A REPLY TO G. B. S.: by G. K. CHESTERTON.

THE NEW AGE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

DURING the past few days the Parliamentary atmosphere has been exceptionally thick with important Bills and resolutions. The Miners Bill and the Education Bill have been introduced, the Sweated Industries Bill has passed its second reading, the Licensing Bill is to appear during the week, and the Woman's Suffrage Bill comes up for its second reading on Friday. The Army and Navy Estimates will have been published by the time this is in the hands of our readers, and Mr. Murray Macdonald's resolution urging a reduction of expenditure upon armaments is expected on Monday. Finally, there is Mr. Redmond's Home Rule resolution, which is designed to extract a definite statement of future policy from the Government, and which is to be introduced as soon as Mr. Birrell returns to the House.

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Every item in the foregoing list, with the exception of the Education Bill, which is an uninteresting and opportunist measure, involves some general principle of the highest importance; and it can rarely have happened that the House of Commons has been called upon to discuss so many far-reaching proposals and to create so many precedents within the short space of ten days.

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Under these circumstances the illness of the Prime Minister is particularly unfortunate. We do not for a moment suppose that there is any truth in the rumour that he is about to retire to the House of Lords, but, we fear, there is little doubt that his absence from the House of Commons is likely to be prolonged, if not permanent. Public opinion already regards Mr. Asquith as the Prime Minister elect, the only open question being how long Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman will refuse to bow to the inevitable. The change, as we have already pointed out, will be nothing less than a disaster to the Liberal Party. At a moment when diplomacy is the one thing needful, if the highly controversial measures contemplated by the Government are to be carried into law, the supremacy of Mr. Asquith can only lead to a premature split in the ranks of reform. He is almost certain to irritate the Nationalists into a fresh obstructionist campaign, the Labour party have not forgotten Featherstone, the Suffragists justly regard him as their special foe, and the mass of the Liberal party distrust, where they do not actively dislike, him. In short, Mr. Asquith has more in common with the Duke of Devonshire than with the rank and file of the anti-Conservative majority which he proposes to lead. We are not in the least concerned for the fate of the Liberal party as such, and indeed would welcome any division which involved the secession of the reactionary elements. But we are concerned for the fate of certain measures which, if they are to escape mutilation in the Lords will require to be sent up with a very solid backing. The Lords are not afraid of Mr. Asquith, nor indeed of the present Government, but they are afraid of the Labour party. And it is not too much to say that they will not hesitate to reject any measure which does not please them and which has not been framed or amended so as to obtain the support of Mr. Henderson and his followers.

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What is wanted, therefore, if anything is to be done, is a Premier who is not only in close touch with his own immediate followers, but who is also amenable to the influence of the "Extreme Left." Neither friend nor enemy would suggest that Mr. Asquith fulfils either of these conditions. There is no man on his side of the house, except perhaps Mr. Harold Cox, who is further from fulfilling them. And unless the Liberal party realise their position at the eleventh hour, and demand a leader whom they can follow, we have nothing to look forward to this side of the General Election but a number of worthless Acts and a lot of tiresome oratory about the blessings of Free Trade.

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It is not difficult to forecast what the attitude of the Government will be in respect to Naval expenditure. There will be no increase, but quite possibly a slight decrease, in the estimates for the coming financial year; and, as to the future, all definite statements will be avoided pending negotiations with the German Government. For once in a way the policy of putting off the evil day is probably justified by the circumstances. The situation at the moment is somewhat peculiar. We have gained such a long start of other countries in the building of first-class battleships and armoured cruisers of the "Dreadnought" and "Invincible" classes respectively, and our superiority in the second line is so enormous that we are bound to be safe and well up to the two-power standard in every respect for two or three years to come. It may be added that if circumstances should demand a sudden increase in our building programme, our special facilities are such as to enable us to turn out battleships half as fast again as the Germans. Also the Government are pledged generally to reduce expenditure upon armaments, and a strong section of their supporters, headed by Mr. Murray Macdonald, are determined to keep them to their pledge.

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On the other hand there is the fact that the new

German Navy Bill provides for the building of an unexpectedly large number of warships; and unless we follow suit, by 1914 or 1915 we shall have lost our strong position, and have abandoned the standard which both parties have hitherto agreed to accept as a minimum. This being so, the Government have either to face a large increase in future naval budgets or else a great war scare with its inevitable "Imperialist" reaction. There is nothing more certain in English politics than that the country will not stand a weak or hesitating policy in the matter of the Navy. For practical purposes the "blue water school" includes the nation, and any Government which dropped the two-power standard, even though it was in order to provide funds for an Old Age Pension Scheme, would soon find itself turned out and sentenced to a prolonged rest on the Opposition side of the House.

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So far we have merely stated without comment the undeniable facts of the situation. Our own position is frankly opportunist. We naturally object to all expenditure upon armaments as being intrinsically wasteful. Battleship after battleship is built, cruises about aimlessly for 20 years or so with several hundred able-bodied men on board, and is then broken up and turned into scrap iron without having fired a shot in earnest during its short life. But we fully recognise at the same time that the alternatives are worse, and that such futilities are but part of the general topsy-turvydom, and cannot be done away with on the instant. Pending a rational agreement between the various powers concerned we must maintain our own armaments, and those armaments must be sufficient to produce a sense of security in the country. That is their raison-d'être from our point of view. Hence we deprecate anything like reduction at the present time. The proposal that we should "set a good example" is as impracticable a remedy in the matter of armaments as it is in the matter of drink. The only way of putting a stop to the game of "beggar-my-neighbour" which the German Government has begun is to show them that we are fully prepared to build two ships to their one, even though we have to tax large incomes half-a-crown in the pound to do it.

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There is a possibility, however, to which we referred above, that something may be done by direct negotiations with the German Government. It is impossible for either party to pretend that their naval programmes are not inter-dependent, and it is the imperative duty of Sir Edward Grey to use every means in his power to come to some arrangement. The German Government is at least as financially embarrassed as ours, and would almost certainly consent to discuss matters. Mr. Edward Bernstein supports this view in a letter to the "Nation." After describing the "utterly deplorable" state of the German Imperial finances, the increasing deficits, and the great difficulty which is being experienced by Prince Bulow in finding a successor to Herr von Stengel, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, he says:—"The lust for more and still bigger ships is in a high degree bridled by financial considerations. . . . . The number of persons who dream of a great naval adventure is too small to counterweigh the general desire for peace in this direction as well as for peace in general. The masses of the working-class democracy are united in their resistance to the insane race in armaments. Their representatives in Parliament have been outvoted, but the masses are there, and as much impregnated as ever with a sense of their mission as the guardians of peace between the nations." It is true that there is all the difference in the world between the German Government and the German people, but no Government can long persist in a fatuous policy, involving heavy taxation, unless it has the people behind it, and it seems possible that they will be ready enough to come to terms.

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Our own Budget prospects are none too bright. Customs show a falling off, as compared with last year, of about a million, and the death duties, in spite of the increased percentages introduced in the last Budget, are very nearly as bad. The Chancellor of the Exchequer will certainly have to put forward some very drastic proposals next month for fresh taxation if he is to meet the various claims which will be made upon him. In spite of our criticism of Mr. Asquith we do not envy him his position.

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The relation between national and local taxation has twice occupied the attention of the House during the week. On Tuesday Mr. Hedges moved a resolution drawing attention to the inequities of the present system, whereby local taxation is levied solely on real property and bears no relation to ability to pay. Mr. Asquith, in reply, pointed out that no change was advisable until the proposed new valuation was made distinguishing between site values and improved values. What he meant, presumably, was that the present heavy burden on the occupier of land must not be lightened at the expense of the taxpayer, but at the expense of the landowner. While thoroughly approving this principle and agreeing that the rate-payer must bear his burden a little longer, we must point out that there can be no justification for increasing that burden at the present time. And in case Mr. Asquith should feel inclined to throw part of the cost of his Old Age Pension scheme on local rates, we take this opportunity of reminding him that he, as well as Mr. Hedges, must await the new valuation, before proposing any such distribution of what is strictly a piece of national expenditure.

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After more than sixty years of agitation the House of Commons has allowed an "experimental" Bill dealing with sweating to pass its second reading. In 1843 Hood published "The Song of the Shirt," and on Friday last Mr. Toulmin, in introducing his Bill, was able to state that "in certain instances" the recognised payment for making a shirt was three farthings. What a commentary on the methods of British statesmanship in the nineteenth century! Generations upon generations of politicians have come and gone since 1843. One and all, they have professed the sincerest sympathy with the poor, and, one and all, they have done nothing to help the most down-trodden class in the country—of whose evil condition they were perfectly well aware. There was no party capital to be made out of the solution of the problem, and no great support to be expected from the voteless women workers, and so they were knowingly and deliberately left to suffer. Who can wonder that the working classes have lost all confidence in the "sincere" professions of capitalist politicians, and have insisted upon having their own representatives in the House of Commons?

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But for the presence of the Labour party we do not doubt that the present Bill would have been either thrown out or "talked out." As it was, the House appeared to be almost unanimous. No one except the irresponsible junior member for the City of London dared to raise his voice in serious opposition, and even he withdrew after having been duly snubbed by one of his leaders. Nevertheless, it is certain that a large number of members on the Opposition benches—and some few on the Government side—would have denounced the Socialist tendency of the Bill if they had had the courage of their opinions. There can be no going back now, however, on the acceptance by both sides of the House of the principle that under certain circumstances wages should be fixed by the State. Those circumstances arise where employers are in the habit of paying less than a "living wage"; and when once the meaning of that term has been defined, there will remain nothing but the inertia of legislative machinery to prevent the enactment by Parliament of a Universal Minimum Wage based on the local cost of living and applying impartially to all industries. Such a measure is indeed but the logical outcome of the principle which the House adopted on Friday without a division.

Whether Wages Boards have come to stay is another question. It is well known that a leading member of the Labour party regards them with considerable disfavour and has an alternative remedy to propose. He may be right; although for the present he is in a hopeless minority both inside and outside his party. Time alone can solve the question, which after all is comparatively speaking a minor one. The recognition of the principle, of the duty of the Government towards the workers, is the important point. By what precise means the Government is to fulfil its duty, and through what machinery it is to exert its authority, are problems that must be settled by experiment. In the meantime let us be thankful that, after 60 years, at least one experiment is to be made.

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We understand that on Friday, when the second reading of the Woman's Suffrage Bill is to be moved, there is to be a big demonstration—and presumably another free fight—outside the House. In view of this possibility we venture to suggest to the acting-Premier two alternative policies, either of which could be relied upon to prevent our prison system being dislocated by the methods of the W.S.P.U. The first is to call out the Guards, line the streets, and shoot down every woman who approaches within a quarter of a mile of Palace Yard. This course would have the merit of being both economical and convincing. The second alternative is to prevail upon the Speaker to allow the application of the closure at 5 o'clock, so that the Bill may at least progress a stage further than it did last Session. If Mr. Asquith should refuse to adopt either of these courses, he will deserve all the abuse which he will certainly get.

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The present attitude of the Government is illogical to the point of absurdity. Either they believe that women should have the vote or they do not. In the former case they should do their best to aid the progress of the Bill; or, if they have scruples as to a mandate, they ought at least to leave the question of giving "facilities" in the hands of members. In the latter case it is their duty to take more intelligent measures than they have done in the past to prevent the scandal of riots in the immediate neighbourhood of the House and the subsequent farcical proceedings in the police court.

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A special campaign has already been started by the Unionist Press against the Miners' Eight Hours Bill, which was introduced on Thursday last by the the Home Secretary. It is contended that it will cause a rise in the price of coal of not less than 2s. per ton, and that the only people who will benefit will be a special class of workers whose conditions of labour are already quite good enough. A further point, urged by Mr. L. Hardy in the House, is that the Bill proposes for the first time to limit the labour of adult men. We fail altogether to see the bearing of this last argument unless Mr. Hardy is prepared to maintain that hours of labour are usually settled under present conditions by brute force. For there is no other respect in which adult men have an advantage over the women and children whom he apparently regards as fit objects for legislation. We hope, however, to deal with the various objections to the Bill on a future occasion. In the meantime we recommend those persons who are so concerned for the interests of the consumer and so assured of the present comfortable conditions of the producers, to make a personal experiment of work underground, and then to tell us whether they think eight hours of it too much or too little for the average human being.

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Mr. Hilaire Belloc is to be congratulated upon his excellent speech with regard to the secrecy of party funds. A great deal of interest was taken in the debate by members in all quarters of the House, but the front benches on both sides were notably empty; it was not a topic to the liking of party leaders.

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Mr. Belloc confined himself entirely to the peril which he foresaw of large subscribers to party funds obtaining an undue influence over legislation. He avoided all personal or direct allegations, and, indeed, performed his task in a thoroughly "gentlemanly" manner. The seconder of the Resolution and the subsequent speakers were less fastidious, and openly referred to the buying and selling of titles, one gentleman even going so far as to mention names. In this matter we are inclined to agree with Mr. MacNeill, who urged that when the legislative functions of the House of Lords were abolished there would be no objection to the traffic in titles and honours provided it were conducted upon a sound and open commercial basis. That is really the last word on the subject. All the real value of titles, as marks of public gratitude for services rendered to the nation, has long since vanished, and it is as idle to deplore the fact as to attempt to remedy it until the whole system upon which plutocracy rests is done away with.

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The question which Mr. Belloc raised is, however, more serious. The existence of secret party funds is a constant menace to the purity of political life. However free from actual corruption the House of Commons may be at the present moment, there is always the danger that private members' votes may be unduly influenced by financial considerations. Nor is it impossible that certain trade interests may be urged upon party leaders with a force which it is hard to disregard. These things are inevitable under the present system; parties need talent, and talent is all too rarely found allied with financial independence; hence the necessity for party funds. Mr. Belloc's proposal of a public audit would, however, only overcome half the difficulty. It would perhaps prevent outside pressure being brought to bear upon party organisations, but it would do nothing to relieve private members of their dependence upon the goodwill of the Whip. The only way to secure the end, which everyone professes to desire, is to follow the example of other democratic countries and provide for the cost of elections and the personal necessities of members out of public funds.

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The Leighton Buzzard Bench of Magistrates have distinguished themselves during the week by an extraordinarily stupid and heartless sentence on a child of 13, named Dorothy Downing. It appeared at the trial that the prisoner, in company with two small boys, had stolen various articles, among which were named a truck, a hammer, a number of eggs, a garden hoe, some baskets, and several bottles of beer. The truck had been returned, but the rest of the things were found hidden in various places. The sentence was five years in a Reformatory.

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Such an inhuman act on the part of the magistrates seems inexplicable. We can only conjecture that they suspected some Socialist influence at work and thought it advisable to make an example and to emphasise the sacredness of the rights of property. Anyone who knows anything of those private institutions which are called Reformatories, and which would seem to have been specially designed for the manufacture of criminals, will be appalled by this monstrous abuse of the powers of local magistrates. Five years in a Reformatory for what was on the face of it nothing more than a childish prank! A lethal chamber might be preferred. Fortunately it is not too late in this case for the Home Secretary to interfere, and we hope that any of our readers who can bring influence to bear, either on the Home Office or in the House of Commons, will do so without delay.

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[NEXT WEEK.—Eden Phillpotts on "A State Department for the Unborn"; Miss Cicely Hamilton (author of "Diana of Dobson's") on "The Vote as a Weapon of Defence"; Herbert Hughes on "English Music."]

Presidential Outlook in the United States.

By an American Correspondent.

IT is conceded that no mere politician can be elected president of the United States for the next administration. He must be a man who will convince the people that he has sound ideas and moral force to execute them for the welfare of the nation and honest business. Two things, apart from the reaction of the people against the financial highwaymanry of the last few years, culminating in the present Republican era, have made this necessary.

The Republican Party, the party of high tariffs, conservative, respectable, and of pedigree, sees ruin and disruption for it to continue openly to be the foster-father of trusts, conserver of special privileges and stock-stuffing speculations which have caused panic and disaster under our unpardonable currency system.

President Roosevelt, driven to assert his official dignity, sent to Congress on January 31 his most vigorous Message, charged with the spirit of fair play and no compromise with law-defying corporations. Apart from the fighting tone of this call to arms by the President, it serves politically as a challenge to the legislative servers of monopoly, and thrusts consternation into the ranks of these reactionaries against the President and his protégé for the Presidential nomination, Wm. H. Taft, now Secretary of War. Mr. Taft is in good training. He has listened for several years while in President Roosevelt's Cabinet to the official denunciations of trust evils and wordy platitudes for "square deal." Mr. Taft himself has the faculty for saying things in harmony with the President and pleasing him by his official acts. The sentiment is growing that Mr. Taft, if elected, would try to continue very much on President Roosevelt's lines, and the belief is becoming more common that Mr. Roosevelt half means what he preaches, and hopes that the people will accept Mr. Taft on faith. The President, in his first burst of enthusiasm, predicted the nomination of Taft on the first ballot of the Republican Convention. He is expected to use all his official prestige to accomplish this. The moral influence of the President has been freely used for Mr. Taft, and the shrewd political intrigue of Theodore Roosevelt will undoubtedly work in many devious ways behind the political scenes. At present Mr. Taft looms above all other possibilities for the Republican nomination.

Sounder men and more capable are in the race. Governor Hughes, of New York, is prominent, less dramatic, clearer visioned about State and national ills, and of demonstrated moral courage, which is yet subject to proof in Mr. Taft. But Governor Hughes has no Roosevelt. As much may also be said of Senator La Follette, of Wisconsin, but he also stands alone, and has no national official advertiser. Yet at present each has the support of his own State, and the candidature of Governor Hughes may at any time spring into greater favour.

The one other condition which renders impossible the election of a President who shows sympathy for the deflowered stock-jobbing interests is that Wm. J. Bryan is stronger than ever, and stands with the people as Saul, taller and fairer. Without the support of official influence, without the power of Federal or State patronage, with all the power of Wall Street, plutocracy, and pseudo-aristocracy at bay, Mr. Bryan is more firmly fixed in the hearts of his countrymen than ever before, and at this time the names of all other aspirants to the Democratic Presidency fade into insignificance.

Mr. Bryan leads a regenerated Democratic Party, with a host of supporters of radical progress. During the last eight years he has taught the people new ideals of national life, preached a doctrine of social righteousness, and stirred the moral impulses of the nation to conceptions of, and the will to achieve for its citizens, economic, moral, and spiritual freedom little dreamed of by them before.

This newly-vitalised Democratic Party demands the absolute subjection to the will of the people of all public service corporations, national, state, and municipal, on the basis of equity, and denounces the tariff as a trust-breeding device, unjustifiable by morals or commercialism, and a curse to American labour. This fresh spirit of Democracy, as carried forth by Mr. Bryan and those with him who have awakened to the new and higher demands of the American people, forces into the political arena of the Republican Party men for the Presidential race who may without invidious distinctions be trusted to lead the fight and direct the moral forces of the country with the confidence of a Bryan.

Thus far all attempts to start counter movements in opposition to the leadership of Mr. Bryan have collapsed for lack of support. No influential statesman is willing to go on record as promoting anti-Bryan demonstrations. Mr. Bryan stands ready and willing to step aside for any man whom the Democratic Party of the country may decide is a stronger man for the Presidential race. Yet he is not willing to accept the judgment of a few persons or groups of men asking him on behalf of the party not to be the candidate. When so approached, he requests them to show their credentials. The reactionaries from the progressive element of the Democratic Party can now do no more than croak their dissatisfaction, gather up their plutocratic skirts in fear of contamination and in humiliating remembrance of their overwhelming defeat of 1904.

The Socialists are not an influential factor in the national election. They are now two branches, comprising the Socialist Party and Socialist Labour Party. There is a movement on foot to bring these two national parties into an organic union. For their Presidential candidate there is much talk of W. D. Haywood, of Colorado, secretary of the Western Federation of Miners, who was acquitted last September of complicity in the murder of Governor Steunenberg, of Idaho.

The wisdom of this may well be questioned. That which has given Mr. Haywood national prominence was his trial in connection with the Steunenberg murder. His secretaryship of a miners' federation which has placed itself upon an out-and-out Socialist platform is of importance only to Socialists. I can conceive of no graver political error than for a National Socialist Party to place its leadership in a man on whom the disinterested masses look with suspicion, and for whom the Court acquittal has not restored the confidence of innocence. The Socialists will do well to avoid striking violently the healthy sensibilities of the country by placing at the head of a great movement a character whom millions of unbiassed citizens will accept as if offered in a spirit of flout—and they may be pardoned for having convictions at variance with the jury's decision at the trial for the life of W. D. Haywood.

Since President Roosevelt is the faster politician who nurses along so admirably the progress of Wm. H. Taft toward the Republican nomination, the country should demand to know with what ability and disposition Mr. Taft will adopt the new Rooseveltian aggression towards the stock-bloated party in Congress, and all that they represent in lawless industrialism. Some feel that he will come far short of the progressive demands. Mr. Bryan and the Democratic Party have come out with unqualified approval of the recent radical demonstration of the President, and Mr. Bryan proposes to force the issues. No one questions his honesty, determination, and ability. Will Mr. Taft meet the strenuous situation? Upon that and millions of extorted and contributed plutocracy funds will depend his election.

Why Empires Fall.

There could be no doubt that the manhood of the Roman people disappeared, and that its heart went rotten under two influences—the degradation of the lower populace by being fed by the State, and the destruction of the middle classes by taxation.—Sir EDWARD FRY, in a speech to the Central Poor Law Conference.

SIR EDWARD (formerly Lord Justice) FRY is a man of distinction in many spheres, and when he warns the British Empire that by adopting Socialist measures it is risking the fate of the Roman Empire, his words are entitled to attention. Let us give some attention to the words I have quoted.

Sir Edward Fry says the Roman Empire fell for two reasons, the first being the feeding of the lower populace by the State. The fallacy here is due, I think, to looseness of language. He knows, of course, that to speak of the lower populace of the Empire being fed by the State would be nonsense. The people who enjoyed the panem et circenses provided out of public funds were the people of Rome and a few other large cities. Free food and free amusements of a very brutal and degrading character had a bad effect upon them, of course. But, after all, the number so affected was not very great. To select this one symptom of the decay of the governing class and to attribute outstanding importance to it, is to dispense with the sense of proportion without which it is impossible to judge history aright. And, further, to use this as an argument against Socialism is unwise, for Socialism does not propose to feed anybody free. Its motto is "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat." It is the system which Sir Edward Fry upholds that permits a large class of idle people to live upon the labour of others without giving any service in return.

Next Sir Edward Fry says the Roman Empire fell because the middle classes were ruined by taxation. To estimate this argument at its true value we must examine rapidly the municipal system of the later Empire. In earlier days the local magistrates had been elected by the popular vote, and all who had held office became members of the local senate or curia, being called curiales. As time went on, the Roman passion for heredity turned the curiales into a caste, consisting of the smaller landowners. They had no choice about holding the various municipal offices. The responsibility was forced upon them, and, furthermore, they were compelled to make up any differences there might be between the taxes demanded by the Imperial Treasury, which they had to collect, and the amounts they could squeeze out of the provincial taxpayers.

Seeing that the aristocracy, or senatorial class (the big landowners), were exempt from municipal taxes and did all they could to get out of paying Imperial taxes, and seeing also that the decay of agriculture continually decreased the tax-bearing acreage, the curiales found it exceedingly hard both to discharge their local obligations and to satisfy the Treasury. So hard did it become, in fact, that numerous harsh laws were passed with the object of preventing members of the municipal caste from shirking their duties, in spite of which laws many lived as hermits in desert places, many voluntarily enrolled themselves in the lower ranks of manual labour, many became serfs to big landowners, and married slave wives. This senseless penalising of a hereditary class had naturally a weakening effect upon the social fabric. But to compare with it the municipal taxation to which the middle class is subject at the present day, or to which it ever could be subjected under a democratic system, is to strain historical truth for the purpose of political argument.

And if Sir Edward Fry's positive "suggestiones" are open to this change, how much more his "suppressions"? He no doubt unintentionally misled the members of the Central Poor Law Conference by what he said. But he misled them very much more by what he did not say. Upon the chief cause of all the causes which directly led to the downfall of the Roman Empire he spoke no word at all. He pointed to the pauperisation of the lower populace, which, as I have shewn, was confined to a few big towns; and he pointed to "the destruction of the middle class by taxation," such destruction being, as I have also shewn, not due to taxation in our sense of the word at all. But he did not even mention the eclipse of the governing faculty of the people at the top, the degradation of the aristocracy, the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of the class which claimed the right to rule.

If any definite causes of Rome's fall can be relied on, the chief cause certainly was that she refused to adapt her forms of government to the needs of the time. The Romans were more conservative by temperament than are the English. They clung to the old system even when it had degenerated into a monstrous and palpable sham. The upper class had ceased to be fit to govern, yet the middle class were excluded as far as possible from any share in Imperial concerns, and the lower class were allowed no voice in public affairs at all. As a consequence, the lower class had neither intelligence nor public spirit, while the commercial class devoted itself to the greedy pursuit of wealth and sensual pleasure, producing such specimens of nouveaux riches as the Trimalchio of Petronius, whose motto was "Buy cheap and sell dear," and whose favourite maxim, "A man is worth what he possesses, and no more." In short, there were in the Roman Empire what Matthew Arnold said there are in England—an upper class materialised, a middle class vulgarised, a lower class brutalised.

But when we look with steady gaze into the turbid waters of history, do we not see clearly that what are called causes of the downfall of Empire are really no more than the symptoms of a deep-seated malady which undermines for centuries the proud fabric of power, and finally brings it crashing to the ground? That malady has been in every case known to us: the Death of the Soul. In one of the finest of his Orations, Dion Chrysostom (not the saint, but the Cynic philosopher) drove this lesson home with a force which ought to appeal powerfully to us to-day.

See how the might of Assyria dwindled, he said, and the dominion of Greece, and the great Macedonian Empire—each because it lost its soul, because its civilisation became material, because it cast off all moral discipline, because it became a slave to its appetite for wealth and enjoyment and showy distinction. The secret of happiness lies, not in pomp and luxury, but in temperance, justice, and true piety. The only security for the permanence of any society lies in a clear perception of the true values of things and a chastened moderation of spirit which enables it to choose the better, not the worse.

Rome fell for the reason that Assyria fell, and Greece and Macedonia. It mistook the Shadow for the Reality. It set more store by the shows of greatness than by the only criterion of a truly great rule—the greatest happiness of the greatest number. St. Augustine, in a famous letter, written to one who contended that Christianity had caused the decadence of Rome, declared with truth that the decay of Rome began long before the coming of Christ, in the decay of the old Roman honour and morality. Christianity was only the expression of the widespread repugnance, felt equally by wise Pagans, against the shams and cruelties and injustices, the wealth-worship and pleasure-seeking of the time.

Rome lost her ideals, and set up materialist gods. The inevitable reaction came, and Rome fell. Has Britain lost her ideals? We Socialists say not. We will not bow the knee to the gods of a selfish Materialism. But unless we can carry the nation with us, Britain is doomed as surely as Greece, Macedonia, Assyria, and Rome.

THORPE LEE.

"Fair and Reasonable Remuneration"

By the Hon. Sir Hartley Williams.

IN a Melbourne paper, "The Age," of November 9, will be found an interesting and instructive judgment of Mr. Justice Higgins, the President of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, on the above subject.

The facts of the case, shortly put, were these. Parliament having previously placed an import duty of £12 on every harvester brought *into* the Commonwealth of Australia, subsequently, by the Excise Act of 1906, provided inter alia that a penalty by way of excise duty amounting to £6 should be imposed on every harvester manufactured *in* Australia under conditions as to remuneration of labour which had not been pronounced by the President of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration to be fair and reasonable. The applicant in the case which was the subject of the judgment was a Mr. McKay, who is the largest manufacturer of harvester machines in Australia, and his application to the Court was made in order to obtain the declaration prescribed by the Excise Act as a condition precedent to his right to claim exemption from the penalty by way of excise duty.

It is obvious that, having regard to his position as a manufacturer of harvesters, Mr. McKay was very greatly benefited by the import duty of £12 per machine imposed by the tariff, and if he proved successful in obtaining the declaration of the Court prescribed by the Excise Act, he would thereby become exempted from the excise duty of £6 per machine on harvesters manufactured by his firm. Mr. Justice Higgins's duty therefore was to decide whether the applicant paid those employed by him in his business fair and reasonable remuneration for their work.

In his judgment, the President of the Court began by stating that, in his opinion, it was manifestly the intention of Parliament to improve the condition of employees in protected industries by securing to them a rate of wage which, as a rule, they could not get by the ordinary method of individual bargaining with employers, and that therefore it was his function to fix the standard of "fair and reasonable" remuneration as something other than a wage which employees, on the one side, driven by pressure would take, and employers, on the other, urged by the desire for profits, would concede. He then proceeded to state, "I can think of no other standard appropriate than the normal need of the average employee living in a civilised community," and as a consequence of this he decided that "fair and reasonable remuneration" meant that the wages paid should be sufficient to furnish employees with proper food and clothing and a condition of frugal comfort estimated by current human standards. He finally came to the conclusion that in the case before him the applicant was not paying his employees such fair and reasonable remuneration as the Act contemplated, and in consequence the application was dismissed. But in dismissing the application, Mr. Justice Higgins paid a high tribute to the defeated applicants' energy and sagacity, and to his desire to treat his workmen fairly. The evidence was conclusive that the applicant had paid his men at market rates, but, as Mr. Justice Higgins found, these market rates were below the normal need of workers living in a civilised community. In the process of arriving at the standard of "normal need in a civilised community," Mr. Justice Higgins seems to have taken into his consideration the following items: rent, groceries, bread, meat, milk, fuel, vegetables, light, clothes, boots, rates, life insurance, savings, accident or benefit society, union pay, newspapers, tram and train fares, sewing machine, school requisites, tobacco, and books. The wages he fixed per day varied from 7s. (the lowest) to 11s. (the highest). To pattern-makers was adjudged as fair and reasonable 11s. per day; to labourers, unskilled, including furnacemen's labourers and lorry drivers, 7s. per day; and between these two extremes were adjudged to other classes of labour 8s., 9s., and 10s. per day. It will thus be seen that a fair and reasonable remuneration to employees under the Act referred to is a very different thing from the minimum living wage prescribed by the Factory Acts of Australian legislation.

Two Kinds of Mental Activity.

By Leo Tolstoy

(The following article was written by Tolstoy to serve as an introduction to a collection of thoughts, aphorisms and maxims by La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues and Montesquieu, translated into Russian.).

HUMAN reason directed to the elucidation of the laws that govern human life, has always manifested itself in two different ways. Some thinkers have tried to systematise all the phenomena and laws of human life into definite connection with one another. Such were the founders of all the philosophic theories from Aristotle to Spinoza and Hegel. Others have helped the elucidation of the laws of human life not by elaborating shapely systems, but by detached observations and apt expressions indicating eternal laws that rule our life. Such were the sages of the ancient world who formed collections of aphorisms, the Christian mystics, and especially the French writers of the XVIth, XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, who brought this kind of writing to the highest degree of perfection.

Such—not to mention the wonderful Montaigne, whose writings partly belong to this class—are the thoughts and maxims of La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, Pascal, Montesquieu and Vauvenargues.

If one compares all knowledge of the laws of human life to a ball continually enlarged by fresh accretions, then thinkers of the first, systematic class, should be likened to men who try to enfold the ball with stuff more or less solid and thick, in order to enlarge its whole surface equally. Thinkers of the second category are like men who without caring for the equal increase of the whole surface of the ball, enlarge its size at various points of a radius along which their thoughts naturally travel, generally outreaching thinkers of the first kind and furnishing future systematisers with matter to work upon.

The advantages on the side of thinkers of the first category are: coherence, completeness and symmetry in their doctrines. The disadvantages are: artificiality in their structure, forced connections between its parts, sometimes evident deviations from truth in order to make the whole teaching coherent, and often—resulting from this—obscurity and mistiness in the manner of their exposition.

The advantages on the side of the second category of thinkers are: directness, sincerity, novelty, boldness and, if one may so express it, impulsiveness in their unshackled thought, resulting in corresponding vigour of expression.

Their disadvantages are: fragmentariness and occasional external contradictions, though these latter are usually more apparent than real.

Their greatest advantage, however, is that whereas works of the first class—philosophic systems—often repel by their pedantry, or—if they do not repel—weaken the mind of the reader by subduing him and depriving him of independence, works of the second class always attract by their sincerity, elegance, and brevity of expression. Above all, they not only do not crush independent activity of the mind, but on the contrary, evoke it by obliging the reader either to deduce further conclusions from what he reads, or, sometimes, when he quite disagrees with the author, by obliging him to contest the latter's positions, and thus arrive at new and unexpected conclusions.

The detached thoughts both of ancient and modern writers are usually of this kind, and such are those of the French writers whose maxims are collected in this volume.—Translated for THE NEW AGE by AYLMER MAUDE.

Colonial Expansion by Cannon.

By M. Hervé.

(Being the last of four articles summarising M. Hervé's speech in his defence. Translated by W. R. T. for THE NEW AGE, *with M. Hervé's express permission.)*

MR. ATTORNEY-GENERAL has just alluded to the disgust with which my articles have overwhelmed him. Gentlemen, I am equally disgusted. But not with precisely the same things. Let Mr. Attorney-General, if he will, cover up with his red robe, or rather let him try to cover up, this record of jobbery, of the bombardment of undefended towns, the massacre of women and children, this bloody catalogue of crimes. But I will not help him. My lawyer's robe shall be no cloak for brigandage. I said to myself: "The Paris jurymen hate me; how could it be otherwise, when they know me only as the horned devil of their newspapers, those creatures of the financiers I am attacking? Let them hate me then. But that is not the point. The point is not: Am I horned and hoofed; not: Does the German Emperor pay me to destroy the national defences; but: Will they, when I put before them these documents, these first syllables of irrefragable proof—will my Paris jurymen dare to condemn me? That is the question, gentlemen, is it not?

Answer me, yes or no!

The soldiers who, at the bidding of certain financiers and capitalists have slaughtered the innocent, shot prisoners of war, butchered the wounded—have they acted as robbers and bandits? Yes or no?

For my part, I have but one name for you, whether you burgle a cottage or a kingdom, whether you hold up a midnight train at the pistol-point or wipe out the unoffending townsfolk of Casablanca with your long-range guns! Big thieves, little thieves, you follow the same blackguard trade!

Are you so innocent as not to see that when your newspapers sing the glories of Colonial expansion they are making fun of you? Do you not realise that these papers are only kept alive by the advertisement (so unstintingly paid for) which they give to big financial schemes? These tools, these mouthpieces of Plutus, will you let their gaudy pictures blind you to the fact that it is your money that pays the piper in Morocco?

"Look at this abomination!" says Mr. Attorney-General, showing us a drawing from the "Guerre Sociale." The filth is a drawing by Grandjouan, that great artist, so universally known for his work on the "Assiette au Beurre." The drawing shows the French flag flying over Moorish corpses. A Colonial officer and a financier are looking at it, and one of them points to the flag and says: "With that planted in it the dunghill is worth money."

Yes, to some that dunghill has been worth millions. But Grandjouan means more than that; he hints at other results of these operations, at a loss, ultimately, to the taxpayers of some thousands of millions, at a possibility that if you do not give heed to your ways, adventures like this of Morocco will one day land you—as it only just failed to land you two years ago—in the jaws of a great European war.

Do not mistake me; I understand quite well the necessities of the capitalist system That we are its relentless foe; that we believe the means of production and exchange should be collectively owned are no more than the Socialist Catholic credo; but, after all, I realise that until capitalism has been put decently underground it has need of outlets. But there are two ways of making them. First, there is the Schneider method. You acquire a colonial market; you are alone there; you sell your goods at devil-may-care-what price—for there are no competitors. And you send in to the good taxpayer the bill for your pleasure excursion with a pious sigh for the massacred natives and other unpleasant incident casualties of war.

But happily, even under the capitalist system, there are other means possible. If capital desires to embark on great constructive works, there is close to its hand a canal system which is the laughing-stock of Germany! And are there no manufacturers whom capitalism can urge to scrap their old-fashioned textile plant and properly equip themselves for the struggle with their German and English competitors? While if M. Schneider wants markets for his workshops, why can he not start on the 315 locomotives and 800 railway carriages which between January, 1906, and October, 1907, had to be ordered abroad?

There are undeveloped countries like Brazil, without capital and without trade, of infinitely greater natural wealth than Morocco, and I notice that the Paris and Netherlands Bank and their political agent are at this precise moment engineering an outlet in Brazil for French money and manufactures. Well and good! Let the captains of industry and finance pursue uninterruptedly their business schemes. With that we have no quarrel; but let it be at their own cost, not at the cost of the taxpayer. Let there be no blood-letting, let them not make use of the army, the so-called national army, to prepare a way for them with Schneider shot and shell.

But, after all, if you think it wise to make yourselves accomplices of the Schneider gang, and to cover up the infamies practised in Morocco, you are free to do so. You have only to condemn me, to gag me, to shut me up for a year in La Santé gaol. I go to prison without fear—even with joy—if I succeed in putting a stop to the massacre of the Moors. If you share with Mr. Attorney-General his admiration for these filibusters; if you think this Colonial brigandge is to be encouraged, condemn me. I shall not plead extenuating circumstances.

Only, if you condemn me, do not complain when your taxes go up, or when you awake to find yourselves on the eve of a European war, or when the Germans steal one day your provinces from you as you have stolen to-day their flocks and iron mines from the Moors.

I have but one standard. I do not say, like the Academician Vogüé, that in certain cases it is right to shoot prisoners of war, to bombard undefended towns, to fire on women and children; that when Germans do that in Brazil, it is very bad, but when Frenchmen do it at Casablanca it suddenly becomes heroism. Away with such hypocrisy!

If by chance you acquit me, gentlemen of the jury, have no fear. Whatever Mr. Attorney-General may say to the contrary, nobody will believe you have turned Hervéist. Public opinion will reflect: "Now, what in the world does this mean? The Paris jury has not condemned Hervé, the man with the flag on the dunghill! . . . If the Paris jurymen, who belong to the middle-class, who are merchants, doctors, what not, if these men, who, far from being revolutionary, but for the most part probably Nationalists or moderate Republicans, have acquitted Hervé, there is more in this business than meets the eye. What? We must find out." And then my object will be achieved.

To conclude, whatever may be your verdict, I shall go on!

[The Court condemned Gustave Herve to the maximum penalty of a year's imprisonment and 3 000 francs fine.]

The Last of the Rationalists.

(A Reply to Mr. Bernard Shaw.)

By G. K. Chesterton.

I HAVE just seen Bernard Shaw's very jolly article* and I hope you will allow me to reply. I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that Belloc and I must be horribly fascinating men. We never suspected it ourselves; but I have been forced to the belief by the discussion in the NEW AGE. We offered certain objections to Socialism. We were honoured by being answered, not only by the two most brilliant Socialists alive, but by the two most brilliant writers alive, who both happen to be Socialists. Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells undertook to reply to us about Socialism. They both forgot to say anything whatever about Socialism, but they insisted on talking (with the utmost humour and luxuriance) about us. The fact can be tested by anyone who cares to look up the file of this paper and compare the articles. My article may have been vague and mystical, but it was about Socialism; Wells's article was about me. Belloc's article may have been harsh or academic, but it was about Socialism; Shaw's article was about Belloc.

The first part of Shaw's article is all about the facts that he has found in "Who's Who." But as the chief fruit and example of his study of that work is the startling statement that Belloc went to Magdalen, I cannot feel that Shaw's biographies are things to lean one's whole weight upon. Nor is it the question (as Shaw seems to suppose) whether my maternal great grandfather having come from Switzerland unfits me to be a member of this nation. The question is whether Shaw's attitude does not unfit him to be a member of any nation. What I said about Shaw and his Socialists was quite simple; I said, and I say, that they have no sympathy with the poor. I do not mean that they have no pity for the poor; I know they have Niagaras of pity. But they have no sympathy; they do not feel with ordinary men about ordinary things. The question is not a question of race, but a question of getting on with men. And I should certainly get on better with Hottentots than Shaw can get on with Irishmen.

In following his admirable career, I have noticed that while Shaw is ready (very rightly) to get excited about anything, he is specially ready to get excited about points of grammar or pronunciation. Therefore I hasten first to quiet his anxiety and to tell him that he is quite right in saying "Shaw and Wells are" while he says "Chesterton and Belloc is." Shaw and Wells are two men of genius. Chesterton and Belloc is mankind. Not mankind as compared with all mankind, not mankind as compared with the people in an omnibus, but as compared with Shaw and Wells, simply mankind. Shaw and Wells, having never seen mankind before in their lives, are naturally alarmed. This monstrous animal, the Chesterbelloc, with its horrible fore legs and its hideous hind legs, may well terrify them; it is Humanity on the move. But Shaw denies this; he suggests that we do not in this matter represent mankind. Very well; the matter is quite easy to prove. It can be proved by simply asking what are the points on which we are actually made game of by modern writers in general and by Shaw and Wells in particular. Of course, every man is both an ordinary man and an extraordinary man. Of course, Belloc and I are ordinary men and also extraordinary men. But we are not derided because of what is extraordinary in us. We are derided because of what is ordinary. Of course, we have peculiarities which are not common to mankind. For instance, I am so fond of the grotesque in art, that I cannot properly appreciate the Greeks. Belloc is so fond of the classic in art that he cannot properly appreciate Browning. These are peculiarities, sometimes lunacies; but we are not mocked about these peculiarities. The only two things which Shaw and Wells and the modern world mock in us, the only two things they notice about us, are two things which are (without any kind of question) common to us and the mass of men. The two best jokes against us, as uttered by the best jester of the age, are also jokes against mankind. The two jokes against us are that we believe in the naturalness of drinking fermented liquor and in the possibility of miracles. We may be right or wrong; but we certainly represent the majority of human beings on those two points: and you only attack us on those two points. It is amusing to note here that Shaw does not read his NEW AGE any more carefully than he does his "Who's Who." He suggests that "the only thing in Wells's earnest and weighty appeal to Chesterton that moved him was an incidental disparagement of the custom of standing drinks." The fact is, of course, that the only thing in Chesterton's earnest and weighty appeal to the world in general that moved Wells was an incidental admission of the custom of standing drinks. If Shaw will go and read Wells's article (it is well worth his trouble) he will find that standing drink was the only point on which I quarrelled with Wells, for the simple reason that it was the only point on which he quarrelled with me. He wrote a whole article packed with all my own opinions; but broke out with considerable violence on this special point. This distinction is important, because it is not Belloc and I who make beer important. It is Shaw and Wells who entertain the wild idea of so ordinary a thing being questionable. Shaw turns our claim for the common human drink into some nasty ideas about "excess"; and then, being evidently unable to boast of having drunk with another man in his life, goes off (I speak with reverence and affection) into some rubbish about a piano. But Belloc and I are not maintaining that beer is a divine glory, but that it is a normal habit and natural right; as normal as meat, and much more normal than soap. We do not get excited on beer. It is Shaw who gets excited on beer. And it really seems a pity to get drunk on beer when you have not even drunk it.

It is proved, then, that on the first fact which Shaw sees as odd about us we are not odd but ordinary: it is proved that we are mankind or (as Shaw would put it) we is mankind. The same exactly is true about the other thing that Shaw thinks odd: the belief in the supernatural. The first and most important fact is that the experience of mankind is on the side of miracles, and men like Shaw can only get out of it by despising mankind and saying that men are filthy and superstitious. There are, no doubt, other and minor facts, notably the fact that I believe in the possibility of miracles, and I can tell Shaw why I believe in it: but Shaw cannot tell me why he disbelieves in it: I know, because I asked him. He has accepted the impossibility of miracles, of course, as a part of the positivist philosophy in which we were all brought up; but some of us have thought our way out of it. He has not. He still clings to his old mental habits of the Hall of Science, of which the great tenet was that all men were rising against religion except the men who weren't, and they didn't count. Now of this old-fashioned materialism to which Shaw clings (I like the word "clings"; Shaw uses it of Belloc, and it seems to call up Belloc's habit and figure so vividly before one)—of this old creed to which Shaw clings, there was one main method and principle. It was this; that the true Freethinker must contradict Christianity, even if he contradicted himself. That wretched creed must be accused of all evils, even if they were inconsistent evils. Thus the old Atheists abused Christianity for being meek and Quakerish, while they also abused it for being bloody and imperialistic. The two sins of the Christian were first that he would not fight, and second that he was always fighting. Similarly, Christianity was attacked, first for concealing the kindness of Nature and then for concealing the unkindness of Nature. This extraordinary religion was first the black spot on a white world and then the white spot on a black world.

* THE NEW AGE for February 15.

Now Shaw is submissive to his old Hall of Science traditions. Shaw will make an attack on Christianity even if it is also an attack on Shaw. Here is a perfectly plain case. Shaw has been telling us ten times a week that what we want is not reason but life, that the lust to live, to live even for oneself, to live infinitely, is glorious. Exactly: but the moment you mention life beyond the grave, Shaw's mind drops forty feet to the level of the Hall of Science, and he begins to say that it is mean and cowardly to wish to live for ever. This is manifest nonsense. It cannot be noble to desire life and mean to desire everlasting life. Shaw has meekly tied himself in this mental knot in obedience to the old materialist tradition to which he clings; he has sacrificed his own Life-Force to the ghost of Bradlaugh. It is exactly the same with this point of miracles. The plain fact is that Shaw does not know what the Catholic doctrine of Miracles is; but he has (to his eternal glory) almost discovered it for himself. He has toiled and panted in the train of the Catholic doctrine of Miracles; and whenever he picked up a piece of it, he was hugely and legitimately proud. The Catholic doctrine of Miracles is this. That the highest power in the universe is not (as the Materialists say) Law: the highest power in the universe is Will, the will of God which is Good Will. Akin to this, though much weaker, is the will of man. There is also in the universe another element of routine and rule; but Will, being the higher, can overpower law, the lower. Therefore, though law says that the blood of St. Januarius must be dry, Will might say that it shall be wet. Now for the last five years Shaw has been preaching this doctrine of the transforming power of will. But it will give him a great shock when he discovers that it is only the Christian doctrine of Miracles: then, very likely, he will drop it like a hot potato. As it is, he takes refuge in a poor sample of the Hall of Science: the comparison between miracles and cheating at cards. Of course, the comparison will not bear even an instant's intellectual examination. Cheating at cards is only wrong because a game exists on a contract that certain rules will be observed; rules that can be written down. Where is the contract between us and Nature that she will not show us new wonders? or if Nature is bound by rules, will Shaw be so obliging as to write them down? If Shaw's comparison proved anything it would prove that it was wicked to do conjuring tricks with cards. But I do Shaw a wrong in taking this part of him seriously at all; this is not Shaw, but Bradlaugh. I only remark that we are all going back, consciously or unconsciously, to the faith of Christendom, and that I am sorry for those who, like Shaw, will only discover where they are going when they have got there.

And, finally, let me recall you to the unwelcome subject of Socialism. Perhaps you have wondered why Beer has been so prominent in this discussion. Obviously Beer is not important, except to teetotallers. The reason is that the proposed abolition of personal property has its only practical parallel in teetotalism, the abolition of normal drink. Drink and property have both swelled in our world into abominations. But there are some like Shaw who want to abolish drink; and there are some, like Belloc and me, who only want to abolish drunkards and teetotallers. Similarly there are some, like Shaw, who want to abolish property, and there are some, like Belloc and me, who want to abolish the wealthy and the unemployed. We do not "plank down" a Utopia, because Utopia is a thing uninteresting to a thinking man; it assumes that all evils come from outside the citizen and none from inside him. But we do "plank down" these much more practical statements: (1) that a man will not be humanly happy unless he owns something in the sense that he can play the fool with it; (2) that this can only be achieved by setting steadily to work to distribute property, not to concentrate it; (3) that history proves that property can be so redistributed and remain so distributed, while history has no record of successful Collectivism outside monasteries. That is what we say, and you may call it right or wrong. But so far you have not called it anything: you have confined yourselves to charming essays on our two charming personalities.

In thinking you, Mr. Editor, for your characteristic chivalry in affording me so much space, may I point out a misprint in a recent issue? You make Mr. Shaw say, in describing certain wild gymnastic attitudes, that he can do them "on his head," which is absurd. If you consult his MS., you will see that he said he could do them "in his head," a far more characteristic phrase and one much more in accord with the physical and mental facts.

The Folly of the Follies.

ALL my life I have longed to come across a competent dramatic critic—one, that is, who would say the things that I think. And I have not come across him. I read in my daily paper that Miss de Vere played a magnificent part with superb success, and I go to the theatre and see Miss de Vere balancing on the perilous edge of the diminished seventh, tremulous and unconvinced. Mr. de Montmorency, I am informed, "took the stage in his own inimitable way," and when I hasten to see him do it I find that his way is just the way I don't want him to take anything. Mrs. de la Rue, they tell me, is as irresistibly funny as ever—and when I come face to face with her, and not in a resisting mood either, I find her a vulgar loud old woman, who doesn't even see the point of the jokes which an unselfish author has given her to play with. I must admit that there are some critics who know good acting when they see it—also that such acting is, now and then, to be seen. But bad acting is to be seen here, there, and everywhere—and bad plays are as common as blackberries or Socialists. And yet I don't come across the dramatic critic who will say about this acting and these plays what I wish to hear, what I think, and what I know that other people think.

There are plenty of critics brave enough to say that Miss de la Vigne did not quite do herself justice, that Mr. de la Morgue has not in such and such a piece sufficient scope for his talents, or that this play was poor though well acted, and that play amusing but not adequately rendered.

What I have always desired has been a critic who would quite definitely, and without any nonsense about it, with damns if necessary, set forth in black and white the true truth about most of our modern plays—that they are, both in themselves and in their interpretations, what one of Mr. Shaw's characters calls *Tosh*. I have wanted someone brought up to the trade—which I was not—to speak faithfully about the melodrama, where virtue is never tried, but always rewarded, the social comedy where everyone is trying to deceive someone else, the farce, with its eleven doors and a comic character behind each, the music-hall, and all that it stands for, the musical comedy, last depth of all; to point out that the actors don't believe in their parts, as, indeed, how can they, seeing that none of them bears more than a fleeting or distorted resemblance to life; to show how tiresome the whole thing was, when it was not vulgar—how dull, when it was not disgusting. And nobody did it. The critics particularised alone Mrs. de la Rue's funniness and Miss de Vere's Parisian gowns, but they would not say what I wanted, would not hit out straight from the shoulder at the whole silly show—the trumpery, twopenny ha'-penny imbecilities of "tradition" and "business."

And just when I began to think that there was nothing for it but that I should turn dramatic critic, and myself say these things, Mr. Pélissier and his Follies came upon the town. And at once what I desired was done. The truth was spoken—so whimsically, so brightly, so very truthfully that I perceived that I need not apprentice myself to the critic's trade while such a master was plying it.

Mr. Pélissier is a satiric genius. As a painter he might have rivalled Hogarth; as an author he would have been talked of with Swift and Sterne. As it is, he

occupies a place entirely his own—the vacant place that I have always longed to see filled. He is the satirist of the stage.

He is also quite a lot of other things: things so various and so good that the bulk of his audience, one would not mind betting a crown, hardly know that he is a satirist at all.

He came to us with an entertainment perfectly new, perfectly charming; one whose ingenious ingenuousness disarmed criticism. And all the while he himself was criticising away like mad. He and his company said what I had always wanted to say. The things they did to amuse their audience were just what we ourselves should have liked to do to amuse our own friends in our own house—if we had been clever enough. There was not, from first to last, one error in taste. We were amused, captivated, interested; sometimes touched, but never shocked.

All this, and the success of it, seemed to show that after all there could be plain speaking; also that an English audience could appreciate really good acting when it was lucky enough to get it. The excellent precept of the Follies, joined to their excellent example, seemed to make for hope. It did seem possible that even the dress circle might in time learn the difference between good acting and bad.

One pinned one's faith on Mr. Pélissier, and looked forward confidently to a bright dramatic "future for generations yet unborn" (Herbert Burrows). The Master Satirist was at work: one could safely leave the matter in his hands. Could one?

Alas, I saw the Follies again the other night. They are still amusing, clever, satiric, and all the charming rest of it, but . . . . they have made concessions to the very things they so beautifully and adequately satirised. Mr. Pélissier knows this well enough; his taste is too fine for him to have sinned in ignorance. He has, one fears, done it because the Follies, like less gifted persons, have to live, and he must, somehow, have concluded that the "really right thing" could not, in face of our national silliness, be relied upon to *pay*. So now he stoops to jokes that make us uncomfortable —"my mother-in-law is dead" is a simple yet flagrant example—and resorts to that base expedient which never fails to enrapture an English audience, the mockery of physical defect. There is a recitation by a man who speaks as he speaks who has no roof to his mouth. It is very funny, and it amuses you, but you are ashamed of being amused. You were not ashamed of being amused at "Excelsior." There is a sketch of three old men. Two of them are amusing and like life: the third, in the bath chair, is like death, and you are not really amused. You laugh at him, and feel all the while that you're a brute. And here and there throughout the performance are little touches which show that Mr. Pélissier is playing down to his audience—which was just what he so audaciously and brilliantly set out *not* to do.

I wish he wouldn't. I wish he would stick to his guns. I wish he would have faith. Surely the supply —of such stuff as he can give—must create the demand? Even with these faults that make the flesh faintly creep, his entertainment is immeasurably the most amusing in London. He has wit, he has humour, he has pathos though he is mighty sparing of it; he has a troupe that work together as no other English company works. Is not all this enough, without the dead mother-in-law—who may, nay must, unless Mr. Pélissier jolly well looks out, prove to be the thin end of the wedge? I mix the metaphor to make it stronger, as the King's Peg is mixed—because I want to drive home to this strong, original satiric genius the fact that the thick end of that mother-in-law wedge is quite exactly the vulgar-without-being-funny stuff which he has so splendidly satirised.

And if the thin end of that wedge be not nipped in the bud (King's Peg again) Mr. Pélissier will score a common-place success with an artistic failure. And even so he may be killing the goose that lays the golden eggs, since common-place successes—like mothers-in-law—are mortal.

E. NESBIT.

A LOVE AFFAIR.

Down flew the shaft of the god,
  Barbed with miraculous change,
Struck—and a woman emerged from a clod.
  This was strange.

Eyes and a mouth it had owned,
  Movable head that would nod,
Waist and a bosom agreeably zoned—
  But a clod.

Now, when her eyes met the male's,
  Flame from them wrapped him in fire;
Breath from that bosom o'erwhelmed him in gales
  Of desire.

Stung by the flattering wave,
  Proudly his manhood he spent.
Rare was the gift of her soul—for she gave,
  But he lent.

Wit she had none to amuse,
  Knew not the trade of a wife,
Heard not the voice of the muse. Now the muse
  Was his life.

Weary, he called on his God:
  "Quench me this woman I've kissed!"
Lo! In due time she returned to the clod.
  She was missed.

ARNOLD BENNETT.

The Governor's Tour in Zululand.

[Sir Matthew Nathan is at present on a tour of inspection in Zululand. The following account of a similar tour by a sometime Native Commissioner in South Africa will, therefore, be of interest to readers of THE NEW AGE.]

THE road winds roughly down the side of a fairly steep and well-wooded hill, from the bottom of which it gradually slopes through some three or four miles of dense thorn bush to the river. It is a clear, cool evening, and long before the drift is reached one hears the shrill voices of women and girls all apparently talking at once. The banks of the river are lined with tall trees in full foliage, and the scene is striking and beautiful as one reaches the top of the road leading straight into the drift. The chattering suddenly ceases, and one looks across the thirty feet of water into the upturned faces of eighty or a hundred girls and women.

They have been talking so loudly that they have not heard the horses approaching, and now—white men not often travelling through this part—they have stopped for a moment as if petrified, with faces turned up to us and brown-black eyes open to widest extent. With the exception of the very young girls, they are not frightened, and almost immediately resume their occupation; but not a word will be uttered until we have passed on. These women have come to the river with their clay pots for water, and when we see them they have lined the edge of the stream up and down and are on their knees, busily scouring the pots. Some twenty have already filled their pots and with them on their heads are wending their way homeward, along a well-worn footpath, in single file. Here and there one is noticed with a blanket, but for the most part they are simply clothed with a goat-skin cut into some simple shape. Many of them have picanins on their backs. The kraal is near the summit of a rough kopje about a mile from the river, and is approachable only by footpaths difficult for horses to travel.

It is known that we are coming, and the chief has sent one of his headmen to guide us to the place of his huts. We find the village to consist of about three hundred huts; but the chief is the recognised head of a

dozen other kraals, large and small, scattered about in the hills, and is a man of importance. We find a few of his headmen in his courtyard, which is scrupulously clean; and as soon as we have entered, the chief comes out of a hut to meet us. We are surprised to find him quite a young man, no more than eighteen, rather stout, and with a face which shows—to the experienced eye—the absorption of much Kaffir beer.

He and the Governor are introduced to each other, and the Chief invites us to off-saddle and orders some of his men to assist us. We tell him we will sleep there that night as we wish to talk to him, and intend going on the next morning. He expresses pleasure, hopes we can stay longer, and gives an order to one of his men. In a short while the man returns, and the Chief asks us to go out with him. He takes us through the courtyard, where we see a few head of oxen which have been brought from the cattle kraal. The Chief has the fattest head driven out and presents it to the Governor as meat for us. It is then taken away and killed, and we return.

The Chief is told that we wish to speak to him on important matters, and is asked to call his indunas together. This he says will take a little time, as he must send to some of his other kraals; so after we have had dinner and made our sleeping arrangements we stroll about the village.

Not the least indication is to be seen of the late fighting in the country, with the exception of the absence of young men. Although there are many of them about, they do not care to show up yet, and so are either in the hills or remain in their huts. Everything has its accustomed air of noisy security. It being evening, young girls are seen in every hut-yard grinding corn for the evening meal. They kneel down before a large hard piece of rock which is slightly hollowed; in the hollow they place the corn, a little at a time, and grind it with an oval smooth hard stone, crooning an accompaniment the while.

There are scores of curs about and many pigs. Picanins, perfectly naked, are dancing and singing and screaming. Youths in different parts are blowing to each other on the hollowed-out shin-bones of goats. Cows and calves are bellowing as they are brought together for milking. The tumult will cease almost with a bang when the meal is prepared, and we finish our stroll pleasantly.

We find on getting back to the courtyard that a number of headmen are there, and others are arriving. In a short while the Chief comes out again, and having arranged our places takes his seat opposite the Governor and in the midst of his councillors. This is a tour of personal inspection and inquiry by the Governor so that it is not necessary to call the tribe together to address them.

The men surrounding the Chief are mostly of middle age; a few are grey-haired old warriors. The Governor, addressing the Chief, states that he is new to the country, regrets that he finds such serious trouble between them and the Natal Government; and says that on behalf of the King of England he is now come to see the Chiefs and hear the reasons of their discontent. The Chief knows that Dinuzulu has been arrested by the Natal Government, and the Governor would be pleased to hear the Chief make some remarks on this and on the situation generally.

The Chief replies that he is very pleased that the Great King has sent the Governor into the country to see things with his own eyes and to hear the children of the Great King speak. Dinuzulu is his Chief, and neither he nor his people took part in the late war. He was glad that the disturbers of the peace had been swept away by the Government, but now Dinuzulu had been arrested and the people were astonished and confused. They were the children of the Great White King, and dared not murmur, but Dinuzulu was an innocent man, and they hoped they would soon see him back at his kraal. As to the country, they were sure that every rebel had been captured and that there was not the least reason to expect any more trouble.

The Governor here reminds the Chief that a number of his young men had been shot in the engagement with Bambaata, and the Chief explains that it was a great grief to him to find that a few of his unruly, hot-headed young bloods had joined the rebels, and that they justly deserved their fate.

The Governor makes many enquiries and receives apparently honest replies. The Chief, advised by his councillors, recognises that he must make a good impression on this man who has the King's ear. The indunas are likewise alive to the occasion. They see that this Governor, who is new to the country, is kindly disposed towards them and is listening with attention and sympathy, and they are anxious to get the utmost advantage from such an opportunity.

After the Governor has promised to give his attention to some minor matters of which the Chief has spoken, we retire feeling comfortably tired.

We start off again at sunrise, and after a glorious three hours' ride reach the head kraal of the next Chief of importance. As getting up to this Chief's hut is very rough horse-work we pitch camp close to the tiny stream running below it, and send word to the Chief that the Governor has arrived and invites him with his indunas to an indaba at the camp. The Chief of this kraal is a tall, handsome, grey-bearded man of about 60.

He is surrounded by his councillors and is quite sure that sooner or later what passes at that council will be known to the head Chief. He remembers that Dinuzulu was sent away once before and returned, and he thinks of the late murders. He would like to say much—probably the truth, possibly exaggerated—that would condemn Dinuzulu, but, even if he could depend on his council, he thinks he will be called on publicly as a witness. He dares not speak under these conditions, and so he simulates surprise at hearing that the head Chief has been taken to Maritzburg, and does not know why, and has no knowledge of any scheming on Dinuzulu's part against the Government. The guilty, he says, whoever they are, should be made to suffer, and the people allowed to live in peace.

The next kraal at which we stop is ruled by a Chief well known to the Government for his loyalty and assistance on several occasions. Since the end of the late war, during which he had sent many useful men to act as guides to the forces, he had not once slept in his own hut for fear of being murdered. Every evening, as soon as it was dark enough, he left the kraal with one attendant only, and went into the hills to sleep, changing the spot every night. His hut had been burnt once, and on two occasions assegais had been buried in what was supposed to be his body. He was a powerful, athletic man of about 50, and as he strode up to the Governor with his beautiful kaross thrown carelessly over his left shoulder he struck one as every inch a Chief and a man.

It was expected that we should find this kraal to be enthusiastic over the arrest of Dinuzulu, but at the end of the meeting the impression left on our minds was that although his men hoped Dinuzulu would not be permitted to return, they were heartily sick of the whole business. While not questioning the power of the Government they were beginning to doubt its willingness and readiness to protect and assist its friends. The Chief declared that he had positive information that Dinuzulu had sent emissaries to various Chiefs in the Transvaal, Cape Colony, and Swaziland sounding them on their feeling towards the whites; but he could not prove any of these things, and all he now wished was that the Government would place a very strong force of soldiers or police in the country to protect them against murderers and rebels.

This visit completed our tour, and the Governor, in summing up his report, finds that, although he is favourably impressed with the native character as a base on which to build, there is far more cleverness and cunning in it than one from abroad expects to find, and that it would be hopeless and unjust to decide on any important matter concerning them without having known and studied them for some considerable time.

RICHMOND HAIGH.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

The Beautiful What.*

The flamboyant flame of the sun, ardent with æon-pent energy, revolted, turned aside from his immemorial mistress, wandered across the track of the Seven Dials that perpetually revolve amid the cloudless essence of Q.F.D.N.W.

Rejoicing on his way he fell in with the refulgent ray of the moon rising with hyaline glint from an epileptiform seizure in the Tychonic Crater. Behold the fierce flame has nurled the rorty ray; they have united in the gusty anguish of love. Their passionate embraces reverberate to distant Neptune, transfusing the Dusky Ring of Saturn with a mad violence that would shame the gobbler's gill, who broke from her darling planet and taking the outer rings in her wake fell to erratic vibrations, disturbing enough to weary Astronomer-Royals.

Be glad, O ye earth; rejoice exceedingly, my tender Pleiades; frolic, leap-frog, O bright-eyed Arcturus; and you Orion (7=matter vanquished by Spirit), skip, dance adown the Milky-Way. The Moon's Ray is in travail; her groans re-echo on the earth, the seas roar, the mountains spin, the cities are swallowed like Whitstable Natives.

He is born. The cymbals clash, the oboes peal, the trumpets sound shrill and clear. The Star in the West is born. Aleister Crowley=50=5=A Magician. Born to Misfortune, Trouble, Strife, Fierce burning Anger, Deathless Struggle must be your lot. Lo, is it not so written in the Kabbalah? Yours also is the Reincarnation and the Life, O laughing lion that is to be!

Here you have distilled for our delight the inner spirit of the Tulip's form, the sweet secret mystery of the Rose's perfume; you have set them free from all that is material whilst preserving all that is sensual. "So also the old mystics were right who saw in every phenomenon a dog-faced demon apt only to seduce the soul from the sacred mystery." Yes, but the phenomenon shall it not be as another sacred mystery; the force of attraction still to be interpreted in terms of God and the Psyche? We shall reward you by befoulment, by cant, by misunderstanding, and by understanding. This to you who wear the Phrygian cap, not as symbol of Liberty, O ribald ones, but of sacrifice and victory, of Inmost Enlightenment, of the soul's deliverance from the fetters of the very soul itself—fear not: you are not "replacing truth of thought by mere expertness of mechanical skill."

You who hold more skill and more power than your great English predecessor, Robertus de Fluctibus, you have not feared to reveal "the Arcana which are in the Adytum of God-nourished Silence" to those who, abandoning nothing, will sail in the company of the Brethren of the Rosy Cross towards the Limbus, that outer, unknown world encircling so many a universe.

Who would have the invitation general (although it is also not for the elect in any ordinary sense)? These you need scarce repel.

> In fine, I have precious little use
> For empty-headed Athenians
> The birds I have snared shall all go loose,
> They are empty-headed Athenians.
> I thought perhaps I might do some good,
> But it's ten to one if I ever should—
> And I doubt if I would save, if I could,
> Such empty-headed Athenians.

Since this is a Socialist review, I must be at pains to notice "Thien Tao," a political essay.

Expressed symbolically the main criticism we have to offer is—

$$r - t = o$$

where $- = o$.

With this the empty-headed Athenians will remain unsatisfied, and we should be deprived of the epiphenomenal auxiliaries which sustain us in our search for the master-key which is to unlock the portals of all mystery; this mystery, ever elusive yet syntonic, in its

*Konx om Pax. By Aleister Crowley (Walter Scott Publishing Co. Priceless.)

appeal to us. Here then let me quote: "The recent extension of the franchise to women had rendered the Yoshiwara the most formidable of the political organizations, while the physique of the nation had been seriously impaired by the results of a law which, by assuring them in case of injury or illness of a life-long competence in idleness which they could never have obtained otherwise by the most laborious toil, encouraged all workers to be utterly careless of their health." The disciples of the Rosy Cross held that woman was an accident, an obtrusion upon the ramparts of the world's plan. Virgo-Scipio is a two-fold sign. Si igitur sub serpentis imagine Phallium Signum intelligimus, quam plana sunt et concinna cuncta pictura lineamenta." This conception of the universe as a male one is tenable, whole and wholesome, although there was ever a place for woman as virgin freed from the material gross greedy things ere she partook of "the fruit of that forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste, Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

To Mr. Crowley this view, like the Occidental conception towards which we are now thrusting out tentacles, of the roles of man and woman furnishes nothing but matter for a jest. Now these views are mutually exclusive, but are equally tenable. What is wearisome, stale and unprofitable is just our present-day molluscan attitude. We sit quivering in the dry sand, awaiting the seas that shall never reach us, but which we should go forth to meet, yet afraid to clamber back up the high cliffs. Mr. Crowley does not display his usual courage here, nor that independence of judgment which nearly everywhere, even when he is most wrong, commends our loving admiration. Mr. Crowley should arrive at his own conclusions regarding the question. As to whether his views are shared by the many or the few is equally impertinent.

Does Mr. Crowley seriously regard laborious toil as ever conducive to health? Toil, laborious or not, is all work undertaken without the spirit of joy, ease, irresponsibility, and is the root of all evil; it can never lead to any form of well-being. "The government was well enough in fact, but in theory had hardly a leg to stand upon." This is not obscurity, but nonsense of the most painful and blatant character. Facts and theories do not suggest contradictory opposition. Facts are but the tortured expressions of stupid people who cannot learn to think.

Mr. Crowley becomes the friend and follower of Herbert Spencer, Lord Avebury, Arnold-Forster, and all the rest of parish-council shop-keeping philosophers who conceive that Socialism aims at the equalisation of the individual by furnishing a like environment and like education for all. Or does he satirise our own day by his remark that "The theory of heredity had broken down, and the ennoblement of the cheesemongers made it not only false, but ridiculous"? How can a theory of heredity ever break down? There is some excuse for Mr. Crowley in the writings of many Socialists, but the philosopher is not guided by the fallacies of others; he dives below and discovers the pearls for himself.

Myself and one or two others can undeceive Mr. Crowley, but he can do it much better himself. He knows that there is no freedom whilst the soul is chained; my Socialism will remove the fetters. Another complaint, and my last. Kwaw devotes some years to the pursuit of philosophy. "In the first year he disciplined and conquered his body and his emotions. In the next six years he disciplined and conquered his mind and its thoughts."

For Mr. Crowley I must recommend that he re-study the sixty-fourth chapter of the Book of the Dead, not in the English translation, however. For our readers, I recommend a study of Mr. Crowley's The Wake World and The Stone of the Philosophers, the first especially containing all the beauty, the sense of haunting mystery, with an entirely divine prescience that surely distinguishes Mr. Crowley from the common flock of writers. By the way, I should mention that the prose is interspersed with some verse; his rhymes,—for instance, "The Suspicious Earl"— are as startling and frolicsome as any you will find in Hudibras, his rhythm is varied, whilst he has a sense of music in words from which even the Irish renascents may learn.

It is Mr. Crowley's pleasure, after soaring in the heights, to suddenly fling himself upon the earth in search of carrion, much as I have watched the condor circling in the Andean ether plump ghoul-like through the air as it sniffed some bespattered carcase. However, in a vestryman age we cannot deny even Mr. Crowley his little joke.

M. D. EDER.

REVIEWS.

The Tinker's Wedding: A comedy in two acts. By J. M. Synge. (Maunsel. 2s. net.).

Although this is the latest addition to the published plays of Mr. J. M. Synge, it cannot be called his most recent play. "The Tinker's Wedding" was originally written before "The Playboy of the Western World," at the time Mr. Synge was working at "Riders to the Sea" and "In the Shadow of the Glen." But since then it has been entirely rewritten. Perhaps this explains why it does not quite attain to that fullness of imaginative conception which is so notable a feature of the other plays. Throughout both acts the humour is broader, and it lacks at times the essential note of comedy. But it is rich in that beauty of language which in Mr. Synge's plays often comes so near to the limits of prose, as to make one half expect his people to break bounds entirely and abandon themselves to verse. The story is a simple tale of vagabondage, containing so little of dramatic context that Mr. Synge's accomplishment in making drama out of such unpromising material is a very real one. Besides this, he has succeeded in achieving something very like comedy with a theme that would have lent itself more readily to farcical treatment. There are four persons in the play: Michael Byrne, a tinker; Mary Byrne, an old woman, his mother; Sarah Casey, a young tinker woman; and a priest. Sarah and Michael wish to marry, but there is no romance about their desires, and to the end that the ceremony shall be performed as economically as possible, financial overtures are made with the priest. The bargain is negotiated on both sides with intense subtlety and finely-conceived humour. The priest requires a sovereign, but, after much haggling, is induced to accept half this amount and a fine new tin can. The happy event is settled for the morrow, and the can is tied in a piece of sacking and placed for safety in the ditch. In the meantime the old woman, who is a true disciple of Silenus and constitutionally suffering from the "drought," appropriates the can during the temporary absence of her son and daughter-in-law elect, putting three empty bottles in its place. The scene closes with the old lady's fine soliloquy on the can and its marketable possibilities at Jemmy Neil's liquor shop. Her act has its dangers, not least of which is the wrath of Sarah Casey, but, reasons Mary, "What's a little stroke on your head beside sitting lonesome on a fine night, hearing the dogs barking, and the bats squeaking, and you saying over, it's a short while only till you die." And she goes bravely forth as the curtain descends singing "The night before Larry was stretched." Next morning the priest arrives to administer the ceremony of marriage. He receives his half-sovereign, grudgingly given by the tinkers, whose minds are half in doubt as to the value they are getting for so much good money. Afterwards they bring him the sack which should have contained the can. Mary's anxiety that he

should not look into it unfortunately rouses the holy man's suspicion. He undoes the sacking, and to the consternation of all, the three bottles are discovered. An enthusiastic quarrel follows. The priest is afraid of the disturbance so near to the church, and tries in vain to rid himself of his riotous petitioners. "If you want to get shut of us," says Sarah, "let you marry us now, for I'm thinking the ten shillings in gold is a good piece for the like of you, and you near burst with the fat." The priest is relentless; he will not have them soiling his church. "There's nothing at all, I'm thinking," says he, "would keep the like of you from hell." With this, he throws down the gold and threatens to give them over to the police. The tinkers are afraid and wrathful. They set on the priest, gag him, and cover his head with the sack. Their intention is to leave him and make away, but on second thoughts they extract a vow from him that he will not inform against them, in return for which they make him free. They gather up their property, Michael saying, philosophically, "He's a great man to have kept us from fooling our gold; and we'll have a great time drinking that bit with the trampers on the green of Clash." The priest stands up. "I've sworn not to call the hand of man upon your crime to-day," he says; "but I haven't sworn I wouldn't call the fire of heaven from the hand of the Almighty God." And he utters a Latin malediction in a loud ecclesiastical tone as the tinkers decamp. Such is the story of the "Tinker's Wedding." It is a slight enough theme, but Mr. Synge shows genius in his handling of it, and in the way in which he displays the simple natures of these vagabonds, with their cunning and superstition, their greed and their comradeship—so little different, yet often so superior to similar characteristics in the priest.

The Spirit of Parliament. By Duncan Schwann, M.P. (Alston Rivers. 3s. 6d.)

This is a very interesting book with an ill-chosen title. Mr. Schwann is a good party man with a seat in the House of Commons, and what he is really writing about is the spirit of the present House of Commons, as illustrated by himself. He has suffered some perturbation of soul in view of the fact that the responsibilities of the average M.P. are widening—the old party principles are ceasing to be adequate guides. He has asked himself whether the material of the average House is equal to the strain, and he replies in effect out of his own experience that the atmosphere of the place may be relied on to inspire. In fact, the book is a piece of generalised autobiography, and it is rather a pity that the chapters do not follow the order of events. Near the end of the book comes a vivid and effective account of an election campaign such as could only have been written by a man who has himself addressed little meetings and opened bazaars. That should have come first; we must know what a man has been through before he enters the House if we would understand the influence of the House upon him. In Mr. Schwann's case, what has happened is that he has been awakened to a very lively sense of the historic past. For him St. Stephen's is peopled with the ghosts of great Commoners, as in fact it is studded with their statues. Mr. Schwann has heard them talk in visions, which he records for us; but it is a little unfortunate that he should select as illustrative of Burke's genius a passage which every schoolboy has had to turn into Latin prose. The associations thus evoked are hardly appropriate. The power of the environment of the intensely practical aspect that every question assumes when the division bells ring are points which Mr. Schwann makes very well, because he makes them with all his heart. But he is less successful when he tries to live up to his title. The chapter on the drama of debate is all wrong. Mr. Schwann tries to make us believe, and no doubt believes himself, that he is writing of the essence of all debate, when he is in reality describing a couple of speeches on South Africa by Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Churchill in the early part of the session of 1906. It is a pity that there is no discussion in this chapter of the point on which the author dwells later on, namely, that the power of the House is passing to the Cabinet on the one side and the country on the other, and that debates are losing their interest in consequence.

When he comes to deal with the House of Lords Mr. Schwann writes frankly of the spirit of party, which is an important and interesting thing, but is not the spirit of Parliament, though he adds in passing that in comparing the House of Lords to the Catacombs of Rome he lays himself open to the retort that it was in those dark and dismal places that what we hold to be truth lurked for several centuries. An ambitious attempt to deal with the relations between the House and the people takes the form of a dialogue on Westminster Bridge in the small hours of the morning between Mr. Schwann and a working man. The latter is excellently drawn; it is a subtle touch to make expectoration an indispensable preliminary to thought. But would Mr. Schwann really have us believe that he began his reply to the workman's questions with "How small of all that human hearts endure, That part that laws and kings can cause and cure," and that the conversation was nevertheless continued?

The style is not perfect. Mr. Schwann has a flow of words, but not a grip over language. His besetting sin is a passion for metaphor. On pages 8 and 9 there are seven different metaphors in seventeen consecutive lines, which is a little hard on the reader's imagination. Still, in spite of obvious faults, the book is a really valuable exposition of the psychology of the members of the present House in general and of the author in particular.

The Gentlest Art: A Choice of Letters by Entertaining Hands. Edited by E. V. Lucas. (Methuen. 5s. net.)

It were difficult to say what particular tendency in our social life stimulated the production of anthologies, just as it is easy to note the increasing familiarity of the anthology as a feature of our book production. Perhaps the laboured hurry of the times makes it necessary, or it may be the inevitable outcome, the final acclamation of a full cycle of literary expression. But whatever the cause, this composite form of literature is not only useful, it is delightful. Mr. E. V. Lucas is, among many other admirable things, an anthologist of great charm. Indeed, he is more than this: he selects and arranges the scattered works of others in so individual a way as to make the result quite original and almost independent. Lovers of the literature of the countryside, for instance, will always remember him in a peculiar and grateful way for "The Open Road." In that book he so distilled the best of what had been said upon the wayfaring life as to produce an essence of the most jubilant open-air thought and expression. It is high praise of his latest anthology to say he has done as much as this for the kind of letters he deals with in "The Gentlest Art." Like "The Open Road," this book is not scholastic; it does not aim at being exhaustive or even informative. It has far better business. It reveals in a most entertaining way a refined and individual taste by means of the most exquisite examples of the epistolary art. "The Gentlest Art" is really a cheerful mosaic of letters conceived in the spirit of comedy. All the selections have some of those qualities which letters should have. They are witty, genial, intimate. Examples have been taken from our most

endeared as well as our most admired writers. Charles Lamb tells of his preferences, and also of his pleasantly shocking habits; Edward Fitzgerald discourses of many things, including his idleness, his new "Sir Joshua" and Frederick Tennyson's cricket match; Thomas Carlyle tells, among other events, how he met Queen Victoria; and Jane Carlyle tells all the news, in seven letters. There are familiar epistles to familiar people—from Dickens, Cowper, Swift, Stevenson, Scott, and many others. A sequence of suggestive notes from Dick Steele tells how that worthy fellow became enthralled by a lady, even to avowing he would do everything she desired in her own way. But Mr. Lucas no more confines himself to the actual than he does to the modern. There are letters from Mr. Wilkins Micawber no less than from Pliny; from the Swan of Lichfield and Jeremy Taylor, as well as from Mr. Tony Veller! There are also amusing epistles in Baboo and in the realistic language of children, and Mr. Lucas will be thanked for the happy thought that prompted him to seek out and include those two capital bucolic letters recommended by Fitzgerald in a letter to Charles Keene, one in which an old squire supplies an impartial character of his man, and the other in which a huntsman informs his master of his daughter's misfortune. Of course, there are absent letters which one would like to have found in the volume, but this is inevitable in so personal a work. On the other hand there is not a single word one would leave out of the book. This anthology of the gentle art of letter-writing is a work of art both in form and in substance.

Euphues the Peripatician. By Parker Woodward. (Gay and Bird. 5s.)

Mr. Woodward attempts to disarm criticism by assuming that his essays will only interest a somewhat diffident group of readers. We do not, however, associate either the great Elizabethans themselves or modern students of their writings with "diffidence." Certainly there is no false modesty about Mr. Woodward's main thesis. He is a Baconian, and a regular wholehogger to boot. Elizabethan literature, in his eyes, is "Euphues," Lyly, Spenser, Marlowe, Kyd, and these writings merely represent the different aspects assumed at will by an untiring Proteus. Once started on his hobby, Mr. Woodward finds proofs everywhere of the cypher-story ushered into an astonished world by Mrs. Gallup. All roads, as he naively remarks, lead to Rome. Shakespeare is gently but firmly set aside. His greatness has been thrust upon him, like that of the late lamented T. C. Druce. "The Droeshant portrait in the First Folio Shakespeare is a mask with eyes." What further proof is needed? None—to the devout Baconian, who can smile at the Master's jokes about the holy S. Francis, who had no money—an oblique reference, of course, to himself—and who can regard the Master (in spite of a few lapses into accepting bribes) as "the great contriver of the reformation of English language, manners, and morals." We hope Mr. Woodward will pursue his researches even further and demonstrate that the immortal Bacon was the real victor of the Spanish Armada and the true discoverer of tobacco. Indeed, we close the book wondering whether Bacon cannot be identified with the monarch "who never said a foolish thing," the man "who never did a wise one" being merely the temporary substitute who had to guard Bacon's secret!

The Blue Lagoon. By H. de Vere Stacpoole (Unwin. 6s).

Mr. Stacpoole is tired of civilisation; he wanted to get right away from the stress and the toil and the tumult and start fresh, so he takes "two buds of civilisation," a boy and a girl of eight years, and transplants them, with an old seaman, to an uninhabited island of the Pacific, where there are breadfruit trees and bananas, a blue lagoon with fish in it; in fact, all the necessities of life. After four years of glorious existence, the sailor dies, and the children are left to fend for themselves. They reach the age of sixteen, and the awakening comes. It is best given in Mr. Stacpoole's own words:—

"She took the cane . . . it slipped, flew out, and struck him a sharp blow on the side of his face. Almost on the instant he turned and slapped her on the shoulder. She stared at him for a moment in troubled amazement, a sob came in her throat . . . As she looked at him like that, he suddenly and fiercely clasped her in his arms. He held her . . . not knowing what to do with her. Then her lips told him, for they met his in an endless kiss."

From this moment Mr. Stacpoole has touched every incident with an indescribable charm and delicacy. The mysterious coming of the baby; the growth of its intelligence, even death itself, which comes upon them tenderly in sleep, all these are handled with such nice discrimination as to hold the reader entranced to the end. We can pay Mr. Stacpoole no greater compliment than to say that for the space of an hour or so he carries his reader away to a "cleaner, greener land," and that when one comes back one is conscious of being rather more than usually disgusted with our present muddle of civilisation.

Waridat-ul-Habib Li Tanwir-il- Labib (The Revelations of Habib for the Enlightenment of the Wise). By Hassan Chevry Hassib. (Luzac and Co. 5s)

Perchance it is rather the fault of the translator than of the Muslim Seer that we find these 55 pages so deadly tedious. The preface assures us that the booklet is devoted "to the elucidation of the origin and development of the Human Soul, of Sex and Heredity, of Divine Decree and Predestination, and of the ascent of

the Soul to God." These are all subjects which present their points of interest for us, but the writer has made no attempt to elucidate them, nor even to state in any presentable shape the mysteries he asks us to contemplate.

The physiology, when it is not trivial, is twaddle. "The atom instrumental in the formation of the physical body of men has its seat in the heart. It is this atom found in the heart which we call Nafs." Man was created from sperm "or despicable water."

According to the author, whoever does not believe that the ascension of Muhammed was of both body and soul is an infidel; if he believes it was of the soul alone, then he is ungodly. The true believer must accept the statement "that there was ascent into the heavens with the body and soul together." The Seer is puzzled to know how the Prophet could have traversed the seven layers of skies. He accepts an explanation as naïvely material as the doubt that besets him. We are afraid this betrays the mental calibre of possessors of Secrets, Muslim Seer and all, to be beneath the level of a Hyde Park Secularist or Christian tub-thumper. The pamphlet is interesting by reason of the price asked for it.

The Mother. By Eden Phillpotts. (Ward, Lock. 6s.).

There are few novels which an intelligent and unfatigued person can enjoy with a good conscience. Mr. Eden Phillpotts, however, is one of the writers whose art is a contribution to thought. His latest work, "The Mother," bears all the traces of the best contemporary reading and discussion. If we may say so, the atmosphere of the book is thoroughly up-to-date; and belongs as much to our period as Plato's dialogues belonged to theirs. Yet no subject is discussed controversially or even as a definite problem. The characters themselves are completely unaware of the drummer to whose beating they nevertheless march. For story-readers simply there is an exquisite story of compelling interest; but for the few there is the super-story, the artistic articulation of the spirit of the age as it broods over the villagers of Dartmoor.

DRAMA.

Diana of Dobson's.

THE production and success of Miss Cicely Hamilton's play at the Kingsway Theatre is both a triumph for the new social drama and for Miss Lena Ashwell's management. The success is none the less certain because it is a kind of Fabian-victory, and none the less desirable because Miss Cicely Hamilton does not take the play too seriously. Had the authoress indeed extended her treatment of the "living-in" side of the drama, intensified the colouring, and laid more emphasis on the incidents, we should have had a pamphlet-drama of considerable value and great interest, but of doubtful theatrical possibilities. Had Miss Hamilton, on the other hand, eliminated a little of the accuracy of observation and social "vignetting" which are worked into the play's fabric, we should have had as purely a romantic comedy as the play purports to be. Instead of this we have a combination of both, which not only recommends the play to the taste of a large public, but does in itself provide the possibility of some most effective social contrasts and some delightful displays of wit.

The plot of the play takes us from one of the dormitories of the shop-girls at Dobson's Drapery establishment to the life led by idle society people in a Swiss hotel, and back again to the bottom dogs sleeping out on the embankment. In the hands of a more conventional writer, the movements of such a plot would have been achieved by the aid of incredible Druriama happenings. But the same clear-headedness that enables Miss Hamilton to observe and record the impressionist vision of "living-in" life in the first act, also enables her to invent a simple straightforward story which accounts for Diana's transference from Dobson's to Switzerland and Society without making any claims on our credulity.

The first act in Dobson's Dormitory only deserves criticism because it is not long enough. We get an impressionist vision of "living-in" life when a more detailed and extended realism would have served as a heightened contrast to the society life shown in the next act. But the impressionist vision is both clear and convincing; Diana's social position as the penniless daughter of a deceased county doctor is made perfectly plain, and the £300 legacy she is informed of by letter during the scene, is just the kind of chance that might happen to anyone in her position. I cannot help thinking there is more in the amount of this legacy than meets the eye. Your conventional dramatist, with half his mind on lunch at the Ritz with a manager, would have made the sum £3,000, and so lost the whole point. £300 is, in fact, just the right figure to secure Diana the capital for the month's "crowded hour of glorious life" she determines on. And yet by its comparative largeness in comparison with her shop-girl's wages of "five bob a week with deductions," and its smallness in comparison with the £600 a year which the man who comes to be her suitor in society, cannot exist on without borrowing, this £300 serves the Fabian purpose of pointing the moral of wealth and poverty, while doing good service as the hinge of the plot besides.

To quell Diana's loud rejoicings over the legacy and the freedom it spells for her, the forewoman enters the dormitory, and after a few sentences of vivid dialogue between the revolted shop-girl and her erstwhile boss, which clearly reveal the servility of living-in, the curtain comes down plump and scandalised on Diana's defiance of earth and all its powers in a vigorous "Damn Dobson's!"

The burst of genuinely delighted and astonished laughter that greeted this scene and this curtain, were very much better testimony of appreciation than any amount of over-stimulated emotion seeking relief in clapping.

Proceeding on its natural and easy mechanism, the plot takes us in the second act to the Hotel Engadine at Pontresina. Diana is there, masquerading as the widow of Josiah Massingberd, in order to secure a widow's freedom, and daintily dressed in a Paris gown.

For the benefit of conventional dramatists and playgoers I must insist on the beautiful simplicity of the plot. As the daughter of a country doctor we accept Diana's knowledge of dress and the manners and fads

of upper class people as a matter of course; your conventional writer would have been bound to get some comedy out of the shop-girl's awkwardness. The comedy Miss Hamilton extracts flows from Diana's appreciation of the irony of her position, and in perhaps the most deliciously witty passage in the play, where Diana is cross-examined as to her husband and her income, Miss Lena Ashwell surpassed herself. Her tearful acknowledgment of the distressing fact that her "life with Josiah was very brief" was a perfect light comedy moment.

If the play produced nothing more than this, it would be an achievement of distinction, but the change of social atmosphere is used not only for light comedy purposes, but to skilfully illuminate the conditions of life of shopmen and women from the point of view not of the dormitory at Dobson's, but of the financial magnate employer. For this purpose Miss Hamilton introduces into the Hotel Engadine circle the personality of the new baronet, Sir Jabez Grinlay (of Grinlay's Emporiums, Ltd.), and his discussion of social conditions with Diana is as dramatically interesting as it is socially searching. It is a point to notice that when Diana utters sentiments of an altogether Socialist flavour, Sir Jabez calls her not a Socialist, but a sentimentalist. As he proposes to Diana Miss Hamilton could make him do no less.

The third act also takes place in the Hotel Engadine. It is 17 days later, Diana has spent all her money and is hurrying off to England. Captain the Hon. Victor Bretherton, who has been hanging round Diana all the time at Pontresina, intercepts her and proposes marriage. In justification of her refusal, and by way of testing him, Diana confesses her deception, and that she has been living at the rate of £3,600 a year for one month only. Hurt and astonished, Captain Bretherton accuses Diana of being an adventuress. She hurls back at him the charge of being an adventurer, willing to marry her when he thought she could support a husband, but unwilling to contemplate marrying a woman he cares for if she is a shop-girl and they would have to attempt to live on his own £600 a year.

This scene was particularly vigorous and well carried through by Mr. C. M. Holland and Miss Ashwell, and ended strongly on Diana's contemptuous challenge to Bretherton to find out his uselessness by trying to earn his own living for six months, without money or influence, and her confession that it would have been better for her not to have taken any interest in Bretherton at all. The last act on the Embankment, where Bretherton has drifted after three months' effort to make his living, and Diana comes because she is out of a job is not so good as the rest of the play. It is not so clearly thought out, and the comedy of the final curtain on the reconciled lovers eating "doorsteps" and coffee on the strength of a borrowed shilling, cannot hide its conventionality.

But after all, why should it not all end happily? Why should we be more concerned for the seriousness of the play than is Miss Hamilton herself? The real interest of the play indeed, apart from its own intrinsic wit and pleasure-giving qualities, lies in its significance as a fore-runner of the light skirmishing comedy plays of a socially concerned generation. It is a proof that serious social topics may become the medium of wit and humour no less brilliant and no less humane than that of the best comedies of the past. More power to Miss Lena Ashwell's discoveries. L. HADEN GUEST.

ART.

Caricatures at the Baillie Gallery.*

Eleven o'clock. An oily urchin, with more buttons than years, is rubbing on to his face some of the dirt removed from the stairs leading to the Baillie Gallery. More or less promiscuously scattered on the landing are some pictures, dusters, and an Art relief, which as though to compensate for its lack of modelling, has many colours smeared over its surface. Passing through the first and second rooms, one is conscious of a solid mass of pictures and frames, interspersed at inconvenient places with statuettes having large labels tied round the necks or waists of the subjects. In the third room is arranged the exhibition of portraits and caricatures, the object of my visit. It appears to me that caricature is generally more interesting than most art-products; it often has a way of revealing unexpected traits, or clinching half-formed opinions; moreover, at its best, it is a striking commentary on character, sometimes more effective than volumes of description. He who would be enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen must get himself caricatured. Here let me say that a caricature is not necessarily funny, yet on seeing one most people suppose it is correct to laugh; surely we should occasionally weep, for more reasons than one.

The exhibition consists of original drawings and prints by S. H. Sime, H. Ospovat, Joseph Simpson, James Pryde, Max Beerbohm, A. Rothenstein, "Sem," and other artists. I remember to have seen better work by S. H. Sime; most of the drawings he sends are not worthily representative. The series of six celebrated criminals shown by James Pryde are so chaotic and mysterious that I fear I need a special initiation to appreciate their qualities. Max Beerbohm sends enough to make us wish for more, his work being full of the spirit of caricature. I question, however, whether his drawing is strong enough to do full justice to his ideas; his men seem somewhat filmy and a little like jelly men. Perhaps they are too retiring, a fault, if fault it be, that Joseph Simpson's work does not possess. Here we have it laid on with a trowel. We see the manner before the subject; it is the ink that hits us. His "Ibsen" is more like a Design for Ibsen than Ibsen; while of the imposing list of Royal persons, "His Majesty the King of Spain" is the nearest to being interesting, but it is also the nearest to the work of the artist who, I believe, is chiefly responsible for the modern revival of the wood-cut method. I do not see the reason for reversion to a manner compelled by conditions which have since been removed. The portrait of "His Majesty King Edward VII." is chiefly remarkable for a conveniently shaped cloud which is resting in just the right place behind. The same cloud reversed does a similar service for the portrait of "Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A." We are informed by the catalogue that these prints are "hand coloured." It is refreshing to pass to the drawings and caricatures of H. Ospovat. They are exhilarating, and render the exhibition notable. Here at least is an artist with a courage and a directness seldom seen in these apologetic days. His realisation of the personalities he portrays is startling. The rich and full "Caruso" suggests the Sunny South; "G. G., Junior" is the washed-out man about town; "Oscar Asche" is tremendous and overpowering; "James Welch" is James Welch, only more so; "Little Tich" is supremely ridiculous; "Joseph Simpson" is beautifully bilious; and the introduction of the weedy mana-

* The Baillie Gallery, 54, Baker Street, W. Exhibition of Portraits and Caricatures open until March 10th.

ger by the side of "Hackenschmidt" gives us a delicious joke. In all, he exhibits fourteen caricatures of great interest. These, considered with his four portraits, prove a power of characterisation which, as far as I am aware, is unequalled at the present time.

E. G. GILLICK.

CORRESPONDENCE.

For the opinions expressed by correspondents, the Editor does not hold himself responsible.

Correspondence intended for publication should be addressed to the Editor and written on one side of the paper only.

SOCIALISM AND THE BAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

If "A Solicitor" desires to take part in the cause he must proceed as with any other business. Socialists are quite ordinary people, and judge by the usual standards. If "A Solicitor" cares to convince Socialists of his bona-fides he will be readily received. Solicitors are not more suspected than Trades Union Secretaries. During the past twenty years many working men have succeeded in obtaining positions and emoluments (by "labour" influence), which have enabled them not only to ignore working-class interests, but to act consistently in obstructing progress. They have been the "vested interests" of the movement.

Labour has had good reason to be suspicious of Solicitors, but to-day their greatest opponents are the salaried official cliques (in Labour circles), the tools of the bourgeoisie, as working-class Socialists do daily aver. "A Solicitor" will no doubt have his troubles, but these only make "life." The bourgeoisie hate a Socialist Solicitor "worse than hell," and with good reason. A workman habituated to "taking orders" and "respecting his betters" is easily bluffed. The atmosphere of his old environment clings to him. He has a craving for "respectability," and tries to look down upon his constituents. He is at once scorned as a fool and suspected as a traitor.

A solicitor with moral courage, perseverance, and *audacity* need fear nothing among Socialists, but he should not seek to become a candidate with working-class support all at once. The confidence of Socialists is not attained by a leap. When we get a group of solicitors in the movement the pace will quicken. Solicitors should not look for lectureships meantime. There is quite enough gas, but ability to introduce business methods for organisation is scarce.

I have been waiting for such a letter as "A Solicitor" writes, and would be glad to co-operate with solicitors of Socialistic convictions or tendencies. Many good laws have been placed upon the Statute-book, but their execution has been controlled by bourgeois solicitors, and interest in Court proceedings has fallen to a wretchedly low level. Anything which would bring the Courts into line with the public consciousness would be welcomed by the public at large, and "A Solicitor" need not be afraid of his "living." The working-class are not the only Socialists nor the most to be dreaded, and under the old methods pasture for solicitors is becoming scanty.

ANOTHER SOLICITOR.

* * *

ON REGICIDE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

Unlike Mr Edward Hutton I have a positive passion for accuracy: when I wrote that the Latin races understand the fundamentals of freedom much better than the Anglo-Saxon I meant exactly what the words convey. Not any means to obtain freedom such as your correspondent suggests by asking whether political or social freedom is intended. The freedom of the individual to say, act, think as he lists.

I accept Mr. Hutton's invitation to visit under his guidance Calabria, Apulia, and the peasants of Northern and Southern Tuscany. I'm entirely at his disposal from this moment, and am quite prepared to throw over impressions gathered from a few days' stay in Naples and some talk with Italian organ-grinders. Of course, I'm somewhat obstinate, and might require much converse with the peasantry.

As to the Spanish Beggar, since Mr. Hutton offers me no journey to the Pensinsula, I must insist that I'm right. The Spaniard does not ask alms as a matter of course, but as a matter of human fellowship. He has nothing, you have something; he takes from you. You bestow an alms; now he has something; he is ready to share it with you. Nor does the beggar ever curse you for a refusal. Firstly, no one ever refuses the courteous appeal of a stranger; secondly, the beggar is too busy to waste time.

The Anglo-Saxons have no political freedom, witness the debate on Mr Belloc's motion. They think they have when they are but the mouth-organs of their Press. The Latins have political freedom when they think they have it not. They are ever fighting for it; hence their souls possess it howsoever their votes be gerrymandered.

THE WRITER OF THE ARTICLE.

* * *

M. BELLOC ON MODERNISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

Lord Melbourne's famous phrase about Macaulay occurs to me as I read M. Belloc's letter: I wish I were as d——d certain of anything as he is of everything. But, if the accuracy of his statements is to be tested by his reference to Modernism, it leaves something to be desired. THE NEW AGE is probably not much interested in the Modernist controversy: but this is a poor reason for his wielding the bludgeon in its paper in the style of the "Universe" or the "Croix." When he tells his readers that "the Catholic Church, since its first emergence into the light of history, has in every crisis and in every profoundly Catholic character shone with devotion to our Blessed Lady," he presumes on their indifference. If this somewhat rhetorical statement holds of the modern and the mediæval, it certainly does not hold of the patriotic or the primitive Church. The cultus of the Virgin is a growth whose development can be traced in history: there was a time when it was not.

That this devotion is not "normally present in Modernist writings" is simply not ad. rem. These writings deal with a different subject matter: one does not expect to find poetry in a treatise on mathematics. And, when all is said and done, there is more about the Blessed Virgin in the writings of M. Loisy and Father Tyrrell than in those of the Apostolic Fathers and St. Paul.

If M. Belloc means, as he evidently does mean, that Modernists as such are indevout to Mary, I would remind him of the Commandment against false witness. There are Modernists who recite the rosary daily, who wear the medal of the Immaculate Conception, the scapular, etc. I am far from inferring their virtue from this. There are far more devout clients of the Madonna than the Camorrists clerical and lay—blackmailers, panders, assassins—now awaiting trial at Naples. The association of morality, even of so elementary a moral virtue as truthfulness, wtih religion belongs to a comparatively late stage in the development of man.

A MODERNIST.

* * *

MOSCOW BEGGARS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

During the last three months the Moscow people have been pestered by swarms of beggars. The intense December cold forced numbers of the poorest people to beggary, and no doubt brought beggars from the country and the poorer towns. They correspond to the English "unemployed:" the unemployed in Russia are beggars. Never have the beggars been more importunate; they are the constant plague of the pedestrian, moaning behind him wherever he goes, pulling his sleeve or insolently blocking his path and demanding alms. There has been considerable outcry in the city, and the authorities have been taking measures to make things a little less uncomfortable. A fortnight ago there was a revision of beggars; several thousand were brought before the police and examined. It was found that a great number had no business in the city, that they belonged to other towns; these were expelled. It is estimated that there are fifty thousand beggars in Moscow, but as the Russians are very liberal in alms they do not live such a bad life as might be imagined. The city provides a certain amount of accommodation for them in night houses where for next to nothing they are allowed to sleep. This week a meeting was held under the presidency of M. Gregoriev to consider the plans of a new night house that is to be opened. This establishment is to be rented at 65,000 roubles per annum, and it is estimated that the customers will contribute 17,000 roubles, and that the net expense will be about 48,000 roubles per annum. This building is to be fitted with baths and laundries, and all modern sanitary accessories, and the cost for a bed for the night will be 6 copecks (three half-pence) for men, and 5 copecks (a penny farthing) for women—it being, I suppose, worth a farthing a head to keep the women off the streets. People are demanding that the beggar shall be altogether abolished and that the destitute should be provided for in workhouses after the English fashion, that profitable work should be provided, and that they should be forced to keep themselves in this way. This demand comes chiefly from people of the middle class, for it is on these that the beggar particu-

larly preys. The richer man travels in his sledge and escapes molestation, and when he is accosted it is less loss to him to spare a few copecks. Consequently the opposition to the demand for the abolition comes from the richer and the official classes, and the speech here yesterday of Count Istchof voices perhaps not only the opinion of the ruling class but of the Russian Government.

He said, "I am surprised that my fellow townsmen in a moment of impatience wish to abolish the Russian beggar. Foolish people in all ages have wanted to kill off obnoxious animals, vermin as they called them, but when they succeeded they began to learn the good offices of the animal they had killed. They have tried to kill off birds and beetles, rats and Jews, and the lesson is being slowly learned that every living thing upon this earth is entitled to its place there. The Russian beggar has his place in the social fabric, and if you remove him much will come tumbling after him. In the first place, our Russian beggar is a living truth. Our young men ever run after English ideas, and they tell us that there are no beggars in London; oh, aren't there! What, then, are the 'unemployed,' the match-sellers, the street singers, these, my friends, are not Russian beggars, no, but they are living falsehoods.

"The salutary influence of the Russian beggar can hardly be over-estimated; there is scarcely another people I would be more loth to see lost to us. Why are Russians the most charitable of all people? It is because they are always confronted with their poor. Why are the English and Germans so hard-hearted and selfish? It is because they will not listen to their poor; these have stopped the circulation of love. Russia, moreover, is the only country now true to the Christian religion, and it is well she should be mindful of the promise of Christ: 'the poor ye have with you always.' If we were disposed to be analytical, much might be said about the way beggars help us towards the Christian ideal. By unerring instinct our beggars stand outside taverns, tobacconists, theatres, and all places of luxury, and in the very moment of our self-indulgence we are confronted by the suffering poor. The beggars know that then we cannot refrain from giving alms. It is a cheap sneer that almsgiving is paying God for our sins; the quality of the impulse is governed by the mental position of the almsgiver, but whatever that postion may be, I consider the impulse twice blessed.

"It is said that the beggars are mostly thieves; it may be so, but I ask you the question, would there be fewer thieves if no money could be obtained by beggars? It is also said that the beggars are spies. No doubt it is true that our Secret Police find it convenient to disguise their agents as beggars. And it is just that license that is permitted to beggars that makes the class so useful to our police. You are not surprised if a beggar looks through your window or walks in at the back door; he comes in God's name, only the dishonest person need fear the spy; if all is straight and honest the spy has no interest in you. Moscow as you know is a centre of disaffection. Nearly all the revolutionary propaganda work circulates from here, and inestimable service has been rendered to the Czar by the work of secret agents disguised as beggars.

"Now as to the reform proposed—the English idea is a failure. Nobody ever does any work in their workhouses, which are crowded with able-bodied men; witness the scandal about their city of Batsey (? Battersea), where a third of the inhabitants were found to be occupying the workhouses and playing cards all day. No, it is the constant mistake of young Russians of to-day to emulate the example of Western civilisation. The West is rotten—Russia only in Europe is healthy, and when she develops it will not be into an England or a Germany, but into something new and good—into something wholly Russian. We have always had beggars as we have always had snow; take either away and we should be heart-broken to-morrow."

The Count then went on to discuss the new night-house, and said that such an institution was quite probably no more than an invitation to beggars in other towns. He thought the expense might be justifiable if the people were content to go no further in reform, and finally he left the matter, trusting, he said, in the time-honoured conservatism and good sense of the Moscow people.

Moscow. STEPHEN GRAHAM.

* * *

A NOTE FROM MALAY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

In the remotest corners of the earth the American financial crisis is producing effects much more serious than your high bank-rate. For as so many manufacturers in the States have had to suspend or curtail their operations, America has almost stopped buying some products which she usually takes in large quantities. For example, the tin-mining industry of the Malay Peninsula is in an unparalleled state of depression, largely because no tin is wanted for America, which was absorbing enormous quantities a few months ago The price of tin has dropped one-third; many of the lower-grade mines have closed down temporarily, and many more are bound to follow suit shortly. Already some ten thousand coolies are out of employment, and destitute. These, by the way, are all Chinese. The Malay has no taste either for monotonous labour or for business enterprise. The labourers on the plantations come from India; those in the mines, and practically the whole trading class, are Chinese.

Whether the unemployed coolies are really penniless, or simply refuse to touch their savings, or have sent their money to be hoarded in China, and now find it out of their reach, it is difficult to tell, but to all appearance they are on the point of starvation. Some of the Towkays (wealthy Chinese) have subscribed funds for their assistance, but the Government will probably be compelled to start relief works. Things would have been still worse but for the fact that the mines in China, which usually supply the whole demand of that country, are of a lower grade than ours, and a large proportion of them are already shut down. Consequently large shipments of tin have been sent to China, but these only slightly lessen the effects of the withdrawal of America from the market.

Rubber, too, is under a cloud, owing to a similar extraordinary drop in its value. No reason can be given for this except the interruption of the American demand. In the case of tin, there is little doubt that a corner is being worked by financiers in London. Recently a group of Chinese capitalists in Penang attempted to break it, but only succeeded in losing some hundreds of thousands of dollars. There is no permanent reason for the slump, and no evidence of overproduction. The responsibility must be shared by the financiers of Europe and America. One wonders whether these pirates of industry ever realise the price in suffering which others have to pay for their precarious fortunes.

It is interesting just now to remember that Mr. Pierpont Morgan's group attempted some time ago to annex the two great industries of Malaya, but was defeated, as it was when it attacked the British tobacco trade. Some say that the Government backed the local people against the invaders, but that may only be gossip. J. O'MAY.

* * *

ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE OF WOMEN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

One may even accept Mr. Hubert Bland's definition of "the economic independence of women"—"Earning . . . . their . . . . . own . . . . . living." Mr. Bland doubts whether under Socialism women will earn their own livings, or wish to; he is sure they will not be compelled to. The truth is that all women, the mothers of desirable children, will earn their livings then, as they do now, and have always. The difference (as I suppose) is, that under Socialism this truth will be universally recognised, instead of being blinked, as unhappily at present by Mr. Bland and not a few others. J. H. S.

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