

THE NEW AGE

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
NOTES OF THE WEEK...	601
FOREIGN AFFAIRS. By S. Verdad...	603
THE CIVIL SERVICE ...	604
BLOCKING MOTIONS. By Hilaire Belloc ...	605
THE GOOD FRIDAY PROCESSION. By Duse Mohamed.	606
THE BOLOGNA CONGRESS. By T. E. Hulme ...	607
THE UNIDEA'D FABIAN. By J. M. Kennedy ...	609
ONLY A HALFPENNY! By William Poel ...	610
AMERICAN NOTES. By Juvenal ...	611
UNEDITED OPINIONS ...	612
BOOKS AND PERSONS. By Jacob Tonson ...	613

MUSIC. By Richmond Haigh ...	614
DRAMA: "Fanny's First Play." By Ashley Dukes ...	616
ART: William Blake. By Huntly Carter ...	616
IN HOSPITAL: A Reverie. By Herbert Hughes ...	618
THE CRY OF THE CREATURE. By Helminthion ...	618
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR FROM S. Verdad, Eden Phillpotts, H. F. Stephens, Patrick J. Dollan, Ellen M. Paterson, J. M. Kennedy, Joseph Burgess, James H. Carey, C. J. Whitby, M.D., Dora Forster, Hugh Blaker, Vance Palmer, J. John Elliott, S. Cunningham, Samuel Wad- ington ...	619

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE middle of May is now given as the date by which the Parliament Bill will have passed the House of Commons. Thereafter its fate will lie on the knees of the Lords. Before that time, however, the subsidiary problems of Home Rule, Federation and the Reform of the Second Chamber must be re-threshed, though in each instance the amount of corn to chaff is inconsiderable. Of the prospects of Reform we have nothing more to say than we have already said: no scheme is likely to prove practicable or desirable. Federation, similarly, is beyond the region of practical politics. England, after all, is an Empire as well as a Commonwealth. A great concession will have been made to the Dominions in admitting them to conversation with the secrets of English Foreign policy; and for the present that must be enough. We must see what price in Dreadnoughts, etc., the Dominions are prepared to pay for their collusion with diplomacy. The discussions of Home Rule which are taking place this week are even more problematical than the foregoing. Everybody realises now that the Government must bring in its Bill next session. Any fruitful discussion must, therefore, be deferred until then.

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The Easter Conferences of the two chief political Socialist bodies have attracted even less attention than usual this year. Both were obviously more concerned about their internal affairs than about Socialism. It seems to be the fate, indeed, of most organisations to exhaust their energy on self-maintenance. As for their objects, other people with their hands free must look after them. We do not propose to discuss the doings of the Social Democratic Party's Congress. They were dull, uninteresting and ineffective. But several points arose during the Independent Labour Party's discussions which may be mentioned. Official optimism is allowed a certain amount of fiction, but we really think the limit is exceeded when the Report of the I.L.P. executive assumes that their present condition is satisfactory. Mr. Snowden in the "Christian Commonwealth" summarises the state of things. The I.L.P. has declined in membership during the last two years. Branch subscriptions have fallen by £200. The number of branches has declined from 842 to 796. Sales of literature have fallen fifty per cent. In addition one may add from common observation that this so-called reaction shows no signs of ceasing. On the contrary,

everything points to its continuance and to the final disappearance of the I.L.P. from the active political forces of the day.

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Various more or less plausible explanations have been offered of this serious but unmistakeable decline in the popularity of Socialist politics. Doubtless the officials of the I.L.P. would attribute it to the machinations of malcontents, beginning with the criticisms of THE NEW AGE two years ago. Others, again, pretend that the decline was inevitable from the moment that the other political parties began stealing the Socialist thunder. But Mr. Snowden, in cautious language is, in our opinion, nearer the point when he declares that the propaganda of the I.L.P. has been unattractive and unintelligent. In less timid language we would repeat the charge: the I.L.P. has failed, is failing and will continue to fail on account of the incompetence and downright stupidity of its personnel, leaders and rank and file. This incompetence and stupidity have been manifested in a thousand ways, but in none more conclusively than in this single fact that to this very moment no person of the smallest pretension to brains has been permitted to acquire influence in the counsels of the I.L.P. As a body, in fact, they have become notorious for their positive hostility to brains in any form. For at least two years the best intelligence of the Socialist movement was at their disposal and they refused it. For two more years they were offered the advantage of the best friendly criticism, and they ignored it. And to-day we are beholding the results.

* * *

All this, however, is past history, and would be of no public importance if at this year's Conference a question of parliamentary procedure had not arisen bearing on the recent indictment by Messrs. Belloc and Chesterton of the party system. We have not had the interest to discover the conclusion to which the Conference actually came on the subject, but the preliminary speeches and votings were enough to convince any reader that the I.L.P. members of Parliament have about as much notion of the political situation as the most ignorant of their members. In particular the speeches of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. Keir Hardie betray an ignorance so great as to make it necessary to assume that it has been acquired. The question arose whether the Labour Party as a whole, and the I.L.P. in particular, were not guilty of breaking their pledges, defeating their objects, and opposing their members by maintaining a thick and thin alliance with the Liberal party. It was urged that the Labour votes should cease to be regarded by the Government as bought in bulk on minor as well as on major issues,

and that, generally speaking, consideration for the safety of the Government should less often determine Labour votes in the House than it does now. There are, we freely admit, great difficulties in making a rule upon this point. So long as the Government chooses to make minor questions vital, so long must a vote against the Government endanger its existence. But the reply even here is that a Government that maintains a tyranny by such crooked devices is not worth maintaining, though its alleged immediate programme be the restoration of the Garden of Eden. Doubtless the present Government's programme on the Veto Bill has the approval of the Labour Party and of the Labour votes in the country as well; but that fact alone does not entitle the Government to a free hand in every matter outside the range of the Bill. Loyal co-operation with the Government on the Veto Bill is one thing, but to yield allegiance on every extraneous matter is robbing Peter to pay Paul.

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What lay at the back of Mr. MacDonald's elaborate apologies, however, was something that the I.L.P. Conference had not the courage to discover. We refer to the "bargain" entered into by the Labour Party with the Liberal Whips. Of this bargain we confess that we have no direct knowledge; it may exist, and there are reasons for supposing that it does exist. On the other hand, we should be prepared to learn that no explicit bargain has been made. The charge was first definitely formulated in no uncertain terms by Messrs. Belloc and Chesterton in their book on "The Party System." It runs as follows:

It has often been suggested by those unacquainted with Westminster that the breakdown of the Labour Party and its absorption and digestion by the professional politicians was due to the influence of "the tone of the House." The suggestion is plausible, but inaccurate. . . . It was due to a definite compact with the Executive by which places, advantages in moving motions, etc.—ultimately, perhaps Cabinet rank—should be the price of compromise: the bargain was accepted.

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The charge therein made received no reply whatever from the Labour Party. Twice it has been repeated in the correspondence columns of *THE NEW AGE*, and the attention of Labour members has been specially drawn to it. Why has there been no reply? We certainly expected that if our own columns were not honoured by an explanation at least the annual conference would be entrusted with a disclaimer. But not a word has been said. The wavering conclusion most men have hitherto held of the real state of affairs will be immensely strengthened by the complete silence. In fact, we may now take it as settled that Messrs. Belloc and Chesterton were right in their guess. This it is that lends almost a sinister air to the political discussions of the Conference. The failure of the rank and file to insist on enlightenment involves them with their officials in ineptitude and something worse.

* * *

Mr. Garvin has become the editor of an American millionaire's journal, but his accuracy is in no way improved. Writing in the "Observer" on Sunday, he puts forward a view of the Holmes circular which he says everybody appears to have missed. The point was made in *THE NEW AGE* three weeks ago, and has been made every week since for the sole benefit of journalists like Mr. Garvin who cannot think alone. It is that the inspectorate of the elementary schools should be better and differently educated from the elementary teachers themselves. It is not to be wondered at that the Conference of Teachers should hold the contrary doctrine. They are naturally disposed to think (in public) that a different education from their own must necessarily be inferior. But too much attention should not be paid to the Teachers' Union's opinions of educational questions. In the first place, they do not meet to discuss education, and, in the second, they are unrepresentative of the mass of the teachers in these matters. Usually, indeed, such

inspectors as are appointed by local authorities from among the ranks of teachers have been officials of the Union in their salad days. So that a conference of delegates declaring in favour of the Holmes Circular would be a conference passing a self-denying ordinance,—an incredible thing!

* * *

There are two aspects of the Holmes Circular discussion. The one is its bureaucratic aspect and the other is the educational. At present nobody but ourselves seems to have the smallest idea that these two aspects have no necessary relation with each other. The "Nation," following the lead of the Teachers' Conference, declares war on "the self-willed arrogance" of the education officials and demands a Parliamentary inquiry into the Civil Service. Mr. Pickles of the Teachers' Union declares that "the dry rot of officialdom must be uptorn." Very well, we do not object to the uptearing of the dry rot, even if it involves a long Parliamentary inquiry. In fact, the appointment and control of the Civil Service have become matters of widespread private if not of public scandal. But in the name of sanity let not this question of bureaucracy blind our eyes to the question of what is the true educational line in the matter of the Holmes Circular. Here the question is simple and distinct. Bureaucracy or no bureaucracy, unless the inspectors of our elementary schools are superior in culture to the teachers they inspect, their work is entirely superfluous when it is not positively harmful to education.

* * *

The question of whether men of superior culture to their fellows are to be found in the ranks of elementary teachers does not call immediately for discussion. We are inclined to believe that they are to be found there as in every other body of men. But nobody with any practical experience of how appointments are made by local authorities would dream of supposing that these gifted individuals are likely to be chosen for any office but that of scapegoat. In fact, we would go so far as to say that few appointments made by local education authorities are anything else but jobs, and that in such jobbery it is precisely the lowest type of teacher that stands the best chance of success. If, as we have often suggested, the teachers themselves could be regarded as a guild and given the selection from among their own number, both of their inspectorate and of their heads, the importation of University men would be unnecessary, for if the best could be chosen the best could be found in the elementary ranks. But we repeat that under the present system the best are never chosen. Consequently, for the safeguarding of some standard, it is advisable that local authorities should be generally confined in their choice to University men. The worst University man is at least a shade superior to the worst elementary teacher. The choice between these two is what the Holmes Circular thrusts on us.

* * *

With the public generally, we find it difficult to pump up sympathy with the London taxi-cab drivers. They may publish their grievances, as the Duke of Wellington once told somebody, and be damned for all we care. It was commonly believed when the service was first instituted that the new vehicles would involve new manners. Had not Mr. Shaw taught us to regard the motor-driver as the new aristocrat? The taxi-cab drivers, however, rapidly degenerated from this proud position; and at this moment there is probably no body of men more greedy, ill-mannered, rascally, and lazy. The contrast between these privately-employed tip-hunters and the publicly-employed tram drivers and conductors is a lesson in collectivism. Had the service been municipalised from the outset both public and drivers would not be now complaining.

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[The present issue closes the Eighth Volume of *THE NEW AGE*. Next week's issue will contain an Index and a Literary Supplement.]

Foreign Affairs.

By S. Verdad.

LIKE Lord Brooke (I think it was Lord or Sir Somebody Brooke), I "stayed in my club during the holidays and looked out at the damned people"—a highly undemocratic thing to do, perhaps; but something that everyone would do if he could. I expected to be plagued by ecstatic gush about Peace Sunday on the part of those penny-a-liners who presume to speak in the name of the people of England, but happily the papers were filled instead with accounts of the state of affairs in Mexico. No wonder peace is having a rest in the United States. I understand that Mr. Taft has not yet quite recovered from the shock of reading Sir Edward Grey's speech at the very time when the American Army, such as it is, was being mobilised.

Apart from the fact that President Diaz is over eighty years old, the days of his rule are numbered. His regular troops are as untrustworthy as those belonging to the Sultan of Morocco, and he is no longer capable of leading his men out to repress disorder in person. Not that the Madero family, who are leading the "Insurrectos," have any very strong backing beyond the dollars of the Wall Street financiers. The general state of anarchy throughout Mexico, and the dangers menacing the lives and property of foreigners, will soon lead either to the resignation of President Diaz, followed by an unstable and uncertain government, or to the absolute necessity for American intervention.

Now Mexico is a good prize. With an area equal to that of France, Spain, Germany, and Great Britain, she has a population of only 14 millions. The people are easy to handle, even the Indians, and, considering their position in the ethnic scale, the Mexicans are on the whole not a bad sort. They are permeated with the spirit of constitutional government to about the same extent as the Cossacks of the Don were a century ago; but they have undoubtedly suffered from absentee landlords and absentee capitalists. The Indians, of whom there are some four millions, and the lower classes are slaves in all but name. Practically all the Mexicans hate the United States Americans like poison, but I have found that, as a general rule, they are ready to welcome Englishmen. The annexation of Mexico by the United States is bound to come; but it will not be an easy job.

That much of this trouble was deliberately organised by the United States in view of Mexican relations with Japan is a fact which is now recognised in diplomatic circles, although of course it is denied officially. I do not profess to explain at the moment why Japan should have wanted an alleged naval base in Magdalena Bay. Although this bay lies at the south-western extremity of Lower California, which is Mexican territory, the Americans could reach it by land or sea in case of necessity. Besides, unless Japan means to take over Hawaii, she has no connecting links, and even Hawaii would be very far both from Japan and Magdalena Bay.

One thing, however, is clear. Japan recognises that there is no love lost between the United States and the Republics of Central and South America, and she means to exploit this state of things to as much advantage as possible. Her representatives should know, however, that the so-called "Greaser" Republics are thoroughly untrustworthy, and that an alliance, to be worth anything, should be sought rather with Brazil, Argentina, or Chile. It must not be overlooked that Brazil has now three first-class "Dreadnoughts," and that Chile and Argentina are having others built. Even if trouble in the Pacific broke out to-morrow, the warships of the South American Republics would be a formidable factor, while their land forces would give the North American troops the time of their lives.

I know that these matters have recently had considerable attention devoted to them at the White House,

just about the opening of the peace campaign. A week or two ago I referred to the relations between the United States and China, which were also a cause of much concern to the authorities at Washington.

I presume it is M. Tardieu who, in the "Temps" leader of April 15, calls attention to the significance of the conferring of the Order of the Golden Fleece upon King Ferdinand by the Emperor Francis Joseph: an indication that the relations between Bulgaria and Austria, which have been officially "cool" since the Prince proclaimed himself a Tsar, are now becoming "warmer." Excellent though the leader is, I should like to supplement the "Temps'" account in one or two places.

It will be remembered that in October, 1908, Prince Ferdinand, as he was then, had been the guest of the Emperor Francis Joseph at Budapest, and that a few days after his departure for Sofia there were two announcements, so close as to be practically simultaneous: that Austria had formally annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that Prince Ferdinand had proclaimed Bulgaria an independent monarchy, with himself as King. Naturally, this looked suspicious on the face of it, and the Turks had no hesitation in declaring that the two rulers had arranged the coup at Budapest. Personally, I do not think this was the case; and certainly Austria took pains afterwards to show that it was not so. The aged Emperor set himself and his Ministers to the task of mollifying the Young Turks, and the authorities at Vienna specifically repudiated Bulgaria.

King Ferdinand paid several visits, and there was much bargaining and negotiating. The end of it was that, in the opinion of Berlin and Vienna, peace in the Balkans would be better than war in the meantime, so Russia and Bulgaria were told to behave themselves and mind what they were about. Hence Bulgaria, too, started to soothe the Turks by endeavouring to prevent Bulgarian bands from crossing the frontier, and in other ways making herself generally agreeable.

All this, however, was not done without an object. Germany had in the meantime made big bids for Turkish favour and Turkish concessions, and she got them. The French money which had been lent to Turkey was spent in Germany, and when the Quai d'Orsay put its foot down on the proposal to float a new Turkish loan on the Paris Bourse Germany undertook to find the money. When Turkey wanted to buy a second-hand battleship or two, France and England had none for sale, but Germany had a couple of spare ones in stock which she was willing to dispose of at a considerable sacrifice.

I wish I could agree with the "Temps" writer that all this was done in the interests of peace in the Balkans, but I greatly doubt it. Bulgaria, while nominally on friendly terms with Turkey, has never quite given up her hankering after Macedonia, or at all events part of it. But it is essential for the purposes of German expansion into Asia Minor and Persia that Turkey should be friendly to the Teutonic Powers, and that the Balkans as a whole should be quiet for some years to come. When Germany supported Turkey in her recent encroachments on the north-western corner of Persia, this also was part of the bribe. Indeed, Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter, the German Foreign Minister, is hopeful that an "arrangement" may be come to whereby Teutonic influence in Central Europe may be still further increased. The "Triple" Alliance, it will be remembered, now includes Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Roumania: a strong combination outwardly; but, as I remarked some time ago, not quite so strong when considered from behind the scenes. The plan is to draw Turkey and Bulgaria into this combination, and whether it works well or ill in future depends mainly on two things, and on the first of these rather than the second: the expanding and dominating power of the German people, and the nature of the defenceless material attractions offered by Persia and Egypt. N'est-ce pas que j'ai raison, M. Tardieu?

The Civil Service.

THE incident of the "Holmes circular," comparatively unimportant in itself, has had the happy effect of bringing under review the whole question of existing methods of appointment, promotion, etc., in the Civil Service. This is a matter for congratulation, and it is to be hoped that, now that the opportunity is given them, Socialists will carefully examine the antiquated machinery of public administration and see whether in its present condition it is fit to be entrusted with the large schemes of reform which they are endeavouring to push forward. Frankly, as a Civil Servant, I say that it is not. Its bearings have got badly rusted, half its energy is running to waste, and it groans and creaks abominably, even under the burden that is now put on it.

An inefficient Civil Service is the worst part of the price we have to pay for the "Party system." The Army and Navy have always been subjected to some external criticism, but with the collective responsibility of the Cabinet for administrative control, the Civil Service has long since passed almost altogether out of the sphere of the House of Commons. Its members have now to content themselves with the harmless discussion of such tit-bits as the Government care to throw them; such as the question whether hairpins ought to be supplied as stores to War Office charwomen, or whether telegraph boys are allowed by the Post Office regulations to play marbles in their lunch-time!

It is now over twenty years since the Civil Service was last overhauled, and when the "Ridley" Commission sat it was not in a worse condition than it is now. John Stuart Mill had established an irrefutable case in favour of the appointment of public servants by open competitive examinations, Dickens had pulled away the veil and exposed the Tite Barnacles of our government departments, and Gladstone had made an honest attempt to re-model the Civil Service on Mill's lines. It was the duty of the "Ridley" Commission to formulate a general scheme of appointment applicable throughout the Civil Service. The idea still held sway and influenced their decisions, that posts of initiative and responsibility could only be filled by men drawn from the "gentlemanly" class; so their scheme provided that the Service should, with certain exceptions, be staffed by three classes—the First Division to direct and control, the Second Division to do the bulk of the work with Boy Clerks to assist in copying.

That scheme has been undermined from both ends. The First Division examination was drawn up by the Civil Service Commissioners in consultation with the Dons of Oxford and Cambridge, with the result that an education at one of those centres of light and learning became almost a *sine qua non* of success in it. Of late years two or three Second Division men, with the help of the University of London, and by the possession of extraordinary brilliance and perseverance, have forced their way through the examination. Still, even with this practical monopoly the First Division failed to satisfy the need of the governing classes for jobs; while, at the same time, with more and more men from the public elementary schools finding that with hard work and additional "coaching" they might aspire to entrance to it, the competition for the Second Division became more and more severe. The result was twofold. A barrier was established between the First and Second Division in the shape of the "Intermediate" class, in response to the demands of the Head Masters of "Public" schools, who complained that while the pay of the Second Division was not sufficiently remunerative to attract their pupils, the examination was not of a character for them to command success in it. Prior to this, existing Civil Servants competing for higher examinations had enjoyed the privilege of deducting five years from their age to bring them within the age limits. So in order to prevent the able Second Division men cramming up "public" school subjects in their evenings, and by their superior merit crowding the public school men out of these Intermediate Clerk-

ships, the age extension was reduced from five years to one. And still the greed of the governing classes for "jobs" was not satisfied! Then the patronage system of appointment was revived, and Cabinet Ministers scrambled over each other to push their needy friends and relations into all the well-paid new posts in connection with Labour Exchanges and Land Valuation, and those of their friends who have not been already accommodated are booking up posts in connection with the administration of the State insurance schemes against invalidity and unemployment.

Meanwhile, Parliament has obediently turned its attention to the other end of the scheme, and members have been distressed, quite properly, at the large number of Boy Clerks engaged for copying work and discharged at 20. So, in response to Parliamentary pressure, a further class was created between the Boy Clerks and the Second Division—the class of Assistant Clerks, and recruited solely from the Boy Clerks. This class was, and, indeed, still is, absurdly underpaid despite repeated favourable modifications of the scale of pay. Assistant Clerks must of necessity in most departments perform work of almost the same character as that of the Second Division; and as Lord Rothschild maintained at its inception that the Second Division scale of pay was too small to get the best men for the work or the best value for the expenditure, it may be imagined what success would result from a cheeseparing economy of employing in their stead Assistant Clerks at a still lower rate. In point of fact, Lord Rothschild was right, for although the Second Division has secured the best men for the work, with no hope of advancement before them and a fair amount of leisure, they have naturally devoted their best energies to supplementing their incomes by additional work outside their official duties.

Before looking for the remedy, perhaps it would be well to restate the case for open competition. A good case can be established against it in favour of direct selection, and no doubt men like Lord Cromer, Lord Hugh Cecil, and perhaps even the writer of THE NEW AGE "Notes of the Week," would be ready to support it. But the case for such a system as against open competition is on a par with the case for a benevolent despotism as against democracy; a despotism seldom remains benevolent, and direct selection seldom remains disinterested or wise. Like democracy, open competition has its drawbacks—square men will sometimes get into round holes and do their work badly—but in the long run its results always prove better than those of direct selection. The difficult problem to decide is, who are to select? And whoever they may be, human nature being what it is, it is almost certain that other claims than an applicant's ability to perform the work will weigh with them in their selection and so vitiate its wisdom. Take an actual instance where no corruption is suggested, but where, on the contrary, the motive for appointment is quite honest and even praiseworthy though none the less unjustifiable. A man was selected for a responsible post in connection with the Labour Exchanges, not because he had any knowledge of the scope and nature of unemployment, or a knowledge of economics or, indeed, any acquaintance with industrial conditions, but simply because he had assisted Lieutenant Shackleton in his expedition to the South Pole and wanted a salary. Imagine the state of "Selfridge's" in a year or two if the head of the drapery department was selected because he had been a successful but unfortunate aeroplaneist, the head of the furnishing department because he had not been able to make a living as a broker and was a second cousin of Mr. Whiteley, and if all the other responsible positions were filled in the same way.

Admitting, however, that there is a case for direct selection, if it be wisely exercised, there is no case at all for the mixture of the two systems such as we have at present—direct selection or restricted competition for the better paid posts and open competition for the rest. No system which human ingenuity could devise could possibly work worse. Half the advantages of open competition are lost while none of the advantages of direct selection are gained. While the men who are

pushed into responsible positions do not control the appointment or dismissal of their subordinates, they are often compelled to admit their capacity for better work and the injustice of their own selection, with the result that while merit in their subordinates goes unrewarded, inefficiency too often goes unpunished.

If we are unwilling to revert to a system of direct selection, open competition must be established as an "iron" law of appointment to the Civil Service and the existing "caste" barrier must be broken down.

In a further article I propose to deal with the immediate steps that must be taken to make the Service efficient and the ultimate ideal that we must keep in view.

X.

Blocking Motions.

By Hilaire Belloc.

It is always interesting to watch the dissolution of a fabric, the break up of a sea-wall under a storm, or the exposure of an elaborate financial fraud under cross examination, or the melting of the ice in spring on the great inland rivers.

It is not only interesting, but pleasurable, to watch this sort of disintegration when the thing that is breaking up has long been evil and is becoming contemptible.

The break up of the Party humbug is going on at such a pace that weekly comments upon it seem all too far apart; but the recess gives one a little breathing space to look round.

Of twenty matters that might attract one in the entertaining spectacle, the chief matter is the active help which the "official Opposition" are giving the Treasury Bench in turning the House of Lords into an undignified annexe to the Caucus. It is a spectacle full of irony, for while Mr. Balfour and Mr. Asquith are actively supporting each other in destroying the old Second Chamber, and replacing it by some new-fangled thing that shall be subject to the machine, that machine itself is going to pieces in their hands. The chief character of the peers that will remain when the business is over will be the continued acquirement of peerage by purchase. . . .

However, I am not writing on that main matter today, but on a particular point of the farce, and that point is the passing of the "Blocking Motion."

When an institution is breaking up, the action of men who appear to be facilitating the catastrophe is largely unconscious. Events converge towards the final disaster in spite of individual human wills, and private people find themselves doing public things upon a scale they never intended. So it is with what has happened to the blocking motion. Yesterday this venerable fraud seemed immortal: only this week it has been tripped up and has fallen heavily! It will not recover from that fall. It will die, and when it dies yet another of the remaining props of the Party System will have gone by the board.

It was the Labour Party, of all people in the world, who did the deed.

I presume they intended nothing so enormous—nay, deliberately to murder the Blocking Motion would be treason to the Front Benches. It was an accident. . . . surely. Let us hope it was an accident. But it has happened and it is irretrievable.

At the risk of repeating something which a few people know accurately, very many vaguely, and most people not at all, it is worth while stating plainly—if only for the sake of future historians—what the Blocking Motion was.

A rule must exist in every possible assembly—even the House of Commons—that only one man shall speak of a thing at one time. A man having given notice that he is going to speak about, let us say, a piece of cheat-

ing worked by a contractor upon the great public services, has obviously the prior right of speaking on it. If the gentleman who so desires to ventilate the scandal falls ill, or becomes hoarse, and yet neglects to take the motion off the paper before the appointed day, it evidently cannot be discussed at all. His motion being down on the paper blocks the way to any other similar motion.

It is self-evident that if the contractor in question were a member of the House, it would be very much to his advantage indeed to put down such a motion and then to fall ill and to forget to take the motion off the paper.

In any public assembly (one would imagine) summoned to discuss public business, a trick of that sort would be severely dealt with. It certainly is not tolerated in any other national assembly in Europe. But in the House of Commons the thing was a custom, and such public opinion as the place retains was satisfied with the explanation that it was a "quaint old custom" which, like many other quaint old customs, such as taking off your hat on the Gangway and keeping it on on the Benches, not standing northward of a bar which isn't there, bowing to the place where the altar of St. Stephen's Chapel used to be—or rather, never was—and crouching as you passed anyone upon his legs, was of ancient national tradition, and therefore worthy of preservation.

It might be notorious that the man who put down the motion never intended to move it; that his object (or the object of his masters) was actually to prevent the motion being discussed: but the quaint old custom preserved his right.

Now there are in our political society three kinds of quaint old customs.

First:—There are quaint old customs which are to the advantage of the commonwealth and restrict a privilege of the well-to-do, or of those in power. These are either killed or allowed to die; if revived, their revival is severely punished. Among such quaint old customs may be numbered the quaint old custom of a village to use its common land, and the quaint old custom by which such busybodies as the inspectors, private societies might not walk into a poor man's house and cross-examine him at pleasure. In Parliament the quaint old custom which rendered Ministers responsible to the House of Commons has been effectually disposed of, and the quaint old custom of free speech has nearly disappeared.

There is a second kind of quaint old custom which consists in harmless memorials of the past: of such are the wigs of judges; of such also the venerable and respectable ritual of Hat and Bar and Gangway and bowing and crouching in the House of Commons, which I have just mentioned. They are valuable, and every wise man will retain them, even where they are grotesque, for they bind us to our past without doing us any harm.

But there is a third kind of quaint old custom which is quite another kettle of fish. It is usually fairly modern. It is deliberately invented for the purpose of bolstering up privilege and fraud, and its quaintness or its age are shams, set up to bamboozle a society which very properly respects tradition.

Of this sort is the quaint old custom of Blocking Motions.

The Blocking Motion is a device used by the Front Benches with the object of limiting free discussion in the House of Commons.

That is the long and short of it. That is why it was so strenuously supported by the professional politicians in turn as each half of them took its period of office. That is why it was never out of order and never frivolous. That is why the mass of the electorate were not allowed to know that it existed, and that is why no representative of an English constituency was ever allowed to stand up against it.

Suppose a Minister to have blundered on some important point; or the two Front Benches to have thought it important that Indian affairs should not be discussed; or a department of foreign affairs to be set aside by the

Front Benches as too grave for the House of Commons to meddle with—in such cases, and in many others, a fellow was got hold of by the promise of some bribe or other (honours or what-not) to put down a motion with the direct intention of not rising to speak on it and of so preventing public discussion upon a public matter in the public assembly of the nation.

Now a trick of this sort, whenever it was practised, was either of great importance or of none.

If the full public discussion of public affairs is necessary to the safety and health of a nation, then this absurd and fraudulent trick was a grave evil. And other nations were right to prevent any such follies in their deliberative assemblies.

If, upon the contrary (as our chief professional politicians believe), the most expeditious methods are the best for government, and if it matters little who is entrusted with the task, then the Blocking Motion was an excellent device, for it prevented the vulgar interference of criticism with administration. But, whichever view we hold, whether that the public discussion of public affairs is a good or an evil thing, the point for us to seize at this moment is that the two Front Benches and their supporters in the Press only tolerated the Blocking motion so long as it served their interests.

The hacks in the Press called it "a legitimate weapon of Parliamentary warfare." Each half of the machine duped its followers by pointing out to them the great advantage of preventing the "Opposition" of the moment from criticising some act of the Government or the dependants of the Government from speaking upon something the other Front Bench wish to leave untouched; the local "Liberal" who played at politics was pleased to see that Mr. Runciman could not be brought to book over the Swansea school case; the provincial or suburban "Tory" who played at politics was delighted to hear that a "Radical" was debarred from discussing Indian affairs.

The mass of the electorate, as I have said, never dreamt that the corrupt contrivance existed, and, where men still took an interest in public affairs, they must have wondered why the House of Commons was so often silent on the most important matters.

But in this Parliament, and in this session of it, the old conventions are going to pieces. Blocking Motions were put down to prevent discussion upon the adjournment before Easter, and, behold, some of these were not only dictated by the Front Benches—such aberrations had been known—but actually interfered with the plans of the "leaders." Here was a business! The Party papers and their hungry proprietors were troubled beyond measure. The thing was a harmless and even necessary part of the Constitution so long as it silenced debate in the interests of those who were expecting titles, or office, or salaries, or contracts. It was a monstrous perversion of Parliamentary procedure when it prevented the sham battle between "Opposition" members on the make and their relatives opposite. I note that "Blocking Motions" were put down on such grave issues to the Commonwealth as the morals of the Anglo-Saxons of Utah, and the keen determination of Rothschild's cousin to prevent rich men from becoming magistrates.

It was the Labour Party (I trust without any plan, nor hoping to effect so great a change) which did the fatal deed! It is done and they cannot undo it.

Every effort will be made by the two Front Benches to save the Blocking Motion, but it is too late—the private member is unloosed in this one, small respect. He has been shown the way and he will follow it. The Front Benches are bound, if they would preserve their own system (which they are fatally condemned to attempt) to modify the rule, and they will modify it.

It will be of a comic interest to follow the shifts to which they will be driven; but one way or another the Blocking Motion will go. With it will disappear one of the few main supports of that intrigue which is concealed from the English public and by which the English public has hitherto been ruled in the making of the laws that govern it.

The Good Friday Procession.

An Impression.

By Duse Mohamed.

LET me state forthwith that I am not a Christian. I believe in God: but no religious system holds me captive. Having made this quite clear, the subjoined impression may hence be considered quite detached. I rarely trouble about processions of any kind—unless they cross my path and observation becomes imperative. But I heard of this procession quite accidentally and determined to see whether this was some mummery of a Church which seems to be fast losing its grip on the public conscience. I did not come to scoff, and I must admit that the solemnity of the whole ceremonial almost persuaded me to remain to pray. From the martial blast of the brazen trump, followed by the short impressive prayer of the Bishop of London on the steps of St. Martin's Church, to the conclusion of the brief service in St. Paul's Cathedral, when the resonant and spirit-lifting swells of "Rock of Ages" pierced the awe-inspiring stillness of a hundred tombs, and which one could almost feel were echoed by the Mosaic prophets that surround the inverted dome of the sacred edifice, the souls of those assembled seemed impelled, enthralled, and permeated with a holy fire, joining themselves to the immortal hosts in suppliant adoration at the feet of the Creator.

There can be little doubt that although "the world is still deceived by ornament," ornate sacerdotalism and ceremonial, while appealing to the senses of the crowd, have lost their hold upon the thinking mind, which, for the most part, regards such survivals of a mediæval age with abstract veneration; and as the sad-coloured habiliments of "primitive" Christian systems find their chief attraction in their sentimental play on the emotions, with a gloriously limned heaven and luridly painted hell at the two extremities and no middle course for the groping soul, the main body of their followers is recruited from the ranks of the timorous. The Church of England, therefore, by striking, as it were, a middle path between the excessively theatrical and the depressingly sober, makes for a subdued solemnity which strongly appeals to the man of average understanding.

This procession of the Bishop of London was unquestionably a master stroke of inspiration. The inspiring prayer, the "solemn supplication on the Day of Atonement in the year in which the representative of the English Church is to be crowned King," was all in the best possible taste.

The distant strain of brass instruments growing in volume as it approached, rising from the deserted streets, blending with the voices of ten thousand pilgrims, and ascending to the almost cloudless sky, stirred the heart with a holy, an ineffable joy quite without the bounds of human comprehension. And the serenely beatific rendering of "There is a green hill," which set the procession of white-robed and behooded priests in motion, provoked a melancholy greatly enhanced by the rhythmic measure of shuffling feet. As befitted the occasion, the cross, an upraised symbol of the people's faith, moved in the van—the multitude representing almost every grade of society followed, chastened, in the clergy's wake, until arriving at St. Paul's the massed choirs broke forth in "The hymn of London."

Now there can be no possible doubt as to the success of this innovation at a time when the London Press is flooded with the plaint of empty churches.

It is questionable whether so large a crowd of laymen could have been induced to enthuse over a mere Good

Friday service at St. Paul's divested of the externals produced by the procession.

It would appear that the Church is waking up. It is in the throes of a contest wherein its very existence is imperilled. The disestablishment of all stable institutions of the decorative kind is in the air. An institution, whether religious or civil, which is incapable of commanding respect by reason of its reactionary methods, is doomed. A Church unable to retain its following must inevitably be supplanted by some more comprehensive system. For in these days of advanced thought all institutions are compelled by force of circumstances to show some valid excuse for their continued existence.

If, therefore, bishops, priests, and deacons of the Church of England will make further processional effort so as to prove to the man in the street that Church effort does not begin and end with dull sermons and set prayers, I venture to assert that the newly-awakened interest must, as a natural consequence, result in at least fewer empty pews.

To my mind the conduct of the procession and the subsequent simple service was worth a hundred meetings of the emotional revivalist order.

The Bishop of London should hence be flattered by the success of his enterprise, and it is to be hoped that his lordship will be induced to continue to "process" with discrimination in the interests of the people who are gradually drifting into a state of mental apathy and contempt for the institution which his lordship so ably represents.

Notes on the Bologna Congress.

By T. E. Hulme.

Bologna, April 7.

I.

ONE may hold two very different views as to the value of congresses in general. One of these views is always associated in my mind with a simple-minded Scotch undergraduate I knew at Cambridge, whose constant topic of conversation at dinner in hall was the extraordinary progress that would take place in science if only the leading people in mathematics and physics could be got together in conference. If only Larmor, Poincaré, J. J. Thomson, Kelvin, and the rest of them could be put together in one room for a month, the exchange of views would solve the problem. It was a real trouble to the poor fellow that the attempt had never been made. I believe that at night, turning over on his pillow for the last time before sleep overcame him, he was lost in amazed wonder that the scandal of the ether's dubious position had been allowed to go on, year by year, when such a simple thing would have finished the matter once and for all.

To show that this congressomania is by no means confined to youth, I can give another example of its ravages. At the last annual meeting of the Aristotelian Society, a member raised an objection to the *variety* of the subjects proposed for discussion in the following year. Let the society take some pressing subject like that of Neo-Realism and discuss it time after time, until the truth had actually been discovered. I make no comment on the fact that a "pressing" subject can easily become "oppressing." What concerns me here is the attitude represented by this request. I was petrified when I first heard it, but after a time, as I looked at the stolid countenance of the reformer, I began to see a kind of halo round him, a coloured landscape of the inside of his mind. His attitude then became less amazing for me. The vision, the sympathetic intuition I formed of his mental make-up, his *welt-anschauung* was this: Somewhere at a great distance, Truth is hidden. She is always waiting to be

discovered, and the reason that during the centuries she has not been found, lies in the perpetual anæmia of the human mind. We cannot keep in one direct path long enough to succeed—or perhaps we keep on dying too often—and so change the line of search. You have, then, a vision of the tragic history of metaphysical thought from Plato to the present time. At many crucial moments in that long and complicated search they were within a foot of Truth, trembling and shrinking in her hiding place, but always at this moment, this fatal anæmia, the desire for variety, turned the hunters off in a new and false direction. Now you see the masterpiece of organised strategy which would infallibly succeed where the ages had failed. Let the Aristotelian Society tie itself down beforehand to keep in one direction. I hasten to say that the society did not set off on this heroic adventure. So what would have happened must for ever remain a subject of pathetic speculation: one of those dreadful "It might have beens" which torment the human mind. "If only Shackleton had not eaten the Manchurian pony, and fallen ill, only 80 miles from the Pole."

However, I have not quite lost hope. Some day a wealthy American lady may endow us, for the precise purpose of taking up the great adventure.

That is one attitude towards congresses. The other is, I think, best explained by a conversation I had with Bergson last July. I told him I was going to Bologna. "I don't know," he said, "whether these meetings actually do any good, but sometimes when you have been puzzled by a man's philosophy, when you have been a little uncertain as to his meaning, then the actual physical presence of the man makes it all clear. And sometimes, as William James used to say, one look at a man is enough to convince you that there you need trouble no further." I went to Bologna in this frame of mind. I wondered how my views on certain people would be affected. I was curious to test the James theory. I wondered how it would work out.

* * *

I had not long to wait for the first conclusive test. On the way to Italy I stopped two days at Dieppe with Jules de Gaultier, about whom I have already written a little in this Review. It was a test under most favourable circumstances. Generally in discussing metaphysics one is, *à propos* of the other man's point, immediately "reminded" of something of one's own which one wants to drag out, and so one never passes outside the limits of one's first concept. But in this case fate made me a perfect listener, for while I understood him perfectly, I had not spoken French for so long that all my uprisings of interruption were stifled automatically before utterance. The result was that I was extremely impressed. Previously, while I enjoyed reading him, yet I always thought "Bovarysme" to be a paradoxical though interesting position. While I admired the dialectic by which it was supported, I had not found it at all "inevitable." But since meeting him I have formed a much clearer and more definite conception of his philosophy.

This different view I now take of De Gaultier. I can only explain when I have first indicated my rather sceptical opinion of philosophy. Metaphysics for me is not a science but an art—the art of completely expressing certain attitudes which one may take up towards the cosmos. What attitude you do take up is not decided for you by metaphysics itself, but by other things. The number of such attitudes is, of course, necessarily limited—like the four points of the compass; the variety of metaphysics can only come in the different ways in which you can manage to indicate your preference for the North or South, as the case may be. But de Gaultier has convinced me that there is another attitude beyond the four traditional ones. It is not an attitude which many people can take up, but for those who take it De Gaultier has written the complete metaphysics. I cannot express how intensely I admire the logical consistency with which it is all worked out.

In so far as philosophers are still peripatetic and like to walk the road gesticulating, Bologna seems to be the ideal place for them to meet in.

Walking about its streets for the first time, this evening, I would go further and say that it is one of the few real towns still left on this earth. There is a great misconception as to what really constitutes a town. The usual idea is that city and country are a pair of opposites, and that the progress of events tends to spread the one and destroy the other. Nothing of the kind. The country is not the raw material out of which the town has been evolved. In the beginning was something I can vaguely call desert. Out of this matrix at one period of history civilisation had evolved two perfect correlatives of artificial and deliberate construction: the compact walled town, and the country. That was the ideal State. Now the period of decadence has set in, as you get it, for example, in South Kensington, is fully back to the state of desert again. Well, in so far as a street is to be a street, i.e., a place for strolling and talking in, and not a railway, Bologna seems to me to be the perfect town. It is all compact of little piazzas flanked by arcades, and never a broad straight street or an open vista in the whole place. You feel always, though you may never see it, the bracing feeling of a disciplinary wall keeping it up to the ideal pitch of town I require, and never allowing it to sprawl into desert. It is a quadrangle and cloister raised to the highest power, the only modern substitute for the groves of Academe.

* * *

I have now to chronicle what is perhaps the most important event that has yet happened to a philosopher. I was sitting in the hotel this morning, writing letters, and was vaguely conscious of the noise of bands in the distance, and various tones of shouting. Then after a time, troop after troop of soldiers began to march past the window at which I was sitting. I began to be interested. Surely something important must be happening. I hurriedly left the hotel and rushed to the centre of the town. There were enormous crowds in the Piazza Vittoria Emanuele. Great red banners hung from the brick Renaissance palaces which surround the square. Lining certain streets were troops with their red pistachios flicked about by the wind, and behind them a mass of people ten deep, all in their characteristic toga cloaks, with one end thrown over the shoulder. When I say mass of people I ought to correct myself. It was not a crowd in the ordinary meaning of the term, but rather a garden city kind of crowd, for surrounding each man was the large space occupied by his cloak. The more I think of that crowd, the more I admire it. It had a peculiar kind of quality I had never seen before. It had achieved the impossible. It was a crowd without being a crowd. It was simply an aggregation of people who managed the extraordinary feat of coming together without becoming that very low class multicellular organism—the mob. If anyone could invent a kind of democracy which includes, as an essential feature, the possession of large and sweeping brown cloaks, then I will be a democrat. To find out what it was all about I bought a paper, "L'Avveniri d'Italia." With amazement, I saw in enormous letters across the front page, "Filosofia." All this was actually on account of philosophy! Really a world become so self-conscious as to care so much for the great question of the "Why" is rapidly leaving the admirable plane of instincts and is nearing its end. This most important event really heralds the rapid approach of the final conflagration.

To descend, however, to detail, this was the welcome for the Duke of the Abruzzi, who had come from Rome to open the Congress on behalf of his cousin the King. I may as well say at once that I have not yet been introduced to him; so that any curiosity the reader of this article may feel about Miss Elkins will have to go unsatisfied.

At this moment circumstance forced on me a frightful dilemma. It was ten o'clock, the time of the official opening of the Congress. I ought at once to go to the "Arch-Gymnasium" and hear the opening cere-

mony and Professor Enrique's paper on "Reality." But if I did this, I should miss the street scene. I shouldn't hear the bands. I should not solve the question whether the garden city crowd could also cheer with dignity. I had to choose between the two, I could not do both. It was either the street, or the Congress; truly a terrible dilemma for me, for I regard processions as the highest form of art. I cannot resist even the lowest form of them. [I must march even with the Salvation Army bands I meet accidentally in Oxford Street on Sunday night, and here was a procession among processions—and then the problem of the behaviour of the crowd. The dilemma was a perplexing one.]

Inside, I knew from the programme that Professor Enriques would speak of Reality. But, alas! Reality for me is so old a lady, that no information about her, however new, however surprising, could attain the plane of interest legitimately described by the word gossip. Outside, officers in wonderful sweeping blue caps were galloping past as the time came for the procession to arrive. The inside seemed to suffer by comparison. My conduct was entirely my own concern, but if Pallas Athene, or the indignant secretary of the Congress had taken it as a piece of lèse majesté and called on me to justify it before a jury of my peers, I could have done so. I would first have appealed to the school which considers that an immediate sensation has reality, and that conceptual notions diminish it. I could have taken the attitude of the aesthetes in the exaltation of the sensation, and said, "Mieux vaut un peu du pain bien cuit, que tout Shakespeare." I could have gone further than that and justified my preference for the particular aspect of sensation represented by soldiers. In the first place, they would be certain to talk inside of progress, while the only progress I can stand is the progress of princes and troops, for they, though they move, make no pretence of moving "upward." They progress in the only way which does not violate the classical ideal of the fixed and constant nature of man.

Then again, there would be much talk inside of the "all" and the "whole," and of the harmony of the concert of the cosmos, and I do not believe in the existence of these things. I am a pluralist, and to see soldiers for a pluralist should be a symbolic philosophic drama. There is no Unity, no Truth, but forces which have different aims, and whose whole reality consists in those differences. To the rationalist this is an absolutely horrible position.

There is one Truth, one Good. It is for this reason that the conception of nationality and everything connected with it appears so extraordinarily irrational to the intellectual. He simply cannot conceive that these are not one truth, but different truths which win or lose. But however symbolic my remaining outside in the street might have been as an assertion of my belief, yet the stage was hardly large enough, the limelight was lamentably absent. Time passed and here was I presenting this spectacle of indecision on the pavement. Finally inward ridicule decided the thing. To cross Europe with the sole purpose of attending a congress, and then to watch a procession instead, would be too much of a comic spectacle. To my lasting regret I went in. I missed a spectacle I shall never see again. I heard words I shall often hear again—I left the real world and entered that of Reality.

At least, I thought I had, but I was mistaken in thinking of myself as a reversed Faust. There was plenty of the world inside. I passed along long corridors, under many arches, and supporting each arch were several police, and soldiers of the heavy cavalry type, and firemen. I shall return to the subject of the enormous number of firemen which guarded us later. I finally reached the Salla di seduti generale. My general impression is of a broad red line at the end, forming the drapery of the platform, and a regular garden of extraordinary hats; great numbers of pretty women—surely this cannot be the world of "Reality"—I do hope they are not philosophers; and then, vaguely, some drums heard outside.

The Unidea'd Fabian.

By J. M. Kennedy.

DURING the last twenty-five years the Fabian Society has made it its professed object to preach Socialism in England, yet we have very little Socialism in England to-day. This cannot be denied by anyone who has his finger on the pulse of the public. It may be true that Socialism is more talked about now than it was ten years or so ago; but it was also very much in evidence in the early eighties, before the Fabian Society came into existence. The Fabian Society's distorted history and crude economics, "made up as we went along," as Mr. Pease ingenuously confesses in the magazine article to which I referred in *THE NEW AGE* a couple of weeks ago, would appear to have produced little appreciable effect.

There is thus evidently something wrong somewhere, and in seeking to know what it is, we must remember that the Fabians, in vaunting the virtues of Socialism, invariably made a point of showing that this new form of government would raise the status of the workers. This, indeed, is the main feature of any reform propaganda. The workmen are to have more money and fewer hours, in order that they may "get more out of life" and raise their standard of living. What, then, was one of the main features of the Fabian propaganda for the achievement of this end? In "T. P.'s Magazine" for March the secretary of the Society, Mr. E. R. Pease, lets us into the secret:—

The Labour Party, which the Society asked for in 1894, when it urged that Trade Unions and Trade Councils should form a political party of their own, raise a fund, and run fifty candidates for Parliament, has come into being, has raised its Parliamentary Fund, and ran precisely 50 candidates at the election of 1906. The astonishing success of 29 of these set all England talking about Socialism, and the Socialist societies were flooded with new recruits, and their bank accounts laden with unexpected gold. The Fabian Society, which for a decade had had some 700 or 800 members, in two or three years trebled in numbers, and spread out in all sorts of new ways.

So there you are. Socialism was talked about more, but its realisation was as far off as ever. The usual crowd of contemptible intellectual loungers and curiosity-seekers, the types who rush in one age to listen to the teachings of Plotinus, and who in another age take to writing learned pamphlets on free-will and predestination, naturally flocked to the Fabian Society, whose banking account was laden with unexpected gold. But what of the workmen?

Wages statistics, which are within the reach of everyone, show that workmen's earnings, fluctuating considerably during the eighties, rose steadily from about 1893 (when a Labour Department was formed under the Board of Trade) to 1899 or 1900, when they tended on the whole to remain stationary. From about 1902 or 1903 to the present date wages have either actually fallen or remained stationary, although the cost of living has increased in the meantime, and profits have also gone up. So that from about 1900 onwards the position of the workman in this country has steadily deteriorated. Why? Because, strange though it may seem to the casual reader, and inexplicable though it will assuredly seem to the Fabians, the Labour Party had in that time become a force in politics—a force of no great weight, certainly; but an influence, nevertheless.

While it is true that a large number of Labour men had been returned at the 1906 election, their influence was felt in Parliament before then. Mr. Keir Hardie had sat in the 1892-5 House of Commons; but he did not count at that time, because neither Socialism nor Labour had become acute political problems. But in 1900 Mr. Keir Hardie returned to the House, where he was joined by another Labour member, Mr. Richard

Bell, and shortly afterwards, I believe, by an Independent Unionist Labour man, Mr. Sloan. As the Balfour Government drew to a close, I am under the impression that this small Labour party was slightly reinforced. It was from about 1900 onwards, therefore, that Labour men first thrust themselves forward in the House of Commons, and the result was a decline in wages. What, then, had the Labour leaders been doing previously to 1900 to account for a steady increase in wages from 1892 to 1899?

This is no very recondite question. In the nineties the Labour leaders had been paying attention to their proper duty, namely, the organisation of Trade Unions, Trade Union Funds, and, more important still from the workmen's point of view, Trade Union agitation. When the Labour leaders left their Unions for Parliament a spirit of apathy fell over the entire Trade Union movement. Inexperienced as these well-meaning but uninstructed Labour leaders were, they did not know, and they were slow to recognise, that what the House of Commons, or rather the Government, gave with one hand it could take away with the other.

If this statement be questioned, an instance or two will suffice to prove it. Take the Bills for the Feeding of Necessitous Children. There were certain districts around London where, when these measures were applied, wages showed a decided tendency to fall. On one occasion, too, the House voted £200,000 for the relief of unemployment. This sum was duly distributed, and in the localities where it was distributed wages fell. It would be possible for me to take several similar measures, ostensibly meant for the relief of the poor, and to show that they really left the poor poorer. It would not be such a difficult task, either, to show that this result followed from Labour interference in Parliament, whereas Labour agitation through the former Trade Union channel would most probably have had quite the reverse effect.

Who, however, were foremost in recommending that Labour should be represented in Parliament, and who, therefore, are directly responsible for the impoverishment of the poor? Why, the members of the Fabian Society.

If we pursue our enquiry a little further and endeavour to ascertain why there should have been such a colossal blunder on the part of the Fabians, we shall not have far to seek for an explanation. The Fabians have never had any conception of what the State should be. They never appear to have doubted for a moment that the State must necessarily be the result of an economical system—i.e., economics first, politics second. Apart from the fact that the Fabian economics have always been of a crude variety, we may see here how they made an egregious blunder at the very start. Knowing nothing of political science, they began their work at the wrong end. Nay, if someone had ventured to mention political science to them they would doubtless have answered in a unanimous chorus, that they could make it up as they went along—and call it Pragmatism, in accordance with Mr. Pease's jocular confession.

There are one or two other points in Mr. Pease's article which I may have an opportunity of dealing with again. Why, for instance, when the portraits of so many nonentities are put in, is the portrait of Mr. Hubert Bland, the treasurer himself, left out? Why is Mr. Granville Barker on the executive? Because of length of service, or of his bountiful subscriptions to the society, or merely log-rolling? And why, again, does Mr. Pease lay himself open to attack by referring to the fact that the "Fabian women have their mysteries, like Greeks of old, which no man is permitted to profane"? After the researches of scholars like Lobeck, Baumeister, and Stengel, I think Mr. Pease would find it difficult to name a Greek mystery in which both men and women did not take part, setting aside, of course, those confined to men only. Let it be remembered, too, that the Greek mysteries were finally suppressed as public nuisances: for not even easy-going classical antiquity could stand the orgies that formed part of them. I respectfully say to the Fabian women, Be warned in time.

Only a Halfpenny!

By William Poel.

THE contents of a costermonger's barrow on a Bank Holiday afford, to the casual observer, a curious study in economics. It is difficult to realise how food is supplied so cheaply to hundreds of day-trippers who spend the whole of their pastime on a public common some miles from home. The margin of profit to be made from this kind of trading is extremely small, and but for the cheapness of the raw material the costers' occupation would cease altogether.

Those who are in the habit of watching, year by year, a Bank Holiday incursion upon a suburban common may have noticed the gradual improvement taking place in the habits of the people, and this is especially noticeable in regard to their dealings with costermongers. Perhaps education is at last beginning to influence even the poorest and least provident, with the result that Bank Holiday is becoming less of an orgy than formerly. Besides, it is dawning gradually upon holiday-trippers that money, if not spent in the public-house, can go further in other ways. With more half-pennies to spend, a larger business is done off the barrows, and in this way new tastes are formed, while the appetite which, we are told, grows by what it feeds on finds opportunity to like other things than ale and stout.

It is interesting to notice how much more varied is the supply of provisions exposed for sale on the barrows than formerly, especially on an August Bank Holiday. There is, of course, to be had in abundance, the "Imperial Neapolitan Ices" guaranteed "for purity and cleanliness" and sold by the "ha'porth." Ginger beer and other harmless drinks are largely sold at a penny the bottle, the wholesale manufacturers driving their big carts, with handsome teams, direct on to the common to distribute what is wanted there to the retailers. Then there is a huge can of dairy milk, come straight from Aylesbury; lemonade, too, is being made on the spot with fresh lemons and sold for a halfpenny a glass. Conspicuous upon the sweet-stalls is "Noah's French Nougat" sold in halfpenny packets, "most delicious and nutritive," being made of "pure honey, sugar, eggs, and vanilla"! On an adjoining barrow can be had whelks, cockles, and mussels, and a brisk trade is done in them at a halfpenny for every saucer-full. Then there is fresh fried fish on a large slice of bread selling for a penny, and shrimps at twopence the pint. Of fruit there is an abundance of small green apples and pears, at a halfpenny the half pound, besides some "New Town Pippins" going for a penny the pound! Oranges three a penny, dried figs twopence the pound. A large paper bag of "monkey nuts" for a halfpenny, cocoa-nuts, twopence each, or "a penny half to make you laugh." Pineapple, taken out of tins, a halfpenny a slice, or fresh grown melons to be had at the same rate. Finally there is the latest addition to the coster's market in the coffee-stall, a small caravan, well known in London streets after midnight. Here coffee is not in demand, but a cup of tea is sold for a penny and a slice of excellent cake for an additional halfpenny, or two slices of bread and butter for a penny. Seven of these stalls stand on the Common within a few yards of each other.

It is exciting for a resident in the suburbs, on the eve of a Bank Holiday, to watch the costers hurrying towards the common with their barrows. Upon the choice of position the success of the next day's trading largely depends, for the tripper should catch sight of

the barrows the moment he reaches his destination. The object of an outing to Hampstead or Wimbledon may be to admire the beauties of the common, but when it is reached the desire for exploring somehow evaporates, and tired out with his long walk from town "Arry" is thankful to sit down upon the first patch of grass he treads upon. Here encamped he seldom troubles himself to stray many yards further during the rest of the day; and here on the roadside, where the common begins, is the best site for the costers' market. Before dusk, on the previous night, a pitch for the barrow must be secured, and it is often not got without a tussle with wrangling competitors. An empty barrow is hastily thrust in position, and there left in charge of a lad while its owner tramps back again to his slum to fetch the necessary supplies, then to retrace his steps pushing his loaded barrow some six miles along the streets. Lucky indeed is that coster who possesses a pony to save him the trouble! Of special importance is it to the retailer of winkles that his barrow should be near to the public house where the majority of his customers hang around. When there is only one inn that faces the common this coster's anxiety to get opposite the door is considerable.

The "Pub" is, of course, besieged the whole of Bank Holiday, notwithstanding the thriving trade done elsewhere. It is just possible to squeeze into the tap-room and more difficult still to get out again. "I've been at it since 7 o'clock this morning," says the potman, "and I wish a thundering storm would come and swamp 'em all." However, by eight o'clock in the evening there has been no deluge beyond the swamping of the customers' stomachs. Beer on Bank Holidays is bought by the quart, not by the glass, and it costs "father" a "tanner." As the pot holds four half-pints "father" brings it out on to the pavement along with an empty glass. He fills the tumbler and swills it off, fills it again for "mother" who "freely quaffs and laughs," then finishes off the two remaining tumblers himself, pouring the last tablespoonful down the throat of his "kiddie." Then "father" discovers that "mother" would like a drop more, and so back again to the bar for another quart when the quaffing is repeated as before. But the Bank Holiday workman little realises what an unprofitable bargain he is making for himself and his fellows in thus spending his money. Out of every twenty shillings which crosses the publican's counter in exchange for beer, the amount that goes to the workman who brews it does not exceed eighteen pence, whilst with other manufactured articles the proportion spent in wages is four to five shillings. Admitting that a "roaring" business is done in the public house from morning to night on a Bank Holiday, and that the money-takings quadruple those obtained by the whole of the costers, yet in the distribution of labour the Trade employs but two women and a potman to the fifty odd toilers at work on the other side of the road. Thus the British workman unconsciously puts wealth into the pockets of those who give him the least in return for it. But the advent of the Tea-stall on public commons will, before long, effect a revolution in the profits of the beer trade. The most casual observer must realise that to spend three halfpence on tea and cake and keep fourpence halfpenny in the pocket to spend elsewhere, is more worth having than is six pennyworth of stout.

Perhaps the comestibles on the barrows do not look particularly tempting to the fastidious, nor do the low prices inspire confidence in "purity and cleanliness;" still, with no flour tax and a reduced imposition on sugar there is a reasonable probability that the articles are genuine. In time it is hoped the Government may realise the need of having women inspectors employed on Bank Holidays to warn children, in the parks and public commons, from buying or eating unwholesome food. A quite small child was seen eating the rind of a melon. The regulation, too, with regard to children and public houses is very little observed on these occasions. Parents who are hardly in a fit state to understand what they are doing should not be allowed to give their children beer.

An Englishman in America.

By Juvenal.

DR. AKED has shaken the gold dust of Fifth Avenue off his feet and has betaken himself to the Golden Gate, which is just as good, if not better, while some people here are asking what difference exists between the Church in New York and the Church in San Francisco. There is a difference, which I know from actual experience. It is this: In New York Church religion is a "pose"; in San Francisco it is a halt between dogma and spiritual nescience.

* * *

The denizens of the religious barnyards of 'Frisco are quite satisfied with crumbs, but they sometimes peck at the fruits of the spirit. At a pinch they will swallow the pips of repentance, as they did after the earthquake and the fire, but the ostriches of Wall Street are not debonair enough for mere crumbs, or the seeds of faith, or anything of the kind; they feed on nuggets mixed with nails from the Steel Trust on week days and digest them while listening to the Sunday sermon and the music.

* * *

In New York the rich like to be seen at church. In San Francisco people are too independent to care about religious appearance. Dr. Aked will run against a wall of agnostic spiritists which will astound his orthodox prejudices if he happens to have any left. The 'Frisco people, both rich and poor, slip through the cracks of creeds like eels through the fingers. They revel in freedom of conscience as they revel in sunshine and balmy airs from the Pacific. A Simon Pure English preacher in California would give the impression of an interesting relic from the "Old Curiosity Shop," and people would go out to see a reed shaken by the wind.

* * *

On the Pacific Coast religious pretence is played out. Nowhere are religious 'isms so fatal to effective work. San Francisco contains only 12,000 Protestant Church members out of a population of 500,000. Dr. Aked experienced an awakening in New York; in San Francisco he will be knocked down by crude facts, spunged off by the bottle holders, pitied by the pew holders, and ignored by the vast majority of the inhabitants, who bask, not in the "sunbeams of divine righteousness," but in the sunbeams of a blue sky.

* * *

The second volume of the Collected Works of Ambrose Bierce has now appeared. The climate of San Francisco had much to do with the development of the incomparable verve and wit displayed by Ambrose Bierce in his "Prattle" column which appeared every week for several years in the San Francisco "Examiner." Senator Hearst, the millionaire owner of the paper, had much to do with the free hand of the Bierce wit. It takes genius to know genius. The whole secret lies there. Dull editors create dull scribblers, who are read by dull readers. If Senator Hearst never did anything but print the "Prattle" of Bierce the Senator would have covered himself with glory.

* * *

The portrait of Ambrose Bierce which has appeared makes most other portraits that one sees in the papers and magazines look like back numbers of temperance weeklies. Such a head takes the shine off the Roosevelts or the Joe Cannons, who, in comparison, look as if they knew only a little about most things and not much about anything in particular. The eyes in the Bierce portrait make one think of two electric lights attached

to a charge of dynamite. Among the public men in England John Burns has such an eye.

* * *

Take the Senators and Members of Congress at Washington; how cousinly the majority look! Yet they come from all parts of America. Some of the Republicans look like traps baited with cheese for Democratic rodents. Some of the Democrats look like bear-traps yawning for Wall Street varmints. The portraits of the political bosses make exceedingly interesting studies. The hardness of the eyes rivals the hardness of the mouth in most cases, and it is a question which part of the face is the more forbidding, the hard slit between the jaws, or the two staring eyeballs which look, in many instances, as if they had seen the ghosts of divorced wives, angry constituents and indignant mothers-in-law. The stare is concrete. When frozen stiff it will bear skating.

* * *

The weakness of the American man is specialism. If he is a financier he knows nothing but the ups and downs of the money market. If he is a lawyer he can only talk or write on law. If he is a politician he is an expert in politics. These specialists are, as a rule, quite ignorant of anything outside their particular hobby. One cause of divorce is the general superiority of the American women over the men. As a rule the women know from three to four times as much as the men. The wife soon begins to tire of the platitudes of the husband. She tires of his hardness, his routine existence, his unromantic sentiments, his lack of art. The average New York husband seated among a company of New York women is like a porpoise out of water.

* * *

The pretensions of the typical scientist surpass comprehension. On one hand there is a shallow realism, on the other dense ignorance of the first principles of science. Even on this ground the women know more than the men. Indeed, when one sees the portraits of some of these wonderful scientists one is reminded of nothing so much as a gallery of Mormon elders. Dense fanatical superstition with intellectual viciousness added. Every day some member of this amusing tribe does his best to palm off on the public a new freak-theory of insanity or so-called degeneration. According to these gentry the whole community is made up of degenerates excepting themselves.

* * *

But for the American women, America might be swallowed up by the machine-brain specialist, the calculating human thinking clock, and everything that pertains to human machinery. When you see an American who knows three or four things, he is an editor or an artist, or a cosmopolitan author. The concentration which many of the politicians, financiers and business men bring to bear on one idea is astounding and appalling. Nowhere in Europe, not even in Berlin, are such money-mania faces to be seen. In Berlin the successful business man relaxes during a good part of the day. In the evening he becomes like other human beings; he has feeling and sentiment like the great majority around him. Not so with the typical machine-thinker in America. He cannot escape from himself. He is always conscious of the thing that holds him with the grip of death.

* * *

The self-made financier, no matter how great his wealth, is never unique. Because all the others are just like him. When one dies another takes his place and all goes on as before. It is an error to talk of the machine money-makers as great personalities. They are not original. It is the artist who displays originality. Even the people know this, for they cease to talk of the big wire-pullers and railroad kings as soon as they are dead, while the writers and artists of genius are continually discussed, living as well as dead.

Take the late David Graham Phillips. His books and his genius are being discussed as never before. He was creative in a sense in which no great financier of our day is creative. The financier and the Trust makers cause a lot of gossip and talk. But they cannot set going "waves" of thought. To use the words of the witty Editor of "Current Literature," such people may be "masters of men, but they are not masters of ideas."

There is a movement beginning in New York which will prove as epoch making as that of the French Encyclopædists in 1751. Even now this movement has the upper hand. It is going to force the financiers to stop and take stock in the wave which, if they are not mindful in time, will sweep them off their feet. One need not be a prophet to predict what is on the way. Up to the present New York and all the other great cities have been dominated by the intellect of finance. The time has come for the domination of philosophy, art, literature, and reason. This movement will not be tied to the apron-strings of any fixed party or any set of cut-and-dried principles. It will extract the best from everything, while avoiding the provincial and the insular.

Unedited Opinions.

A Ventured Commentary.

THAT was a remarkably beautiful poem THE NEW AGE published last week.

I fancy that neither all its beauty nor all its meaning appears on a single reading, and who nowadays reads a new poem twice?

I have read it myself many times already, but I confess there are still several passages and phrases which have so far refused to yield up their meaning.

Have you sufficiently considered what used to be called the Argument, do you think? An Ode, you know, is a lyrical discourse and must be as rigorously articulated as an Oration. Wordsworth's famous Ode, for example, might almost be reduced to syllogisms, so strictly reasoned is it. He falls away, at the last, into sentiment perhaps, and there is not enough drama in it to suit my liking. But both he and Dryden knew what an Ode should be. The "Ode to the Cherubim" is, I imagine, not less carefully constructed.

I believe I have grasped the Argument of it, but I should be glad to compare my impressions with yours.

Well, as a hasty summary I can do no better than this. Listen: The poet begins by interrogating the Cherubim, who were her companions during infancy, what drew her to be born into the world? She complains that they left her and allowed her celestial mind to fall under rule and penalty taught by men. There appears to be no reply to her questionings, but she is led by the mood thus induced to wander in memory among the classic legends handed down to us. These being immortal raise her to the contemplation of the mystery of Time. Time is seen to be an eternal present, in which all that has been always is. While thus musing the ring of Time is broken for her by the power of Imagination; she hears again the old familiar voices of the Cherubim; and she beholds, in this vision above Time, an existence wherein gods beyond gods appear paying homage to the supernal deity. Also she learns that life upon the earth is mercifully restrained in its native evil by certain beneficent laws which shield man. Their beneficence delights her and she resumes her gratitude to the classics whose lore has enabled her to reassume her soul. They, she concludes, are the bridge over which the soul imprisoned in earth may pass to its starry home. She then awakes to sublunar life again. Does that strike you as conveying the general idea of the Ode?

Admirably, I think, and you have made the poem seem all the more profound.

Approfondissez les choses, especially when they are real poems.

Certainly. And now can you throw some light on the darker passages? For example, I do not doubt that the introduction of the classical stories by name is quite deliberate; but I would like to be sure that I have not missed anything. The Ariadne and Dionysos episode, for instance?

You realise, of course, the place of the classic stories in the Ode as a whole, since it is from them that the poet expressly derives her inspiration. The Ariadne and Dionysos story is particularly appropriate, and this accounts, no doubt, for the space and importance given to it. For Ariadne sleeping on Naxos isle and believing herself to be abandoned is a perfect image of the soul newly imprisoned in flesh and feeling itself forsaken. Then you will observe that Ariadne is not really forsaken. First there are the symbols of the coming god which Proserpina lays about her couch—green ivy and a vine-wand. These, if we translate them into the language of the Ode, are the "fair books" and "gracious lore" which for human souls are the symbols of the Cherubim, that is, of Imagination. Finally, there is the coming of the god himself, Dionysos, who, as you know, is the initiating god, the god who breaks the ring of Time. No sooner has Dionysos leapt to the shore for the deliverance of Ariadne than the poet's own imagination is similarly released. The island ring of Time in which the poet's soul believed itself to be imprisoned is broken, and the visions of the celestial life appear.

Yes, that is all very harmonious, and my impressions agree with yours. Have you the same view, I wonder, of the nature of the beneficent over-rulings which the poet discovered? The "guardant sceptres" referred to are, I take it, the limitation of our capacity for pain and mortality itself.

Exactly. For one could conceive a world in which the capacity for pain had no limit and a suffering life no end. There is no reason, in fact, why our world should not be made in this fashion. Milton's "Hell" was so conceived—why not the earth so created? That limits are fixed both to pain and to mortal life is a gift, as it were, of divine mercy. The natural state has been over-ruled in these things; what might have been simply hell has been redeemed. And this is the poet's assurance.

The conclusion appears to me very fine, namely, that the noblest literature forms the bridge to the Imagination.

So it is, and no higher praise of literature can be given. But what cherishing care is necessary to the preservation of these fair books that contain the echoes of the songs of the Cherubim!

I was much delighted, too, with the passage beginning: "A golden bell at early morn." The fancy that a golden bell rings for celestial beings at dawn and a silver bell at eve is most picturesque.

Yes, and not merely picturesque, I think, but true symbols. I mean that if the celestial life *could* be truly represented these images would be found to be nearest reality. In relation to the Cherubim of music they are particularly appropriate, more appropriate in my opinion than Yeats's well-known description: "there morning's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow, and evening full of the linnets' wings."

Why linnets?

Exactly. There is nothing inevitable or even very natural about linnets in the evening. However, we need not enter into comparisons. All poems are unique.

Some of the phrases in the Ode struck me as being most wonderfully happy: "So near me *streamed* the Dance Celestial;" "classic bridge"—what a condensation of meaning in that!—"tutelary rhyme," "sceptic day." By the way, did you gather the meaning of "vintaged oar" and "dolphined prow" as applied to Dionysos' boat?

"Vintaged," I presume, refers to the fact that the oar of Dionysos was wreathed with vine; and the prow of his boat, you remember, was surrounded by gambolling dolphins. But if you are discussing phrases, I cite "sagacious pinion" as a masterstroke. The intelligence of the swallow is in its wings.

Books and Persons.

By Jacob Tonson.

PURSuing my remarks about the renewed agitation against "The New Machiavelli," I am able to state that the circulation has been greatly increased thereby. The daily sale has risen from twenty copies a day to a hundred copies a day, which is not so bad for a novel over four months old. Seventeen thousand copies have now been sold altogether. The anti-Wells campaign in Manchester has fallen particularly flat. Dr. Moulton, principal of the Theological College at Didsbury, had the misfortune to mar a long and honourable career as a controversialist by a very regrettable letter to the "Manchester Guardian." He was attacked in his turn, and was wise enough not to stick to his guns. Mr. Wells has nearly finished another long novel. Its title is "Marjorie: A Marriage," and it will be published by Macmillans, probably next January. I believe that the plot turns chiefly upon the question of house-management. The libraries will have no excuse whatever for banning it. I hope that before next January the "Westminster Gazette" will have decided that its columns are not too green for the discussion of Mr. Wells's work. Its obstinate silence concerning "The New Machiavelli" is doubtless meant to be majestic; but as a fact it is merely ridiculous.

* * *

More than once publishers of the highest rank have suggested to me that I might write a novel dealing with prostitution in London (which proves that not all publishers are afraid of the circulating libraries). And I have been tempted to deal with the theme, which is in my opinion a first-class theme, despite the view often expressed to the contrary by mandarins whose knowledge of the subject is limited to their peccadilloes. But I have not yielded to the temptation, and I do not think I ever shall. The British public is not sufficiently educated, in an artistic sense, to be able to accept such a novel on its merits. A hundred years ago it was, and a hundred years hence it may be again; but at the present time its attitude towards art is, in the main, simply barbaric. Why should we attempt to deceive ourselves? Its attitude towards art is, in the main, simply barbaric. However, every novelist, I am glad to see, has not felt my hesitations about the theme of prostitution. In "A Bed of Roses" (Frank Palmer, 6s.), Mr. W. L. George has written the story of a harlot in London. She was not a colonel's daughter, but she was an officer's wife, and therefore an unusual specimen. Mr. George (whose first novel this is) tells his tale with the utmost simplicity and directness, and he cannot be accused of any clumsiness, literary or otherwise. In fact, the book is throughout very skilful. Upon such aspects of the affair as the British public obviously would not stand, Mr. George keeps silence. But then his heroine was much above the average, both in luck and in intelligence, if not in spirit. It is probable that she did not suffer from any of the three great material plagues of her profession—disease, bullies, and blackmailing policemen. She did not launch herself in the said profession until she had honestly tried and honestly failed to make a decent living and retain her health in sundry others. She went into it for money; and she emerged from it scatheless and with a competence, after having conscientiously wrung every cent she could out of every man she met. She never lapsed, in her professional relations, from the most perfect egotism, and she was right. But here again she was unusual. Nevertheless, the type drawn by Mr. George does exist. "A Bed of Roses" is a very sound novel. Save for a few artificialities of dialogue, it is nearly faultless in its rendering. No woman, harlot or not, ever addressed her servants in such language as this: "From the dizzy heights of trained domesticity, experts in your own line, you are justified in looking down upon me as an unskilled labourer." (By the way, Victoria spoke perhaps truer than she knew, being English!) The fault

of the novel is negative. It lacks emotion. And perhaps the reason is that Mr. George has omitted passion from his theme. There is no paramount critical situation in the book; no supreme scene the anticipation and the realisation of which might have enfevered his pen. The central motive is only sordidly financial; had it been passionately financial it might have served adequately. But Victoria was not avaricious.

* * *

Nobody with a taste for pure and ingenuous literature ought to miss Mr. Ramsay Colles' "In Castle and Court House, being reminiscences of thirty years in Ireland" (Werner Laurie). By the way, it contains a great deal about England. It is a mine of delights, quite worthy to be ranked with Professor Gant's unforgettable novel, "Perfect Womanhood" (Digby and Long), and quite as funny as "The Diary of a Nobody," though infinitely more ingenuous. I must quote from it. On July 6, 1891, Mr. Colles, having purchased two bottles of whisky in Clonegall, "retired early to bed; I was so mercilessly persecuted by midnight visitors in the shape of agile agitators 'from whom is derived the verb to flee,' that in despair I arose, poured all the whisky into the wash basin, and proceeded to soak my pyjamas in the pure spirit . . . with the happy result of a total rout of the foe. . . ." But it is Mr. Colles' literary reminiscences that deserve the laurel for charm. In his enthusiasm for Wordsworth he "paid a visit to Lakeland," and passed a week "under the hospital roof of Miss Christopherson." "Miss Christopherson had purchased at a sale a large grandfather's clock, once the property of Wordsworth, and this clock she, to my great delight, permitted me to wind! It was one of the old-fashioned kind. . . ."

* * *

Again: "In August, 1903, I contributed an article on Mr. Swinburne's early dramas and poems to 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' a copy of which I left with my card at 'The Pines,' Putney Hill, a delightfully situated residence which has been fully described in his graphic manner by Mr. James Douglas of 'The Star' newspaper in his fine volume on the life work of our greatest living critic (and as Swinburne himself declared, possibly the greatest of all time), Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton. Both Swinburne and Watts-Dunton happened, as I learnt afterwards, to be away at the time, I believe at Lancing. I called again a little later, and found that the two poets were still away from home, and had to content myself by taking Swinburne's favourite walk up Putney Hill to Wimbledon. . . ." But, "Mr. Thomas Wright, to whom we are indebted for lives of Pater, Edward FitzGerald, Burnaby, and Sir Richard Burton, told me that, calling at 'The Pines' about this time, his hosts mentioned my name, and expressed some interest in my work." Later, Mr. Colles actually met the tenants of the delightfully situated residence. "I was shown into a room richly furnished with Chinese carved cabinets and rare old furniture. . . . Mr. Watts-Dunton was the first to greet me, and a little later Mr. Swinburne glided in. Both poets shook hands, Mr. Watts-Dunton with vigour, but Swinburne's hand lay in mine with the pressure of a butterfly." But, "As I am not one of those who jot down other men's utterances in order to make 'copy' of them, I fear there is little I can record here of our conversation. . . . Since that memorable evening in May I have had the honour and pleasure of dining many times at 'The Pines' with both poets, and have partaken of afternoon tea on Sundays."

* * *

And I cannot omit this: "Sir Robert [Ball] after a lecture on the stars delivered before a provincial audience, turned to a lad near him (who happened to be my nephew, Robert Beare, now, alas, gone where there is none). . . ." It is a pity that Mr. Colles, who usually gives every detail, should have omitted to state whether it is in heaven or hell that there is no beer, and his authority for the positive pronouncement that in one of these places beer is not found. This solitary carelessness is the one fault of the book, which contains 314

indexed pages, each as good as the samples I have cited. The volume costs a mere 12s. 6d. net. Mr. Ramsay Colles is still under fifty, and was born "in the holy city of Buddha Gaya, Bengal, under the shadow of the great Maha-Bodhi temple."

Music.

By Richmond Haigh.

My camp was in a rather wild and lonely spot in North-East native territory. There were no other white men about; the nearest village was seventy miles away, and had it not been for my native post-runner, who arrived and left once a week, I might have counted myself out of all touch with the civilised world.

The days were very hot! Work was carried on in the early part of the day and in the evenings—while the sun was high every living thing sought shade and cool—but the nights were all the more enjoyable, and, when there was a moon, they were taken full advantage of. Even on dark nights one would hear the singing of native boys and girls right up to midnight from the kraals dotted about in the hills. Many and many an hour have I sat out at the side of the hut comfortably smoking and listening to the sound of the voices as they were wafted from different ways, and thinking and wishing that amongst the whites—the civilised, advanced people—anything approaching the content and lightness of heart of these natives was to be found.

One moonless night I was sitting at my door and, being quite alone—my native servants had asked permission to attend a beer-drink at a kraal and I had let them go—I was quietly touching the strings of a guitar when an old native came up and saluted me. In answer to my question he told me he had come a long way and was going further and, saying simply that he was tired, asked if he might rest awhile. Of course he could, and was he not hungry? He said he was, so I took him round to the kitchen where he soon blew the fire into life and had a piece of meat toasting on it.

I returned to my room and sat for a bit, then, feeling that I must talk to someone, I took my guitar round to the back and finding the old man squatting outside and eating I sat down on an empty candle-box and fell into conversation with him.

When he mentioned the name of the village from which he came I was immediately interested. This tribe had, some ten or twelve years earlier, disputed some matter with the whites and had fought to maintain their right. They were defeated, and, the old chief being killed, the victors had taken the young heir, with a few of his juvenile companions, and placed him close to a town where the boy was to be educated in the ways of the white people. Little more than twelve months since the young chief had been sent back to take his place as head of his tribe.

The whites had done their work well—there was no doubt of it! The sprightly, promising little lad that was taken away ten years since, with his skin kaross over his shoulder, returned riding a bicycle and dressed in a check tweed suit; a thorough sawny with a high collar, accompanied by two missionaries, one white and one native. What was more, and infinitely worse from his people's point of view, was that he had been persuaded before he returned to marry a mission-station girl—certainly also of high degree, but not in accordance with their tribal rights nor with the face of his people with him. The tribe had known that this marriage was being arranged and had sent the young man messages imploring him to refuse it, but his teachers had got him well in hand, and they won the day. However, it was hoped by his mother and the indunas of the tribe that when he returned to the place of his fathers and saw his people again the young chief would be pleased to take his place—as should his

father's son—as the upholder of the rites and customs upon which the tribe had grown into being and upon which its welfare as a whole depended.

It was common knowledge in those parts that his people had been disappointed in their hopes. Taken young as he had been, the boy was now about twenty years of age, the years of careful schooling and repression appeared to have entirely obliterated every trace of the open, free, dignified native air. He was now glib and pert, inclined to look slightly upon the indunas and men of the council and condescendingly upon the rest of his people. The preachers, while expressing every respect for the old chieftainess and the headmen of the tribe, took good care to advise and direct the young chief in such a way as to make their position always more secure, and, being the teachers appointed by the government, they were supported by the native commissioner of the district. Within a month of his return T'labodi, son of Sefogoli—who, by the way, had been christened Daniel by the missionaries—had openly forsaken the ancient circle and had laid the foundations of a four-cornered house; he had also cleared a space in the middle of his village for the erection of a church.

All this, as I have said, was commonly known through that part and was a subject of much debate and concern amongst the natives.

"Are you not Makalooti?" I asked the old man, "of the house of Puruan?"

"I am," he replied, "and I know when you came and asked Magatook's permission to examine and dig in the hill, Latana."

"Which," I remarked, "you indunas advised the chieftainess to refuse?"

"I hope you are not still offended," said my guest; "but I think we were right to refuse. Had you found gold then should we have had no more peace?"

"No, no! my friend!" I assured him. "At the time I was angry, but I have long since looked at the matter from the top. You were wise in your decision."

The old induna smiled curiously. "You whites are a strange people," he said, thoughtfully.

"But," I broke in on his reverie, "what is the news? I have heard that T'labodi has returned and it is said that your brother's child has forgotten his father. I hope there is no trouble in your land."

My visitor finished the meat he was eating and slowly rubbed his fatty fingers on his bare legs before replying; then he spoke as follows, and sometimes with the deepest bitterness:

"Trouble! Yes, there is trouble in our land. You are a white man and you let me rest here and I have eaten your meat, but trouble is the white man's trail! It travels with him and stays behind him. Although you also came to us with honey on your tongue promising great riches it wanted not a keen eye to see the trouble that was your companion and that would remain with us if we gave you house. When your commissioners and police visit us we know they have not come to bring us anything good; they want money or they want us to work or they have come to punish someone. We have fought and lost and so expect these things, and it is openly done. But now, when your long black-coats have come, your talkers and singers, your wheedlers of women and children—ho! this has surprised us. Your guns have shot us down, your generals have divided up our people, but all this could not break up the tribe. It has remained one, and wherever they have been the people have remembered the chief and looked to him. But now our tribe is quivering like a wounded buck. We are divided and uncertain, and when Sefogoli's son is known to be walking the better sort of the people prefer not to meet him and find work in their houses.

"Our name is a laugh in the mouths of our neighbours, but they, they will also eat dirt! What can stop it? And who is it that has brought all this about? Is it the police or the soldiers, or is it the cunning of another chief? No! It is not the work of men at all. It is done by these humming things, these loud talkers who point the finger"—here the indignant old man

pointed upwards with a forefinger, shaking his hand in a way common to preachers—"and we must not kill them; we cannot even drive them away, as we did you, because the government has sent them with T'labodi and the commissioner has warned us that they must not be molested, and we can no more fight the government.

"Ah! your government is bitter! It is long since we shook our spears, but it has forgiven nothing. We are to be broken up and scattered and the names of our fathers must be forgotten. We are helpless against such cunning—and mad! but what can we do?"

"They have sent these teachers with words like the flowing of milk. Good words to say we can live in peace and may till our lands without fear. We hear the government is our father and has sent these ministers to give the children schooling and to tell us a new thing where each will sit in his own place and be happy. The snakes! The jackals! They cannot talk to men; we see the twisted tongue and prove them liars. No! they work with women and children. They sing with them and make them ashamed that they are not covered all over like white people. They teach the children to put their faces against the ancient rites of our fathers—the circumcision and the way at the sowing. This is our peace—when our children are set against us and our young women have also opinions.

"Three wives were to come to T'labodi; a daughter of Solapi, a daughter of Phelit, and a girl from the house of Maloneng, chiefs all and men of great standing. It was spoken by Sefogoli while T'labodi was yet a child. And now we have held many councils with the boy and the mother of the young chief has not neglected the matter, but when he has seen the wisdom of our words and we have thought to save the honour of our house and people ever these teachers have come between us and his church wife has persuaded him against us until we are like to become a scorn in the eyes of these chieftains and must hide our faces.

"This is the peace the government has sent us! Already the people are murmuring, and those of the best families will not long sit to be spat upon. Magatook, the boy's mother, may keep the people together, for she is wise; and it may yet be that T'labodi will become a man, but should he hold to his present ways the people will forget that he is Sefogoli's son. The kraals will drift apart; each man will be concerned only with his own house, and when the goats are scattered they become easy prey for the wolf.

"Our house of Puruani can be named back from fathers to great-fathers until both hands are finished. We have fought many wars, we have been broken up and taken away as slaves, famine has left the chief with a few bony men and women of his people, but the tribe has grown again. It has, after every blow, gathered to its chief and become proud and powerful. And now, through our own chief our tale is to be told. We have reached the end and I shall see it, for I am still hale and strong. Blood is not to flow; there is to be no fighting, we cannot defend ourselves. No! we must just sit and watch these babblers, these teachers, break the ties that have held the people together for hundreds of years and see the tribe fall out like a bundle of sticks when the thong is broken.

"White man! It is evilly done! Even the goats have a leader to keep them together. In a few years our people will be scattered and helpless and will become your slaves, but your government is powerful; why not do this openly? What have we done that our faces should be rubbed in the dirt and that we should be made a mock of in this way?"

It was not light enough for me to see the expression on the poor old man's face, but dark fire shone from his eyes, and when, as he finished speaking, his arms dropped to his sides I found I had not a word to say. For a few moments there was silence, then, feeling the strain of the position, I remarked, as I very softly touched a chord on the guitar:

"The world is changing, my father! It is not only here but in our own countries over the sea the old ways are being pushed aside and forgotten. Our old men

also complain that we are casting scorn upon the ways of our forefathers. These teachers and ministers are many in our own land, and they talk with us even as they do with your people, and our people are divided by them and split up into many kraals and parties." I could not continue, for I knew that no argument I could bring would be applicable to the present case. There could be no balm to the soul of the old induna and warrior! His nation, as he had known and loved it, was doomed! His vision as to the future was only too clear, and I would not appear to mock him further. "Your people will not be slaves," I finished, lamely enough.

Now for the past few minutes there had been at intervals a peculiar scratching or whishing sound which we had both noticed. I had looked to see if the old man was perhaps grating a piece of wood, and when the sound came again a little louder and my visitor looked curiously at me I raised the guitar, which I had continued softly playing, to see if it was scraping anywhere and we both looked about us, but the sound had stopped again and our feelings were too deeply stirred for us to take notice of any trifle. My fingers continued aimlessly touching the strings when the old man began, in a toneless voice, as though he recognised the hopelessness of discussing the subject, to reply to what I had said. What he said I do not remember, and what he had further to say I shall never know, for suddenly from the very side of the little box on which I was sitting came a sharp blast like a jet from a powerful bellows.

"Snake! Noga!" we shouted together, and jumped. A candle-box is only about twelve inches high, and sitting as I was I don't know how I jumped at all, but I must have beaten all records, for in an instant I was standing by the wood heap fifteen feet away, guitar still in hand, straining my eyes to the ground about me.

"Light the lamp on the kitchen table," I called, and then, moving very gingerly indeed, I felt for a block of wood.

The position was a ticklish one. Of course we knew that we had a puff-adder to deal with. These reptiles when surprised or alarmed move slowly or lie quite still, and we were sure that our gusty friend was somewhere near about and we could expect to hear from him at any moment.

Keeping my legs quite still I bent over and, peering around, satisfied myself that the creature was not within reach; then I took a step towards where we had been sitting. Straining my eyes through the gloom again I fancied at last that I saw something dark stretched out about five feet from me. I waited a moment, then, as the lamp was not yet forthcoming (the old man had to blow the fire to a flame to light it) and I thought I detected a movement in the shadow before me, I took careful aim, threw the block with all my force, and jumped backwards immediately. I could not see what had happened, and stood very uncomfortably where I landed. A moment after Makalooti came out with the little lamp flickering.

We saw the snake stretched, to our immense relief. I had not been mistaken, and my aim had been true. The brute lay with its back broken and was dispatched by the old man striking it on the head with his stick. It proved to be a full-grown puff-adder—certainly a very ugly customer to have to do with in the dark.

I was wondering a bit when the induna expressed my thoughts by saying, "It came to the music of your strings." "Yes," I said, "it must have been a good way off when we heard it first," for the whishing sounds we had heard had been made by the reptile as he slowly approached us.

We discussed the incident for a while, then having shown my guest where he could sleep he drew his blankets round him and ended the conversation with "It meant no harm! It would not have touched us! The sound of our voices and the music of your strings drew it towards us. Now it lies with a broken back—dead. So is it with your people and my people."

I wished the old man "Good night."

Drama.

By Ashley Dukes.

"Fanny's First Play" (Little Theatre).

CRITICISM, it would seem, has been forestalled. "Fanny's First Play" is at once a drama and a commentary, a farce and a lampoon, a sermon and a topical revue, a manifesto and an impertinence, an apologia and a revenge. A drama for the emasculated, a lampoon for the curious, a sermon for the elect, an impertinence for the dull, an apologia for the author and a revenge upon the critics. The whole, with its induction, three acts and epilogue, is presented in sandwich form; as complete a meal and as unsatisfying. (A vegetarian sandwich, it may be noted.) The critics who discussed the play upon the stage during the epilogue were quite illuminating from their various standpoints, although upon the whole a trifle inclined to leniency. They remarked, for example, that it was vastly amusing and intolerably wearisome; that it was undeniably original and dreadfully hackneyed; that it showed feeling and lacked passion; that it was brazen and timid, earnest and flippant; and so on. All this is so true that there remains little to be said. Four critics took part in the debate, and the breadth of their generalisations exhausted the subject. The rest can do no more than adapt themselves to the new part of showman-guide, and, like Mr. Trotter of the "Times," "record an impression." So be it. Let us enter the museum of dramatic curiosities. The visit shall be personally conducted.

How to begin? "Ahem! Ladies and gentlemen, we have here a remarkable specimen of contemporary drama. It is described upon the playbill, you will observe, as an easy play for a little theatre. 'Easy' may be taken to mean facile; the 'little theatre' refers to the limited audience. But such limitations cannot perturb the purveyor of intellectual nourishment, who exhibits to the West End the manners and customs of Denmark Hill. Bad manners? Perhaps. That, again, matters little. I need hardly remind you that the suburb of Denmark Hill has already been immortalised in 'The Madras House.' If the nourishment is forthcoming, we need not enquire into its source. The present work is manufactured from ideas of guaranteed freshness. How fresh? I cannot tell you precisely, madam. They have been gathered within the past fifteen years. I beg your pardon? Yes, a little salt has been added. It conceals the flavour. The anonymous author. . . ."

But stay. This tone must cease. The anonymous author may himself be one of the immortals. Such lapses have been known. And, in any case, "contemporary drama" will never do. The epilogue and the morning newspaper have summed up the effect of "Fanny's First Play" upon the public mind at the moment. The critic as showman-guide must try to realise its effect upon posterity. Impartiality can only be achieved when a truth has ceased to be labelled as hackneyed merely because it has been repeated too insistently, or an untruth to be accepted as sound merely because it is original. Project yourselves, then, a generation into the future. Let our dramatic museum be a museum of dramatic relics. And if there be a touch of pedantry in the valuation, let it be pardoned as a vice of the historian.

To begin afresh. "We have here an example of the later Shavian drama, in an induction, three acts and an epilogue. The form of the play, with a part of the audience upon the stage, is pseudo-classical. The student of this period may remember that the 'Greek form' was claimed for two earlier works, 'Getting Married' and 'Misalliance,' on the ground that their conversation was continuous. 'Fanny's First Play,' by a similar licence, may be described as Elizabethan. The point is of no great importance, however, and we pass on to the play itself. It would appear that at the time when it was written the author was labouring under some resentment at his treatment by the dramatic critics. References to the authority of Aristotle, coupled

with the name of a Mr. Trotter, support this conclusion. This Mr. Trotter seems to have had a counterpart among the critics of the day and to have laid down some rules of dramaturgy with which the author very naturally disagreed. He appears, with three other critics, Mr. Vaughan, Mr. Gunn, and Mr. Flawner Bannel, as a personage of the induction. These gentlemen have been summoned to the country house of a romantic nobleman, in order to attend the private performance of a play written by the nobleman's daughter Fanny. Fanny is a member of the Cambridge University Fabian Society, an offshoot of a body to which frequent references are made in the dramatic literature of the day, apparently for the sake of advertisement. Her play deals, somewhat precociously, with family life in a suburb of London. The relations of parents and children in two separate families are considered. The children—in the one case a son, in the other a daughter—assert their independence by serving a fortnight's imprisonment for being drunk and disorderly and assaulting the police. After their release they return home. The sympathies of their parents are broadened, and finally a better understanding prevails. This happy ending is brought about by all the familiar parallelisms of farce, assisted by a catastrophic footman who proves to be a duke's brother in disguise, and a French naval lieutenant who flatters the Chauvinism of the parents so shamelessly by his praise of the freedom of the English family life that they have no alternative but to live up to his ideal. Much of the play is very wittily written although its humour suffers from the inversion which may be studied in Pinero's stage children or Shaw's self-explanatory supermen; a humour, that is to say, which depends upon the easy effect of making the incredible appear ridiculous rather than of making the natural appear humorous. In spite of the precocity already mentioned, it is also rather timid and cautious in treatment. The portrait of the 'daughter of joy' suggests the limitations of Fanny's experience. There is an evident attempt to make all the characters very nice and respectable at heart under their superficial coating of vulgarity, smartness, and slang. We confess that the depth of 'feeling' discussed during the epilogue would appear deeper and more convincing if this sense of compromise were absent. There remains the question of authorship. . . ."

But, as usual, posterity proves rather a bore; and it may well be left to look after itself. The question of authorship may be dismissed because there is no question. And if impressions are to be recorded without guile, it may as well be said that "Fanny's First Play," induction, epilogue and all, is an immensely entertaining practical joke; that if we test it by measuring the volume of laughter it creates, as the author insists that we must, it is far more successful than "Getting Married" or "Misalliance"; that with all its vices it is never in the least pretentious; and that it is, in fact, a pleasant, easy little play for a little theatre. It calls for no denunciation, for it is all as benevolent as the good footman Juggins or his counterpart, the waiter in "You Never Can Tell." *Requiescat in pace.*

Art.

By Huntly Carter.

MEN are busy adding one more chapter to the Book of Prophecy which lies open on the threshold of the new age. This may be the meaning of the two noticeable things connected with Blake at the present moment. One is the bewildering output of works on the poet-painter; the other the fact that it is no longer fashionable in enlightened circles to regard Blake as an entertaining lunatic. It may be prophetic. In the present revaluation of all forms of human thought and action it may be that the race is placing a new value on art and poetry, on imagination and symbolism, on the heroic and inspiring, on the ideal as the ecstatic form of the idea. It may be that we are about to follow the example of Blake, who could "touch the sky with his finger" and to whom dreams were far more real than

realities (so-called). That Blake was inspired by heroic ideals and lived in an age when artists were not bound to scrappy productions, but sought to carry out monumental conceptions, is clear from the reprint of Mr. Basil de Selincourt's "William Blake" (Duckworth's Library of Art, 5s.). The artist that drew the many marvellous designs which this book contains could have only been the centre of an heroic movement, inspired by the Greek as his contemporaries, Flaxman, Fuseli, and the rest, were inspired; and as he appears to have inspired men that came after him.

* * *

Blake's soaring imagination, feeling for big form, amazing sense of life and movement were the outcome of a winged soul propelled by the eternal winds of idealism, vision, and spontaneous interpretation, and not of a soul chained to earth by the meticulous and tortuous bonds of modern artistic faith. If it is probable that we are entering upon a Blake age it is permissible to ask, If Blake were alive to-day to what form of artistic work might he give a new valuation? Judging by some of his designs, especially the aspiring and living curves of the floating figure in "Lord teach these souls to fly" Blake might play a great part in the rebuilding of the theatre as an appropriate House of the Soul. One can imagine the extraordinary work he could do in the way of symbolic scenery. I should like to see the "Blue Bird" treated by Blake, then indeed we should see visions and wonders where now in the production under the direction of Mr. Herbert Trench we see neither. Some idea of what Blake could provide in landscape scenery may be gathered from the designs to Thornton's Pastorals, four of which are reproduced under the title of "Vergil illustrated for Schoolboys." Here he takes one or two bits of ordinary pastoral scenery, adds imagination and weirdness, and places them before us, impressive and unique.

* * *

Mr. de Selincourt is not concerned with the resurrection of Blake as an artist of the theatre. His volume is designed to criticise and value the eighteenth-century Blake, and to discuss him as artist, poet, and mystic. The author's estimation is largely discounted by the fact that he is not a specialist in artistic or mystical matters. Otherwise he would have omitted the chapter on "Blake's Madness," wherein he takes Blake to Bedlam and discovers many of the well-known stigmata of distorted minds. For one thing, Blake's ecstasy was insane, or he suffered from ecstatic delirium. If, as the author maintains, Blake was mad then his mystical thoughts must be placed to the account of insanity, and accordingly the chapter on the "Mystic Vision" should come out. As it stands it throws a curious light on Blake's poetical and spiritual experience. In one place it mentions that "During the last twenty years of his life he almost ceased to be a poet; he remained an artist only because long years of unremitting handicraft and unquestioning observation had given him an inner universe of his own, and turned the language of art into an unanalysed presupposition of all his thinking, which no theory could shatter and no conviction undermine." What does the author mean by "Blake almost ceased to be a poet"? and "He remained an artist *only because, &c.*"? It reads like unadulterated nonsense, or it may be but loose thinking. Though there is a great deal of this sort of controversial matter in the text the exceedingly well-chosen illustrations and the gems of poetry help to pull the book out of the fire.

* * *

Blake's critics may be broadly divided into two classes, those who are in affinity with Blake and those who are not. Mr. G. K. Chesterton has also written a book on Blake (Duckworth, 2s. net), and like Mr. de Selincourt proves he is not within the charmed circle of those who have affinity with the great mystic. He is not even on its borders, but well without it. Ecstasy was the keynote of Blake's life; journalism sums up Mr. Chesterton's. The interpretation of Blake as artist is clearly not in the latter's line. Probably Mr. Chesterton is aware of this, for he has taken the wise precau-

tion of talking about every drawing except those in the book. Thus he prevents the critic from making comparisons in this direction. But he has not gone far enough. Had he gone further and excluded all illustrations there would have been little or nothing for the critic to do. When the critic picks up a book by Mr. Chesterton he knows it will be a book by and of Mr. Chesterton, whether it be concerned with fiction, poetry, the drama, belles lettres, the exact sciences, or the Christian Science of the lower orders, and he lets it pass accordingly as Chestertonian. But when he picks up a book by Mr. Chesterton largely concerned with Blake's principles of art on which Mr. Chesterton has been so unwise as to allow Blake himself to speak, he is not inclined to be so lenient. So in the present volume, when Mr. Chesterton begins to chatter about influence, perspective, and foreshortening, and prejudice, while adding useful samples of Blake himself, one sets about the examination of Mr. Chesterton's opinions with a frank disregard for everything but the truth thereof. Accordingly in stumbling across such rank nonsense as "The thing he (Blake) hated most in art was the thing which we now call Impressionism" one turns to the illustrations for proof and finds none. If there is evidence of anything it is that Mr. Chesterton has not taken the trouble to examine Blake's pictorial work. This thing which we call Impressionism and which Blake hated is "the substitution of atmosphere for shape, the sacrifice of form to tint, the cloudland of the mere colourist." How could Blake hate what we now call Impressionism seeing that the modern form of Impressionism—the search for atmosphere and the experimenting with light and colour—was not understood in Blake's time? But Blake would do nothing so foolish as to hate Impressionism, or if he did he would simply hate himself. He was just as great an Impressionist as the post-Impressionists.

* * *

Blake put down what he saw, and his constant words were, I did so because "The spirit told me." Like the post-Impressionists, he had his impression of life. Like Swedenborg, his field of impression was heaven. He saw deities and angels and recorded them in Greek and Hebrew forms. Was not Blake an Impressionist when he went out into the field and saw Beelzebub or somebody sitting on a tree? Of course, Mr. Chesterton from his point of view of art and sanity would call Blake mad just as other worthy persons are labelling our late visitors. Nor is Mr. Chesterton more convincing where he speaks of the lasting influence of Flaxman on Blake, "who remained a Flaxmanite to the day of his death," who followed "the principle of Flaxman," and was "a fanatic on the subject of the firm line." But at least in one thing Blake did not follow Flaxman. If we are to believe Mr. Chesterton that Flaxman avoided "perspective and foreshortening as if there was something grotesque about them" and "perspective really is the comic element in things," Blake did not avoid them. On the contrary, Blake owed everything to perspective and foreshortening, all the life and movement of his drawings. Let Mr. Chesterton look at "The Eagle," a magnificent drawing full of everything that one wants; there is nothing else but foreshortening. Let him turn to "The Selfhood of Deceit" and note the foreshortening in the central figure, the bigness of the body, and the comparative smallness of the arms and head. And if Flaxman avoided perspective and foreshortening how did he manage it if "he would admit no line into a modern picture that might have been on a Greek bas-relief." But there is no need to continue. The value of the little book is in its really fine selection of illustrations. The text is merely an example of Mr. Chesterton's exercising his powers of paradox and contradiction. It never rises with Blake's aspiring spirit "To the Evening Star," and one never hears the voice of the inspired poet who sang:

Smile on our loves, and whilst thou drawest round
The curtains of the sky, scatter thy dew
On every flower that closes its sweet eyes
In timely sleep. Let thy west wind sleep on
The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes
And wash the dusk with silver.

In Hospital: A Reverie.

By Herbert Hughes.

IT is a whole month since I have been to a concert or a play; the Sister has just now reminded me how long it is since I came in. Even now confused memoirs of concerts and anæsthetics and plays and visitors' teas play pitch-and-toss through my brain, and this house has become one vast epic operation and this room one long unfinished symphony. . . . My green-painted room is on the ground floor and past my windows with their close-drawn muslin curtains moves part of the motley procession of life. I cannot see much of it—only the dim outlines of mysterious unknown figures, of phantom cars and carriages, moving swiftly and nervously anywhere and nowhere. Now and then a ponderous wagon lurches itself with a curse out of the way of some shrill, importunate taxi, and the irrelevant knock of a postman at the door of a house opposite is the only comment. . . . It may be because I can see so little of the life that passes by me that I can hear in this street the motifs of a thousand operas. Errand boys pass my window whistling phrases that remind me at one moment of the abrupt music of "Till Eulenspiegel" and at the next of some impulsive rhythm in "Carmen"; and someone evidently cleaning windows or airing a room across the street moves the reluctant sashes up and down every day since I have been here to a tune that has been borrowed from "L'Après-midi d'un Faune." It is not every window that is so fastidious in its taste; but we are in the neighbourhood of Portland Place, and the Queen's Hall is only a few yards away. Here the pinafores servant-maids, shrieking at the street-doors for cabs, employ the phrase the "walküre" repeat so often on the uncomfortable heights of Walhalla; and the very milkcans this morning, each tuned to a different pitch, rattled out the motif of the "Flying Dutchman"; and I wondered if the flying Dutchman were again prowling the highways of the world in search of a bride. Or perhaps he is on the seas once more trying to round the Horn, for he only did that in rough weather, and to-night it is very stormy. . . . Someone told me it has been raining—I did not know; but I can hear the great crescendos of the wind with the sudden lulls that Beethoven was so fond of. An hour ago, before the wind became so fierce, a poor man was singing at the corner of the street. He was only a few yards away and I could hear that he was singing some air out of "Maritana." His voice was once beautiful, but he must have been an oldish man, for nobody sings "Maritana" nowadays. And he must have known it well, for he sang it with all the cadenzas of that period; I thought he must be very frail and tired, for he loitered through the music, occasionally extending a bar and resting himself, as if it didn't matter how long it took him to finish it. For him there was no train to catch, no "walküre" whistling for a taxi.

I think every self-respecting street must have its own motif. The errand-boy who announces his progress with a theme from "Till Eulenspiegel" must bring that motif from another street; and the milkman with his Wagnerian cans must likewise come from some little distance. Sooner or later all the great music of the modern world finds its way through the streets. Beaumont Street is a whirlwind of lost motifs, ghosts of tunes they seem to be, and most of them modern; it is only seldom I have heard anything older than the end of the eighteenth century. I wish I could take down the notes of the tune which, more than any other, haunts this street. Its rhythm is restless, tempestuous; and it seems to be played on the strings of innumerable

violins. Its restlessness is the restlessness of this street with its phantom figures hurrying everywhere and nowhere; and it is the restlessness, also, of this green-painted room with its secret histories of tragedy and farce, of sleepless, painful nights, of the joy of recovery, of convalescence, and death.

* * *

On the table beside my bed there lies a gift that has been my most faithful distraction during many tedious nights and days. The friend who has provided me with chrysanthemums and lilies for my mantelshelf provided me with this. It is a little grey plush elephant, the tail of which you turn like a handle. It knows only one tune, the name of which was scrawled across the label of the box it came in. The handwriting on the label was foreign, but the song is English, of the music-halls, and to-day the exultant rhythm of its refrain is echoed in the streets of a thousand cities. The tune itself—no son of man knows the third line of the words—is of such popularity that in two or three years it will have found its way into the cottage fastnesses of Aran; there it will in all probability remain, in its last painful metamorphosis, one week and perish miserably.

It is because I am deeply conscious of the ultimate fate of the little tune that so faithfully keeps me company; it is because I feel sorry for it; it is perhaps because I am sorry for myself that I cherish the simple, delicate ribaldry of its first incarnation. When I have been tired of reading second-rate novels and have been bored with anything better, it has never failed to dispel my ennui. Its high-pitched energy stimulates me, and the old familiar fragrance of its melody (for indeed it has had many aliases) gives me a pleasure that nothing else gives me; a pleasure that uplifts and thrills my whole being, and lasts—until I am tired turning the handle. . . . And is it any wonder that I turn the handle so frequently, that I cherish the sweet simplicity of the song when I know that in the world outside it is already being defiled by rude contact with human life, when I know that its progress is a Rake's Progress, when I can see it in all the horror of its last journey, feeble and debauched, glowering at virtue with a still lascivious eye, and reeling its drunken way up the rocky slopes of some Irish shore? For it is then that the ancient oligarchy of Aran will sit in judgment; it is then that its career will be passed in review, its qualities and defects as a law-abiding song discussed with lofty seriousness, opposed and defended as in a court of law. And on the seventh day I know the last irrevocable sentence will be passed: that it may never again be sung by mortal lips. And then, and not till then, it will perish miserably.

And in that day I shall take down the grey plush elephant from its hiding place, and I shall think of these things; of the mutability of all things in this world but the ancient oligarchy of Aran.

THE CRY OF THE CREATURE.

ALMIGHTY God! you knew full well,
 When first you formed your plan,
 That you but fashioned Heavenly Hell
 In which to torture Man.
 You gave us joy of life, O Jove,
 To watch our sand-glass run:
 You bound our hearts with thongs of love
 To snap them one by one.
 A garden sweet with flowery breath,
 With song and rainbow-light,
 Yet spread for Love to strive with Death,
 And endless mournful fight.
 O! First Great Cause of Thought and Thing,
 How strong soe'er you be,
 Not all your might shall ever wring
 One word of praise from me.

HELMINTHION.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

S. VERDAD AND HIS CRITICS.

Sir,—I agree with Mr. Otto Bucht that the Reichstag rendered certain lip-service to the cause of arbitration after the Chancellor had made his famous speech. And Mr. Bucht is also quite right in thinking that I am "above taking notice of such trifles as the opinion of the German Reichstag," for the simple reason that the Chancellor represents the official views, and he is responsible, not to the Reichstag, but to the Kaiser himself. Furthermore, the Kaiser may, I know, fully rely upon the German Army. If, therefore, I want to know what Germany is likely to do in political matters I do not require to trouble about the members of the Reichstag; for they will always toe the line with the Court at grave junctures. From what the Chancellor said I can judge what the official view is; and I know that the official view can be backed up, if necessary, by the German Army. That is enough for me.

"Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg," says Mr. Bucht finally, "is, admittedly, the most incapable and unintelligent official who ever held the highest civil position in a great Empire." This is indeed sweeping. Doubtless "admittedly" refers to the German Socialists, for the "Reds" look upon the Chancellor in this light. But the German Socialists, as Mr. Bucht says about my humble self, do a lot of things; and this is one of the wrong 'uns.

As to the waging of war, I can follow the German Chancellor, but not Mr. Bucht altogether. A democratic country appoints its representatives, which have control over the Cabinet. The moral is obvious. In an autocratic country, where the Cabinet is not responsible to the nation, the autocracy will not wage war unless it can rely upon having the country behind it. Look how well the German people backed up the autocracy on three separate occasions: against Denmark, Austria, and France. At the time of the Russo-Japanese war the peasants were boasting how soon they would "lick the little Japs." No autocracy can wage war if the whole nation sets its face against it, because the absence of the army when it is engaged in operations may make things unpleasant at home.

England, of course, belongs to the category of autocratically governed countries, since the Cabinet is not responsible to the representatives of the nation. The representatives of the nation, on the contrary, are obviously responsible to the Cabinet: a fact which, I may say in passing, has often furnished certain autocratic rulers with material for many a jest. In short, autocracies are safe if they do not abuse their power too much; but history shows that they have often fallen into temptation.

As far as South Africa is concerned, I am obliged to Mr. Riordan for supporting me in regard to some points, while contradicting me on others. Now, let me mention one thing. When referring to the disadvantages under which the Britishers labour, Mr. Riordan says: "The remedy for this state of things is an increased immigration of Britishers, not abuse of the Boer, or the advocacy of absurd repressive measures." Good. But in the paragraph coming just before this my critic says: "The Boers, again, are more willing to accept a foreigner lately arrived from Holland or Germany as an Africander than an Englisher who has been born and lived his whole life in South Africa. In pursuance of this policy the Government will never appoint a Britisher to any post unless compelled to, and the higher ranks of the Civil Service and Police are open to Dutch Africanders only."

Now, in the name of commonsense, what Englishman is going to emigrate to South Africa on these terms? more especially when we find Mr. Riordan saying in another paragraph that the Boers "accepted their incorporation in the British Empire in a loyal spirit, but with the reservation that they would do their best to keep this country Dutch Africander." Fancy the people of Alsace-Lorraine talking like that after having been taken over by Germany!

"H." who writes from Riga about M. Stolypin, will pardon me for saying that he is given to embellishing his statements for the purpose of heightening the effect. "To call a man liberal who has plunged the country in a state of lawlessness and mercilessness—of which there has never been an idea before in the most barbaric anti-constitutional times—is either total ignorance or unpardonable carelessness." So it will be seen that "H." writes our barbarous tongue with sufficient emphasis; but the ignorance and carelessness are not mine. I am acquainted with most periods of Russian history, including the Mongol invasions and the reigns of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great. Time will show the results of the Stolypin régime; and S. Verdad will once again have proved himself to be on the side of the angels.

S. VERDAD.

PHILOSOPHY AND WAR.

Sir,—Mr. Verdad continues to believe with Wordsworth that Carnage is God's Daughter, and implies that representative thinkers are of the same opinion. Without citing the rationalists who, like myself, would willingly bow out both daughter and parent, I venture to believe that your foreign correspondent is mistaken when he claims for the entire philosophical class his own convictions. Psychology and Continental thought, we learn, are on Mr. Verdad's side, while only pedants and idealists suffer from the peace fever. May I suggest that THE NEW AGE endeavour to learn what men and women from the ranks of thought have "preserved their sanity" with Mr. Verdad and the German Chancellor, and who permit themselves to believe that war, being contrary to the spirit of "Enthusiasm for Humanity" awakened by evolution's perfect work in the heart of conscious existence, must presently cease?

Pray let Mr. Huntly Carter, who conducts these symposia so admirably, endeavour to learn whether indeed philosophy and psychology in their last manifestations are with Mr. Verdad. He asserts that the dream of universal peace is an absurd delusion, and that none who has given any consideration to the subject will disagree.

Is this the case? One always admires the picturesque force and splendid virility of Mr. Verdad's outlook; but so much the more is it to be regretted that he takes so primitive a view in this connection. Does he really?

EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

* * *

THE TRAINING OF TORIES.

Sir,—In a letter to the Editor which was published in THE NEW AGE for July 28, 1910 (Vol VII., No. 13), Mr. J. M. Kennedy wrote as follows (page 308):—

" . . . Let the Tories be taught to think, how to develop any philosophical and psychological insight they may have. This presupposes an acquaintance with the writings of certain foreign thinkers, not all which have yet been translated into English, such as Nietzsche, Papini, Sera, Schopenhauer, and so on" (including, of course, Niccolo Machiavelli).

I write to thank Mr. Kennedy for "A Statesman's Mind," and to express the hope that he will continue with the greatest of all tasks, to change the Tory mentality of to-day by the publishing of similar extracts from the works of similar authors. As Nietzsche observed, "There is no harder lot in all human fate than when the powerful of the earth are not at the same time the first men. There (as in England to-day) everything becomes false, and warped, and monstrous."

H. F. STEPHENS.

* * *

THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE PARTY SYSTEM.

Sir,—In your issue of April 6 Mr. Cecil Chesterton asks:

1. Can a single Labour Member of the present Parliament be named who does not owe his seat to the support of the Liberal Party, or could retain it if the Liberals put up a candidate against him?

In Scotland we have two Labour Members who have won their seats without Liberal support: Mr. George N. Barnes, M.P., won Blackfriars in 1906 in a three-cornered contest; D. A. Provan was the Liberal candidate and Mr. Bonar Law the Conservative. Since then Mr. Barnes has held the seat against all comers.

Mr. Wm. Adamson, M.P., won West Fife from the Liberals in December, 1910. This election was a straight fight between Labourism and Liberalism. West Fife had been a Liberal stronghold previously. In Govan and Camlachie the Labour Party unsuccessfully fought both Liberal and Tory. The same remark applies to Mid- and North-East Lanark.

Mr. Wilkie, M.P., represents Dundee in conjunction with Mr. Winston Churchill. But there as elsewhere in Scotland the Labour Party are looking forward to the day when they will fight both Liberal and Tory. When Churchill won Dundee at a bye-election in 1908 he was opposed by the Labour Party, whose nominee was second in a three-cornered contest.

Other Scottish constituencies fought by the Labour Party against Liberal and Tory were North Ayrshire and North-West Lanarkshire. In Camlachie the Labour Party have put candidates in five successive elections against Liberal and Tory. And they console themselves with the knowledge that they have kept the Liberal out each time. It is common knowledge that the Liberal Party have offered to waive seats to Mr. Robert Smillie and Mr. John Robertson provided they stood as Lib.-Labour candidates. In each instance the offer was refused.

I think this is sufficient proof that in Scotland at any rate the Labour Party owes nothing to the goodwill of the Liberal Party.

PATRICK J. DOLLAN.

THE FABIAN SOCIETY.

Sir,—I should like to criticise Mr. Kennedy's "final word" in his remarks on the Fabian Society which appear in THE NEW AGE.

He says: "I may recall that the waiting game played by Fabius was not at all to the taste of the Romans, so they recalled him and appointed Marcus Minucius Rufus in his stead."

To begin with, this statement is quite incorrect. The Romans did *not* recall Fabius and appoint Minucius in his stead; they merely equalised the powers of the dictator and his master of the horse. Well, what happened? Hannibal laid an ambush for Minucius, who promptly fell into it and was only saved by the opportune arrival of Fabius. Minucius—the story is most touching and eminently moral—makes full confession of his error before the whole army, salutes Fabius as his "more than father," lays down his lately acquired powers, and submits to Fabius' wise counsels a sadder and a wiser man.

When Fabius retired from power his tactics were abandoned, which course of action led to the disaster of Cannæ. Fabius appears on the scene soon after, to retrieve the Roman fortunes, takes Cersilinum and Tarentum after patient sieges, and by these and like tactics drives Hannibal to bay in the S.E. corner of Italy, from whence he has to retire to Africa.

Though I am a member both of the London and of the Cambridge University Fabian Societies I dare to believe these facts are perfectly correct. (V. Livy, xxii., c. 15-32.)

I should just like to ask Mr. Kennedy (though I fear he will consider the question irrelevant) what he thinks would have happened to the Romans but for the "inactivity" of Fabius which he seems to despise so much?

ELLEN M. PATERSON.

* * *

Sir,—Several interesting points are raised in "Fabian's" letter. Dealing with his prologue, I did not say in my article that Moses or anyone else indulged in heights. I said that certain thinkers indulged in rambles on intellectual heights, quite a different thing. Most grammarians divide sentences into simple, compound, and complex. I presume that the Fabians are still at the first stage. Or perhaps they make up their grammar as they go along, in the same way as Mr. Pease assures us they make up their history, mathematics, and so forth.

(1) One of Mr. Webb's typical failures was in connection with the Railway Conciliation Bill. This Bill established Conciliation Boards for six years, and in a letter to THE NEW AGE (issue of December 7, 1907), Mr. Pease, on behalf of the Fabian Executive, stated that this Bill went beyond the men's wildest dreams. Yet from the men's point of view the Bill has been a complete failure, for it has ever since given rise to a considerable amount of unrest. Nevertheless, the Fabians profess to act in the interests of the workmen. It is, however, obvious from the effects of this Bill that Mr. Webb and his friends were quite unable to foresee the results of what they themselves recommended.

As for the effect of the Fabian propaganda as a whole upon the working-men of this country, I refer to this matter in my second article, which you publish on another page.

(2) Apart from Mr. Belloc's relative speeches in Parliament, see his two articles in THE NEW AGE of April 14, 1910, and May, 26, 1910, in which he deals specifically with the Prevention of Destitution Bill. Other articles of Mr. Belloc's less specific, it is true, but dealing nevertheless with points raised in various Fabian tracts, appeared in THE NEW AGE of December 17, 1908 (see also Mr. Wells's comment on Mr. Belloc's article in the same issue); November 19, 1908, May 2, 1908, and October 7, 1909.

(3) I have not the slightest objection to young Fabians meeting for self-improvement. But—and this may also serve as an answer to "Fabian's" last question, in which he seeks to know the cause of my annoyance with the Society—I object to these confessedly immature people trying to lead where they ought to be content to follow at a distance. Mutual criticism is good enough in its way; but first of all there must be something worth criticising. Mutual criticism will never generate a new idea. The Fabian fallacy is that an indefinite number of mutual critics—let us say fifty—will, with sufficient mutual criticism, produce one idea. Nothing, however, remains nothing, even when multiplied by fifty. The mathematical problem is simple. One multiplied by fifty equals fifty. Nothing multiplied by nothing equals nothing. Ideas do not come from below, but from above. If the Fabians will study the relative speeches of Bismarck, delivered, say, between 1879 and 1884, they will find more plans for benefiting the working-classes than the Fabians have ever dreamt of.

Now, if the Fabians confine their efforts to criticising one another, thus forming select Bands of Hope or Y.M.C.A.'s,

I shall have nothing to say against them. But if they attempt to do something for which their powers are not sufficiently matured, their minds not sufficiently developed, such as laying down theories or schemes of social reform, of which they themselves cannot foresee the results, I shall assume that they are looking for trouble. And they will find it.

(4) It seems to me that "Fabian" tries to shield Mr. Webb's works by the sophist's last refuge, viz., a quibble. Having mentioned the books by Mr. and Mrs. Webb, he says: "Who, having read the books referred to, would deny *respect* for their writers?" "Fabian" uses the wrong preposition after "respect," but that may pass. Now, I did not say that I had no respect for the writers of these books; I did say that there were places where the works themselves were treated with scant respect. I have respect for the writers as I have respect for any industrious man or woman engaged in useful research work; but it is only for such research work that Mr. and Mrs. Webb can claim any credit. That is to say, their books lay down no new constructive principles or theories.

As to what I know of these books, I may say in answer to "Fabian's" query that I have read the "History of Trade Unionism," "Industrial Democracy," and two parts of a book on Local Government the exact titles of which I cannot at the moment recollect. I have also read many articles by Mrs. Webb which have appeared in various newspapers from time to time, not to mention the Minority Report—not the edition edited for the Fabian Society, but the official blue-book.

See likewise my answer to "Fabian's" second question, which deals partly with his fourth.

(5) Now for the expression "on the make" which "Fabian" would like to have elucidated. After a careful review of the Fabian propaganda during the last fifteen years or so, there does not seem to me to be any doubt that the ultimate object of the Society is the exploitation of the sorrows, grievances, and wrongs of the workers for the benefit of the Fabians themselves. I do not mean that the Fabians pursue this end cynically, or even consciously. They are not strong enough to be cynical. They are, in short, so conceited, they have been taken during such a lengthy period at their own valuation, that they think they are entitled to lead. Ninety per cent. of the Fabians I have met (I do not speak of what one may judge from reading between the lines of the Fabian Tracts) appear to consider themselves as potential State officials and functionaries generally. The Fabians are potential priests and popes. It is they who will lay down the law for the world in general; they will act as fathers unto us and we shall be as their children. This is the Fabian *arrière-pensée*, and half-an-hour's conversation with an average member of the Society will convince the most sceptical of it.

(6) I think that when "Fabian" digests the foregoing statements his curiosity in respect to my annoyance will be satisfied. I refer him more particularly to my answers to questions 3 and 5.

By the way, "Fabian" will find a few other points connected with the Society, some of them bearing on his questions, discussed in my second article in this week's issue.

J. M. KENNEDY.

* * *

Sir,—In view of the protests prominent Fabians have made against the libraries boycotting books by H. G. Wells and A. Neil Lyons the following letter seems to be a bit queer.

(Copy.)

The Fabian Society,
3, Clement's Inn, Strand,
London, W.C.

April 10, 1911.

Dear Mr. Burgess,—I received the proofs of your book and submitted them together with your proposals to my committee on Friday evening. I am sorry to say that they took a very strong view of the preface by Mr. Hyndman and directed me categorically not even to accept an advertisement of the book for the "Fabian News." I think it is a pity you allowed your book to be prefaced by so bitter an opponent of Burns, as I do not imagine that there is anything else in the book to which such strong exception could be taken, and apart from the preface I have no reason to suppose the committee would have been unwilling to promote its sale.

I am, yours sincerely,

EDW. R. PEASE.

By the same post my publishers, The Reformers' Book-stall, Ltd., Glasgow, had returned the copy of a five-inch advertisement submitted for insertion in the May issue of the "Fabian News."

JOSEPH BURGESS.

SOCIALISM AND INDUSTRIALISM.

Sir,—The man who preaches a principle is always in danger of being asked for a detail; and the wise man, no prophet he, will curse the detail-mongers for their Laputa-born hypotheses. It is the kink in the brain of your thorough-going detail-delver that he is intensely interested in unborn grandchildren; and delights in nothing better than to present last night's dream as his matter-of-fact next-door neighbour. So when Mr. Paul complacently contemplates the facility of filling THE NEW AGE with his hypothetical asses'-bridges, I feel that he needs but to fulfil his task to achieve a final and exquisite rationalism in the throes of his exhaustion; for farce is blood-brother to reason.

I suggested in my letter a line of reconciliation between Socialists and Industrialists. In other words I see that the vivifying spirit is effervescing from the Socialist ideal, leaving behind an insipid something which only slaves will drink. The thoughtful Socialist has denounced this Labour Party stuff flat; he is profoundly disgusted. He recognises that Parliamentary act-spinning is but stereotyping the present industrial condition of servitude, wagedom, and shoddy; and that the puritanical ethic of the unimaginative crowd is increasingly encircling and restricting originality of thought, and freedom of conduct. He must read this book, or see that play, whilst to invite his child to see him drink a glass of beer is to merit the hell and fury of an angry State. Admirable Oriental ethic! You do as I do or be damned in this world and the next! It is useless for Mr. Cecil Chesterton to tell us that this paternalism is unpopular with the democracy; for it is the reek of every election, and the stench of the Parliamentary page. Mr. Verdaz might well preach war in desperation; like the Englishman with nothing to do, he desires to kill something. Therefore I conceived the idea of doing Socialism a service by uniting it to a living idea; but Mr. Paul throws loghuts, fevers and other characteristic symptoms of unsocial Socialists at my head for my temerity.

Now, if in walking to Bath I fall in with a man journeying to Exeter, there seems no earthly reason to me in stipulating as a preliminary for temporary companionship that my neighbour must describe to me his next suit of clothes which he contemplates obtaining; and applying the parable, Mr. Paul will see that, granting that the freeing of credit now will facilitate the development of personally controlled industry, and the consequent rebirth of the community spirit, his questions are relatively insignificant; for the point is: does he want so much? If he does not, then I will admit that there can be no reconciliation; for no individualist will help to preserve the evils of this industrial system with the added abomination of a soulless routine administration; the very contemplation is appalling. If, however, Socialists have any enthusiasm for the communal ideal, if they believe that civilisation is something more than three square meals a day, then a reconciliation conserving the essence of Individualism and Socialism is practicable upon the lines indicated in Mr. Meulen's letters; and suggested in my own.

Thus when Mr. Paul asks me for definitions, I can only reply that I sufficiently defined my terms and object in my letter; whilst lacking Mr. Paul's uniformity of mind I imagine that some communities might communise land, whilst persons like myself might favour loghuts and small-pox. Like is attracted to like, and no doubt there will remain people full to the brim with a metaphysical right to the earth; and who will feast upon the plenteous fruits of the earth, and live in mansions with the latest sanitary conveniences depriving no man of his earth-right. I don't object to their ideas; but they mustn't covet the bodies and souls of log-hutters like myself. However, loghuts and blackberries have no immediate relation to the desirability of altering our present economic muddle. Mr. Paul must fulfil his threat, burn the result; and get that confounded fallacy out of his head that Sir Robert Peel founded society with the policeman.

JAMES H. CAREY.

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SEX AND SUPERMAN.

Sir,—Mr. Randall says in his rejoinder to Mr. Sinclair that those who regard sex as a paramount interest are not supermen, but "fornicators." In a book recently published Henri Beyle is included among a list of "supermen." But Beyle said of himself, "L'amour a toujours été pour moi la plus grande des affaires ou plutôt la seule." It is not safe to estimate a man's value in any other department of life by the application of moral interests. For as to Stendhal's genius there can be no possible question. At any rate, we know that Nietzsche admired him greatly. And I suppose he may be counted an authority where it is a question of "supermen"!

C. J. WHITBY, M.D.

NIETZSCHE AND WOMAN.

Sir,—The views of Mr. V. W. Eyre, March 9, headed "Nietzsche and Woman," appear to me so interesting that I hope some comments may still be permissible. The evident kindly feeling towards women collectively which Mr. Eyre expresses is pleasant, and is rare in Englishmen, and is the more creditable as he takes such a gloomy view of their future.

I wish to draw Mr. Eyre's attention to some facts which may perhaps be consoling:—

1. He fears that men will suddenly cease to admire woman as beautiful, and will, in consequence, degrade them more than in the past.

The main fact of the psychology of beauty is tersely expressed in the proverb, "Beauty is in the eye of the gazer." Therefore there is no one standard of beauty. Mr. Eyre thinks the masculine form more beautiful than the feminine. So do I, and so do many others, but many men think the contrary. He thinks the masculine face more beautiful than the feminine; I and many others think the contrary.

A further important point is unnoticed: that most people lack the faintest feeling for beauty in any form, except perhaps a transitory attraction to "a pretty girl." Any fairness or favour that women may obtain from men does not depend on the precarious tenure of masculine perception of visual beauty.

2. Mr. Eyre says he is disappointed with the university girl, though she "goes forth into the world often with great enthusiasms, anxious to devote to the general welfare her industry, patience and enormous capacity for hard work." Why is he not more disappointed with the university man, who certainly does not possess these admirable qualities, and has usually not even a borrowed culture? She "clings to some authority" and "becomes a hack." Does she? There could not be a truer description of the universities themselves—following in old grooves, with no power to give, in any adequate measure, of the boundless wealth of human knowledge which they keep locked up, and without any excuse of the pressure of penury.

How little do the men who govern—or sleep and luxuriate—in universities do to inspire the nation's teachers, or to enable simple persons to grasp the broad principles of modern humanity and social science, and as much detailed knowledge as will guide them in their own career and open their eyes to the enjoyment and beauty of life!

What can we say of the "public schools," whose very name is a lie, deceiving some into the belief that the democratic intentions of their founders are carried out? These schools are officered by university men who have not even learnt that to educate the young is a highly skilled work, and needs *trained* teachers, such as are insisted on by women in schools for girls. Their discipline exhibits almost as brutal mis-education as that of a thousand years ago.

When have universities sent out men to teach the laws of health as distinguished from those of disease? Or even begun to study the important relation between kinds of work and health and efficiency? Why do they not provide us with genealogical forms and directions, for the use of individual families—so essential to the study of national health and heredity? What can they care for the visual arts when they cannot even make a colour chart? It has been left to the good sense of the Royal Horticultural Society to promote colour discrimination, and its use in the arts, by purchasing copies of the French Repertoire des Couleurs, which they kindly sell to colour-students, no English ones being obtainable?

Is not the negation of colour in the dress of English gentlemen traceable to university influence? Is not the absence of piety and of the enthusiasm of conviction in English churchism due to the same?

And, to add one more query out of many, why has not the university made the enormously valuable study of psychology attractive and intelligible to Mr. Eyre?

3. Can Mr. Eyre quote one biologist in support of his statement that "every year weakens the force of our primitive instincts"? Havelock Ellis (note, page 73 of "Man and Woman"), distinctly repudiates the idea of "a future of humanity in which . . . the sexual emotions shall have almost disappeared."

DORA FORSTER.

* * *

"SHAVIANA."

Sir,—Shaw-baiting seems a favourite diversion of the clever young men of the day, and THE NEW AGE is one of their happy-hunting grounds.

Mr. J. M. Kennedy, with a note of admiration, sends a terrific review from a New York yellow journal, written by a mere minnow of a man, and tainted throughout with a stupid party bias. Apart from the writer's naive references to Socialism, it is well to remember that "blasted Britishers"—from pugilists to poets—seldom get fair treatment in the New York papers.

Personally I regard Oscar Wilde and Shaw as the most

distinctive literary personalities of the time, and the latter the man, before all others, who has made possible the success of such a paper as THE NEW AGE.

HUGH BLAKER.

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THE PREROGATIVE OF MERCY.

Sir,—It is about time someone protested against the abuse of the prerogative of "mercy" which was witnessed in the Morrison case. Everyone knew what was going to happen, but the mercy was withheld till the date fixed for the execution was sufficiently near to make the intervention of the Home Secretary dramatic. It was not a sequence of the police inquiry, which led to nothing, and was intended to lead to nothing. The condemned man was allowed to go through all the anticipatory emotions of death (and if death is painless its horror consists entirely of anticipatory emotions); then mercifully sentenced to lifelong servitude as well. Two such punishments for one alleged crime are a fairly heavy penalty, and redound to the glory of Churchill.

VANCE PALMER.

THEOLOGY.

Sir,—May I just say this? The Moderns may overestimate the sublimity of their emotions, but the fact remains that the emotions, although perhaps of relatively small "magnitude" in the cosmos, are of relative large "importance"; they, and their "activities," constitute noumena, although perhaps more "superficial" noumena. Conceit, for instance, may be a blot of ink that mars a landscape painting, or a squeak that spoils a song. However, in that portion of the spiritual universe in which most men live and move, the interaction of the emotions constitute noumena of overwhelming significance (to men).

A coster bearing false witness in a street brawl, out of spite, may be possessed of a very "large" and cunning devil—the whole constituting a dreadfully significant noumenon.

The "groanings which cannot be uttered," and the "peace of God which passes all understanding," are noumena; they may be felt, but not "explained" nor "described." "As above, so below," may be a man's belief, but "as below, so above," is the corresponding principle on which he necessarily thinks.

J. JOHN ELLIOTT.

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SACERDOTAL PRIVILEGES.

Sir,—I am pleased to have at length extracted from the "Eclectic Philosopher" an acknowledgment of the sources from whence he has drawn his charges against convents. They appear to be as follows: (1) Scott's poem "Marmion," a mere romance which these anti-convent people invariably quote as if it were history. With equal justice I might make the misdeeds of the Rev. Mr. Stiggins of "The Pickwick Papers" the basis of a charge against the Nonconformist clergy.

(2) "Special histories" which with commendable caution he refrains from naming.

(3) What he is pleased to call his "reason"; in other words, his prejudices.

(4) "Narratives of escaped religieuses." For very different reasons I have followed the movements and read the effusions of these bogus ex-nuns as closely as your correspondent. During the last few years at least a dozen of these people have been introduced to the public by the various organisations which make a speciality of this sort of thing. In every case the scene of their imaginary troubles has been laid in non-existent convents, for the purpose of evading inconvenient inquiries. But in every case exposure has sooner or later ensued, and their clerical exploiters have been forced, much against the grain, to drop them and search for fresh tools.

I note that your correspondent still maintains that the famous Protestant classic, "The Awful Adventures of Maria Monk," may be true "as far as his means of information extend." This won't wash. However limited these means may be, the free libraries are open to all, and in the new edition of the "Times Encyclopedia," as well as in the "American Encyclopedia," your correspondent can find the full history of this disgusting imposture.

Your correspondent also avows his devout belief in the old wives' fable of "the walled up nun." This legend was the subject of an exhaustive controversy some years ago in the "Pall Mall Gazette," and the only writer who championed it finally apologised, withdrew, and confessed that he had been deceived by his authorities.

ANTI-CANT.

* * *

THE REPRESENTATION OF SHAKESPEARE.

Sir,—In your symposium on the representation of Shakespeare the Hon. A. S. G. Canning remarks on there being no evidence in the plays of the Londoners' habit of misplacing the letter "h."

Is not this because in Shakespeare's day the "tyranny of

the aspirate" was not yet established? I have understood that the old Anglo-Saxon guttural sound (vainly recalled in "licht" and "necht," Scots) had almost disappeared by the middle of the 14th century, while the aspirate force of "h" was not general until the late 17th century. The transition in spelling of the mediæval "Hierusalem" to the modern "Jerusalem" seems to support the theory that the aspirate is of late introduction; as also the change of "Hallelujah" to "Alleluia."

S. CUNNINGTON.

* * *

SHAKESPEARE OR BACON?

Sir,—Mr. Visiak requests me to substantiate my statement that "the law referred to in the 'Merchant of Venice' was not the English, but the Italian law in force in Venice in the sixteenth century," but as the trial in the play takes place at Venice, my statement is manifestly correct, and cannot possibly require any substantiation.

Respecting the question whether the Venetian law is correctly stated in the play, I would point out that the latter, as Mr. Visiak is doubtless aware, is founded on "Il Pecorone," a collection of Italian tales written by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino in 1378, and that the law, with the rest of the story, is taken from that work, which had not been translated at the time the play was written. Bacon's mother, it may be mentioned, not only knew Italian, but she also translated Italian books into English, as, for instance, the sermons of Bernardino Ochino—whereas Shakespeare's mother could not even write her own name.

A stipendiary magistrate at Liverpool stated some years ago that the plays "contain passages displaying not merely a knowledge of the principles and practice of the law of real property, but also of the common law, and of the criminal law, and a thorough intimacy with the exact letter of the Statute Law." And yet we are asked to believe that they were written by a man who was first a butcher, and afterwards an actor.

As regards the Sonnets I can only repeat that, like Mr. Sidney Lee, I do not believe, for the reasons stated in my letter, that Shakespeare supplied them to the publisher; and as only the author would have all these 154 Sonnets, some of them being of a rather private and confidential nature, the author himself probably sent them direct to Thorpe, the publisher—unless, indeed, he sent them through Mr. William Hall, who, according to Mr. Sidney Lee, was the person described in the dedication as "Mr. W. H.," and as being the "only begetter" (procurer) of the Sonnets. But "Mr. W. H." may have been Bacon's friend William Herbert.

The "sugred sonnets" referred to by Francis Meres in 1598 were no doubt the two included in the "Passionate Pilgrim" in the following year, and possibly a few others circulated in manuscript, but it seems more probable that the two in the "Passionate Pilgrim" were all that had been so circulated, as otherwise more would have been included in that lying anthology in which poems by Richard Barnfield, B. Griffin, Marlowe, Raleigh, and other authors, were published as having been written by W. Shakespeare.

With reference to Mr. W. T. Smedley's recent interesting letters respecting the geography of the plays, I would point out that Coryat, writing in 1610, stated as regards the river at Verona, "although it be not able to bear vessels of a great burden, yet it carrieth pretty barges of convenient quantity, wherein great store of merchandise is brought unto the city both out of Germany and from Venice itself."

SAMUEL WADDINGTON.

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MODERN BIOGRAPHY.

Sir,—As your weekly is the single literary journal in which such a letter as this from a perfectly obscure person—though a student of literature—has the faintest chance of appearing, will you allow me to protest against Mr. Gribble's latest contribution to literature, in which all the discreditable stories in the life of the great tragedienne "Rachel" are raked up and served for those who love these sweepings in the same delectable manner in which the amours of Byron were recently presented, as the papers so gracefully put it, by the same accomplished hand—accomplished, I mean, not as the eminent chef is accomplished in turning out savouries for our consumption, but in placing before us every un-savoury morsel in the life of a great man or woman that this industrious spademan can dig up? Is there no literary journal with sufficient care for literature to come forward and say boldly that no greater wrong to literature and to good taste could be conceived than that perpetrated by Mr. Francis Gribble and his publisher?

With the single exception of the "Birmingham Daily Post," which had a most fine, dignified and manly protest on the ignoble stuff of this kind,—(it is an odd commentary on things that the best literary criticism of the moment should appear in a Birmingham daily newspaper, though of late there has been somewhat of a falling off in the quality)—so far as my own observation went (I industriously col-

lected the reviews), not one had a sufficiently independent or courageous attitude, or, as I have said, sufficient care for literature to criticise the Byron rechauffée as it deserved, and as the "Rachel" *plat* likewise deserves.

Of course, the stock reply to this is, "What on earth does it matter to literature?" The people who thus argue might just as well say that if a man desecrates Westminster Abbey he does no harm to art. The memory of a man or woman of genius should be preserved as religiously as the great Cathedral, and those who drag down or degrade or soil it are every bit as great Philistines as he who defaces a temple. And not alone this. There is another side rarely recognised, and that is, in addition, the vulgarising of men's minds so that the man or woman who knows nothing of Byron's glorious poetry or of the unspeakably great service to human thought rendered by Byron, for ever associates him with a degrading sensualism which was the least valuable side of his life and character, and at this period, as the admirable review to which I have alluded pointed out, need not even be recalled for the understanding and enjoyment of his splendid poetry.

I trust, Sir, you will find a space for this. I may say that though I differ from you as regards Socialism, and honestly care nothing about Mr. Jacob Tonson, I take your journal because it shows those unique things to-day: courage, independence, knowledge, and judgment, and is neither rabidly democratic nor insanelly eclectic. STERN.

MODERN LOVE.

Sir,—Would you find room for the enclosed truthful narrative. H. P. A.

There was a chill in the wet wind, the moon
Was dim and small as dissolving pearl,
The electric lamp was like a pale balloon,
And I was walking London with my girl.

Her feet were heavy with a shop-day's load,
It was the hour of love; my eyes were dim
With casting figures; love was like a goad,
We were too weary to rake up a whim.

I lived North, and she "lived in," and so
Just before ten o'clock we said good-night,
In a back-street; then the door did go,
The door wherethrough she vanished from my sight.

Another hour and I with deadened brain
Was whirled by rows of windows as the tram
(Whence life and all seemed like a chilly rain)
Howled like a fire-eyed fiend through Tottenham.

A FEW EPIGRAMS ON READY CASH.

Sir,—Do you care to print the following cynical aphorisms which I have translated from the French of Sacha Guitry. D. W.

The most important thing on earth is money.
Without money happiness is impossible.

One ought not have too little money, and not too much.
Because those who have too much try to impress others with the idea that they have too little. And if they should remain unimpressible they become a nuisance.

It is perfectly evident that Rockefeller is not the happiest man in the world because he is the richest. It is equally apparent that the poorest man in the world is the unhappiest of all.

We can only think money.

There are those who think of their own, and those who think of other people's. It is our greatest preoccupation in life.

Money is everything.
But it is not everything.
There is health!

And yet —

We would hesitate to lessen our incomes to re-establish our health, and we would not hesitate to endanger our health to double our income.

I, at any rate.

If a millionaire were foolish enough to offer fifty pounds for every toe cut from one's foot, he would be ruined in ten minutes.

And then there is love that plays its small part in life.

Well, yes. . . Only with money one can afford to have illusions about love, whereas love cannot afford to have illusions about money.

Only fish can live on love and fresh water.

The comedies of yesteryear, wherein one met the young man hesitating to declare his love because of his own indigence and the opulence of the object of his affection, are comedies first—and of long ago, next.

If there is a man in this world sufficiently childish to act in that way —

Let us be uncertain of his existence.

And let us add that delicacy in money-matters is a thing of the past.

Example: Set four young men of good family and unimpeachable honesty round a table, give them a pack of cards and the rules of poker. Before thirty minutes are up two of these young men will begin to cheat. (By "cheat" I mean, try to see the game of his neighbour.)

I do not understand the pleasure of giving, especially where money is concerned. (Instead of this, I would give anyone a rendezvous, a smack in the face, or an old hat.

And, curiously, I do not think myself greedy.

Is it because the greater part of the people are like me?

Having such ideas, I think that those who lend their wealth spontaneously ought to be made to retain a certain interest—say 95 to 100 per cent.

It is this that prevents me from being grateful to my creditors.

It is this which even constrains me to withhold the return of their money. (It is not the only reason, but we'll let that pass.)

It is true that they could not have valued money highly to have lent some to me.

They have speculated on my gratefulness. They no doubt wished me to be indebted to them eternally.

Pooh! it is so mean of them.

I never wish to see them again.

CONCERNING "THE NEW AGE."

Sir,—Perhaps you will permit me to use your columns to reply to a number of questions addressed to me by readers of THE NEW AGE, who are solicitous for its welfare. (1) It is frequently suggested that THE NEW AGE should obtain more advertisements. Nothing would suit me better whatever you, as Editor, might say; but really the matter does not rest with the management. It is obvious that patent medicine sellers who know their business will not advertise in a paper that circulates among the intelligent; and the same may be said of the rest of the semi-fraudulent traders upon ignorance and credulity. Publishers are in a different class, no doubt; but, here again, commonsense would suggest an explanation of their refusal to advertise in a journal which criticises their wares so fearlessly as THE NEW AGE. Only the most literate and public-spirited would thank you for putting the interests of literature before their interests as tradesmen. Perhaps, also, your readers are a little to blame in this matter. I hear of many who buy books favourably reviewed in your columns who nevertheless never mention its name when ordering from the publisher. I repeat that we do our best to obtain advertisements on honourable terms. On any other THE NEW AGE is glad to be without them.

(2) Why is THE NEW AGE not obtainable on every book-stall? For the simple reason that this would involve printing ten times as many copies as we sell. The "Daily Mail" can afford to do this; so can several popular penny weeklies. But they could also afford to give away their whole issues. Their revenue from advertisements is sufficient to more than cover the loss on circulation. THE NEW AGE, on the other hand, relies upon circulation alone. No other paper in England does. But we cannot print many more than we sell without certain loss.

(3) Why does THE NEW AGE advertise itself by means of posters? Again the question is one of cost in the first place and of a special circulation in the second. The cost of exhibiting posters is enormous, and only journals subsidised by advertisements can afford it. Secondly, not more than one in a thousand of the general public would buy THE NEW AGE twice even if it were advertised like a soap.

(4) Why do not the newspapers refer more often to the important articles which THE NEW AGE publishes? Because THE NEW AGE is a sort of "open secret" which every journalist knows and no journalist mentions. Also it must be remembered that THE NEW AGE has managed to escape a label; and without a label round its neck journalists cannot calculate either its opinions or their value.

(5) On what does THE NEW AGE, then, rely for increasing its circulation? Far be it from me to say that to increase in circulation is not the first business of a journal; but the directors of THE NEW AGE have less material views. Apart from the merits of the paper itself, we rely upon the goodwill of our present readers to increase our sales. They must know by this time that the success of the paper is largely in their hands, and is theirs to make or mar. They, indeed, do know, for I receive daily proofs that your readers, on the whole, do their best to make THE NEW AGE known. Some, it is true—but I should become controversial.

(6) Why should not THE NEW AGE return to its original price of a penny a week? The balance-sheets of that penny period contain the answer to this question. THE NEW AGE lost over £1,000 a year. In view of that experience, we should be more likely to raise the price to sixpence.

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