

# NEW AGE

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART.

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

It may be easy to drive a coach and four through an Act of Parliament, but it is not so easy to drive an Act through Parliament itself. There are half a thousand pockets at Westminster through which a Bill must pass, not to mention the even more tightly-laced minds of the members. Mr. Lloyd George is experiencing all the difficulties of the camel-driver intent on getting his camel through a needle's eye. Unfortunately, he is dropping too much of the merchandise for our liking. After all, it is his Bill, not merely any Bill, that he has undertaken to pass; and if it issues from the Commons plucked almost to the skin we shall not think much either of him or his hen. On the other hand, the principles of the Bill are in themselves worth something, even if for a year or two they result in nothing more than a general Valuation and Registration of Land. It will save us a good deal of trouble and delay when we finally decide to resume possession of England. Lastly, we hope Mr. Lloyd George's concessionary mood will last over the beer and tobacco clauses. On the latter, at any rate, the Labour Party must be prepared to sit up a night or two.

The worst of the weary business is the damnable iteration of the objections to the Budget. In Parliament they are gone through daily, reminding us of the old song:

On Monday we had bread and dripping,  
On Tuesday we'd dripping and bread,  
On Wednesday and Thursday we'd dripping and toast.  
Well, that's only dripping and bread.

Every obscure little member, when he has learned from his leaders a few safe arguments, rises and delivers them as new truths. No wonder the Labour Party has begun to get a wee little bit impatient. It was Mr. Pointer, the newest member, however, who complained articulately; the rest have learned manners. Mr. Pointer, however, compelled Mr. Macdonald to come

to his assistance; and thus we had an improving lecture on the extent of the contribution by the Labour Party to the honour and dignity of the House.

But the Labour Party is not alone in its endurance of boredom. Mr. Lloyd George has suffered a good deal of what can only be called an inflammation of deputations. The climax was surely reached in the visit to him of that futile body of economic quacks and ignoramuses called the British Constitutional Association. On this occasion Lord Hugh Cecil was the chief spokesman. He has, we may say, declined the offer of THE NEW AGE to debate Socialism with him in our pages; but he is not at all afraid of belarding the columns of the "Times" and other journals incapable of answering him, with his arguments. These ratiocinations of his culminated before Mr. Lloyd George in a sentence that deserves to be remembered: "By strict logic," he said, "combining the principles of the Budget and those of the Licensing Bill, the State might, with 21 years' time limit, take possession of the whole of the landed property throughout the country." How perspicacious of Lord Hugh! It seems we have at last made ourselves plain.

Well, and what is the objection? If half a thousand individuals had obtained possession of four-fifths of the air or water of the country, and were on the point of putting a prohibitive price on their use by the community, would not the community be right to re-appropriate a common necessity, and without so much as a year's limit? Land is equally indispensable to life with air and water, though not, unfortunately, so obviously. A country that was not half daft with lies, besotted with phrases, and reduced to slavery by snobbery would long since have not only reassumed its birth-right, but kicked into the wilderness any perfidious Jacob who should venture to rob it of a square inch of one of its means of life. Lord Hugh Cecil is quite right, except in the matter of figures. If we grant 21 years as a time limit it will be because we cannot do it in less. Poor Esau would not let us.

But Lord Hugh has not the courage of the Conservative leader in Germany. Dr. von Heydebrand frankly admitted that he and his party opposed the inheritance tax of Prince Bülow on the simple ground that such a tax could not be entrusted to a democratically elected Reichstag. "They knew that such a tax would be raised and extended, and might lead in the end to expropriation of property." If Lord Hugh Cecil really had the courage, he would declare for disfranchising the working classes to-morrow.

The class struggle is likely to be forced on us from above. Everybody knows that in theory the Socialist

movement in England, with the single exception of the Social Democratic Party, repudiates the class struggle. It denies, that is, that there is any inevitable antagonism between the possessing and non-possessing classes. This concession has been mainly due to the facts that not only has Socialism been largely indebted to its middle class allies, but the upper and middle classes of the country have on the whole been more liberal here than elsewhere. But this liberalism is likely to vanish as the economic issues become clearer. Three times this week unprovoked attacks on the Labour and Socialist Parties have been made by representatives of the ruling class. At Stockton Lord Castlereagh (of whom Shelley's words appear to be hereditarily true) declared that "most Socialists were either fools or lunatics." The Duke of Rutland, at Leicester, let his cat out of the bag by testily remarking that he "would like to put a gag into the mouth of every Labour member and keep it there."

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But the most offensive attack was that of Lord Winterton. This noble lord had the impertinence to charge Mr. Thorne with being drunk in the House of Commons. Even if Mr. Thorne had been as drunk as a lord, he would still have found plenty of company in the House of Commons, and during many a sitting too. In fact, drunkenness is quite venal in Parliament among the orthodox parties. But the Labour Party is still new enough to have the charge of drunkenness made almost criminal. Presumably Lord Winterton was relying upon the conventional conception of the working man as a beast given over to guzzling and without manners. As it happens, the Labour Party is temperate to a fault, and its manners in the House are Galahadian. The record of the suspension of Mr. Thorne was expunged on the following day at the instance of Mr. Asquith and Mr. Balfour, both of whom gave quite unnecessary testimonials to the Labour Party. Of Lord Winterton we can only say that his manners alone would exclude him from membership of the party to which Mr. Thorne belongs.

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We shall venture to mar the orchestral concord on the subject of education which Mr. Runciman opened by a solo on the big drum. Education is now costing the country annually some two millions less than the Navy costs: and in our view the expenditure is almost as useless. During the last five years, on Mr. Runciman's own admission, educational changes have been confined to administration; in other words, they have not been educational at all. There are only two important subjects in education proper; one is the curriculum, the other is the status of the teachers. Neither was mentioned by Mr. Runciman or will be. Yet we may sanitise our schools, feed and doctor and clothe the children, establish crèches and raise the school age without any radical improvement until, firstly, we have decided to abolish at least half the subjects of instruction on the time-table, and, secondly, made up our minds to pay teachers such a wage as will secure the country the services of other than the rejected of the clerk and factory world.

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While elementary day-school education is still in so shocking a state, it is simple lunacy to talk of making elementary evening-school education compulsory. Yet a Committee appointed by the Board of Education has just recommended the extension of compulsory attendance of children between 14 and 17 at evening schools. The thing is monstrous. No evening continuation school that we have ever seen deserved to be encouraged by the grant of a single half-penny. To make them compulsory is a new act of slavery for our youth. What is obviously needed for the poor is what the children of the rich obtain: free education until the age of 20 or so, with no hurry to get into wage-slavery. That the enforced "idleness" of children to the age of 20 would cost a great deal is true; but what is the value of machinery if it does not set people free, and who better deserve to be set free than children, whose responsibility for the chaos of civilisation is nil? There

should be no evening schools for the poor, still less compulsory attendance at them.

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But compulsion is all the rage now. Poor Lord Roberts is being employed in his old age in the task of pulling chestnuts out of the fire for men unworthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes. His speech on Tuesday in the House of Lords was a pathetic appeal to the country to provide a conscript army for the use of the very class whose patriotism may be measured by their objection to paying a farthing tax on their landed possessions. We have certainly no objection to preparations for the defence of the country against Germany or any other Power idiotic enough to attack us. But it is nonsense to say that the voluntary principle has broken down until it has been tried. We shall never believe that a voluntary army is impossible until the offer of trade union wages, civic conditions, and a civil service pension to all soldiers has failed to enlist a million of men.

\* \* \*

Compulsory service, however, will not be rendered impossible by the opposition of the people: but by the opposition of the classes. Everybody knows that the one difficulty is to secure officers enough even for the Army we have. To multiply our Army would be to leave it officerless or,—unthinkable—to throw the higher ranks open to men without distinction of class. This democratic and sensible advice is only adopted during war; in peace the mess would not stand it.

\* \* \*

The change of Chancellors in Germany might prove an opportunity for the Cabinet to renew its attempt (if the attempt was ever made) to come to an understanding with Germany. Prince Bülow never did understand England, though he seems to have understood Germany well enough. His successor, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, is, we are told, no diplomatist, and we may add in the words of Artemus Ward, his other habits air good. The German Invasion scare is now marked *Diminuendo*, but nobody knows when the pedals will not be put on again. It is incumbent on Sir Edward Grey to learn what the new Chancellor feels disposed to do, for Germany's sake as well as for England's.

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We imagine, however, that Sir Edward Grey's laurels are dropping pretty rapidly now. By his own confession, the Turkish revolution took him by surprise; but for that we can forgive him, since it took the Young Turks themselves almost by surprise. But Sir Edward Grey's failure to divine the Persian sequel is unforgiveable. In a properly critical country Sir Edward Grey would now find himself superannuated. The Shah has been deposed, the Nationalists are in possession of the capital. The Russian Colonel Liakhoff has sold his sword to the winners; and, in fact, things have turned out precisely as Sir Edward Grey thought they would not turn out. His pet ally, Russia, has, through no fault of his, lost her chance of dipping her feet in the Persian Gulf and securing a pass to India. In short, Sir Edward Grey has failed not only England, but what must gall him worse, Russia as well.

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The Suffragettes have invented a new and admirable method of propaganda. The 14 ladies who were imprisoned last week have steadily refused to obey the prison regulations, on the ground that they are entitled to political, not civil punishment. Mr. Gladstone, of course, has a reply for them which doubtless his admirers will regard as clever. The women cannot possibly be political offenders because they have not a vote: and they cannot obtain a vote because they cannot agitate politically. We hope they will continue to break the whole lot of the regulations, and induce the genuine civil prisoners to do it also. They might even emulate O'Donovan Rossa, who emptied his slops on a peeping Governor. It is about time someone in the Cabinet was brought to his senses; and the person who needs the treatment most urgently is Mr. Herbert Gladstone.

## National Defence and the Democracy.

THE death of General de Galliffet, whose cynical ferocity in the repression of the Commune is now a matter of history; the General whose murderous proclivities marked him easily first among the bloody Generals employed by the execrated Versailles Government in the slaughter of 35,000 of their fellow creatures; the disappearance from the stage of the principal military figure in that most remarkable of all civil wars is just one of those events which may and should be used to bring into prominence the inchoate nature of Socialist thought in this country, and makes it worth while to attempt to bring the British Socialist movement to realise its kinship with the Continental movement.

On no point, perhaps, is British Socialist opinion more ill-informed, undefined, uncertain, and incomplete than on the question of the military and anti-militarist ideas of the Continental Socialist movement.

Nor do British Socialists realise that the French Socialist movement is historically, logically, and as a matter of easily ascertained fact, the natural leader in the world's democratic Socialist movement.

The reasons for this condition of mind in England are perfectly simple and can be discussed, if need be, on some other occasion—but the result is a whole host of misconceptions, reflecting alike on our intelligence and our capacity for solidarity which it is imperative some determined attempt should be made to remove.

The death of General de Galliffet, an event which falls like a barren seed on the stony ground of British Socialist ignorance, prompts Cipriani to write in the course of an article in "L'Humanité": "We all know that the army is a hotbed of Galliffets, and if to-morrow—as in 1871—the people came out into the streets, Galliffets would spring up like mushrooms to steep themselves in its blood."

To the average British Socialist who has never grasped the significance of Belfast, forgotten Featherstone except as a party cry, and never seen a machine-gun in Trafalgar Square, Cipriani's words are the language of hyperbole.

To those who do not shrink from the logical conclusion that, whether it is politic to say so or not, Socialism means revolution, and who realise the truth of the hackneyed saying that revolutions are not made with rose-water; to those who know anything of the mentality of the ruling classes and the psychology of the army officer in this and all other European countries—and less perhaps in France than elsewhere—Cipriani's words are a simple truism.

Let me now quote the same writer's conclusion and ask all Socialists, or mere believers in democracy, who read this to seriously reflect on these words:—

"What is necessary to prevent the growth of this noxious fungus—it is—what Socialists have maintained for years—the abolition of standing armies and their replacement by the nations in arms."

Let me ask all Socialists and democrats of every type to weigh well whether there are substantial grounds for believing that the leaders of the Socialist and Labour movements in this country are justified in withholding from British democracy its place side by side with the international democratic movement in its demand for a national militia and the abolition of standing armies.

It is true that much depends upon what might be meant by a national militia, but scepticism as to the democratic and Socialistic nature of such a military body can only be justified by gross ignorance of Continental democracies or want of faith in their ideals.

To pretend that the demand for a national militia

in France and Germany, for instance, arises from the detestation of these democracies of conscription, and then to put forward as a particular British virtue the national hatred of conscription, is not an instance of bad faith—as it might appear—but arises from the sheer insular incapacity to grasp the full significance of the world democratic movement to which Mr. English Walling referred in his recent article in THE NEW AGE.

A little of that "aggressive and winning Socialism that bases everything on a democratic confidence in the masses of men" would save the movement in this country from that incoherence of expression which in connexion with military policy is paralysing action and sterilising thought.

Paralysing action because nothing whatever can be done to obtain for the British Socialist and Labour movement the *locus standi* to which it is entitled in the settlement of the question of national defence as long as this movement has placed before it no plan of action, but only a determined opposition to all forms of military training on a universal basis.

Sterilising thought because it does not seem to have occurred to any of our publicists in Parliament or in the Press that the situation here is immensely simpler than on the Continent owing to the demand for compulsory military training which is coming here from the governing classes.

To oppose this demand on behalf of the democracy by a negative attitude is either to have it broken down by the normal working of party government or else to result in the strengthening of our existing system of a standing army which it is the object of the Continental democracy to destroy.

It is a deplorable fact that we have not yet developed within our ranks a leader with more than the most superficial acquaintance with the Continental democracies. There is not as far as I know a single one who has ever lived amongst, acquired the language, and studied from the inside, the ideals of the working classes on the Continent, and I think it is to be regretted that some of our Labour members do not see that the cause they have at heart might be better served by a sojourn in the midst of one of the great democracies of Europe than in cultivating, by trips to the Colonies, a bastard Imperialism which cannot but be opposed eventually to the spirit of democracy.

When we have a leader capable of putting the democracy of the whole before the democracy of a part he will see the enormous impetus that can be given to the Continental anti-militarist movement by the concession in Great Britain of compulsory military training on the lines of Continental democratic thought. He will see how this will at the same time bring the British movement into its proper place in the international movement and line up the whole of the Labour and Socialist movement in this country.

Such a leader with the insight with which I have endowed him will see that the constitution of Haldane's Territorial Army may be either a step towards a most odious form of conscription—unilluminated by democratic ideals—or a system of organised national defence on lines consistent with the highest democratic ideals.

Without dealing now with the social and democratic side of the organisation of a national militia in this country, the political conditions which the democracy of Britain would insist upon as the *sine qua non* of its concession of the principle of compulsory military training would be:—

Adult Suffrage (Male and Female).

Payment of Members.

Proportional Representation.

That if faced by an united working-class democracy the governing classes would agree to pay this price for the organisation of the nation in arms there can be no doubt. That is to say, if the demand were put forward with the sincerity and conviction which could not fail to result from such an intelligent appreciation of the vast importance of the issues involved as my faith in the British, no less than the Continental democracies, entitles me to expect when the matter is properly put before them.

RICHARD MAURICE.

## Hungary! Advance or Avaunt?

THE development, political and commercial, of Hungary is creating an Anglo-Hungarian literature. These three books are all valuable to the student of the constitutional history, political conditions, and economic evolution in Hungary.

Count Andrassy's work is unfinished,\* but it carries the account of Hungarian constitutional liberty from the period of the Arpads, who were the first rulers of the tribes inhabiting the geographical area known as Hungary, down to the reign of Matthias II in the early part of the seventeenth century. As a writer of history, Count Andrassy has been as successful as those who know his scholarly attainments and ripe political wisdom had the right to expect. Yet there are certain signs of unreality in his argument on constitutional liberty. One feels that he is not perfectly happy in his moment of writing; and his conscious uneasiness that there is a somewhat hollow ring about Hungarian constitutional liberty is explained by a study of "Scotus Viator's" able and disquieting analysis of the present status of the minor peoples in Hungary under Magyar rule. One is surprised to find Count Andrassy speaking of "the Hungarians." It is a most misleading term. The Irish, for instance, represent a well-defined ethnological type; whereas the Hungarians are merely the inhabitants of Hungary, connoting no ethnological type. "Hungarians" may be permissible in a popular handbook, but it is unpardonable in a book on constitutional law and liberty.

"Hungary of To-day" is explanatory of the prevalent theories of taxation, labour legislation, social and intellectual ideals, commercial and industrial progress, in modern Hungary. The most distinguished Hungarian publicists have contributed the various chapters, with the exception of a chapter by the editor, Mr. Percy Alden, on "The State Child," describing the advanced policy which obtains in Hungary on matters affecting the child. As a trustworthy guide to the material and intellectual progress of modern Hungary, this composite book is to be strongly recommended to all those who are interested in the economic and social resurrection of Central Europe.

The most vital book of the three is "Scotus Viator's" "Racial Problems." It is a weighty and elaborate exposure of Magyar domination in Hungary. "Scotus Viator" has been vigorously denounced in the most atrocious terms by those whose conduct he has examined without fear or favour. Pamphlets and books have been published to establish, not the falsity of his facts, but his enmity to the Magyar people. Englishmen who know the personality concealed under the nom-de-plume of "Scotus Viator" recognise the more bitter these personalities the greater the proof of the truth of the charges made by this maligned writer.

To summarise the situation to-day, the Magyars are themselves committing the same acts of oppression which they charged as tyranny against Austria in '48 in the days of Kossuth and the European revolutions. The language of the non-Magyar peoples is ruthlessly suppressed. The non-Magyar journalist is imprisoned or fined heavily the moment he criticises Magyar rule. The judges are intimidated by the Government to convict in political trials. Juries are packed. Children are persecuted if they sing patriotic racial songs. Non-Magyar teachers and priests are prosecuted and Magyar teachers and priests are put in their place. The Magyars have resorted to the usual methods of ruling races in impressing their alien language, alien educations, and alien ideals upon those who are temporarily subject to them, or who are numerically in an inferiority. The

\*"The Development of Hungarian Constitutional Liberty." By Count Julius Andrassy. Translated by C. Arthur and Ilona Genever. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., London. 1908. 465 pp.)

"Racial Problems in Hungary." By "Scotus Viator." (Archibald Constable and Co., Ltd., London. 1908. 528 pp., maps and photos. 16s. net.)

"Hungary of To-day." By Members of the Hungarian Government. Edited by Percy Alden, M.P. (Eveleigh Nash, London. 1909. 409 pp., illustrated. 7s. 6d. net.)

Csernova trial is as astounding an instance of organised judicial miscarriage as the Denshawai trial. The Magyars, with the usual courage of the Imperialist, war on women. The prisoners in the Csernova trial were sixteen women and two men, the total sentences amounting to 36½ years' imprisonment for no offence whatever, unless being shot at by gendarmes brings one within the grip of Magyar criminal jurisprudence. The appendices contain long catalogues of political prosecutions of Roumanians and Slovaks. The sentences are ferocious in their severity.

The replies of Count Andrassy to the interpellations of the Slovak leaders in the Lower House are couched in most illiberal language. Count Andrassy's speeches in office and the principles enunciated in his book on Hungarian constitutional liberty are as diverse as Lord Morley's administration of India and his philosophic writings. There is a harshness and censoriousness about Count Andrassy's defence of Governmental action which ill befits a professor of constitutional liberty; hence the uncertain weakness which betrays itself throughout his book.

"Scotus Viator" has done a great service to the nationalities in Hungary in collecting the vast quantity of material contained in "Racial Problems"; it is a tremendous indictment of the Magyar Government. Though Hungary's material progress has been rapid in the last few decades, her moral and spiritual outlook, certainly so far as the flaming spirit of liberty is concerned, has darkened since the days of '48. Count Andrassy may be well advised to write a history of constitutional liberty in Hungary; it is right to record that which is vanishing ere it slips away past recall. In Hungary, as elsewhere, the forms of constitutional liberty are no guarantee of the existence of personal liberty or liberty to express and to write one's honest opinions, without risking vindictive prosecution and persecution. As Eugène Marbeau put it, in the finest definition of Liberty in literature, "Liberty is the right to be in the wrong." That definition of Liberty has not been understood by the Magyars, nor, perhaps, by any other ruling people. Until it is accepted and acted upon, Hungary will be torn by the dissensions of the races which are resident upon its soil. The Magyar statesmen should study "Scotus Viator's" book as an independent criticism of an outspoken but friendly observer, whose erudition and knowledge of his subject have given him a claim to be heard.

To the English politician all these books are invaluable. To the jurist Count Andrassy's book will appeal most. The collection of essays edited by Mr. Alden has the wider commercial and financial field for its circulation. "Scotus Viator" should be read by everyone who studies European politics and the race difficulties of Central Europe.

"STANHOPE OF CHESTER."

## G. Bernard Shaw.

By Francis Grierson.

It is interesting to note that both in England and America humour is losing itself in wit and wit in cynicism. Material success added a bitter drop to Mark Twain's humour, and the same kind of success has added a taste of hyssop to the medicinal cat-nip, snap-dragon, and hellebore of Mr. Bernard Shaw's genius. But the most curious thing of all is the fact that G. B. S. expects to win people to Socialism by a sting-bee process instead of by pleasant potions of honey from the common hive. Perhaps he is imitating the tactics of Disraeli, who understood the crowd and used his wit as a fanning machine to clear the way to the goal of his choice, who stood just outside the political circus, hailed the idlers and clubmen by clever antics, filled his tent at the side-show, and then began a bare-back performance in a ring in which the other riders used pads, palfreys, and salaam alek carpets to ease the fall of their reckless and break-neck somersaults.

Anyhow, none of them can plunge with the dexterity of G. B. S. There is a wonderful elasticity in his bouncing-board. He is a past-grand-master in the art

of diving, although he sometimes goes to the bottom, and seemingly for good; but he always bobs up like a bladder, and by a hocus-pocus of word massage and mental calisthenics he resuscitates himself and is at it again.

No matter what G. B. S. does he is always diverting, but, like a good many of his "comrades," he does not care much for the humble life. He believes in success. He does not believe in being a communistic caterpillar; it is better to be a butterfly, because there are no limits to what a butterfly may do, from sitting on a proletarian paling to flitting over fields and fashionable pleasure grounds, alighting on a daisy here, a buttercup there, a cabbage leaf here, a rose bush somewhere else, for no full-grown butterfly will consent to flutter long on a cabbage. Fine flowers and fine scents are wanted, and these can only be had in the gardens of success. If it is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven than it is for a camel to enter the eye of the needle, it is still harder for rich artists and writers to become serious Socialists. And some of Mr. Shaw's "comrades" are doing their level best to become richer. If you ask them for their patent of equality they will show you a pair of patent boots, with the answer that equality may reside under tanned hide, but not under curled hair. Brain power is good, but success is still better. It makes millions of unthinking people mistake sophistry for philosophy and selfishness for the teaching of democratic saints.

G. B. S. likes to preach against sentiment and preside at anti-vivisection meetings. Is it his love for dogs that makes him a cynic, or his cynicism that makes him pity the dogs? Conundrum that can only be explained by the great Saint Bernard himself. It is probable that if someone were to tell us that a cabbage has nerves, a beet a heart, and a turnip a gizzard, G. B. S. would eschew them and begin to chew something else. We are to show sentiment, but never in the place where most people expect it. The proper thing seems to consist in doing the opposite thing. If the partition that separates wit from madness is only a page of tissue paper the partition might disappear by the turning of a leaf. Some people prefer the sentimental to the cynical because, like somebody's cocoa, it goes furthest and lasts the longest. In some things it is better to side with the majority.

When G. B. S. is not plunging he swims *entre deux eaux*, as when he writes: "If the Judgment Day were fixed for the centenary of Poe's birth there are among the dead only two men (Poe and Whitman) born since the Declaration of Independence whose plea for mercy could avert a prompt sentence of damnation on the entire American nation." Our humourist ignores Lincoln. The great President was neither an artist nor a poet, and Mr. Shaw is bound to appear in artistic company, even though he should miss the company of the greatest humanist of the past hundred years. But in ignoring Lincoln G. B. S. negatives his attitude as a democratic leader. It is like talking about the history of Socialism while ignoring Fourier, the history of art while ignoring Michael Angelo, the history of music while ignoring Beethoven.

G. B. S. is often most amusing when he intends to be serious, as when he writes about Mark Twain and music. "Twain," he says, "described 'Lohengrin' as a 'shiverer,' though he liked the wedding chorus, which shows that Mark, like Dickens, was not properly educated; for Wagner would have been just the man for him if he had been trained to understand and use music as Mr. Rockefeller was trained to understand and use money." So then, a man can be trained to appreciate what he cannot possibly understand! An American humourist, who possesses about as much music in his temperament as there is in a jew's-harp, does not appreciate Wagner because, like the old farmer, he did not receive a proper "edification!" But G. B. S. goes one better when he says: "America did not teach Mark Twain the language of the great ideals, just as England did not teach it to Dickens and Thackeray." The notion of a writer like Twain occupying himself with any ideal is very funny. For the simple truth is this—Mark Twain is the greatest cynic America ever pro-

duced. A good many people have failed to grasp the fact, because his cynicism is varnished by a species of bland and natural humour, which hides the reality. The good Mark may or may not have been born a cynic, but in any case it is impossible to be the intimate associate of American millionaires without becoming more or less like them. The American humourist has no great liking for the humble life in spite of his humble origin, and his most intimate friend was the arch-millionaire Rogers of the Standard Oil Plutocracy.

And this is why the bare notion of Mark Twain dabbling in "Ideals" is excruciating, and this word pronounced over the graves of Dickens and Thackeray would make them turn in their coffins. The American humourist never cared to be an expert in anything but the dangerous science of piloting boats full of passengers on the Mississippi; G. B. S. would undertake to pilot all England through the shallows of art, the whirlpools of politics, and the social rapids of no-man's land, a place that looks to some people ten times more dangerous than the shifting sand-bars of the muddy Mississippi. Mark Twain looked after the safety of bodies; G. B. S. would look after mind and body. He writes as if mind can be manufactured. He is labouring under the delusion that art is a trick and authority book knowledge. Darwin wrote: "The longer I live the more inclined I am to agree with Francis Galton that most of our faculties are innate and that what is acquired is very little." These words should be pondered just now, when discrimination and judgment seem to be about as cheap in the world of distracted wits as footballs in the world of distorted sports.

Our greatest humourist is not capering in a fool's Paradise; he has the range of a new garden of Eden, where he alone is the only regenerate Adam, and where from the tall tree-tops of fruitarian delights he lets the hard cocoa-nuts of communistic conundrums crack on the bewildered heads of the bourgeoisie to give them the only taste of the milk of human kindness they will ever get at his hands. For his humour is greater than his humanism.

G. B. S. is our master cynic. He is without a rival even in the salon and the dining-room, for his dress matches nothing from curtains to cantaloupes. True, artists and poets do pretty much what they please. Whistler tied a blue ribbon in his hair and wore an impudent eye-glass. But Socialism, when it is wrapped in wit and tied in knotty paradox, alarms the average business man. They take G. B. S. too seriously. Even when he presents his paradox in the most beautiful bon-bon baskets, with gold and silver trimmings, they fear some intellectual dynamite at the bottom. He mystifies people by his plays, walks the tight-rope of theatrical surprises, stands on his heels, toes, or head with the balance-pole of paradox quivering in the teeth of the public; for no one knows which end of the pole will go highest in the air—the Tolstoy-Ibsen or the Nietzsche-Wagner end.

But, in spite of all, some people will continue to ask, in what does G. B. S. take himself seriously? This question might be answered by asking some others: How does he compare with some of the masters he most admires? Has he the tartaric sincerity of Tolstoy? Has he the long-suffering patience of Ibsen, the passion of Wagner, the fine frenzy of Nietzsche?

Mr. Shaw's weakness lies in the intellectuality of his wit. He can tear down but he cannot construct; he can scatter but he cannot concentrate, and the instruction he affords is rarely in proportion to the amusement.

## The Sea Lady.

'NEATH the foam of scudding seas,  
'Neath the cloud-rack of the waves,  
Her mansion is, in coral caves,  
Hung with weedy tapestries.

There she sleeps; nor stir nor sound  
Breaks the sea-lit dim serene:  
There she dreams; nor shade nor sheen  
Sicklies o'er the still profound.

E. H. VISIAR,

## The Clarion Van.

WHEN the Clarion Van came into his neighbourhood Holbein Bagman was drawn towards it irresistibly, and it was not long before he had ingratiated himself into a position upon the platform at an evening meeting in the public thoroughfare. The first impression that struck Holbein Bagman was the picture he saw in front of him. The van had been stationed beneath an arc lamp borne upon a lofty standard, and serving to illuminate the faces of a motley crowd with warm bright light, chequered by sharp-edged shadows. That ring of faces like a ring of fire—the intense expressionary fire of human countenances brought together and all directed to one centre—set Holbein Bagman's heart a-beating, stimulated and dilated his nature. He was in the very focus of that concentrated gaze, and could read momentary feelings and life histories all around him. Beyond the crowd presented itself the marvellous vista of the main thoroughfare of a manufacturing vicinity, narrowing at the far end towards railway arches, its squalid shops and dwellings in huddled perspective enchanted and glorified by the glow of a sky still commercing with the lights that altered in the upper air. Within the street itself Holbein Bagman watched groups of people meeting, dissolving, heavy wheeled traffic interminable in procession, tram cars and motor cars passing and re-passing with sudden blaze of light and clamours of bell or siren, the edges of the crowd round the van limning or dislimning like vapour. The picture fluctuated under the deepening hues of twilight with alternations of brightness and darkness, noise and quiet, disturbance and momentary rest. All was motion and drama, murmur and mystery, until "Who wouldn't be here!" exclaimed Holbein Bagman, nearly falling off the van in the self-forgetfulness of ecstasy.

Recalled to prudence by the singing of a hymn and this narrow escape from accident, Holbein Bagman began to attend more particularly to the upturned faces. The nearest circle about the van was composed of children under the age of sixteen, boys and girls unkempt of hair and clothing, hollow in cheek and eye, not one of whom but was an argument of condemnation against the existing condition of society. These children gazed up and down, talked and wrangled together like sparrows, occasionally catching the eye of Holbein Bagman with an expression half-furtive, half-cowering. It says something for Holbein Bagman's lack of self-possession that his imagination was haunted by Scriptural phrases. "It is the will of your Father which is in heaven that not one of these little ones shall perish." "Where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them." Holbein Bagman looked about for the Christ in the concentric circles of hardened and weather-beaten working folk and loafing folk who had gathered together round the van. If the Christ was anywhere he ought to be there, and what was the saying of a bishop who had stuck like a burr in Holbein Bagman's memory? Bishop Ridley (may the Clarion Van bless him for it) had said: "I beseech you to be good to Christ. The matter is, alas! he hath lain too long abroad without lodging in the streets of London, both hungry and naked and cold." These words had been written to a statesman and repeated before a King. Holbein Bagman, the plebeian, perhaps ought never to have heard them, for their effect upon him, recurring just at that moment, was to increase the confusion which already had worked lamentable and unorthodox mischief in his intoxicated faculties. "The New Testament," muttered Holbein Bagman, "which I will read one day, says something like this: 'I was an hungred and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me, I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came to me.' Now if these words mean what they say"—the rôle of commentator was new to Holbein Bagman—"they can have no other meaning than this, that I, the Divine, am that hungry man, that naked man, that criminal. I, the Divine, am all men—therefore keep your eyes open that you do not miss

me." Holbein Bagman began to gaze with a new intensity upon that audience of working people to whose social equals in another country the words had been spoken, "Ye are the light of the world: the Kingdom of Heaven is within you." A woman with a discoloured eye, which might have been given to her by any one of the knot of men who stood at her elbow, was the first answer to his investigation. A drunken man, rapidly growing ill-tempered under the efforts of the bystanders to quiet him, was the second. A chorus of boo-boos from a section of the crowd greeting the remarks of the chairman was the third. Yet Holbein Bagman's faith was not shaken: the divine was there in the midst, for he had felt its presence. Already his heart had expanded by contact with common humanity, already his mind had grown more eager, and Holbein Bagman took these effects for the tokens of divine possession. Let his spirit mount a little higher and Holbein Bagman would be among the prophets!

Perhaps, gentle reader, you have never interpreted the fact in its true significance that an audience drawn from the slums and mean streets will listen with attention and appreciation to good teaching when the mood takes them. Such a mood seemed to be settling down upon the crowd as the chairman went on with his preliminaries. He was not the best of chairmen, nor the most intelligent of Socialists, and Holbein Bagman noted that the crowd had taken his measure. They were at the same time attentive and inattentive, as if hearing but not caring greatly for what they heard. It was possible, then, for a speaker to be less than equal to the intelligence of that motley multitude? Unmistakably it was possible, and Holbein Bagman was convinced that an opportunity was lost until the chairman gave way to the Clarion Vanner. It is not my intention to record in detail an address which began with a jest and passed on to sober seriousness, and presently landed the Vanner into an appeal to religion, to conceptions of right and wrong, justice and honesty, as if there could be no doubt that his audience could assist him in applying such standards of measurement. The speaker established a sympathy between himself and the folk who listened to him; he succeeded in playing upon the mysterious harp which is human nature, and in drawing from it for a while tones which resembled sphere music. For the time being speaker and hearers had forgotten the commonplace, and participated together in a sense of enlargement of life.

No sooner had the Clarion Vanner concluded than Holbein Bagman, I am ashamed to say, was upstanding upon his feet. "My friends," he cried, before any person could arrest him, "the Clarion Vanner has told us that Socialism is Religion. I am entirely in agreement with the speaker. To me it seems that there is no such religion in the world to-day as Socialism, and I will give you some of my reasons. I know of no more wonderful example of faith than that which the Clarion Vanner is showing. He has faith in you, in mankind, as the founder of Christianity had of old when he said to the common people that 'ye are the salt of the earth.' For if the Vanner had not faith in you, he would not be speaking to you; and if Jesus had not had faith in men and women he would not have tried to teach them. Then the Clarion Vanner has faith in the future. He believes that the days to come can be made better than the days that now are. He has faith in reason, he has faith in effort, he has faith in every good endeavour. Show me, then, in any of the churches of to-day more of the reality and essence of religion! Show me finer worship, finer reverence, finer conviction—nay, show me anything so fine! The common clay of humanity, who honours it as the Socialist honours it? The Kingdom of Heaven that is in the midst of us, who declares it as the Socialist declares it? The enthusiasm that kindles the spirits of men when they come together, as with the renewal of the day of Pentecost—who inherits it like the Socialist? And the words of Jesus, for whom have they such meaning as for the Socialist? . . . My friends, Socialism is religion, for Socialism is hope and faith and love and effort, and by these things, and by these things only, men truly live."

HOLBEIN BAGMAN.

## An Open Letter to the Executors of William Morris.

SIRS,—There is a word to be said to you concerning the poems of William Morris; and as those who might say it with authority and effect are greatly occupied with the works of living men, I shall presume to say it from my obscurity.

"The Defence of Guenevere" has been, to at least one man now busy in the world, such a "golden book" as the poems of Ronsard were to Gaston de Latour in Pater's romance; and this not so much because the music and fantasy of Poe came there to a more matchless issue as that the saturated observation and passionate life, also present, seemed to have achieved almost a re-birth of poetry.

The poems of Morris's later life, like the later designs of Rossetti, have another largeness and sweetness and power; but in the early years when genius touches a myriad possibilities before yielding to the limitation of any choice, both men found a strangeness of wonder for whose transience no splendour of their maturity can quite compensate us.

In the instance of Morris the regret is enhanced, because the scant successes of his "Guenevere" volume discouraged him from farther work in poetry for so many years that his maturity and choice were reached in silence.

Judge, then, the effect upon those who love that first volume of the announcement by Mr. Mackail (doubtlessly with your concurrence), in his fine biography of Morris (vol. I, pp. 166-173), that before the poet had been moved to a discontinuance of his art he had written poems yet unpublished in which those first characteristics were strengthened and deepened with tremendous effect; that fragments exist of another Guenevere poem intended to lead up to those published; and, more than all, that the novel and poignant dramatic energy of "Sir Peter Harpdon's End" had been extended and developed amazingly in a series of "Scenes from the Fall of Troy," of which more than half were completed and are still available.

Sirs, the songs and the passages of blank verse quoted by Mr. Mackail from these last prove it to be a matter of grave importance and national concern that they should not remain unpublished and subject to all the risks that wait upon a unique manuscript, without counting that there are living men who deserve and need to read such poems before they die.

I do not know if such a publication would be against their author's wish; certainly in the somewhat similar case of his early prose romances his own slighting opinion of them has not prevented their being collected in the volume "The Hollow Land," greatly to the world's enrichment; while the fact of Mr. Mackail having quoted nearly a hundred lines in his biography stirs the hope that such a course may seem feasible to you in this instance also.

In this day of elegant three-and-sixpennyworths it is less than a duty that those who have the power should lay open this additional counsel of beauty from the great days that are just over and remind us how generously poets worked then?

In the same connection it may be recalled that Mr. Mackail speaks (Vol. I, pp. 207-208) of at least three narrative poems still extant which were written for the "Earthly Paradise" series, but finally admitted, beside several fragments (one of which appeared in "The Athenæum" and has been pirated in America); and farther (Vol. II, pp. 257-258) that when the collection of "Poems by the Way" was made, enough work of

all periods remained unprinted to fill another such volume. The publication of the latter would surely serve fortunately to emphasise the fact that Morris was among the greatest of lyric poets—a fact too often obscured in the shadow of his huge verse-romances; while the inclusion of the flotsam of the "Earthly Paradise" would fitly perfect a volume of such liberal proportions as Morris loved his books to assume.

Yet I take leave to urge foremost the most vital importance of the publication of those early Troy poems, which would extend the beloved poet's fame by extending the number of the modes of poetry over which he has proved his mastery, and would add at the same time another genre to English poetry.

I am, sirs, respectfully your petitioner, G. B.

## Two Fables.

By Edward Storer.

### Bad Weather.

GOD ALMIGHTY sat upon his throne of gold and purple, conducting the infinite orchestra of planets, winds, and elements. His beat was rhythmic, though a trifle lethargic, for He had been conducting the same piece a matter of several million years, and knew it tolerably well.

From the pale reeds of Saturn and Mercury there flowed a silver music, sweet, shrill, and strange. It was like the skirling of gigantic grasshoppers dancing about the vaporous fields of space. The Moon clapped her lustrous cymbals like a butterfly closing her wings together, while Jupiter played his far trombone with concentration and energy. The Hail, the Wind, the red-faced tenor of a Sun, the elegant virtuoso the Lightning, and the big drums of the Thunder all combined to swell the volume of sound made by this colossal and remorseless orchestra.

On the Earth the poor creatures for whom this extravagant and costly entertainment was provided were anything but pleased. Matters had been very unpleasant there for some time past: nothing had come to them but hail, snow, wind, Aurora Borealis, thunder, blizzards, earthquakes, and other ear-racking and terrifying music.

As a matter of fact, they had had about enough of it down there, and said so, so plainly that the news of their discomfort reached the ears of God just as He was turning over a page of the score.

"Madam," He said to Venus, "I fancy your *E* string must be down." But it was not so.

At last, however, the true explanation of this extraordinary cacophony was afforded.

"I think, Sire," ventured Mars, turning towards God with a courtly bow, "that we are playing the wrong parts. . . . Boreas there is struggling with the Winter Symphony, while really . . ."

"Ah yes," said the Almighty with a gesture of infinite weariness, "that comes of always playing the same old tunes."

### Eternal Folly.

"Kiss me," said the Moon to the Earth, as they climbed up the silken stairway of twilight into their house of the Dark. But for a filmy shawl of cloud thrown lightly over her, the Moon was naked. She leaned gently on the Earth.

The stars, who are the children of these two lovers, were playing their little golden games in the sky with an amused, half-shy regard for the amorousities of their parents.

"Mignon," said the Earth, bending over the beautiful pale face of his wife.

As he kissed her, a long, crimson shudder plunged through the West and dyed the air a hundred tints.

And all the thousand children of the Earth and the Moon, the little stars playing their golden games in the sky, smiled to themselves at this nightly folly of their aged and respectable parents.

"Was there ever such a couple?" they asked.

## The Three Tramps.

By Major Arthur Layard.

THE long, hot summer's day was nearing its close. Not a breath of wind ruffled the oily surface of the broad, sluggish river as the red ball of the sun set in the west behind the vast expanse of fens. Myriads of circling companies of gnats played and pirouetted, rose and fell, in the light, diaphanous haze which was gathering over field and water. The slow, drowsy flow of the stream scarcely stirred the slender, graceful reeds which nestled under the old disused towpath. Over the opposite bank twinkled one little star in the clear, faint green of a cloudless sky.

As far as the eye could reach in the growing twilight the water-meadows lay flat and wide, the line of the deep intersecting ditches marked by stunted hedgerows. Here and there a solitary wind-disfigured tree seemed to accentuate the loneliness of the scene. The aromatic odour of the sedges filled the air. The swallows flew high, and away to the south a trailing flight of wild duck was pointing to the spire of a church, which stood up afar in the fens like a needle on end in a green cloth.

There was a stealthy, rustling movement in the long, thick grasses near the dyke which separated the towpath from the fen country beyond, and a ragged, bald, unshaven man, with a squint, dragged himself to his feet with a muttered imprecation.

"These 'ere gnats are the devil!" he growled, stretching his thin, lanky arms and yawning. His pointed elbows had pierced the sleeves of the horrible old frock-coat, which hung about him in tatters. A piece of frayed cord crossed his bare, dirty chest obliquely, and passing over one shoulder held up his patched, mire-stained trousers. String, also, had been brought into use ingeniously to prevent what was left of his boots from falling off his feet. Socks he had none. He stooped and picked up a soiled, shapeless cap, and kicked viciously at something concealed in the long grass.

"Chuck it!" remonstrated a husky voice.

Another well-directed prod proved effective, and a gaunt, red-haired individual emerged from hiding, and, crawling on his hands and knees to the edge of the towpath, looked up and down the river, blaspheming. The brim of his greasy bowler hat was half ripped off. His torn, threadbare jacket and trousers were rotten with age. As he knelt on the bank the soles of his grimy feet showed through the jagged holes of his wretched old boots. He was richer than his companion, for he possessed a shirt, and a strap as a waistbelt.

"Look 'ere, guv'nor," said the first man, "we've got to kip movin'. See that church stickin' up? That's the place we're a-makin' for."

Twilight was gradually deepening into night, and a heavy dew began to settle on the herbage. The clear blue of the firmament was dotted with stars. The fish were on the feed, and now and again a sudden splash would break the silence.

"Wot's that?" exclaimed the red-headed tramp, peering through the haze, and pointing up-stream. "Look! It's a-comin' this way."

The other crouched at his side and followed his gaze. Vaguely seen on the surface of the water was a small, white, oval object, slowly moving towards them, parallel with the towpath, and immediately outside the line of rushes. It bobbed up and down gently in the leisurely current.

"S'elp me, it's a dead un;" exclaimed the squint-eyed man. "That white thing's 'is mug."

A clump of stout reeds delayed, and then stopped, the progress of the floating body. The two tramps leaned forward with eager curiosity, clutching at the sloping, muddy bank. They looked from behind like two foul vultures gloating over their prey.

The poor drowned man was a good-looking young fellow in boating kit. They could distinctly perceive, through the semi-transparent water, his white flannel shirt, his belt, and white trousers.

"Ow's he got there?"

"Arsk another. Look! There goes 'is boat."

A canoe, bottom upwards, slid noiselessly past them through the mist.

"We kin get a 'thick-un,' guv'nor, for telling the cops abah't the bloke," said red-head.

"Garn!"

"Yuss! I've 'eard that's a fac'."

"Look 'ere, sonny. Why not sneak 'is clothes fust? I cud do with 'is shirt an' belt. I ain't got none."

"Anyone abah't?" asked the other. "Cast yer swivel-eye rahnd."

The two tramps scrambled up and scanned the towpath and the fields behind them with careful scrutiny. A moment sooner and they would have seen above the thick grass of

the dyke, and not twenty paces distant, the black head and shoulders of a third tramp, who had been watching them and listening intently to their conversation. As they rose to their feet he dropped at once out of sight. His rags were, if possible, even more disreputable than those of the first two men. He was hatless and devoid of foot-gear.

The towpath was the shortest cut between two workhouses, which accounted for the presence at this lonely spot of these three wastrels.

"There ain't no one," said swivel-eye.

"Ow're we to git the bloke aht?" queried the other, scratching his red poll.

"One of us'll 'ave to go in an' fetch 'im."

"Orl right. Seems shaller just 'ere. It's gettin' a bit dark. We'll 'ave to look slippy. 'E ain't more'n a couple o' yards aht."

Squatting on the towpath they removed their dilapidated boots. The black, shock head of the third tramp appeared once more above the long grass, his beady eyes taking in their every movement. The man with the squint bared his skinny legs above his bony knees, and spat in his palms.

"Give us yer 'and, guv'nor," he grunted, cautiously descending the somewhat steep bank into the stream, followed by the other. The ripples circled outwards and lapped the pale face of the poor dead fellow.

The bed of the river sloped rapidly downwards at this point, but after a couple of trials swivel-eye grabbed the corpse by the hair; and then, by backing steadily, the two men managed to pull it through the reeds and half-way up the bank, till the feet were well clear of the water.

"Nothin' in 'is pockets, curse it!" exclaimed the man with the squint.

The other removed the canvas shoes and flung them on the towpath. The black head of the third tramp rose an inch higher and noted where they fell.

"Shirt, belt, trousers, and socks, guv'nor," itemed swivel-eye. "Share an' share alike. Settle abah't them 'trilbies' later. I ain't got no shirt or belly-band. You 'ave. You kip the socks an' trousers. That's fair."

"Yuss, that's a bargain. But I'm a-goin' to 'ave them shoes, s'elp me!"

"See yer blowed fust. 'Oo went into the stream an' fetched 'em out, I'd like to know?"

"Silly rot! 'Ow d'yer s'pose you cud 'ave got 'em aht without me a 'oldin' yer?"

The third man was quietly crawling like a snake through the grass nearer and nearer to the shoes.

"Wot's that bloomin' well got to do with it, yer blighter? I'm wet up ter my middle."

"Yuss; an' I've got to put on the dead 'un's soppin' wet trousers. It's orl one!"

"I'm bloomin' well going to 'ave them 'trilbies.'"

"You ain't!"

"Take that, yer red-headed thief," exclaimed swivel-eye, butting his bald head at the stomach of the other, who dodged to one side with remarkable alacrity and landed him a terrific blow in the ribs as he stumbled forward.

Meanwhile the dead body was inch by inch slowly sliding down the slippery bank with gathering velocity, feet first, into the river.

Swivel-eye caught his opponent by the ankle as he fell and pulled him to the ground. In another second the two ragged beings were locked in one another's arms, rolling over and over, kicking, scratching and biting like a couple of wild cats.

The black-haired tramp crept yet closer, and reaching out an uncleanly paw, annexed the shoes and concealed them in his breast.

Blasphemies and howls of rage proceeded from the combatants, who, in the struggle, had moved some four or five yards away from the place where they had pulled out the dead man. The third tramp, scrambling up, ran to the edge of the towpath just in time to see the corpse disappear into the river. He waited. It rose to the surface a few yards from the bank and was caught once more in the reeds—this time well out of reach.

The twilight had given place to bright starshine. By looking attentively he could just make out its position. He had a stick in his hand, and he planted it firmly in the mud as a mark, immediately opposite the body.

At the same instant the warriors separated, panting for breath; and, facing one another on their hands and knees, glared mutual murder from their bloodshot eyes.

"Go it, ye cripples!" cried the third man; "and let the best blighter win! Thankee kindly, gen'lmen, for them shoes." He plucked them from his breast, and, brandishing them triumphantly, made off down the towpath at a quick shuffle.

The rivals leapt to their feet, but they were too exhausted to attempt to follow him, and he vanished into the night.

"That bloomin' well settles it," said red head.

Swivel-eye walked over to the place where they had recovered the body. "The dead 'un's taken 'is 'ook!" he exclaimed, with a fearful oath.

An hour later a hatless, black-haired, tattered individual, wearing a pair of canvas boating shoes, walked into the police station of the county town and, giving his name as William Weary, of no fixed abode or occupation, claimed a sovereign for the discovery of the body of the drowned man.

## Books and Persons.

(AN OCCASIONAL CAUSERIE.)

A VOLUME which should pass through the hands of all those very numerous people who are concerned in the present renaissance of the English stage—from Mr. Bernard Shaw to his plaything, Mr. Redford—is M. Adolphe Thalasso's -- *Le Théâtre Libre* -- (published by the "Mercure de France," 3 frs. 50 c.). In this book of three hundred pages is given the whole history of the highly important dramatic movement begun by that great man, André Antoine, on the 30th March, 1887, in a bandbox-hall, with a quadruple bill, of which three items were perfect failures, while the fourth (an adaptation of Zola's "Jacques Damour") was a perfect success. If the Théâtre Libre had been German, and its historian a German, this work would have been in ten volumes instead of in one, and nobody would ever have read it except the composers and Prof. George Saintsbury, who reads everything. But the French can be documentary without being eternal, and M. Thalasso's book is strangely comprehensive. He begins at the beginning with "general considerations upon the aesthetic of dramatic art." And then he supplies a sketch of nineteenth century prose drama, which he divides, epigrammatically, into two schools—the school that seeks "life through movement," and the school that seeks "movement through life." That is to say, the machine-made piece-makers on the one hand, and on the other those who sought to bring truth into the theatre. The representatives of the first school are of course Scribe, Angier, Dumas fils, and Sardou. By the way, M. Thalasso points out that Sardou first saw the full possibilities of a crowd on the stage; which is to his credit.

\* ——— \*

At the head of the realistic school M. Thalasso puts — Balzac — Balzac, all of whose plays were disasters, and perhaps deservedly so! I think, though, that he is right. After Balzac, Alfred de Musset and Henri Becque. The name of Musset surprised me. I should have said positively that Henri Becque was the greatest French dramatist of his century and -- *La Parisienne* -- the greatest modern play. M. Thalasso puts him second to de Musset. Has anyone in England ever envisaged "On ne badine pas avec l'amour," elegant trifle, as a forerunner of modern realism? The idea is piquant, and will bear examination. Another name that seems odd in this gallery is Erckmann-Chatriain. Of course Zola, Daudet, and the brothers de Goncourt are among the later pillars of the -- movement through life -- school. There is an agreeable glimpse of Sarcey, during a performance of -- *Thérèse Raquin*, -- sighing and moaning in the corridors that the play had really made him feel quite ill! . . . Astonishing the respect shown to Sarcey even by his opponents! The most advanced progressives of to-day still speak of Sarcey as though he had genius, as though his views have somehow a real artistic importance. The fact is he had, with all his honest stupidity, such tremendous influence during his career—making and marring reputations at will, literally—that the entire dramatic world of Paris is still afraid of his shadow. \* \*

All this is preliminary to the Théâtre Libre. M. Thalasso offers a complete history of the enterprise—its début, its apogee, its decadence, the retirement from it of Antoine, its agony, and its death. It died on the 27th April, 1896, in the throes of Guy de Maupassant's "Mademoiselle Fifi," adapted by Oscar Méténier (which piece is largely responsible for the existing "Grand Guignol," the little show that last year came over to us from Paris, and unhappily got lost somehow in the recesses of the Shaftesbury Theatre). M. Thalasso

then discusses the seven causes of the decadence of the Théâtre Libre, and concludes with an essay on its influence, comprising a number of opinions thereon specially emitted by dramatists of genuine importance.

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In appendices we have details about all the authors (French and foreign) whose works were staged by Antoine (the foreign legion includes Tolstoi, Turgenev, Ibsen, Bjornson, Hauptman, Strindberg, and Heijermans—but not Sir Arthur Wing Pinero), and all the artistes. Among the native authors were Jean Jullien, François de Curel, Georges de Porto-Riche, and Emile Fabre. These four are all still living and working, and the least of them is more important and more susceptible of immortality than any of the boulevard favourites, such as Donnay and Lavedan, or even than Brieux, to whom, I have noticed, the rulers of our Stage Society and other similar societies are apt to attach too much importance. The master of masters of the Théâtre Libre is undoubtedly Jean Jullien, whose -- *La Sérénade* -- (performed at the end of 1887) is the first truly modern piece, the first proper example of *rosserie* on the stage. Until the Théâtre Libre produced this play it had not -- found itself. Unable to obtain a preface from Antoine himself, M. Thalasso rightly went to Jean Jullien for his preface—and got it.

—x—x—x—

Looming and frowning over all these authors and players is the heroic, the amazing figure of André Antoine. The early history of his enterprise borders on the fantastic. The first performance of the Théâtre Libre had to be postponed until Antoine got his humble wages from the Gas Company where he was a clerk; out of those wages all the expenses had to be paid. When he sent out circulars inviting subscriptions for a series of performances, he delivered them by hand himself to save postages. He painted the scenery; he directed the rehearsals, he acted, and he would "brook no interference -- from anybody whatever. Incidentally he indited long letters to Sarcey. And once, apropos of a piece by François de Curel given at the Théâtre Français, he offered a few written remarks to the ineffable Le Bargy concerning the "rôle of the comedian," which must have exquisitely wounded that golden favourite. After renouncing the Théâtre Libre, Antoine made a fortune at his own theatre by compromising with the public taste. Since then, as director of the Odéon, he has lost either a great deal of his own money or a great deal of other people's. He will live a long time in the history of the theatre. This book is one to be read.

—x—x—x—

In the current number of Mr. John Lane's diverting monthly "The Bodleian," there is an interview with Mr. Hugh de Sélincourt, composed with masterly skill (by some too modest anonymity) as a parody of the conventional interview with the conventional rising young author, as it is printed, for example, in the "Westminster Gazette -- or "The World." The parody opens thus: "As I entered the room, a teddy-bear (fortunately hollow) hurtled an inch from my nose. In the wake of the teddy-bear flew a blue-gray kitten, who pounced on his prey with a savage growl. At the same moment a shout of laughter went up from the other end of the room; the music (a Schubert impromptu) stopped, and I found myself face to face with Mr. and Mrs. Hugh de Sélincourt, both deeply apologetic, but both laughing merrily." The whole of the interview is equally perfect banter of the latest journalism, and not E. V. Lucas and C. L. Graves could do better. I do not think that Mr. John Lane ought to keep this humourist to himself. The fact is, he won't. The interview, by the way, is apropos of Mr. de Sélincourt's new novel, "The Way Things Happen." It is possible that Mr. de Sélincourt may have a future as a novelist. It is certain that, in spite of his tender years, he has a past. A singular figure in modern letters! A characteristic of most novelists, even readable ones, is their sublime ignorance of literature. Mr. de Sélincourt is a scholar. Another characteristic of most novelists is disillusion and gentle,

tired cynicism—for example, Mr. John Masefield! Mr. de Sélincourt is not yet within fifty years of disillusion. And apart from the detail that he really can "write," his most precious and rare asset is his terrific instinctive joy in life, joy in his material. Hence I regard him with a stern but genuine curiosity. He has already written a chapter here and there of which he will never be ashamed. I do not assert that he is the novelist of the future, but I say that wary readers who find an innocent pleasure in remarking "I told you so," will be well advised to perpend upon his fictions.

JACOB TONSON.

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"Woman's Worst Enemy—Woman." By Beatrice Tina. (New Age Press. 1s. net.)

I will not preface my remarks about this book by saying that it is a courageous statement of woman's case. Beatrice Tina is obviously a creative artist, and, therefore, there is no question of courage or cowardice in her work. What she writes seriously is of necessity truth and reality to herself.

She has a wonderful clear-sightedness, childlike in its simplicity and directness. Children are not trammelled by convention and prejudices because they do not know anything about either. Most people when they learn of these bug-bears or, in other words, grow up, become narrowed by their experience. Beatrice Tina seems to have garnered the knowledge and still kept her childhood's gift. The enormous gain attached to this is obvious; there is one disadvantage, that is an occasional discovery of a well-worn truism, but this is a rare occurrence. This writer has another treasure which is generally shared by the small band of children who have not quite shed the wisdom they gathered in some other world, namely, an arrogant merciless sense of humour. There is no formularising or caging

this censor; it positively ramps around and very perfect is he who escapes its sting entirely.

There have been doubts concerning the sex of "Beatrice Tina." These will be silenced easily by "Woman's Worst Enemy," for the writer's experiences as a woman are touched upon and the work is too serious to inspire suspicion of a trick. One feels by the way, when she writes of these experiences, that Miss Tina possesses an exceptionally genuine memory.

This "Woman's Worst Enemy" is remarkably well knit together, and there is no waste of words or superfluous echo of idea.

It begins by stating the author's own mental position towards the Woman question; goes on to talk of different types, of the kept wife, the professional woman, the artisan, the harlot and the unfit mother, winding up with "woman as State creditor."

There are three great points driven home—the crime of allowing girls to marry and to attempt child-birth without knowledge of their significance, the evil of unfit maternity, and the importance of careful breeding. In speaking of the last, the author says:—

A child's life begins nine months before it is born. The mother, being the necessary intermediary, must have means to fit herself for maternity if she is to produce a child worth her trouble and worth the attention of the community.

In proportion to its intelligence, a community will demand quality rather than quantity. Nowadays, when God is on the side of the most ingenious guns—that is, on the side which owns the best organising and inventive brains, numbers count less than intelligence. And intelligence is an expensive product.

Good breeding is a communal matter, and the Ideal State would be one wherein every person born was really welcomed, and every person dead one really missed.

Of the unfit mother:—

Almighty curse! That Adam, the builder and rebuilder of civilisations, must fall and fall again, defeated by the quailing womb of the woman who bears him.

A decadent nation, in attempting to restore its energy by forcing women into becoming mothers, merely burns the candle at both ends.

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But the next line is somewhat disconcerting: "Rarer than any mortal is this mother."

By the way, as conclusion to one chapter we have a charming touch of that arrogant humour.

To my youthful disgust at the idea of childbirth I add a conclusion. Never have I seen the adult creature of whom I would like to be the mother.

There is much interest to be found in Beatrice Tina's fashion of making herself understood. She acknowledges no fetters and refuses absolutely to knuckle down to the word of custom. Consequently she has the whole wealth of the English language to draw upon.

"Woman's Worst Enemy" is not a long book, but a very treasury of wisdom and experience is packed into it.

N. BEENHAM.

REVIEWS.

**Greek Architecture.** By Edith A. Browne. (Black. 3s. 6d. net.)

To their series dealing with "Great Buildings and How to Enjoy Them," Messrs. Adam and Charles Black have added the present volume. Its cheapness is really remarkable: the book is a handsome cloth-bound square demy 8vo. of xiv.—132 pages, and contains 48 quite excellent full-page illustrations reproduced from photographs. While the convenience and the completeness of the general information given—particularly praiseworthy is an illustrated glossary of technical architectural terms—render the book almost necessary and at least extremely handy and pleasant for the general reader and the advanced student, the readable and uncontroversial nature of its text makes it an admirable elementary introduction to Greek architecture for anyone entirely ignorant but anxious to learn something of the subject. There are only two faults to be found; the first is a serious one, and should be remedied in future editions—there is no index; the second, unfortunately irremediable, is that the photographs of the Temple at Segesta and the Theatre at Taormina give little or no idea of the amazing natural beauty in whose midst these two perfect manifestations of the Greek genius are set. We have before us as we write two other photographs of the same places, also taken by Biagi—il mirabile—which recreate as if by miracle that glory wherewith actual sight invests them, and give even to those whose experience the magic of Sicily has not yet made immortal some conception of her buildings' eternal splendour.

**The Exile of St. Helena.** By Phillippe Gonnard. (Heinemann. 10s. 6d. net.)

Now that this work on the Napoleonic Legend has been published, the last word on the subject has, M. Gonnard hopes, been fairly said. We wish we could share M. Gonnard's hope, for the last ten years' unceasing flow of Napoleonic literature has been anything but a Midsummer Night's Dream, but we cannot. While there are Orleanists to provoke Bonapartists to keep the Napoleonic cause alive last words will be as frequent as the last appearances of a theatrical star. M. Gonnard's laudable intention has been to unearth the "hopes and intentions" of Napoleon while at St. Helena. From the evidence before us we do not think he has got into the skin of Napoleon's intentions at all. For one thing he tells us Napoleon had no plan of escape, for another that he was acting all through. From this it would appear that Napoleon was acting all

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along with a secret purpose. He wanted to keep up his prestige and to square one of the Powers waiting to use this prestige, despite his "documentations" to the contrary. The truth is, Napoleon played his part to the end, working first for himself, then for his son (as M. Gonnard claims), and, if all failed, for his name. The book, however, contains exhaustive references, and these, together with its illustrations and admirable "get up," should secure it a place in the best libraries.

**Marriage as a Trade.** By Cecily Hamilton. (Chapman and Hall. 5s.)

It was the most welcome of shocks to find the "Daily Mail" allotting large space and giant headlines to its review of this book. We wonder if miracles are happening in Suburbia. Are the women there really wearier than we believe of their position as word-paid wives and mothers, and even ready to be attacked and derided if that will bite through their fetters? Needless to say, Miss Hamilton, before pronouncing her judgment, has taken just pains to know both sides of the story. It is that which makes her summing up of serious importance. She has written a very courageous book. The conclusion we draw therefrom is, that under the present marriage-laws women have a far worthier life if they remain single. Page 212 contains, perhaps, the most everlastingly true description ever written of women's secret attitude towards the Daisy Lord type of law-breakers.

**The Life of the Universe.** By Svante Arrhenius. (Harper's, 5s. net.)

The first volume is merely a primer dealing in a perfunctory way with the creation myths of primitive races and some ancient peoples. This historical part is very sketchy, and Arrhenius possesses no gifts of making these poetic stories glow with life. The second volume treats of astronomical discoveries, the conception of energy and of infinity. The Swedish chemist, like other scientists, is out of his depths where philosophical problems are concerned. Scientists should confine themselves to their particular trades and help us to get good soap, wholesome jam, show us how to grow potatoes and breed cattle, leaving the philosopher to the tasks which he understands so much better. There is nothing more illuminating about Professor Arrhenius than about any of the other semi-popular and trivial works of this nature. The one worldly idea we find is the suggestion that by radio-activity germs may have been transplanted through infinite space; thus our earth may have received germs from other stars. We also like the idea that under certain conditions of the air a ray of light is so refracted that a person looking straight towards the horizon would see all round the world, and would "be in a position to see his own back." Despite the necessary failure of science to unravel the universe, Professor Arrhenius is quite sure that science will perform this task, and he is impressed "with the soundness and reliability of modern opinions" as compared with ancient ones. We like this reawakening of the Age of Faith, be it only in radio-activity.

## ART.

A few pictures at the London Salon (Royal Albert Hall).

HERE we have an equivalent to the French "Independants." The absence of a hanging committee seems almost sacrilegious in this England, but atmosphere is balanced for the adventurous sightseer by the choice of Albert Hall for background. The circumference of that vast building seemed rather alarming at first, but I felt well rewarded for my tramp when I discovered Mr. Gideon Fidler's work. He has three pictures. They are of outdoor things. In the first a gloriously alive pheasant is contemplating the pitiful skull of another, who had travelled along the pleasant path earlier and more unfortunately.

The second gives a peep of river, and on one side, close to the watcher, a proud kingfisher perches, a world of supremacy expressed in the poise of head and

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preened feathers. More in the background is a smaller one, ready to preen and to rule, its shorter feathers and smaller head foretelling just so much glory as the first claims. Mr. Fidler writes under this picture:

"Long may you reign."

But the third picture is the most entrancing of all. The painter has taken the idea, or at least used as title, two lines of Kipling:

"Only the dew-pond on the height,  
Unfed, that never fails."

The composition of the picture is quite wonderful. It represents a wide, shallow pond cut out of chalk-white ground, with spreading turf edges, and there are sheep drinking. Written down it may sound to some people unimaginative, but only it is unimagined by them. One can feel the impression of sun and air and space; it radiates at quite a distance from the picture.

Another contribution which delighted my heart was by Mr. A. C. Colthurst. He gives an illustration of Debussy's impression of a spinny. Notes and sharps and flats are dotted about all over small melodious-looking trees. The thing was irresistible. An empty-looking stretch of ocean bearing up a line of sailing boats seemed a less lucid symbol of Mozart's musical soul. But we are certainly indebted to this artist for an amusing illustration to an idea. I wonder if he gathered inspiration from John Line's poster of the elliptical rain-bow and Chopin prelude? Probably not.

Horace C. Taylor sent in three terrifying pictures, much after the German decadents' school. I was sorry about the hanging committee then, for they inspired nightmare. One was called "A Poet," and another "Garden Cities of the Future." How this young man—for I would swear he is a young man—can support the creations of his brain I wonder. Such a problem has frequently demanded solution from my brain, and failed to find it.

"The Bathing Pool." This is a wonderful picture of Orpen's. Tall grey walls tower round a small pool, and babies and one woman are playing round it. Though these walls tower so, they do not seem to make the tiny figures lonely. The technique of this painting is striking, for it is almost entirely monotone, and yet seems to meet the eye with colours and colours, just as real stone walls do when one has gazed on them for awhile.

There are some studies of landscape by Konrad Krzyzanowski, and he has also two portraits. This artist exhibited at the Salon last year.

I found, too, a marvellous production of Walter Crane's. An astonishing young woman with bright yellow hair and calculation in her off eye is holding an apple very determinedly in her hand. Obviously she does not intend to part with it for less than a very high price. I am not very sure what mythical heroine she represents, but I think I saw the same head as a print, and it was more pleasing.

There are still other pictures well worth a tramp round the Hall, but I will content myself with digging out these few.

## Recent Music.

IN London we have as many string quartets as we require, and a little more. We are frequently visited with foreign touring quartets of first-class abilities, which is a strong reason for running parties of native origin. The best of all the foreigners who have recently appeared here is that wonderful group of players who performed at the French concerts. Their performances will, I am sure, never be forgotten by those who heard them. But there is at least one British combination worthy of being considered seriously; I refer to the English String Quartet. It is composed of Thomas Morris, Herbert Kinze, Frank Bridge, and Ivor James. These young artists were all students together at the Royal College of Music; each member of the quartet is thoroughly acquainted with his neighbour's temperament and musical habits, and the result is an excellent ensemble. The contrast between their playing and the playing of the quartet at the French

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concerts is simply the contrast between things English and things French. At their second concert, given at the Bechstein Hall, a composition by Frank Bridge was performed in England for the first time. This work (Quartet in E minor) represents imagination and academic ability at breaking point. With Mr. Bridge imagination is an unconsidered trifle; but some of us still look for it in music, and in these days of great technical achievements in composition we naturally turn to the sort in which we shall find some homage to beauty. In this Quartet (which, by the way, I like better than most things of the composer's I have yet heard) there is quite a considerable amount of vitality and exuberance, blustering like the little winds that blow your hat off in a crowded street. In it one finds hints of courage and independence, but no very striking originality; the grace and elegant rhythm of the Allegretto movement, however, raise it rather above the class of average native work we are now getting hardened to. I hope the English String Quartet will continue to prosper if only for the noble purpose of producing Mr. Bridge's compositions. I was delighted to observe a very distinguished professor, who was seated near me, wincing at one of Mr. Bridge's unprepared discords. I didn't like the chord myself, but I enjoyed the professor immensely. He was more eloquent at that moment than all his lectures.

\* \* \*

The musical season is now over. It has been shorter than usual, but has been crowded with many good things. It will be best remembered for the first performance of "Pelléas and Melisande" at Covent Garden, the greatest opera since "Die Meistersinger." Debussy, who came over to rehearse the company, has proved in this work (finished almost a decade ago) what every operatic composer who ever thought of the subject at all tried to suggest, namely, the possibility of a reconciliation between dramatic poetry and music. With an orchestra very similar to that employed by Mozart he has succeeded where the flamboyant Wagner always failed. Indeed Debussy seems to have derived more from the methods of old Monteverde than from any subsequent reformer. His music is of course always superb, in this opera being more than usually restrained, so that the poetry of the libretto is not completely sacrificed. Maeterlinck himself disapproves of it. But then real poets will always object to musical settings of their cherished works, and who can blame them? Debussy has, I say, proved the possibility of a legitimate union between stage poetry and music; but he has not consummated it. To do so he will have to advance as far beyond his present achievements as he has already advanced beyond Wagner's. In other words, we are proceeding in a circle, and he will have to take us to the point from whence the Greek chorus started. Then we may begin again to appreciate poetry and the proper declamation of dramatic verse.

\* \* \*

Covent Garden has also seen this season the first production of "Louise" by Gustave Charpentier, an opera of Bohemian life in Montmartre to swaggering and sentimental music of the Puccini type; "Tess," by Baron Frederic d'Erlanger, an Italian libretto on Hardy's novel, translated into English by Mr. Claude Aveling to music of genial and sympathetic qualities; and the Afternoon Theatre produced "The Wreckers" of Miss Ethel Smyth, an "all English" libretto of Cornish life a century ago to music written with a strong German accent. So far for Opera.

\* \* \*

In other kinds of music the achievements of the season have been more generally interesting: Mr. Delius in a "Mass of Life," founded on a Nietzschean text; M. Reynaldo Hahn in his "Bal de Beatrice d'Este," a wonderful little piece of chamber music descriptive of a ball arranged for that lady by Leonardo da Vinci; the recitals of Max Reger; the French concerts; Mr. Hamilton Harty in his Violin Concerto; Sir Charles Stanford in his Great Skit entitled an "Ode to Discord," so well advertised that everybody was familiar with the joke beforehand; and lastly (of a

purely random list) the concert of Mr. Joseph Holbrooke, who had just returned from a trip to Terra del Fuego with Lord Howard de Walden, under whose protection he took out an orchestra of four hundred thousand performers to play his lordship's opera to the natives. Mr. Holbrooke announced his concert with his usual "eccentric" blether circularised in print; this time it was headed "An Apology," in which he expressed his regret at being forced to give a concert of his own compositions. This composer is a man of genius when he is writing music, but his paragraphs should be banned by the Censor as unfit for publication. I heard only a portion of his concert, and couldn't afford to pay a shilling for the programme, but came away with the pleasantest memories, memories of a mighty orchestra, a chorus spilling itself all over the hall like rice at a wedding ceremony, and an audience of perfectly alarming proportions. I am afraid I have forgotten the tunes.

\* \* \*

I hope Mr. Thomas Beecham will not be discouraged by the fact that there are now four "permanent" orchestras in London. It must be a most difficult business to keep a propagandist orchestra going under present conditions; we look, however, to Mr. Beecham to do so. His work has, in the last two or three years, been far and away the most important thing in London.

HERBERT HUGHES.

## 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.*

**SPECIAL NOTICE.**—*Correspondents are requested to be brief. Many letters weekly are omitted on account of their length.*

AMBROSE BIERCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

The notes of Jacob Tonson on Ambrose Bierce interested me keenly, and I hope they may be the means of directing the attention of some English publisher to the possibility of issuing a cheap edition of Bierce's short stories in this country. That so rare a judge in these matters as Jacob Tonson thinks well of the stories should be a sufficient recommendation; that so well-informed an authority on literary matters generally knows so little of Bierce is significant, and might justify a London publisher in claiming as a "discovery" (so far as England is concerned) a mere "re-discovery." Anyway, the thing itself should be worth while.

Twelve years or so back, Bierce nearly obtained the distinction of book-publication in London. I was acting editor of a certain London weekly, one of whose contributors was an eccentric but gifted young Bohemian named Cowley-Brown. He had lived for awhile in the United States, and had read and met Bierce, whom he described as "wasting the greater part of his time breaking his shins over his own wit, excoriating Irish-American saloon-keeping politicians, and filth of that sort, in an inimitable causerie entitled 'Prattle,' which he contributes to a San Francisco paper." I asked Cowley-Brown to write about Bierce, and he did, his articles causing some little sensation in literary circles on this side. Later on I learned that the late James Payn and Robert Barr had already praised Bierce over here. Cowley-Brown subsequently started the "Anti-Philistine" (which some of your readers may remember), but like many other good things it failed to find a large public. He had intended to publish in England a collection of Bierce's stories, issued already in America with the title "Can Such Things Be?" and showed me a copy, corrected by Bierce for the London market. But the scheme fell through. He did actually print in "The Anti-Philistine" several of Bierce's best stories, notably "The Damned Thing," "A Son of the Gods," "My Favourite Murder," "A Watcher by the Dead," "The Realm of the Unreal," and what I personally think is his greatest, as well as his most horrible, story, "Chickamauga." Bierce may have imitated himself, as Jacob Tonson says, but perhaps he could hardly have imitated a better model in the line of gruesome fantasy.

I have an idea that Cowley-Brown told me that Bierce was an Englishman and wrote some of his earlier stories in London, that failing of recognition, even of a livelihood here, he went to

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America. But I am not sure of this, and in print I find that Cowley-Brown alluded to Bierce as a product of California, bracketing him with Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller, and Mark Twain as the pride of the Golden Gate in that day when she shall come to be proud of her noblest achievements.

I may add that Mrs. Gertrude Atherton years ago tried to work up a London interest in Bierce, declaring that he "has the best brutal imagination of any man in the English-speaking race." Cowley-Brown whilst in England not only blew the Bierce trumpet to his strongest purpose, but introduced to a number of Londoners who did not know them before several other American writers who, if not so great as Bierce, I personally found very good reading, among them Stanley Waterloo ("A Man and a Woman") and Percival Pollard. When last I heard of Cowley-Brown he was at the Bohemian Club in Frisco. If he should see this, he may be tempted to send you further information concerning Bierce and his work. There are so few writers of fiction in any generation that really matter: it is a pity to allow any of them to escape a part of his public for want of the necessary drumming.

WILLIAM PURVIS.

VIVISECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

May I be allowed a little space in your columns to correct the inaccurate statements about Mr. Stephen Coleridge's Bill made by Miss Kidd in your last issue. I need not deal with her arguments as they are based on her inaccurate statements.

1. It is incorrect for Miss Kidd to state that complete anæsthesia is at the present time enforced at all cutting operations. There are only two inspectors for the whole of Great Britain, and it would be impossible for them to see that the provisions of the Act are properly carried out. An important clause in Mr. Coleridge's Bill deals with this matter and provides for a sufficient number of inspectors to see that the law is enforced in every case.

2. It would be illogical, as Miss Kidd suggests, for animals "to be killed before regaining consciousness, and at the same time to allow inoculation experiments, in which the whole of the suffering consists in the after-effects." But the Bill does nothing of the kind. Indeed, there is a special clause which provides that the animal shall either be killed or completely anæsthetised "directly it begins to feel pain."

3. Although Miss Kidd informs your readers that her society does not approve of bringing in a Bill for lesser measures itself, it appears to be willing to accept such a Bill if the Government is responsible for it. But why only accept a Government Bill? Surely it would be wiser and more logical to accept any Bill, even a Bill by Mr. Stephen Coleridge. But if there is a personal objection in his case, I suggest that Miss Kidd's society should welcome private members' Bills as well as Government Bills, and particularly the Bill of the member for Peterborough, Mr. George Greenwood.

ROBT. STEWART.

A SUGGESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

It has often occurred to me that one defect of the Socialist movement in this country ought to be remedied by THE NEW AGE: I refer to the absence of cartoons. Half the effective propaganda in France and Germany is pictorial, and in this country Liberalism owes at least a quarter of its popularity to Sir F. C. Gould. That the Socialist movement in England contains writers of distinction is evident in any issue of THE NEW AGE. I cannot believe that there is not an equal number of draughtsmen among us. You would be doing a great service to Socialism as well as to THE NEW AGE by unearthing these artists and publishing some of their work.

R. M.

[We shall be happy to adopt our correspondent's suggestion, and we hereby invite our readers to submit suitable drawings and cartoons, which must be exclusively in line.—Ed. N.A.]

BERGSON AND BAX.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

Of course, one accepts entirely Mr. Bax's statement that he has not read Bergson, but the momentum of his denial carries him on to an additional statement which requires correction. The question of priority, he says, is settled by the fact that the principal ideas in "Roots of Reality" were first embodied in an earlier book published in 1892, "when Bergson was not heard of." It so happens, however, that all Bergson's books are merely the development of ideas first stated in "Données immédiates de la conscience," published in 1889, three years before Mr. Bax's book.

Really, however, I don't think that the question of priority need arise at all. An analogy can only be drawn between Bergson and Bax in that they both treat of the same problem—the impossibility of completely including the "alogical" under the "logical." The treatment of this problem leads to two quite independent philosophies.

T. E. HULME.

THE POOLS OF SILENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEW AGE."

The most complete reply to Mr. Stacpoole's letter of last week will be found in quotations from Mr. Stacpoole's books.

He charges your reviewer with malicious falsification and unadulterated lies. What are his instances? First that I have written that his heroine in the "Blue Lagoon" is awakened to sex by a slap on the back. Mr. Stacpoole says: "No person in 'The Blue Lagoon' is struck upon the back. Your reviewer

has twisted a perfectly simple incident into an indecent shape." Here is the passage on which I relied (p. 227):—

"She took the cane . . . it slipped, flew out and struck her companion a sharp blow on the side of the 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. Then some veil seemed lifted, some wizard's wand stretched out, some mysterious vial broken. As she looked at him like that, he suddenly and fiercely clasped her in his arms . . . not knowing what to do with her. Then her lips told him for they met his in an endless kiss."

Admitting the slight inaccuracy of writing "back" instead of "shoulder," I leave it to you to decide whether my interpretation is not borne out by the passage. To prove that Mr. Stacpoole is not unsophisticated I may quote a passage from "The Pools of Silence." An old black woman has been beaten to death. "Berselius, also dripping with sweat, his eyes also dilated to a rim, tottering like a drunken man, gazed drinking the sight in . . . beyond the instincts of murder and assassination, beyond the instincts that make a Count Cajus or a Marquis de Sade. . . ." (p. 128).

Mr. Stacpoole's next charge of "falsification and unadulterated lies" is to the effect that I ridiculed him for stating that Captain Berselius selected an old grandmother to be beaten to death. True, the selection is ostensibly made by another character named Meeus, and the flogging is carried out by the native soldiers; but (page 123) we are shown that Meeus is the merest creature of Berselius, and so obedient as to obey a simple glance from this "tremendous personality." Of course, my jibe was not at the never-existent Berselius, a more than usually incredible puppet of this author's, but at Mr. Stacpoole. It was he who selected the grandmother and had her flogged for our luxurious horror.

Further, Mr. Stacpoole assures you that "Berselius does not die 'the gentlest man ever born,' he dies his old original self." Once again I appeal from Mr. Stacpoole to Mr. Stacpoole's book. Berselius has undergone an operation which Mr. Stacpoole certainly assures us restores his converted hero to his old savage personality: but there is only Mr. Stacpoole's word for it that the change has taken place. Nothing that Berselius says or does before his timely death would be unworthy of the gentlest man ever born.

Page 333: "The operation has been successful." Page 337: "Berselius asked for her (his daughter Maxine)." Page 338: "Maxine sat down on a chair by the bed. . . 'Your mother?' said Berselius." Page 339: "Berselius turned his head and his eyes found Adams' with a not unkindly gaze in them." Page 340: "He raised the little hand of Maxine and touched it with his lips. . . . It was the last act of his life."

The measure of Mr. Stacpoole's sympathy with the Congo natives whose woes have provided him with copy for his "greatest romance" may be taken all through this book. He speaks of the natives variously as niggers, animals, and things. Even in his letter to you he cannot conceal his contempt for them. In response to my suggestion that a real Berselius would have chosen a worthy victim, such as a powerful chief or a beautiful maiden, he asks: "Where are beautiful maidens to be found in the Congo Free State? Has your reviewer ever seen a Congo nigger?"

On his own admission (page 64) some of the girls were "almost comely." I can supplement Mr. Stacpoole's tourist acquaintance with "niggers" by a lifelong knowledge of African natives from the Point to Cape Verde.

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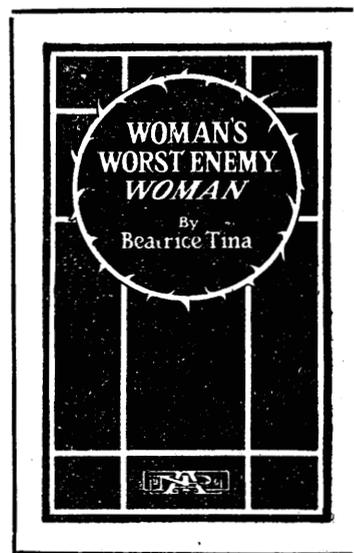
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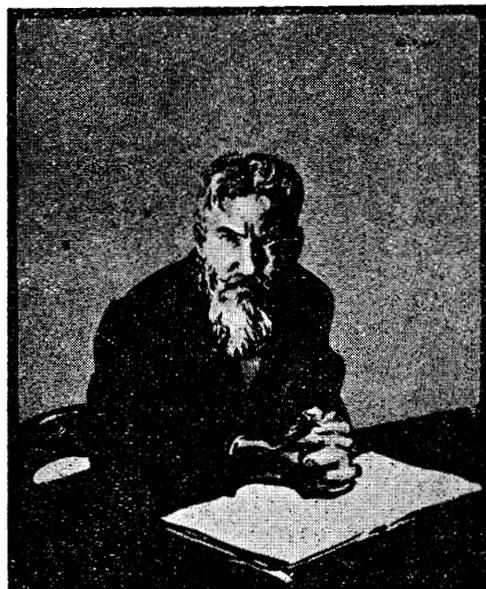
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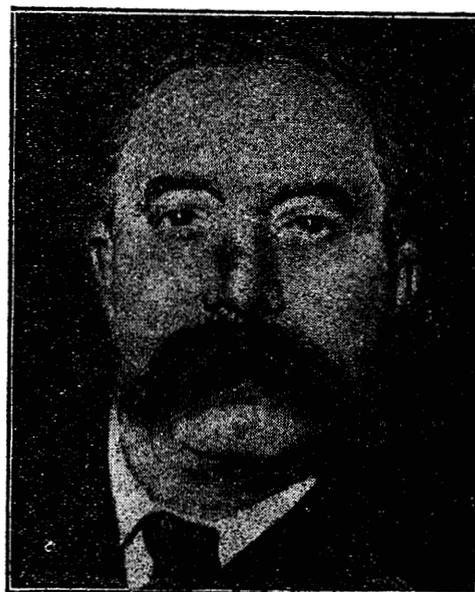
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