:

Say—I am a Child of Earth and of starry Heaven
But my Birth is from Heaven.

AN EXILE.

All night the bentgrass and the weeds
Move secretly in undertones.

And like the phantom of old deeds
There is a ghost upon the moss.

I seek the rowans' wintry shade:

There is a ghost upon the moss.

There is a ghost upon the moss.

A fall ing water tells of loss
In darkness on the stones.

From her for whom they die
And withered as the weed and blade
A long dead starlight sets and swarms.

JOHN HELSTON.

Readers and Writers.

It is, I remark, exactly ten years to the day since I first made my bow to the deafening plaudits of the readers of The New Age, which are, I understand, often almost audible through the Editor's microphone—though not on my account, to be sure. Since my debut in January, 1911, I have played my typewriter in many different surroundings, but I think I may claim that I have never written a word without a thought of this paper at the back of my mind. I have, so to speak, never written anything where it may have appeared, that was not intended for The New Age; I have always kept my eyes—or dotted them—on the principles that I learned when I was beginning to write in these columns. It is, therefore, with a sense of returning home that I come to them again. Once more, I feel, I am on my native heath; I hope I shall do nothing to blast it.

Looking through the material I have collected for these notes, I am a little perplexed on discovering that much of it deals with foreign literature and comparatively little with that of our own country. It is certain not that I have a preference for the exotic; on the contrary, I confess that I am lazy enough to be glad to read a good translation—I emphasise the word "good," of course—rather than a foreign original where possible. But I find simply that my interest at present is being drawn abroad. When I turn to our own bookshops, I rarely see anything that commands my attention. Wherases at first I thought, "How is it that I have so little English material for this column?" I am now inclined on consideration to shrug my shoulders and say, "How could it be otherwise?".

A year or two ago there were signs of movements among English writers. True, these were largely in verse, which is not always a sign of real vitality. Still, they were there. We had some poets, for example, who looked as if they were going to lead somewhere. We had some novelists, for example, among English writers. True, these were largely from the specialist. But if it be allowable to suppose that such a collision might bring about a temporary intermixture, followed by the generation of one or more new bodies having the same character as their parents, the process may throw some light on the origin of the reproductive activity of organisms, and on the nature of heredity.

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experiment in English unhymed verse, though this was the aspect of it which most interested the writer.” The rise of Mr. Lytton Strachey is, I suppose, the most remarkable feature of recent English literary affairs. His first book, a history of French literature in a popular series, did not promise “Eminent Victorians.” And “Eminent Victorians,” for all its style and skill—though one wearied of some of the motifs, particularly the trite Voltaireanism—certainly did not prepare one for the excellence of “Queen Victoria.” (Rumour says that the last, as published, is a revision of a version modelled in much the same spirit as “Eminent Victorians,” which happened to be read in manuscript by a lady able to give Mr. Strachey access to material that made him revise his earlier opinion of his subject.) But even this book, with all its virtues, cannot be held to provide a new impulse for young writers. Like Mr. Aldous Huxley, from whom perhaps more is to be hoped than from most of our other young writers—his “Chrome Yellow” is a clever example of literary embroidery—Mr. Strachey seems to write without more enthusiasm than will just bring him to the end of his book; there is no surplus of energy to fire other writers’ torches. His books are stones dropped, not flung, into our stagnant pool. There is a splash but there are no ripples.

I have searched distractedly through the elephantine Christmas supplements of our literary papers in the hope of finding the announcement of some new live force among English writers, but I have found little of interest. There are the scores of fool-hardy annuals; books for boys and books for girls; reprints of classics, illustrated almost invariably by the wrong artists and published at a high price for people who would not dream of publishing them in their own cheap editions; to give to their relatives and friends; religious books; topographical books; novels by all the acknowledged novelists; and plays by all the acknowledged playwrights—but not one single book, so far as I can notice, with the one or two exceptions mentioned above, that carries on an old tradition farther than it was before, or establishes or adds to the field for the fatherland of English letters. For me, not long ago we were turning to Ireland in the hope that something new was going to come out of that country. Synge, Yeats, AE, Standish O’Grady, James Stephens and other Irish writers had developed a use of the Irish language that had at least the charm of a new syntax. But to-day we no longer look in that direction. There is no literary vitality there either. Whether or not there will be an advance in Gaelic, I do not know, though it seems to me hardly likely that a change of language will help matters in our time. The political changes do not concern me. The political changes do not concern me. The political changes do not concern me in painting. Art

THREE PERMANENT VALUES IN PAINTING.

I hope my readers will not be put off by my making such an obvious statement as that there are equally great works of art in all stages of human evolution in which art has been manifested. The difference in their appearance is the consequence of the race, age, and general conception of life at the period in which they were created. In other words, their appearance changed with the time, and if we take a subject which was exploited in all ages we shall soon detect that the difference is in the style in which the same subject was treated at different times. It is not difficult to see how Isis passed through all the fashions of different periods until she finally took the shape of Fornarina in Raphael’s paintings of the Medici. I am not going to discuss the different styles because it is not style, age nor subject which makes a work of art great. The reason for which works of different ages and styles are great is that they embody the fundamental principles belonging to that particular branch of art to which they belong. An Assyrian relief is good for the same reason as the frieze of the Parthenon, and Michelangelo’s figures in the Medici Chapel are good just in the same way as any good Negro sculpture. If a Futurist ever paints a great picture it will be great for the very same reason for which Giotto is great. In saying this I am not referring to any such intangible qualities as “spirituality,” “beauty,” “esthetic emotion,” or “profound significance.” Nor do I mean “beautiful texture” or “imitation of surface,” and so on. What I mean is that each art has its specific raison d’être, and therefore its special fundamental qualities. At present I must limit myself to discussing some of these qualities in painting.

One of these qualities in painting is that which makes a picture an organism, that fundamental unity of appearance which I will call composition. That is the law of painting which subordinates to the whole every part of the picture. Through it every form or colour or complex of forms and colours borrowed from nature is changed or applied in such a way as to answer its function in the picture. A good picture is not nature transferred on to canvas but laws of nature applied to a picture in order to give a new creation which can live only if it be complete in itself. In other words, there must be plenty of variety but not one single thing lacking or superfluous. This variety must not be created artificially but out of homogeneous elements. For similar reasons composition cannot be concerned with the literary meaning of the subject. For composition the only interest in the subject is its pictorial possibilities. This is the case with great masters even when they had to paint a subject forced on them. For example, Giotto was asked to paint frescoes illustrating the life of St. Francis. Among other frescoes he painted “St. Francis appearing at Arles to St. Antony of Padua” (St. Croce, Florence). He was obliged to place somewhere the figures of St. Francis, St. Antony and the brother of the Franciscan Order. For him the principal problem was how to arrange all these forms so as to fill in the best way the space he had to cover and to get a good picture. I do not imply that he was doing it consciously or subconsciously; I am just analysing the picture as it can be seen in our day. He did not attempt to express the ecstasy of St. Antony or the astonishment of the monks; and no one looking at the fresco without knowing its subject can experience any
religious emotions. Anyone who gets such emotions gets them simply from previous knowledge about the subject. Cimabue taking from the Byzantines the type of the Madonna and adapting it to his time by breaking some of the old traditions is principally concerned with the problem of adapting to that shape different settings. The only religious thing in it is what we ourselves attribute to the picture from knowing that it is meant to be the Madonna. Replace the title "Madonna" by "Mrs. X." and the painting will be almost as great, though it take as a proof that Cimabue directed his attention to the picture and not to the Madonna as a religious symbol. This implies that any composition dictated by other than pictorial reasons makes an inferior picture. In other words it means that a wrong medium has been chosen to convey a certain feeling, idea or mood. In this respect Frith's "Derby Day" is a bad picture. He did not attempt to make out of his subject a painting which should have a value without reference to its literary meaning, but used all his skill to convey through coloured shapes a complex of sensations which could be much better expressed in words. That forced him to neglect the general appearance of the picture which should dominate everything and determine the position and function of every form. Whatever meaning there may be in the painting will be a bit great, though there the Derby must, if it is ever painted, be put in a certain order in which every form will be in its proper place in the picture and in the right relation to the whole as well as to its immediate surroundings. A fairly good example of this is given in Van Gogh's "The Hague Portfolio." There are no particular rules as to the actual way of composing a picture. The only rule is that every picture must have a law which will establish the right relation between its various parts and elements. That law has been established for himself and this is one of the signs of his great taste.

A good composition is not yet a good picture. To become that it must be executed in a way which belongs specifically to that particular composition. By that I mean that different shapes require different treatment, and that this treatment depends on the desired effect of the whole. By the treatment I understand the method of drawing and colouring. If this is not a law the material in which the artist works is lost and the different qualities of forms cannot be fully expressed. For example, if an artist has to introduce into his picture two forms of different material and noise there may be at least forms must be different even if they have the same shape, if there is necessity in the picture for contrast of these two materials. Where that contrast is not necessary one of the two materials is superfluous and has no meaning in the picture. In other words, there must be a perfect harmony between execution and conception of the picture.

A good composition well executed is not yet a great picture. To be that it must be revealed; it must make a new object of things. Such is the case with Cimabue, Goito, Uccello, [El Greco] Rembrandt, Cézanne and other great masters. This revelation must be on the plane of painting; otherwise it will bring nothing new into the art. A picture, however well composed and executed, but implying Einstein's theory before Einstein, would not necessarily be a great painting, although it might be of great interest and value to scientists.

These are the three basic needs of a picture, namely, execution, harmony between the execution and conception of the picture, and revelation. These three elements united on the plan of painting give a great picture. Of course, they are all three involved in each other, another work, in some way, for others as well. That is the reason why so little space is given to the last two points.

A. R. Stephens.
Views and Reviews.

HUMAN PROGRESS.—II.

The problem as stated by Mr. Bevan* seems to be insoluble; but by restatement even insoluble problems become capable of discussion. If we cast his dilemma into hypothetical form, we may be able to see its true bearings. Let us say then that if the Christian hope warrants a belief in the continuous progress of humanity on this planet, and if Science, taken by itself, does not point to any continuous progress, then to be a Christian one must adopt Tertullian’s Credo quia impossible, and recognise that faith is sui generis. As faith is, in the Christian teaching, the very power of controlling natural processes by miraculous means, the assurance of continuous progress that Christians have sought in the theory of evolution implies a primary lack of faith, and the assurance itself is illegitimate. If “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” then, whatever Science may say, the future is already existent and founded in reality, so far as we have faith in it. On this basis, faith in progress is itself the guarantee of progress.

But we may well ask whether the Christian hope does warrant a belief in the continuous progress of humanity on this planet? Is a belief in everlasting life necessarily limited to a belief in the continuance of human personality? If so, what does one mean by human personality? Man as a moral being must be conscious; and consciousness, although adding something to the sum total of personality, is a transient and intermittent phenomenon of it. We know it to be associated with definite physical and chemical states; Preyer, by the administration of lactate of soda, as a type of the products of disassimilation in the brain, has produced yawnings, somnolence, and even sleep, says Ribot. Mr. A. E. Baines, in his “Germination In Its Electrical Aspect,” states:

Consciousness is in direct ratio to brain potential. Anything that interferes with the supply of energy to the brain or with the electrostatic capacity of the cells of the brain must diminish consciousness. It is merely a question of degree.

The fact has been demonstrated by Mr. Baines that neuro-electricity is generated in the lungs by the combination of oxy-haemoglobin, and the blood carries the energy to every cell in the body, the brain being the seat of highest potential. Fatigue interferes with the generation of nerve force; and in sleep the oxygen intake is halved, the generation of neuro-electricity is also halved and the brain cells are not charged to the same potential. The man is unconscious. If the Christian hope is limited to the conscious moral personality of man, it is postulating the permanence of a transient and rigidly conditioned phenomenon of an organism.

But everlasting life seems to me to be much wider in significance. The unconscious man is not a dead man; “all psychic activity certainly implies nervous activity; still, all nervous activity does by no means imply psychic activity—nervous activity being far more extended than psychic activity,” says Ribot. Life is more extended than consciousness, and everlasting life is obviously the most extended form of it. The question at once arises: “What is life?” and Mr. Baines says that the best definition he has seen is given in the “American Medical Dictionary,” which defines it as “a peculiar

*“Hellenism and Christianity.” By Edwyn Bevan. (Allen and Unwin. 12s. 6d. net.)
stimated condition of organised matter." But a chemist like Meldola declares that the difference between organic and inorganic chemistry is merely one of convenience, that "organic matter is carbonaceous matter; modern science knows of no "vitalism" apart from carbon compounds." But:

In recording this triumphant success of synthetic chemistry, it is clear that the stimulus has as yet been produced in the laboratory no compound possessing in the least degree those characters which pertain to living organic matter. The great and fundamental problem of life, living between the boiling point and freezing point, has as yet remained unsolved; it may remain unsolved for all time, or it may not. For aught that we know, Nature may be solving this problem daily under our eyes, but her methods have as yet remained unrevealed. Any relation in this direction that awaits the science of the future must perforce be through Organic Chemistry.

Life, to the organic chemist, is much more extended than human consciousness, with the possibility that, if and when the gap is bridged, our definition of life may have to be so enlarged that it will include what we now call inorganic matter.

If we turn to a physicist like Professor Soddy, with particular reference to the problem of a cooling earth which Mr. Bevan has stated as one horn of his dilemma, we are again possible with the evidence that we may have to alter our conceptions of life.

Let us indulge for a moment in these gloomy speculations, as to the consequences to this earth of the cooling of the sun with the lapse of ages, which used to be in vogue, but which radio-activity has so radically shaken. Picture the fate of the world when the sun has become a dull red-hot ball, or even when it has cooled so far that it would no longer emit light to us. That does not at all mean that the world would be in inky darkness and that the sun would not emit light to the people then inhabiting this world, if any had survived and could keep themselves from freezing. To such, if the eye continued to adapt itself to the changing conditions, our blues and violets would be ultra-violet and invisible, but our dark-heat would be light, and hot bodies would be luminous to them which would be dark to us. One can hardly emerge from such thoughts without an intuition that, in spite of all, the universal Life Principle, which makes this world a teeming hive, may not be at the spot of every physical condition, may not be entirely confined to a temperature between freezing and boiling point, to an oxygen atmosphere, to the most peculiar kind of incandescence, as we are almost forced by our experience of life to conclude. Possibly the Great Organiser can operate under conditions, where we could not for an instant survive, to produce beings we should not need a special education recognise as being alive like ourselves.

There seems no reason to doubt that the Christian hope of everlasting life, in some form or other, does not conflict with what science admits to be possible. So far as we know at present, all life comes from life (Pasteur's annihilation of the theory of spontaneous generation logically implies a continuous life process—although logic is not a very sound guide to Nature), with the possibility that it may have to be extended from what we now regard as inorganic materials. When Mr. Bevan says: "Christianity certainly implies a belief that the world process is one of unique significance, governed by a Divine purpose, and subordinated to a worthy end," the problem takes on a different aspect. Significance for that Divine Purpose, and be significant for it at the next instant to come before making the next movement; it is not conflict with what science admits to be possible.

So with the Christian theory: "I have said, Ye are Gods; and all of you are children of the most High": had he believed in the Incarnation, he might have spared himself and us his lugubrious essays. Even Hamlet, with pardonable exaggeration, said of man: "[In form like an angel! [he did not know our modern actors], in apprehension, how like a god!" and he did not blame humanity, but himself, for the fact that "man delights not me, nor woman neither." The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are pessimists; Andreyev should take a dose of salts, as Byron did, to cure depression. It is significant of the purely theatrical nature of Andreyev's pessimism that his interpreter only mentions that: "Even Thought, or the Book, could not help the Man to become a God." Andreyev apparently accepted the antithesis of the God and the Man, of Being and Becoming, and despised because he could not observe the Becoming. Had he started with a special education, recognised as being alive like ourselves.

This translation by Mr. Gregory Zilboorg makes Andreyev's "best dramatic work" accessible to English readers. It is certainly more like a stage-play and less like a symbolic initiation drama than the others that we have read; but it does not rank with what we may call "European" art. Its pessimism, on which the translator lays such stress, is a personal, almost a wilful, pessimism; he is a minor poet, a philosopher, of whom a big man like Tolstoy said: "Leonid Andreyev tries to frighten me, but I am not afraid." The basis of this pessimism is clear, if Mr. Zilboorg may be taken as a true interpreter; "the relations of man to man, of group to group, according to Andreyev are such that the Man is forced to effect himself. Even Thought, or the Book, could not help the Man to become a God. He becomes a clown. He performs stunts, he gets slaps; the public laughs, being unaware that this laughter is a mockery at itself, at its culture, at its thought, at its achievements. The characters of the play, as the reader will be reminded with bitter sarcasm and unfriendliness, for Andreyev seems to have lost his last faith in the Man." Andreyev apparently accepted the antithesis of the God and the Man, of Being and Becoming, and despised because he could not observe the Becoming. Had he started with a special education, recognised as being alive like ourselves.

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live eternally.” There is plenty of bustle in the play, plenty of character, plenty of sardonic humour—but no good humour. Everybody is worrying about love; even the lady lion-tamer, being refused by the rider and apparently not satisfied with Papa Briquet, asks: “He, what shall I do to make my lions love me?” It is very tragic, no doubt, if one could only take it seriously; but it afflicts us in much the same way as a Lyceum melodrama does, we laugh in the wrong places. We see Andreyev all the time looking the same way as a Lyceum melodrama does, we laugh in only take it seriously; but it afflicts us in much the same way as a Lyceum melodrama does, we laugh in.

The Church Undermined: A Mystery Play. By Edward Willmore. (C. H. Ward, 9s., Woodgrange Road, E.) 6d. net.)

This is a stupid allegory of the Church in which Christ is a stranger, and the proletariat is not “in direct power.” The Church is supposed to be undermined by the unbelief of its priests in the teachings to which it subscribes; the priests, having lost, by their insincerity, the power of making Christ acceptable to others, have also lost the power of stemming the revolution which will overthrow the Church as well as every other institution. That, so far as we can gather, is the gist of Mr. Willmore’s dramatic faculty; but his dramatic faculty is not too obvious, and there are no “star” parts for players. It might be played in a Labour Church (if there is such a place), but it is quite unsuitable for a theatre, and has no literary value. The whole argument was stated in one phrase of Peter Keegan’s creed: “In my dreams it (Heaven) is a country where the State is the Church, and the Church the people; three in one and one in three.” It is evident that Mr. Willmore sees that we are not living in Heaven.

The Valley of Indecision. By Christopher Stone. (Collins. 9s. net.)

Mr. Stone offers us a study of a man who feels impelled to begin a sort of crusade, to become “a sort of itinerant friar” preaching the Gospel through Sussex. He is not quite certain how he wants to handle the theme; Peter’s announcement of his mission is treated ironically, with his mother asking: “What will you wear, dear?” and suggesting “the brown tweed, and so” etc. But later, Mr. Stone seems to want us to take the idea seriously, asks us to believe that Peter’s mother is so impressed by his seriousness that she would have forsaken all and followed him—if she had not died in her bed before he started. With the exception of one outburst at a party, Peter’s crusade seems to have been abortive, and Peter is permitted by his family to put himself entirely in the hands of a peculiar sort of “shepherd of souls.” The book, although hitting off manners with a happy tact, and handling religious argument with some dexterity, fails to produce much impression because the author is not sure what effect he wishes to produce.

Portraits and Sketches of Serbia. By Francesca M. Wilson. (The Switharpace. 2s. 6d. net.)

Although this is not a book about Serbia’s problems, the purpose of its publication is to revive our interest in them. Miss Wilson was a worker for the Serbian Relief Fund and the Friends’ War Victims’ Relief Committee, and these sketches of people and places that she saw remind us that Serbia is still on the map and her people still suffering. But they have an intrinsic interest of their own: “A Professor of Anti-malarial Drugs,” “Mr. Ogilvie,” “A Schoolmaster of the Near East,” are capital pictures of real people. Even “An Orphan Hunt” gives us a very amusing picture of the local Member of Parliament. The advantage of this treatment is that it reminds us that the Serbians are not a “cause,” not a “problem,” but just people in difficulties who can be helped as all other people in similar difficulties can be helped, by the provision of the necessities of life. Perhaps the Allied Governments have done.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

MONEY AND PRICES.

Sir,—To disprove my statement that “prices are bound to rise and fall proportionately and simultaneously with every additional issue and contrac-

cution of currency is not in accordance with experience,” your correspondent, Mr. Tuke, must produce far more evidence than the carefully selected tabular statement he has copied from “Public Welfare.” In the first place, he gives merely a single index number for a whole year and in the second place he omits three entire years from his table. If he will take the index numbers together with the volume of currency notes and credits outstanding week by week over the same period he will find confirmation of my statement. I have had to go carefully into this subject on several occasions both during and since the war and I found numerous instances of a decrease in prices with an increase of currency and vice versa. I failed to find any proportional or simultaneous advance of prices with the increase of currency during any period! In the January, 1921, issue of the “Quarterly Review,” Dr. W. A. Shaw, the well-known statistician, showed that although prices had advanced 100 per cent. from the commencement of the war until November, 1916, there had been no proportional increase in the currency. Gold currency had been called in and exchanged for an equal volume of Treasury notes. He showed that the great advance in prices during that period was not the result of any currency inflation—as the financial “experts” asserted—but to the relative shortage of goods.

If prices moved up and down proportional and simultaneous with the volume of currency, we should find a higher level of prices every Saturday night than on the following Monday as the result of the weekly wage payments. Similarly the general level of prices should be high on the first of every month due to the monthly salaries paid and low towards the end of the month! If he will look at the index numbers together with the volume of currency notes and credits outstanding week by week over the same period he will find confirmation of my statement.

Whilst I fully agree with Major Douglas and The New Age that the tendency of any increase of currency is to raise prices and that currency contraction tends to lower prices, my point is that these results are not as certain and immediate as the expansion and contraction of the mercury of a thermometer under heat and cold for example. In short, price movements are entirely artificial, the result of discussions, decisions and agreements of traders, and are in no sense automatic as so many writers intimate.

ARTHUR KITSON.

IBSEN AND THE THEATRE.

Sir,—Your entertaining dramatic critic, in his notice of the recent performance of “John Gabriel Borkman,” observed: “Ibsen is not a writer for whom I profess or feel any admiration, as he is usually presented on the London stage.”

Ibsen’s own views with regard to the performance of his work in the theatre may be gathered from his correspondence, and these views are very enlightening to the student of the theatre.

In one of his letters he declares that “Peer Gynt” and “Brand” were not intended for the stage at all. After eleven years of slavery in the ramshackle playhouses of Bergen and Christiania, the dramatist had come to the conclusion that the theatre was not a fit place for an artist to live in. He felt a call to simple authorship. The reception which greeted the publication of “Peer Gynt” —especially the review of Petersen declaring the work to be “not real poetry” —caused the author to make a mighty resolve. He deliberately suppressed a large part of the artist in his nature in order to become “a photographer.”

In acknowledging the receipt of a poem by Leo Dietrichstein—a work which was a plea for the recog-
nition of art and of national traditions as valuable civilising influences—Ibsen wrote:

"It seems to me doubtful if better artistic conditions can be arrived at before the intellectual soil has been thoroughly turned up and cleansed and the intellectual swamp drained. As long as a people considers it more important to build meeting-houses than theatres—looking at it as if the Zulu Mission was more the art museum than the Art Museum, art cannot really thrive, cannot even be considered as of immediate necessity. I do not think it is of any use to plead for the possibilities of art with arguments derived from its own nature, which with us is so little understood—or rather so thoroughly misunderstood. What we need first of all with us is to fall upon and eradicate all the gloomy mediæval monasticism which narrows the view and stupefies the mind. My opinion is that at the present time it is no use to yield one's weapons for art; one must fight against them against what is hostile to art. First clear away, then we can build."

Ibsen did not himself claim, then, that his social plays are true art. They are an analysis, a demonstration, of the falsities of the groundwork of society—under a dramatic form, right or wrong in such a way as to make facing the artist in himself to this task, who shall say? Personally I agree with Mr. John Francis Hope that the synthetic art of today is not inferior to the synthetic literature of yesterday, but rather more to humanity than all his analytic works, even as the "Bacchae" outvalues the rest of Euripides' work.

From the time of Ibsen's severance from the multiple activities of theatre production, he considered all his writing from a purely literary point of view. He maintained that the machinery and organisation of the contemporary theatre were inadequate to the needs of the dramatic art he envisioned. On one occasion he wrote: "I consider it injurious to a dramatic work that it should be made accessible to the public in the first instance by means of a strange performance... as things are now, a new play is judged, not from its surroundings, purely and simply as a literary work. The judgment will always comprehend both the play and its performance; these two entirely different things are mixed up together, and the chief attention of the public is, as a rule, more attracted by the acting and the actors than by the play."

Mr. John Francis Hope was evidently judging from the performance which he had the misfortune to witness, when he characterised Mrs. Wilton as a "disreputable widow." In the mind of her creator she was neither widow nor disreputable. She was the type of woman. In the mind of her creator she was neither widow nor disreputable. She was the type of woman. In the mind of her creator she was neither widow nor disreputable. She was the type of woman. In the mind of her creator she was neither widow nor disreputable. She was the type of woman.

Mr. Hope replies: Miss Enid Rose's interesting letter leads up to a non sequitur. If Ibsen really wanted his plays to be read as literature, the "art of the theatre" is irrelevant to his social dramas. But even if we consider the art of the theatre, I am by no means sure that I agree with Miss Rose, or that she agrees with herself, in demanding a new theatre, and the finer mechanical and physical aids. The only art of the theatre that interests me is the art of acting, of interpreting the play; there is a marked tendency at the Everyman, for example, to concentrate victoriously rather than on dramatic effects. Mr. Norman Macdernott certainly has latterly achieved some very beautiful effects; the sudden sunset in Lord Dunsany's "The Tents of the Arabs," for example, with arguments derived from the nature of the drama born on its stage," says Miss Rose. That was true of Drury Lane, whose dramas were written around the mechanical effects devised by Mr. Arthur Collins: it is not true of the drama written as "literature," or indeed, of any work of genius. Mozart, for example, did not consider the ordinary possibilities of the human voice when he wrote "The Choral ending to his 9th Symphony;" Ibsen did not consider "the ramshackle playhouses" when he wrote "Emperor and Galilean." "That the theatre shall not become the master of art," as Nietzsche put it, is above all desired; and I refuse to accept the means of expression, the theatre, as the condition or the substitute for the end, the drama. "John Gabriel Borkman" simply wants playing, not staging, or lighting, except so far as these things are superimposed, as, for example, the opening in darkness, the slow lighting up of the fire, the ghostly light of the room which at last reveals a woman knitting by the fire, all this is irrelevant trickery; and we have no reason to suppose that any such concentration to it would be lessened by any rebuilding of theatres.

All this is without prejudice to the rebuilding of theatres, most of which in London are incapable of being used for the production of plays that ought to be performed, such as "Emperor and Galilean." But that must be argued on its own merits; for, after all, if a play is acted well, few of us care about its setting; or even notice it. If Miss Rose will make her pupils act, I will cheerfully wait until the millennium for a new theatre."

CLEON.

We note that on page 83 of your issue of December 15 reference is made to "CLEON" and Maximilian Bügg in a current discussion. Mr. D. will kindly let us know how this has come about because "CLEON" is published anonymously and the author's name on the booklet is Eupolis, Jr.

C. W. DANIEL, LTD.
(C. W. Daniel).

"[A. E. R.'s letters: The information was published by Mr. Bügg himself in his "Diary of a Square Peg."]

All communications relative to The New Age should be addressed to The New Age, 38, Cursitor Street, E.C.4.
Readers and Writers (1918-1921).
By A. R. ORAGE. (January 10th). 7s. 6d.
A selection from the well-known series of weekly causeries contributed to THE NEW AGE during the past eight years over the initials "R. H. C." Though many guesses have been made at the personality behind these comments on current literary affairs, it is only now that their real authorship has been avowed.

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"Justie McCarthy redivivus! A trifle more racy, equally liberal in political views, and here and there more autobiographical; but with just the same bland, friendly, historical manner, and filling just the same kind of gap as did McCarthy's HISTORY OF OUR OWN TIMES."—Times.

Romain Rolland: The Man and His Work.
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By OTTO JESPERSEN. (January 10th). 18s.
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This volume may serve either as an introduction to those who are interested in the differences of opinion which still prevail as to the nature of Beauty, or as a textbook for students of the Theory of Criticism itself.

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