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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

It is not often that our comments are illustrated within a few days of their publication with such force and point as have been our comments of last week by the events of the last few days. Replying to the "Spectator's" advocacy—now, by the way, rapidly spreading over the Press—of increased capital as a remedy for low wages, we referred to the commonly accepted facts of our recent boom in trade, the increasing capitalisation and over-capitalisation of our chief industries, the vast swelling of profits, and the contemporary steady decline in real wages and the return on labour. This apparition of increasing capital with diminishing wages did not, we said, bear out the "Spectator's" view that what is needed to raise wages is more capital. And now all these contentions of ours have been again illustrated and again proved from sources guiltless of collusion with us and indisposed, indeed, to point our moral. Within the last few days in the "Times" Financial Supplement, in the "Daily Mail" and the "Daily News," statistics have been published of the actual trade of this country over the previous twelve months. They show that in the chief industries, and notably in just those industries in which "labour unrest" has been conspicuous, the volume of wealth-production has been enormous, the profits huge, and the wages lowering. Despite labour troubles past, present and prospective, capital has been increasing while wages have been declining. By common admission, supported now by statistics, capital has been during the last twelve months walking on velvet with roses, roses all the way, what time labour has been treading nearer and nearer to the cold stone floor of destitution.

Let us look first at the railways as the résumé of the past year is displayed in the "Times" and elsewhere to the satisfaction of railway shareholders. It is well known that the year 1907 was in respect of traffic and profits a boom year for our railway lines. In that year the total net profits amounted to 45 millions sterling, a sum nearly equal to the total amount paid to the six or seven hundred thousand men engaged in labour on the lines. Taking the figures of the 27 chief lines alone, the "Times" estimates that the number of men employed was some 479,000. This figure, it will be remarked, was the point at which employment stood when Mr. Lloyd George patented and put upon the labour market his ingenious device of Conciliation Boards. Within three years, however, this total of 479,000 was reduced by 16,000. On the same lines during the year 1910-11 the number of men employed had sunk from 479,000 to 463,000, with what effect, do you suppose, on profits and wages? Profits for the same year leaped up from 45 millions, the boom and record of 1907, to 48 millions in 1910-11, an increase equal to the total profits on our national post-office. Wages, on the other hand, despite the reduction in employment by some 16,000 men, fell by just about a penny per week per man. Not much evidence there that what is needed to abolish poverty is more wealth.

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The "Times," however, goes on to remark that large as this profit may appear when compared absolutely with wages, the return on the capital which it represents is small, some three or three and a quarter per cent. This return is so infinitesimal (in comparison, that is, with other investments) that the directors will be expected to spare no pains to economise in management still further. The daughters of the horse-leech cry for more and more profits. Nevertheless, the situation is difficult. For the directors are on the horns of the following dilemma: If a higher dividend is declared next year, let us say, and the year after, the tumult of the public may be considerable. What, we shall say, you professed to be unable to raise wages without raising fares and freights, and all the time your profits were actually rising! On the other hand, it is just possible that railway nationalisation may begin within a few years to be seriously contemplated. A Liberal group of members, headed by Baron de Forest, has already begun a mild campaign with this object. By

the Act of 1844 it is provided that the State may at any time take over the railways on payment of a sum equal to 25 years' purchase of the annual divisible profits estimated on the average of the three preceding years. To ensure, therefore, that if the State should take over the railways the State shall pay, as usual, through the nose, it is desirable that the present directors should declare as large divisible profits as possible. But how to do this without attracting public attention, that is the question. The "Times" unfortunately offers the harassed directors no advice on this subject, but two or three inadvertencies (shall we call them?) reveal the state of affairs we have long suspected. Referring to the means hitherto taken to conceal the real profits on the railways, the "Times" remarks on the "disastrous over-capitalisation" of the chief companies. Railway stock has been watered, the "Times" calculates, by at least 18½ per cent. In addition a thousand little ingenuities have been practised in the form of bonuses, writing off capital, reserves, etc., etc., to make the declared profits look less than they are. If nationalisation is imminent, these concealed profits must be dragged into the light of the half-yearly balance-sheets, there to swell the purchase price of the railway companies. We shall know, indeed, whether nationalisation is or is not imminent by the balance-sheets issued this year by the companies. If dividends appear to be high, we may be sure that Mr. Lloyd George has given the word that Railway Nationalisation is coming. If they remain low, Railway Nationalisation is not yet "practical politics."

* * *

For some reason or other the accounts of the colliery companies—mostly family concerns, it is true—are rather less fraudulent than the public balance-sheets of the railway companies. Except in, say, fifty per cent. of the instances, the profits shown are probably not more than fifty per cent. below the profits actually earned. From a list we have seen of about a score of our leading collieries' balance-sheets, we calculate that the average rate of dividend confessed and revealed is ten per cent., which means that the total capital of the coal industry is repaid to its proprietors every decade. This average, however, is composed of collieries that scarcely pay at all as well as of collieries that pay so handsomely that we wonder their owners are not ashamed to look their workmen in the face. In one Welsh colliery, for example, the dividend actually amounts to nearly seventy per cent. per annum; and this in a district where "labour unrest" has been occasioned by the demand of miners, not for an increase of wages, but for the restoration of wages to their former purchasing level. It may be asked why the economic law by which capital flows to high profits and by competition reduces them does not operate in the case of collieries. By all the reasoning of the "Spectator" this law should instantly appear to reduce the inflated, exceptional dividend of sixty-eight per cent. The reply is, of course, that coal is a monopoly into which no outside capital is permitted to flow. These economic laws on which the validity of competition depends are like all other virtuous things—they flourish only in liberty. In the midst of rings, monopolies, and trusts by which English industry, more than any industry in the world, is bound actually if not nominally, these same economic laws exist only in a state of suspended animation. Not even the "Spectator" can quicken the economic law of reducing profits by competing capital when the competition of new capital is made impossible by monopoly.

* * *

We may just touch briefly on two other illustrations of our general case that wages are falling while profits are rising. It will be remembered that last summer the seamen were put to the trouble and expense of attempting to raise their wages by means of a strike. We were certain at the time that the strike would prove to be justified by the figures of the trade. Strikes hardly ever occur, in fact, without excellent cause and justification. The men divine the state of trade and by some occult process arrive at a shrewd and accurate estimate of what the trade will bear in the way of wages. If their

demands are ignored, it is only then that in ordinary circumstances they strike. The Shipping Federation, however, acting after the usual manner of capitalists, declared through the columns of the "Times" that the state of trade was such that the smallest increase of wages would cripple it. Dozens of firms would have to close down and hundreds of vessels would have to be laid up to rot into firewood and scrap-iron. The public, with its usual credulous generosity, accepted the word of these liars, and when wages were actually raised a very little consented willingly to a considerable increase in fares and freights—an increase much more than sufficient to cover any expense to which the shipping companies were likely to be put. The facts are now well known that at the very moment of these protestations of impending bankruptcy the shipping industry in general was having the year of its life. Nothing like the trade either in traffic or in building has been seen before in the history of this planet. The year 1911, remarkable in so many other respects, was in the matter of shipping and shipbuilding an annus mirabilis. Of the traffic the record imports and exports—sixty per cent. of the world's total being carried in British bottoms—bear witness. In shipbuilding three British ports each by itself alone topped the entire shipbuilding of the whole German Empire. No fewer than five ports each turned out as much tonnage as the whole of the United States; each of seven ports easily surpassed the total shipping industry of France. It was in this annus mirabilis that a decline in wages was only arrested by the expenditure of thousands of pounds by the seamen's unions. The other interesting item is soon told. Messrs. Brunner-Mond announce that on the 25th inst. their nominal capital will be increased to five millions. Wealthy Socialists, we understand, have a peculiar preference for investments in Brunner-Mond's.

* * *

Apart from the question of raising wages, to which we shall return in a moment, an obvious reflection on all this commercial deception of the public is the staggering amount of personal dishonesty it reveals. In dealing with capitalism it is clear that we have not to deal with gentlemen except in the most banal sense of the word. No humane or public-spirited intelligence can be expected to survive in an atmosphere of falsified accounts, concealed profits, watered capital and lying protestations in regard to wages. As well expect mercy, as Shakespeare says, from male tigers, as consideration for either labour or the public from these carnivora of capitalism. They have their dupes, it is true, who speak us fairly on their behalf and of whom we in turn become occasionally the dupes. Who would suppose, for example, that the "Spectator," honest, sincere and courageous, would complacently play into the hands of men who deliberately cook their accounts for the consumption of the public? Yet the "Spectator," in advocating more and more wealth for these men, in the mistaken belief that the more wealth the more wages, is undeniably playing Moab to their Israel—"Moab is my washpot." Even the "Spectator," however, cannot conceal from the world the manifest fact that in capitalism both labour and the public have an enemy on whom reason and intelligence are likely to be lost. The conclusion in practice, we fear, is of the gloomiest. Not by a rash word would we venture to stir up such strife as once put an end to the similar condition of things in France. On the other hand, to what but force of the grossest description will capitalism yield? Reason they will not have; but after reason—the deluge!

* * *

Short of the deluge two forces alone exist sufficient each in itself to oppose successfully the force of capitalism—the State with public opinion, and Labour. Of these two, however, the former, it is to be feared, is criminally indifferent, and the latter is half-blind. We have only to recall the conduct of the present State Executive during the last five years to realise that the State is at present no match for capitalism. On the contrary, the State appears to be its willing tool. Mr.

Gardiner, of the "Daily News," has recently been all the way to Brussels to eulogise the present Cabinet. Its social legislation, he told the poor Belgians, had put this country easily first among the nations of the world. The whole of industry was gradually being brought under the benevolent guardianship of the State. Men, women, and children, sickness, unemployment, disease, immorality were all receiving the most careful and paternal attention. In a few years [he did not say this, but it was implied] the Kingdom of Heaven would be brought to earth in this England of ours. Well, it may all be true enough—save the conclusion—in one sense. We do not deny that *attention* has been given to matters of social legislation by the present Government. What we do deny, however, is that the attention has been benevolent, or, if benevolent, anything but disastrous. Measured by the sole reliable index of prosperity, the rate and amount of wages in proportion to wealth, it is certain that the five years' office of the present Cabinet has seen an appalling reaction and retrogression. The very activity of the State on which Mr. Gardiner congratulates the Government has been directed solely to making good the constant losses of the working classes in wages. With every general decline in wages, poverty increases so rapidly that some new Government provision becomes imperative. But we should not praise the Government for merely substituting charity for wages. The substitution is condemnation.

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Actually, of course, there has been no effort made by this or any other recent Government to combat capitalism at its source, for the double reason that the Cabinet, consisting of wirepullers run by plutocrats, are themselves capitalistically disposed, and, further, public opinion is as helpless as it is unenlightened on the problem. Speaking on Monday at the Persian demonstration, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. Silvester Horne, Dr. Clifford, and other champions of Mr. Lloyd George's Insurance Bill, urged that foreign policy should be democratised and brought under the control of public opinion. But if foreign policy, so difficult a subject for the public to understand, should be brought under the influence of public opinion, how much more desirable it is that public opinion should control what it does understand. Yet, as we all know, these very speakers not only themselves ignored public opinion in the matter of the Insurance Bill, but they were largely responsible for nerving Mr. Lloyd George against even the advice of the Cabinet, to resist and flout it. What should Sir Edward Grey say to these critics but that he will take the same liberty with public opinion that they encouraged Mr. Lloyd George to take; and with the more reason since his subject is caviare to the public while Mr. Lloyd George's was plain bread and butter. The fact is that the spokesmen of public opinion are themselves often the first to flout it. When public opinion is identical with their own personal views, democracy is everything to them. When public opinion differs from them public opinion is wrong. With such equivocating leaders what can be expected in the way of public influence on the compact and single-minded force of capitalism? Between capitalists, the Cabinet and leaders such as these, the public finds no public voice whatever. It is only in private and amongst ourselves that we, the public, have an opportunity of stating our views. Under the crust of lies and misrepresentation, however, a pretty volcano of feeling is boiling.

* * *

Neither the State nor the public, as represented, showing any signs of combating capitalism, the only alternative to letting in the jungle of revolution is Labour. And Labour, as we have said, is half-blind. Only half or wholly blind labour leaders could possibly have conducted the successful railway strike of last August to so disastrous a termination. It is clear now, and it was clear then, that the companies were making a margin of profits from which they could easily have afforded to raise wages all round. In addition the question of recognition had been clearly settled in the men's minds, and they were determined

to raise the prestige of their own officials by insisting upon it. The strike took place, and for twenty-four hours the issue hung in the balance. Industry became so dislocated that nothing short of total surrender on the part of the companies could be expected if the men's leaders held out another day. Instead of merely raising wages and forcing recognition, the unions had it in their power to compel the nationalisation of railways forthwith, thereby saving themselves years of agitation and the public enormous sums of purchase money. Precisely when they were on the point of winning, the men's leaders incontinently threw up the sponge; the companies, the Government, and Mr. Henderson rushed in to complete the defeat, and within a few hours the latest state of the railwaymen was made worse than the first. The men returned to their work like whipped curs, said one observer. But it was their leaders who had beaten them.

* * *

Now we are not so prejudiced that we cannot admit a good motive as well as a bad motive for this act of surrender. The good motive in our view is mistaken, but it does not thereby cease to be good. The fact is—and it has since been fully illustrated—that these labour leaders of the older generation have a profound respect for what appears to them to be public opinion. They have been told so often that they have come to believe it as a truth that the public is entitled to the respect of labour. Witness the touching provision invariably made by organised unions on strike for the conveniences of the sick and infirm. Witness, further, the offers made by unions on strike to act as constables to preserve public order. Witness the cautious, cooling words invariably uttered by responsible Labour leaders before and during a great strike. Witness, above all, the ease with which they are coaxed back to work, with nothing whatever won and all their funds spent, by Sir George Askwith and the Press combined. Yes, it has its noble side, this susceptibility to what they conceive as public opinion on the part of the labour leaders. It is not war, it is not sense, but it is pathetic and even encouraging. With all this oppression of responsibility, how little likely they are to set a light to civilisation! In contrast to this delicacy of Agag before the imagined public, we have to set the brazen impudence of capitalists. Their respect for the public, real or imaginary, is of the order of the young man who feared not God nor regarded man. On the morrow of the Shipping Strike they calmly raised fares and freights to make a profit out of their losses. Within a few hours of concluding the Railway Settlement the public were informed that fares and freights—already in England the highest in the world—would be still further raised. Even before the Coal Strike is begun and long before a farthing has been spent by the coal-owners in defeating the strike, prices of coal have been raised some fifteen to twenty per cent. Not much public respect, fear, or consideration in that! The fact is that the public opinion of which the men's leaders stand in fear and the men's masters boldly make use is not real public opinion at all; it is a specially manufactured opinion served up by newspapers, themselves the creatures of its capitalist creators. The real public opinion of this country is, we are convinced, entirely on the side of the men in their struggle for wages. It would be odd, indeed, if it were not so, since the public largely consists of wage-earners. In obeying the good motive of public respect, therefore, the men's leaders are again misled in their proper worship. Not to public opinion do they bow, but to an idol made of newspaper.

* * *

If their good motive turns out to be not so very good, their bad motive is even worse than it appears. We charge the Labour movement with an almost complete ignorance of its aim and purpose, its methods and its means. Save for the minority of industrialists, whom THE NEW AGE has in its keeping, the leaders of the trade union movement have no more notion of what they are doing than somnambulists. Somnambulists they are, in fact, for they walk, it is true, but only in their sleep. Consider, for example, the use the labour

leaders have made of the rich material provided by the industrial unrest of the last twelve months. All that terrific force, not unreasonable in its nature, not disposed to violence in its temper, needed only to be directed to break down the most solid walls of capitalism. A single leader of brains and courage would have put himself at the head of it, given it eyes and led it to a conquest of higher wages, which would have relieved not only wage-earners of poverty, but the rest of us from the stupefying contemplation of poverty. There were two objectives—one immediate, the other more remote but none the less real. The immediate objective was and always must be to raise wages. The secondary objective was to establish the foundations of an entirely new order of industry in which the unions shall be co-partners, as unions, with the employers. Fine words, as Mr. Pease, of the Fabian Society, once said of "recognition," "butter no parsnips." Quite true. Recognition ending in itself is an empty pomp. But what may be said of "recognition" that paves the way to the admission of the unions into complete partnership with the present owners of the instruments of industry? That would be recognition to some purpose.

* * *

It is, however, precisely this larger object that the older leaders of trade unionism, together with their Parliamentary friends, appear incapable of visualising. The Report of the Parliamentary Labour Executive, just published, refers in terms of satisfaction to the labour unrest as a welcome symptom of revived activity. But there is no satisfaction to be derived from merely looking at it and then kicking it downstairs. It exists there to be made use of; and its service is not to seat a few more Labour members on the Benches of the House of Commons, but to re-organise national industry on a sounder basis. The kept capitalist Press denounce the Labour leaders for stirring up this self-same labour unrest. Certainly it is criminal to stir up an unrest of which, when it is aroused, you can make no use. During the past year unrest enough has been engendered to melt down capitalism and to remould it nearer to our hearts' desire. But in the absence of any clear aim among the old leaders, nothing has been done and, with them still at the helm, nothing will be done. We repeat that the true object of the labour movement is to obtain through its unions the position of joint and equal partners in industry with their present masters. Everything else, with the single exception of wages, should be subordinated to that end. The membership of the unions should be filled up, the unions federated and the leaders educated with the clear purpose of entering industry as equals and no longer as slaves. It is probable that at the smallest sign of this purpose the employers will renew their efforts to break the power of the unions. But with determination and, above all, with a clear notion of their object, the unions have the future before them. Where the State has failed Labour alone can succeed. England expects that the unions will do their duty.

* * *

Just a word or two on the cotton lock-out and the threatened coal strike. With the former we have nothing much to do. An act of aggression on the part of the masters (from what motive is not clear, but certainly unionism had nothing to do with it) has for the time being been checked in its ostensible purpose. The question of unionism remains where it was. The "Times" speaks of the victory for "personal liberty"; but if a soldier in time of national disaster refused to fight, would the "Times" defend his action on the ground of personal liberty? Trade unionism is war and the issues are life and death to the whole wage-earning class. Sooner or later every wage-earner must belong to his union, even as now every employer, doctor, barrister and professional man belongs to his. Ostracism is the mildest punishment meted out by professional unions to their blacklegs. The same punishment is not too much for the blacklegs of manual labour. Regarding the threatened coal strike, it is amusing to observe the precision with which the tone of the Press is changed with each successive proof of

the men's determination. Writing while the result of the ballot was in doubt, the "Daily Mail" was carefully inclined to think that a million or so miners were unreasonably threatening to strike for an impossible demand. A minimum wage was as preposterous a demand to them as to Socialist eunuchs, who, dear creatures, argued that an advance in wages would ruin the English gold mines. When the ballots began to come in, however, the "Daily Mail" discovered that the demands of the men were "not unreasonable" after all. The faster the majorities were announced the faster did the "Daily Mail" discover fresh reasons for the men's demands. By Thursday this index of capitalist opinion was praying on its bended knees for a "better understanding" between the men and the masters, echoing the opinions of THE NEW AGE in respect of so daring a theme as co-partnership. By Friday the principle of the Minimum Wage was actually conceded—on paper—and the men were invited to draw up the terms of the masters' surrender. In face of this open door it will be hard on the men if their leaders have not the courage to give it a good push. Several elements conspire to make their defeat even more scandalous than the defeat of the railwaymen. For once in their lives their masters have admittedly no case. Read the deliberate confession of Sir Arthur Markham. The public, too, are not only exasperated with the coal owners for having raised prices without any excuse, but their attitude towards miners, of all men, is incurably romantic. Four deaths by accident per day is the toll that this industry takes of miners, and the pit-hero is a commonplace of public imagination. In short, the public is disposed to hope that the miners may win; and only the antediluvian sentiments and tactics of Mr. Enoch Edwards and his somewhat melancholy lieutenants can prevent it. We hope to be able to record next week a settlement, satisfactory for the present, of the coal dispute.

SONG OF THE NIGHT MISTS.

(Translated from the Polish of Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer by P. Selver.)

SOFTLY, softly, let us wake not streams that in the valley sleep,
 Let us with the wind dance gently o'er the spaces wide and deep.
 Let us like a mighty garland round the moon ourselves entwine,
 That our bodies filled with radiance, in a rainbow hue may shine.
 Let us quaff the roar of torrents that are merged into the lake,
 And the gentle noise of firs and of the pine-trees in the brake.
 Balmy scent of blossoms blooming on the mountains let us drink,
 Filled with music, fragrance, colour, let us rise to heaven's brink.
 Softly, softly, let us wake not streams that in the valley sleep,
 Let us, with the wind, dance gently o'er the spaces wide and deep.
 Lo, a star falls! let us fly and hold it fast in our embrace,
 Let us fly to greet it, ere 'tis shattered, leaving not a trace.
 With the milky down, the filmy coat of darkness let us play,
 With the plumage of the night-owls wheeling upwards and away.
 Let us speed to catch the flitter-mouse, so softly flying past,
 Just as we, and let us in our tiny meshes hold him fast.
 Let us flit from peak to peak, like to gently swaying bridges,
 By the gleaming star-light fastened to the corners of the ridges,
 And upon them rests the wind that for a moment 'bates its roaring,
 Ere once more it rends us down and drives us onward, dancing, soaring.

Foreign Affairs.

By S. Verdad.

At the time of writing, Saturday night, I don't know whether Count Aehrenthal's sudden illness is genuine or spoo. In either case the announcement is alarming. If this clever and yet solid Austrian Foreign Minister dies, or retires owing to ill-health, the war party in Austria will come into power, and the same result will be reached if Count Aehrenthal simply wishes to retire and is giving ill-health as an excuse.

We are already familiar, in a general way, with what has happened in Austria during the last three or four weeks. The apparently uncalled-for mobilisation of Italian troops on the Austrian frontier gave great offence to a nation which is, on the whole, peace-loving. The war party exploited this feeling of irritation and intensified it. The country seethed. War with Italy was freely spoken of and discussed, just as the imminence of war between France and Germany was discussed in September last. The men at the back of this agitation were the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir-apparent to the Austrian throne, and Baron Conrad von Hötzendorf, Chief of the General Staff. But the war fever grew too strong to suit the taste of one man, who wants no war in the few years which are left to him. The Emperor Francis Joseph stepped in, and Baron Conrad von Hötzendorf stepped out.

Bad for the war party, you say? Not at all. The agitation went on, secretly instead of openly, and its effects were thus all the worse—think of the secret boozing in the Prohibition States! But Aehrenthal remained; and he wanted peace. He knew better than anyone else what trouble was brewing in the Balkan States, and how likely it was to break out when the little clique that rules Turkey was forced in the long run to come to terms of peace with Italy. Count Aehrenthal reckoned on another Bosnian affair, and war with Italy would not serve his purpose at all. So his influence was thrown into the scale of peace, i.e., he took the side of those who deprecated the anti-Italian agitation and endeavoured to put a stop to it.

But the Archduke is a hard man to set aside. He is daring to the point of foolhardiness and as stubborn as a mule. He was backed up by the influence of the Clericals, who saw wonderful possibilities ahead. The Archduke, it seemed, was to make war upon Italy, conquer her, and restore the temporal power to the Pope. I do not remember at the moment what else precisely was included in the Clerical programme, but this is enough to go on with.

Still, it takes a good deal to perturb Count Aehrenthal. He is said to have a strain of Sephardim blood in him. From his appearance, I believe this statement to be true; and this proportion of his ancestry makes him calm and tenacious. He has held his post as Austrian Foreign Minister since the autumn of 1906—a fairly long period, as these positions go on the Continent. And it will take some very powerful influence to drive him out. Those who are satiated with war scares will earnestly hope that he may hold his office for some considerable time to come.

When writing these articles I have often had occasion to comment on military or naval matters, or the general defences of one country or another. I have never, unfortunately, been able to say much for the higher ranks of British officers, or for the present organisation of our Army. In taking up this attitude I have usually had the support of distinguished Continental critics, such as Colonel Gädke, and I have heard from private sources that the few thinking officers in the British Army are equally concerned about the future of our land forces. Only two men appear to criticise the British Army regularly—Lord Roberts and Lord Haldane. Lord Roberts issues an encyclical and Lord Haldane replies in a Kanting speech. Lord Roberts is obsessed with proposals for conscription; and with all deference to his distinguished

military services, it must be said that his views on soldiering are not worth serious consideration at the present day. He has never laid down permanent and enduring principles, like Frederick or Napoleon, but merely views as transient and ephemeral as a modern novel.

I often wondered where Haldane got his military knowledge from. The secret came out the other day: he is an assiduous reader of Colonel Repington's articles in the "Times," and Colonel Repington is a frequent visitor at the War Office.

Colonel à Court, as he was usually known in the Army, or Colonel Repington, as he apparently prefers to call himself since he left it, is a military man of some experience; but I deny that he has any right to stand at the War Minister's elbow and dictate the policy of the British Army. I say this because he is tactless; and I say that he is tactless chiefly because of that article which he wrote for the "Times" some weeks ago, "proving" that the power of the German Army was exaggerated and mentioning certain defects in it. An article like this, published in an important organ like the "Times," led to results in Germany which its writer possibly did not expect. The whole General Staff considered it carefully and made a few changes in the vast organisation under their control. In other words, the Germans do not object to criticism of their army: they welcome it, and when they find a few suggestions which appear to be good they adopt them. So a British officer, or ex-officer, has helped to increase the efficiency of the German Army.

Very different is the case here. No military critic, however experienced, has a chance. No officer with brains has an opportunity of using them. Initiative is discouraged. Promotion is slow; for rapid promotion society influence is necessary. In previous numbers of THE NEW AGE Dr. Miller Maguire said some severe things about our Army. If he had been ten times more severe, he would still not have been severe enough. The condition of our land forces, from top to bottom, is deplorable, scandalous, criminal; especially when we remember what we pay for it. The German Army, while not ideally perfect, is as perfect as devoted officers can make it. After all, it is the officers that count: an army is nothing without leadership. But leadership implies initiative, and, as I have said, initiative is totally discouraged in the British Army.

Our officers, of course, are hampered to some extent by the effete arrangements concerning their payment. I am not sure when the present salary-list was drawn up—about the time of Waterloo, probably, or perhaps even Blenheim: one need never be surprised at anything connected with our Army. Wealthy aristocrats make up for this deficiency of pay by sending their sons into the Army and giving them liberal allowances; but this is an unsatisfactory system. It is unsatisfactory chiefly because the modern type of young aristocrat looks upon his duties as a bore and seldom carries them out properly. What a mess things would be in many a time if it were not for two or three non-commissioned officers in each regiment who "know how"! On the other hand, I have known numerous instances of German officers with a lineage as long as to-day and to-morrow, rising at five in the morning to fit themselves for the day's drill. And I have known instances of British officers in the Indian Army who actually had to be taught how to write—and this after their having been through Eton and passed all the army examinations.

I cannot find that Lord Haldane ever refers to these things, or that Lord Roberts refers to them, or that Colonel Repington refers to them. I wish one of them would do so, or two of them, or all three of them. I wish Lord Haldane would stop talking solemn nonsense about the Territorials, and that Lord Roberts would stop talking querulous nonsense about conscription. And I wish some one could tell me by what right Colonel Repington exercises such an enormous influence at the War Office.

Assisted Investment by Cheap Loans.

By Charles Manson.

At the other end of a lengthy chain of years we have Lazarus consuming such crumbs as *perchance* fall from the table of Dives. At this end, we find the same Lazarus, the same Dives, and the same crumbs. But now the crumbs are regulated by statute according to St. Lloyd George. Lazarus of old was covered with sores; and sores are still the passport to the Lloyd Georgean bounty. It does not seem a great advance for nineteen centuries.

But is it impossible, we ask, for Lazarus, sick or sound, to have a table of his own? Surely Lazarus himself will find a way to sounder social and economic conditions if the statesmen of this country do not soon move. We have fair notification of his objective, in the Industrial Syndical doctrine, which seeks to vest in Labour the whole industrial equipment of this country; or, in other words, which seeks the Union of Capital with Labour. Is it not possible to further the union of these two affinities, not explosively—shattering the vessel—but gradually, without disturbance to the present social and economic basis?

Let us see how the problem stands! Amongst us we have people and institutions of great wealth, whose investments are like a rising tide, whose incomes are unspendable, or, at any rate, are far in excess of individual wants. To these people and institutions, the rare of interest upon their investments is altogether a minor consideration. Simplicity and security are what they seek. Is it not safe to assume they would be willing to put their wealth at the service of the Government, at a nominal rate of interest, if that course served great public ends?

Below this class is a large section of the people, secure from the evils arising from the preventable ills of life; to whom sickness brings no neglect, unemployment no despair, old age no deprivations; to whose dependents death brings no poverty; whose standard of living conduces to health and enjoyment. This immunity results from the possession of Capital in some shape or form: investments upon which they can fall back in time of need; reserves to meet known and unknown contingencies. As often as not the Worker and Capitalist are one. Herein we have the ideal union: ideal in prosperity and ideal in adversity—for if the power to work fails, Capital, with its income-producing power, remains.

Below this class again is the mass of industrial workers. Statistics show that the average income of such admits but a modest standard of living; that it is insufficient to enable provision to be made for invalidity and death. This class stands or falls upon its single asset—labour. It has no alternative means, no second string. If health or work fails, there is nothing to come between them and misery, privation and suffering, except Public or Private Charity. Is it to be wondered at, then, that life on this crater's edge should be a disturbed and restless one; or that the working-classes should turn their eyes with envy to the more secure position of the middle and upper classes; or that they should endeavour, as far as in them lies, by the same method of accumulating reserves, to ameliorate their position?

These, then, are the three great divisions—the middle class setting a standard, the working class desirous of attaining that standard, and the wealthy class with the means to establish that standard. Or, to put it in another way, Labour desiring Capital, the middle class with sufficient for all needs, and the wealthy with a

superfluity. The bare statement of the position suggests the possibility of obtaining the use of the superfluous wealth for the purpose, in statesmanlike fashion, of applying it to schemes for reducing the superfluous poverty.

Attempts have been made—bungling attempts—to make up to the worker the deficiencies in his lot. The taxpayer has been saddled with millions upon millions in half-doing what could have been done effectively, concurrently with a reduction in the taxpayers' burdens. Not only so, but the nation has been mulct in countless millions, in consequence of the protesting struggles of discontented workers, all of which could have been saved by the timely application of a more statesmanlike scheme of relief to their necessities. It is not too much to say that the country pays, or will soon be paying, in public and private charity, not less than 100 millions a year, to which must be added perhaps half that amount, as representing the losses from strikes, from general discontent, and from labour grudgingly given. This is a heavy sum for the State to write off each year. It is dead loss. It does not even go into a bad-debt-recovery book. It is a continuous drain on the resources of the nation.

What is the remedy? Surely it lies in the organisation for the worker of the same methods of investment as have been adopted with such notable success by the middle class. One of the great political parties has approached the solution by its declared approval of the policy of "Occupation Ownership"; but the approach has been that of a man who does not know his ground and fears a morass. But what firmer ground can a statesman have than the traditional habits of the great middle class of this country? Surely a nation of freeholders cannot be otherwise than a nation of political content. The first step, then, in a sound social policy is to aid the worker in acquiring the freehold of his cottage or holding (if rural) or of his dwelling-house (if urban). But it is admitted that the working-man occupier has no margin of income to apply to such a purchase. It follows, therefore, that the policy involves lending to the worker the sum required for his purchase at such a low rate of interest that the difference between its value as an income-producing investment and the rate of interest paid will provide sufficient margin to clear off the encumbrance. The State, for such an important scheme, would scarcely be likely to have to pay more than 2 per cent. for the money it borrows, and could afford to lend at the same rate. Even if it should be forced to pay 3 per cent., to lend at 2 per cent. would involve a loss on a loan of 500 millions of only five millions a year. And 500 millions would be ample to finance a scheme of cheap loans to the people.

Speaking roughly, under the policy of State loans a man would be able to acquire a better house than he would usually live in, within a period of 16 years, without having to add anything to the sum saved in rent. If, with self-denial, he put to his redemption fund the sums usually spent on beer, tobacco, in betting or in sport, he would accomplish his purpose so much the sooner. Having, then, thus in effect added the rent of his house to the working-man's income, and having added its capital value to his smaller savings, is it necessary to leave him forthwith to his own devices? Is it not rather a statesmanlike scheme and one calculated to establish that industrial peace so necessary to the best interests of the nation, to aid and encourage, under proper advice and safeguards, under suitable restraints against unadvised realisation, investments in other securities; eventually, as he feels his feet, leading up to the workman's participation in the capital stock of those enterprises from which he draws his wage? Would not a nation of capital-owning workers be a nation of economic content? Does not the increasing inroad of machinery, the constant tendency for labour to be displayed by its introduction, make such a policy imperative? Does not this economic trend point to the striking fact that, in course of time, the only way in which a considerable section of the lower classes will be able to exist, otherwise than at the State's expense, must be by means of investments acquired during their

younger and shorter working life, preferably in the capital stock of those enterprises from which their labour is eventually displaced? Can we affirm, in the face of the startling inventions of, say, the last twenty-five years, that the Gospel of Work is an eternal truth?

The political and economic outlooks both point, then, to the wisdom of developing the policy of "occupation ownership" into that of the broader and more general one of "assisted investment by cheap loans." It is thus that, by honest evolutionary methods and without disturbance to social and economic conditions, the lower classes can be carried nearer their desired goal than by the revolutionary and destructive methods of industrial syndicalism. And not only would the lower classes be benefited by this policy, but the whole nation would be relieved from burden by the gradual wiping out of much of the present Poor Law, Old Age Pension, Insurance, and other expenditure. The only outlay to set off against this huge economy is the improbable loss of the difference between the rate of interest paid and received by the State. The administration of the scheme, apart from its finance, would cost little, if anything, for the agencies are already in existence for taking charge of it, and the cost of the investment itself would be borne ultimately by the investor. Doles never return, in any shape, to the Treasury. Neither do they leave the people richer. Nor do they give the nation leverage over the recipients. On the other hand, loans to the people would be repaid after having completed their beneficent work of increasing permanently the material well-being of the nation to an extent not hitherto dreamed of.

The natural outcome of the policy would be to remove all feeling of envy and antagonism between Capital and Labour, and between class and class; to obliterate that dreariest of all impulses, the desire to get as much and give as little in return as possible; to sweeten home life; to raise the tone of public life; to increase the buying power of the lower classes; in short, to make of our nation what it should be—the happiest, the busiest, the most patriotic, the most benevolent on the face of the globe. Of course, this fascinating picture cannot be realised in the snap of a camera; but it can be realised in a single generation—which is what the impatience of a restless people demands.

Pages from a Book of Swells.

The Plutocrat Philanthropist.

By T. H. S. Escott.

THE origin of the late Sir Andrew Newport's great wealth remained during his lifetime something of a mystery to most of his friends and even to some members of his family. His subterranean possessions in the North and West of England would have sufficed to make him a rich man, but not one of the mid-nineteenth century's earliest professional millionaires, still less to have qualified him to be the reputed original of the Sir Gorgius Midas created and immortalised by Du Maurier in "Punch." The secret may now, without breach of confidence, be divulged; and the earliest scene, some mention of which is inseparable from the hitherto unwritten narrative, is the shabby death-room of a man whose acquaintance with the late baronet dated from the days when the two men as boys worked together at the pit's mouth in the same Tyneside colliery. The paths of assured, unbrokenly progressive success, and struggle that long seemed a series of failures, seldom cross each other. Consequently the two lads, who were early associates, remained some distance apart after several strokes of industrial luck and other fortunate side wins distinguished Newport from his early mate by making him part owner of the mine in or near which the two as boys had earned their living.

Long after he had shot so far ahead, Newport, for reasons of his own other than a mere sentiment of friendship, took care not to lose sight of his former less

fortunate comrade. That bravely struggling—but, as fortune would have it, miserably rewarded—toiler possessed a scientifically inventive genius which, discreetly directed and favourably environed, might have brought him fame as well as fortune. The discoveries and events of the age were favourable to the stimulations of those gifts in the highest degree. The old world and the new were being connected by submarine cables. But as yet the wires along which the electric message was to be flashed remained at the mercy of the hostile forces of an unconquerable ocean, which, however strong their casing, tore the wires asunder like so much packthread, and in a night of fury might undo the labour of years.

Newport had contrived to satisfy himself that the clever associate of his boyhood had discovered a means of combating the assaults of time and tempest upon the line of communication that, if laid with strength enough, would make two worlds one. By this time, however, the future Sir Andrew Newport, in addition to being a colliery magnate, was also a member of Parliament with interests in one of our Mediterranean possessions that kept him a good deal out of England. His hands being so full, he had necessarily lost the grasp he had so long been careful to maintain upon the Tyneside friend of his youth.

One day, after a spell of absence from his business premises in George Street, Westminster, he heard on revisiting them that a little boy, poorly dressed, with tears in his eyes, had called, and was still below, pitifully entreating a word with Mr. Newport. In tones tremulous with a fluttered presentiment the great man gave the order, "Show him up." It turned out as the great man instinctively felt sure it would, to be a messenger from the luckless inventor, who was lying sick unto death as they feared at his solitary room in the contiguous College Street. Thither hurried the Sir Andrew that was to be; he saw at once the invalid's days, perhaps hours, were numbered.

"Nothing for nothing, Andy, was, I know, always your motto. But it is in my power to put you on something which will make you by-and-by richer and more famous than you ever thought for, though I shall never live to see it. That box on the table contains instructions and specimens that will protect the cable, that, as matters are, is good for nothing, and make it as safe as the bell wire in this room."

However substantially supported by its original wealth, the Newport baronetcy, but for the little incident now related, would not have become almost a synonym for riches—riches, upon the whole, not ill-used, and in many ways contributing to the general good of the neighbourhood in which its possessors live. The existing occupant, the fifth baronet, I believe, of Grip Grange, the chief Newport seat in a home county, is the well-known and aggressively opulent Sir Mark, of that ilk; his prenomen just suggests a distant kinship on the maternal side with the Screechchilds of Ellesdee Hall, also in the same neighbourhood, and in himself he personifies the noblest and most characteristic attributes of the two families. He is, however, more a man of sentiment, in Sheridan's "School for Scandal" meaning of the word, than most of his relatives or than any of the immediate predecessors in his title. It was only the other day that a grandson of the humble inventor, whose genius laid the foundations of the already-mentioned Sir Andrew Newport's greatness, called on him to ask for a trifle in the way of money help and pitched him a very pitiful tale indeed. "John," he said to the powdered footman who answered the bell, "show this poor fellow the door, or the story of his sorrows will make me quite ill." Not, indeed, that Sir Mark Newport is unable sometimes to do a kindly act, and even give away money, provided he gets his return in the way of advertisement and notoriety. It is only the disinterested generosity that asks and expects no material return to which he is constitutionally incapable of rising, and which, therefore, makes so eminently appropriate the legend inscribed beneath the crest which the Heralds' College have found for him, "No quid without its quo."

The State v. The Innocent.

By Beatrice Hastings.

SOME months ago, in an article entitled "Judicial Murder," I referred to the stupid cruelty of legally ruining the whole family of a homicide, of branding them from grandfather to child with a shame which they did nothing to deserve and which no vicarious penance or atonement is permitted to remove. There is now a case in the courts that should surely touch both the reason and the feelings of everyone in this matter, so much to the point is it, so clearly are the family of the accused not the sort of people upon whom the ruination of having one of them die upon the gallows should be forced.

William Philpot, of Wimbledon, a tram-conductor, is charged upon his own confession with the murder of his wife. The defence is one which a committee of mental specialists (not police surgeons) alone can weigh, namely, overstrain consequent upon a series of illnesses including pleurisy, gastric ulcers and lung trouble. The mysterious disease, epilepsy, had already claimed one of the family, an aunt of the accused who has been confined in an infirmary for eighteen years. Philpot's father gave evidence that his son had frequently complained of unbearable pain in the head. Philpot has never committed any previous crime. Even so much evidence in an educated country ought to save the man from being tried at all. His place is a hospital bed, not a solitary prison cell. The story of his bathing his two children and putting them to bed before going to deliver himself up makes pathetic reading. There is nothing incurable about this man. He wants rest only. He would probably recover in the charge of good people, as did Mary, the sister of Charles Lamb, who murdered both mother and father. More about Philpot personally I may scarcely say without infringing the law, but what might or might not be said about Philpot would not affect the case of his family.

Mr. Henry Philpot, the father, an aged man, lives at Sidcup. He is a retired stationmaster. His wife, the mother of William, is also alive, and there are two young children of the accused. One feels that nothing should need to be written but these bare facts for everyone to realise the savagery of the law that will keep those two blameless old people shuddering and weeping for weeks and weeks to come with the agony of the gallows upon them day and night. What have they done to be doomed to misery at the hands of men, incomparably beyond any woe laid upon men by the hand of God, beyond any pain inflicted in the natural world? *Their* pain even cannot be imagined. For one moment, or two, you and I may visualise these aged people enduring in physical sweat and fever, or in cold anguish of the soul, that ever-present terror of an evil day—but that's all we can do: we may imagine for a moment what they suffer at this moment; but to-night and to-morrow: and many nights they will wring their old hands, and cry, and pass from room to room in *unimaginable* prolongment of torment. It is a very damnable thing—this Justice of ours that deals so with innocent people.

The case of the children at the hands of Justice is grotesque in its tragedy. Their mother is dead by violence—that is not enough for two children to have to learn—they are threatened with an unspeakable fate. We should do better to put them at once in a lethal chamber than to curse them with so intolerable a burden.

We might ask ourselves why, in the name of decency, we permit a whole family to be ruined for so long as memory lasts on account of the act of one of its members over whom it had no control. We allow them no chance of atonement, we take away all hope, we damn them with an everlasting torment and shame: and they guiltless of any offence against us!

The Peril of Large Organisations.

By Arthur J. Penty.

III.

So far my criticism of large organisations has been directed against large organisations as such, to show that the evils which are always present in them are there because, being large, they are unwieldy, and not because they are owned privately or publicly. The greatest evil of all, however, is common to both—they tend to destroy personal liberty. Their growth is a peril to democracy. The liberty of a people depends ultimately upon the liberty of the individual, and the liberty of the individual is only guaranteed on the assumption that he may, if he choose, become his own master on his own account. Just in proportion as he is unable to do this, his liberty must depend upon the goodwill of his employer. It is true that the man who is established on his own account depends for his liberty upon the goodwill of the public, for absolute liberty is incompatible with organised society, and there are many who would argue that this is all the interference which collectivism would put upon his liberty. But experience teaches us this is not so. The psychology of corporate action, as Mr. Belloc has pointed out, differs essentially from the psychology of individual action. For instance, Wm. Morris established himself in society as a craftsman by the assistance of private patrons, but I cannot imagine any public body in England giving him an appointment and allowing him to pursue his work on the lines which he chose to follow. The idea is unthinkable. Morris certainly recognised this himself, and his opposition to collectivism undoubtedly had this knowledge behind it. It is all very well to try to evade this dilemma by talking about endowing genius; but genius, as society is now constituted, inevitably wants to change things, and what community would ever assist unknown men who are out for revolution? The truth is, the reformer is powerless unless he can stand on his own feet; and when the reformer is powerless, liberty disappears.

This sums up my indictment of large organisations. There are other very serious evils which I have only mentioned incidentally, such as the tendency of large organisations to destroy the crafts and arts, and which I would enlarge upon were I not convinced that the introduction of this issue into the discussion would inevitably lead to misunderstanding. The question naturally arises: What is to be done? The answer is difficult; in the political and immediate sense, nothing can be done. The reformer should not commence with politics; he should end with them! An over-anxiety to do something practical is one of the curses of the present time, and incomplete discussion tends in the long run to prevent genuine schemes from being reduced to practice. What are called practical schemes nowadays are only plausible so long as we hide from ourselves unpleasant facts. Reformers, it is to be regretted, have too often an unfortunate habit of brushing these facts aside. They instinctively shrink from them as something which, if considered, must paralyse their practical activity. To me, practical activity is quite a secondary matter. I am persuaded that the reform movement will never be successful until it is prepared to face unpleasant facts. It must be prepared, if need be, to condemn modern civilisation as a huge failure—a mighty adventure which has not come off. Not until it has the courage to do this will the reform movement achieve anything really useful. And the only useful thing to do at the present time is to clarify our own minds and as many others as we can reach. Schemes which otherwise are practical are condemned as impossible because of the confusion of thought in modern society. Our popular remedies are quack remedies—they are plausible until they are reduced to practice. It is merely a question of demand and supply. We demand quack remedies and they are supplied. We cannot grumble if we get what we ask for. If after we get them we do not like them, it is illogical to blame the purveyor, for we were not prepared to pay the cost of the genuine article.

I said that the only useful thing to do is to clarify our own minds. Let us be sure that the things which are successful in society are ultimately the things which individuals believe in and worship. If individuals worship success as an end in itself, then big organisations are the natural outcome of such a worship. Big organisations are rooted in the mind, the heart, and the soul of the people. What, therefore, we have to remedy is primarily a corruption of the soul. If we pursue this thought further we shall find that this corruption has its roots in the absence of established standards in modern life. As a nation we are without standards of morals, of conduct, of faith, or of taste. The elementary sense of honesty in things is fast disappearing from among us. We judge by results—the visible results which can be reduced to the terms of statistics. All else with us is uncertain. Big organisations are visible and tangible results of our spiritual corruption. The re-establishment of spiritual standards is ultimately the only remedy. A problem which is as old as civilisation itself is not to be remedied in a day. As a nation we have sowed corruption in the past—we are reaping the harvest to-day. A death-bed repentance cannot save us.

Meanwhile, the big world runs its course of corruption. The tide is, perhaps, already too strong to be stemmed. Yet slowly but surely these large organisations which look so powerful and invincible to-day will disintegrate and decay. They have turned away from reality and can never return. But time cures all things. I feel we are approaching the end of the commercial system. Our large organisations are everywhere becoming rickety. The position in which the Thames Ironworks Company finds itself to-day is much more general than is usually supposed. By that I mean that such organisations are increasingly living from hand to mouth. One by one they will disappear and smaller organisations will take their place. For just as production for profit has brought large organisations into existence, so a return to production for use, which must follow the re-establishment of spiritual standards, will bring back smaller ones. Observe I am speaking now of production, not of distribution. Production and distribution are two separate problems, though they react upon each other, and their solutions are to be found along different lines. In distribution large organisations are meritable. Reform of them can only mean democratic control by the actual workers, and there is nothing that I can see which would prevent such a scheme being successful if reduced to practice. But with production it is different. I cannot conceive large productive organisations being reformed; they are false to the core.

I should like to draw attention to a recent Fabian tract: "The Necessary Basis of Society," by Mr. Sidney Webb. In this tract Mr. Webb explicitly states that the work of governments in the future must be to substitute the wholesale method of supplying human needs for a method which caters for the needs of individuals. With the aspiration I feel myself in entire sympathy; but with the proposed method of effecting this reform I must beg to differ. I suspect the proposition is only put forward as a sop to silence those who criticise the wholesale way of doing things, for it is the *reductio ad absurdum* of collectivism; for what government will ever be able to deal with things except in a wholesale way? Government departments, as we have seen, proceed necessarily by rules and regulations. The official idea of adjusting things to the needs of individuals is necessarily by the agency of more and more regulations. Can any rational person imagine that such a policy could be crowned with success? Are not these ever-accumulating rules and regulations precisely the things which refuse to adjust themselves to the needs of individuals? The average man is already bewildered by them. He needs to-day to be a legal expert to find his way about among them, and to multiply them is but to add to his bewilderment. This system-mongering leads to nowhere except to greater confusion. The danger before society is the danger of an ever-increasing complexity of social relations. In primitive societies the individual had some grip of social questions. The laws were few, and he knew them; the issues were clear,

and the average intelligence could easily grasp them. But with the growth of complex social relations the average mind has lost that grip on reality which it formerly had. Therein lies the fallacy of supposing some solution to follow further development along present lines. We must go back before long for the simple reason that we cannot travel much further forward. To simpler conditions we shall inevitably return.

I Gather the Limbs of Osiris.

By Ezra Pound.

IX.

ON TECHNIQUE.

"SKILL in technique," says Joseph Conrad, "is something more than honesty." And if this is applicable to the racing of yachts it should be no less applicable to the writing of poetry.

We can imagine easily the delight of Ysaye and M. Nickisch on being invited, firstly to dinner and secondly to listen to your fourteen-year-old daughter play Beethoven; or lifting the parallel to more exact preciseness, let us suppose the child, never having taken a music lesson in her life, hears Busoni play Chopin, and on the spur of the moment, thinking to produce similar effect, hires a hall and produces what she thinks sounds somewhat the same. These things are in the realm of music mildly unthinkable; but then the ordinary piano teacher spends more thought on the art of music than does the average "poet" on the art of poetry. No great composer has, so far as I know, boasted an ignorance of musical tradition or thought himself less a musician because he could play Mozart correctly. Yet it is not uncommon to hear practising "poets" speak of "technique" as if it were a thing antipathetic to "poetry." And they mean something that is more or less true. Likewise you will hear people, one set of them, raging against form—by which they mean external symmetry—and another set against free verse. And it is quite certain that none of these people have any exact, effable concept of what they do mean; or if they have a definite dislike of something properly dislikable, they only succeeded in expressing a dislike for something not quite it and not quite not it.

As for the ancients, we say for them it was quite easy. There was then an interest in poetry. Homer had the advantage of writing for an audience each of whom knew something of a ship and of a sword. One could allude to things that all understood.

Let us imagine to-day a contest between Jack Johnson and the surviving "White Hope"; let us imagine Court circles deeply interested; let us imagine Olympia filled half with the "flower of the realm" and half with chieftains from Zlyzmbaa; let us suppose that everyone had staked their last half-crown, and that the victors were going to rape all the wives and daughters of the vanquished, and there was a divorce scandal inextricably entangled in the affair; and that if the blacks won they were going to burn the National Gallery and the home of Sir Florence Tlallina-Lalina.

It is very hard to reproduce the simplicity of the epic period. Browning does, it is true, get at life almost as "simply" as did Ovid and Catullus; but then he was one "classicist" 'mid a host of Victorians. Even this is not Homer.

Let us return to our hypothetical prize-fight. In an account of the fight what details would we demand? Fine psychological analysis of the combatants? Character study? Or the sort of details that a sporting crowd want from a fight that they have stakes on? Left-lead for the jaw. Counter. If the fight were as important as the one mentioned they might even take it from one who called sacred things by uninitiated names: "an almighty swat in the thorax," "wot-for in the kisser," "a resounding blow upon the optic"—bad, this last. Leave it in the hands of the "descriptive writer." *Qui sono io profano.*

The very existence of the "descriptive writer" shows that the people are not without some vague, undefined

hunger for euphuës, for the decorated "Elizabethan" speech. And the "descriptive writer" is so rare, I am told, that one "great daily" had to have their "coronation" done by an Italian and translated.

And as for poetry, for verse, and the people, I remember a series of "poems" in a new form that ran long in the "New York Journal," and with acclaim, one a day. Alas! I can only remember two of them, as follows:—

1. In the days of old Pompei
Did the people get away?
Nay! Nay!
2. In the days of Charlemagne
Did the people get champagne?
Guess again!

Yet even these verses will appeal only to "certain classes," and our prize-fight is a phantom, Eheu fugaces! How, then, shall the poet in this dreary day attain universality, how write what will be understood of "the many" and lauded of "the few"?

What interest have all men in common? What forces play upon them all? Money and sex and to-morrow. And we have called money "fate" until that game is played out. And sex? Well, poetry has been erotic, or amative, or something of that sort—at least, a vast deal of it has—ever since it stopped being epic—and this sort of thing interests the inexperienced. And to-morrow? We none of us agree about.

We are nevertheless one humanity, compounded of one mud and of one æther; and every man who does his own job really well has a latent respect for every other man who does *his* own job really well; this is our lasting bond; whether it be a matter of buying up all the little brass farthings in Cuba and selling them at a quarter per cent. advance, or of delivering steam-engines to King Menelek across three rivers and one hundred and four ravines, or of conducting some new crotchety variety of employers' liability insurance, or of punching another man's head, the man who really does the thing well, if he be pleased afterwards to talk about it, gets always his auditors' attention; he gets his audience the moment he says something so intimate that it proves him the expert; he does not, as a rule, sling generalities; he gives the particular case for what it is worth; the truth is the individual.

As for the arts and their technique—technique is the means of conveying an exact impression of exactly what one means in such a way as to exhilarate.

When it comes to poetry, I hold no brief for any particular system of metric. Europe supplies us with three or five or perhaps more systems. The early Greek system of measure by quantity, which becomes the convention of later Greek and of Latin verse; the Provençal system, measure (a) by number of syllables, (b) by number of stressed syllables, which has become the convention of most European poetry; the Anglo-Saxon system of alliteration; these all concern the scansion. For terminations we have rhyme in various arrangements, blank verse, and the Spanish system of assonance. English is made up of Latin, French, and Anglo-Saxon, and it is probable that all these systems concern us. It is not beyond the pales of possibility that English verse of the future will be a sort of orchestration taking account of all these systems.

When I say above that technique is the means of conveying an exact impression of exactly what one means, I do not by any means mean that poetry is to be stripped of any of its powers of vague suggestion. Our life is, in so far as it is worth living, made up in great part of things indefinite, impalpable; and it is precisely because the arts present us these things that we—humanity—cannot get on without the arts. The picture that suggests indefinite poems, the line of verse that means a gallery of paintings, the modulation that suggests a score of metaphors and is contained in none: it is these things that touch us nearly that "matter."

The artist discriminates, that is, between one kind of indefinability and another, and poetry is a very complex

art. Its media are on one hand the simplest, the least interesting, and on the other the most arcane, most fascinating. It is an art of pure sound bound in through an art of arbitrary and conventional symbols. In so far as it is an art of pure sound, it is allied with music, painting, sculpture; in so far as it is an art of arbitrary symbols, it is allied to prose. A word exists when two or more people agree to mean the same thing by it.

Permit me one more cumbersome simile, for I am trying to say something about the masterly use of words, and it is not easy. Let us imagine that words are like great hollow cones of steel of different dullness and acuteness; I say great because I want them not too easy to move; they must be of different sizes. Let us imagine them charged with a force like electricity, or, rather, radiating a force from their apexes—some radiating, some sucking in. We must have a greater variety of activity than with electricity—not merely positive and negative; but let us say +, −, ×, ÷, +a, −a, ×a, ÷a, etc. Some of these kinds of force neutralise each other, some augment; but the only way any two cones can be got to act without waste is for them to be so placed that their apexes and a line of surface meet exactly. When this conjunction occurs let us say their force is not added one's to the other's, but multiplied the one's by the other's; thus three or four words in exact juxtaposition are capable of radiating this energy at a very high potentiality; mind you, the juxtaposition of their vertices must be exact and the angles or "signs" of discharge must augment and not neutralise each other. This peculiar energy which fills the cones is the power of tradition, of centuries of race consciousness, of agreement, of association; and the control of it is the "Technique of Content," which nothing short of genius understands.

There is the slighter "technique of manner," a thing reducible almost to rules, a matter of "j's" and "d's," of order and sequence, a thing attenuable, a thing verging off until it degenerates into rhetoric; and this slighter technique is also a thing of price, notwithstanding that all the qualities which differentiate poetry from prose are things born before syntax; this technique of surface is valuable above its smoother virtues simply because it is technique, and because technique is the only gauge and test of a man's lasting sincerity.

Everyone, or nearly everyone, feels at one time or another poetic, and falls to writing verses; but only that man who cares and believes really in the pint of truth that is in him will work, year in and year out, to find the perfect expression.

If technique is thus the protection of the public, the sign manual by which it distinguishes between the serious artist and the disagreeable young person expressing its haedinus egotism, it is no less a protection to the artist himself during the most crucial period of his development. I speak now of technique seriously studied, of a searching into cause and effect, into the purposes of sound and rhythm as such, not—not by any means—of a conscientious and clever imitation of the master of the moment, of the poet in vogue.

How many have I seen, how many have we all of us known, young, with promising poetic insides, who produce one book and die of it? For in our time, at least, the little public that does read new poetry is not twice bored by the same aspirant, and if a man's first book has not in it some sign of a serious struggle with the bases of the art he has small likelihood of meeting them in a second. But the man who has some standard reasonably high—consider, says Longinus, in what mood Diogenes or Sophocles would have listened to your effusion—does, while he is striving to bring his work within reach of his own conception of it, get rid of the first froth of verse, which is in nearly every case quite like the first verse-froth of everyone else. He emerges decently clean after some reasonable purgation, not nearly a master, but licensed, an initiate, with some chance of conserving his will to speak and of seeing it mature and strengthen with the ripening and strengthening of the mind itself until, by the favour of the gods, he come upon some lasting excellence.

Let the poet who has been not too long ago born

make very sure of this, that no one cares to hear, in strained iambs, that he feels sprightly in spring, is uncomfortable when his sexual desires are ungratified, and that he has read about human brotherhood in last year's magazines. But let a man once convince thirty people that he has some faint chance of finding, or that he, at least, is determined and ready to suffer all drudgery in attempting to find, some entanglement of words so subtle, so crafty that they can be read or heard without yawning, after the reading of Pindar and Meleager, and of "As ye came from the holy land of Walsingham" and "Tamlin," and of a passage from John Keats—let thirty or a dozen people believe this, and the man of whom they believe it will find friendship where he had little expected it, and delightful things will befall him suddenly and with no other explanation.

Our Noble Gift of Speech.

THEY were gathered together in a corner, solemnly, strenuously bent upon setting the world straight and as it should be: brows puckered, hearts bitter, minds closed—every weapon of that sort whetted and gleaming.

I believe the world did not even guess how its fate quivered in the balance—but that was just foolish ignorance; besides, it is not the point.

"Peace arbitrations and fiddlesticks!" cried the Man of Sense, red and restive. "What's England coming to? That's what I want to know. War is Nature's purge—it's—it's—(he glared so that you felt he knew all about everything, even though words did happen to be too trivial to convey him)—it's the nation's register—er—What are men for?"

Everyone knew that, of course, so nobody troubled to answer; but one or two nodded instead, which really did better in the long run.

"You must do something about it at once," said the Cynic suavely. "It'll never do to let men go on wasting their lives not being killed in this regardless way: it's a national scandal. Perhaps if Lloyd George and the Kaiser could be persuaded to take a week-end together—"

"Besides, what's the use of having an Army if there's not to be any war?" propounded the Society Ornament, looking pretty—she clasped her little hands with a charming show of irresponsibility. And two or three of the men forgot their solemn duty to the nation.

"Give me the reins of Government in me 'ands for twenty-four hours and I'd show yer," announced the Gentleman Corner-Ranter emphatically. "Inter these 'ands that aint ashamed of a honest day's work, and there's a fact fer yer. On'y twenty-four hours I say, and I'd show yer 'ow to run the greatest country of a great world. War? Yus! same as our fathers and their fathers before them; same as has always bin and of w'ich our nobil land 'as made 'erself the Sovereign of the World. War? Yus, and them as say diff'rent is Liars, and I challenge them—(he raised his voice)—I challenge them to conterrick me; let 'em remember they've got a Man to face if they do, that's all."

"What is it they all want?" asked a Child.

"They are talking, my dear," said the Philosopher gently, "so they want for nothing just at present."

The sun sank in a sea of molten gold, and young rose clouds feathered the sky. Moreover, flowers and grass sent out their last message to the July night.

"What men want is a leader," observed the Man of Sense instructively.

"No they don't," said the Very Young Man, whose great idea was opposition; "that's one of the most poisonous bits of—of—decadence going. I entirely disagree with you."

"Well, 'oo cares fer you?" inquired the Corner-Ranter, rather unkindly. "Wot our friend 'ere says is perfectly true, and straightforward, and spoken like a Ninglishman: wot people wants is a leader, 'e says, and there 'e's got yer. They do want a leader; that's just about wot they *do* want, and I'd like to 'ave the choosin' of 'im—"

This lured them to the House of Lords and the Divorce Laws, if you'll believe me; and all the sweetness faded from the night before they had finished. Two had agreed, and ten had disagreed—and they were all right and each wrong. Such an intellectual evening they were having!

"It's so absurd," reflected the Idealist really sadly. "Why can't they let each other alone and be at peace? Why can't they see that's the only way?"

"There ought to be a deal more public debating than there is," said the local Alderman. "People leave one another alone too much. Arguing is the only way."

"Patriotism should be taught in the schools—with a cat-o'-nine-tails if necessary," said the Man of Sense. "That's the only way."

"It's not," said the Young Man. "Reactionary rot!"

"Are you sure?" asked the Cynic very solemnly.

"No, but he's Shavian," said the Wag. "Always contradicting himself and everyone else."

Which depressed people so that they began to disperse.

"Well, well," murmured the Old Man, waking in his corner. "I've slept through it all and I'm just the same. He! he! Talk! talk! So the world goes on."

"No, it doesn't," said the Young Man, by force of habit.

LORIMER ROYSTON.

After Dinner.

(With profuse apologies to the author of "We come down to a Shilling.")

WE were leaning back, the four of us, in great luxurious fauteuils, toasting our fingers at the flames of our cigars and quaffing without cease great draughts of extra-dry out of tumblers. Then the greatest pork-butcher in London got up from his luxurious fauteuil and seated himself at my right hand. I looked at him curiously. He gave me that genial wink of his that makes customers, doubtful whether to purchase a chop or a leg, frequently decide on the more expensive of the two, almost always.

He crooked his elbow in his inimitable fashion, and emptied his glass to my health. I followed suit, and we refilled.

"I've 'ad ite glawses o' this," he said at last. "Prime, ain't it?"

"Not 'arf," I answered. "I could see he was waiting to tell me something."

He winked again—that fascinating wink. "Didcher spot that hawticle o' mine yesterdye in the piper?"

"Blimy if I did," I said.

"On 'Hidealism Vindicated.'"

"Goolor! you ain't 'arf going it," I cried.

Then the others stopped their conversation and regarded us. They drew their fauteuils nearer to listen to us.

"Didcher read my hawticle, Cookney?" said the greatest pork-butcher in London. I took to Cookney at once. He was such a pleasant, tall fellow, and so nice too. The other was Lash, who writes the poetry for the Christmas pantomimes.

"Yus," rejoined Cookney. "That wos a saucy little bit abart the himmortality of the soul," he interposed.

"Soul," I said to my neighbour. "D'ye b'lieve in the soul?"

"Yus."

"Strite?"

"Strite."

"No rottin'. Hevolution?"

"You bet."

"Metemscosis?"

"Yus."

"Anthropolatricism?"

"I *don't* fink!"

"Strike me pink," I said, nodding and shaking my head, as I drained, refilled, and re-emptied my tumbler. "If you ain't gort 'old o' the roight fing."

Then I pinched some spoons and went home to Annie.

C. E. B.



A CONVERSATION PIECE.

Art and Drama.

By Huntly Carter.

WHAT can be extracted from the work of Professor Max Reinhardt that is of value to the revolutionary movement in this country? The question is worth pondering. An answer may be found in a comparison between the realistic representation of "The Miracle" at Olympia and the symbolic representation of the same subject in the little theatre which I outlined last week.

* * *

"The Miracle" is a cosmic theme. I can imagine the poet carried on high waves of emotion to the next world returning with such an eternal theme. It is really the old, old one of the conflict between Heaven and Hell, between Good and Evil. It is illustrated in the experiences of a nun, who has been uplifted by the Church for a glimpse into Paradise and is drawn down from the empyrean by the dull spirit of man or sexual love for a glance into Hell. So she undergoes the old, old process of disillusionment or enlightenment.

* * *

She undergoes this process, according to Professor Max Reinhardt's form of art of literal representation on a gigantic scale. She takes no circuitous or fortuitous route in her journey from the physical to the spiritual climax. She goes right ahead, as the Americans say. She manifests no violent conflict between the flesh and the spirit as a nun in the full flush of her first passion for life working against the spiritual heritage of the Church would do. In watching the progress of the latest pagan in her march from heaven to hell by way of the world, one is never conscious that a real miracle is being wrought—the miracle of the apotheosis of the human soul. On the contrary, one is only conscious of the stage miracle—the incarnation of the Madonna and a processional of effects produced with pleasure by a huge crowd for the pleasure of an equally huge crowd. And out of these effects—some of them extraordinarily vivid, rhythmical, and touched with splendid colour—arises a vision of a rather giddy young person passing through a Fleet Street universe, made up of seductions, murders, suicides, inquisitions, conflagrations, the march-past of the Anglo-German army, likewise of a realistic mixture of dead lovers, the return of the wanderer with a babe at her breast, and the subsequent death of the babe and its burial in the Virgin's lap. Such is the Prussian Imperial drama.

* * *

There is no need to deal exhaustively with the incongruities of the realistic heaven and hell of the Reinhardt conception, through which the nun is escorted by Humperdinck's entente cordiale music and Stern's colour. Anyone with imagination can conceive what would happen in a huge space usually devoted to horse shows converted into a Gothic cathedral in which the rival paradises have to make their bow. They can see, for one thing, the scene converted into a sort of stadium by crowds of sprinting nuns, who are not sportsmen, but are obliged to do the two hundred yards or so from the entrance-mark to the Madonna seated centre within a specified time. They can also understand that it would be difficult for the exterior scenery and the aforementioned events of the Fleet Street world to enter the cathedral and adjust their behaviour towards an interior that is neither journalistic nor frivolous. And they will shed tears with me at the vision of the cathedral mood disturbed by the antics of a frivolous nuptial couch.

* * *

So let me turn from the contemplation of this kaleidoscopic "show"—surely the culminating point of showmanship in this country—from this exhibition of stagecraftsmanship, from this chaos of situations far too fragmentary in treatment, from the richly-coloured Madonna, from the gigantic and magnificent scarlet doors of the cathedral, symbolising the world but artisti-

cally having no relation to the rest of the play than a rhinoceros to a flea, from the shower of colours like confetti shooting themselves out in all directions, and from endless pictures in the making—to its condensed version in the little theatre.

* * *

Here the revelation of the nun's soul in the dash for temporal liberty would be metaphysically and symbolically treated. There would be the substitution of the divine right of the individual for the divine right of the Church, and the testing of private judgment by experience. We would see the nun's absorption in the comparatively narrow sphere of the Church, believing that the conscience of the Virgin Mary, the central symbol of the scene, is the voice of God speaking to her. This would be followed by the opening of the great symbolic doors of the world, the coming of the new vision, the migration from Papacy to Piccadilly, and the return. Here the central symbol would be the Spielmann. Throughout would be expressed the greatest mental struggle of this woman's life. This is the only thing that matters, and it is the one thing obscured by the overwhelming display at Olympia.

* * *

In the suggested treatment of the theme the essentials of Max Reinhardt's work would be retained, while the unessentials that encumber "The Miracle" would be cut away. Thus a living spirit would be extracted to be clothed in light, form, movement, sound, and colour. The tremendous simplicity still underlying Reinhardt's productions would remain. There would be no crowds, no locality, no stage properties save one or two essentials, no decorations save those springing from the psychology of the characters and necessary to give them wideness of expression. The revolt against the impossible idea of the stage as a picture framed by the proscenium would be maintained. The search for intimacy—that is, a close rapprochement between the stage and the audience—would be carried on, but not in Reinhardt's reactionary way. Instead of trying to get intimacy by physical means, such as entombing the audience in a cement vault and sprinkling it with vapid actors, the experiment would be tried of turning out the "house" lights and submitting the spectator to a vivid experience, both psychic and artistic. Beyond this, there would be an application of the principles of vitality and definiteness in line and colour that distinguishes Reinhardt's best work from a prevalent vague and meaningless impressionism.

* * *

In my view "The Miracle" would be far more effective and stimulating if treated as suggested: that is, much on the lines of "Jacob and Esau," a sixteenth century version of the Bible story recently produced at the Little Theatre. Here is a play full of the right ideas, wonderfully simple in spirit and simple in treatment. In fact, it touches the high water-mark of its own class of dramatic literature. What is the value of this piece to our age? Precisely that of the simplification of Shakespeare. It is an aid to our own dramatic renaissance, nothing more. In bringing such a piece before us Mr. William Poel renders the drama an immense service, for thereby he reveals exactly the qualities of simplicity, sincerity, and joyousness needed for its salvation. If he would go on with these productions, and give us not only suggestive scenery but suggestive colour, he would deserve the best thanks of the younger school of reformers. In order to obtain the desired effect, Mr. Poel should avoid dressing the characters realistically. "Jacob and Esau" is a play for all time, and, like all eternal things, it seeks to escape from the realistic hell to which historical and archaeological minds condemn them. Why does not Mr. Poel invite the aid of an artist, say Mr. Alfred Wolmark, who has a fine colour sense and could turn his feeling for decoration to great advantage in these simple possible plays? One other thing, I should like to see the acting made to express that spontaneity and joy of life of a period when the play instinct was at its intensest.

Fresh Gales and Gentle Air.

By One of the Asiatics.

"THEY look upon life as a good—our modern Asiatics all more or less regard it as an evil. There is no blitheness in the dull censorious world of modern 'advanced' literature. It is bitter, cynical, pessimist. It grins and snarls and sneers. A convert to the Church once described to me his experience of Congregational and Unitarian chapels as 'sitting in a pit of ashes.' But the atmosphere of Puritanism is like an old English May-day compared to that of such a publication as, say, THE NEW AGE. One wonders who the abnormal beings are who spend threepence a week on this newspaper, and who persuade themselves that they enjoy it. Its satisfaction in ugliness (I do not say 'delight'—its writers appear incapable of pleasure), its disbelief in goodness, its dreary aloofness from everyday humanity, its ridiculous absorption in the talkee-talkie of a small literary clique—all are most curious. The world of the jingle-maker is sane and healthy and human—it is not darkened by problems."

The above exhilarating references to this journal and its writers are culled from the pages of the "Oxford and Cambridge Review," which we all read regularly in order to counteract our tendency to get out of touch with "everyday humanity." They appear in the current number in an article by the Rev. R. L. Gales on "Three Jingle Makers." Mr. Gales is best known as the writer of essays in which the present writer, at any rate, has taken satisfaction—though Mr. Gales will not allow him to say "delight." They are pleasant, quiet essays about old songs and old places and country people and local customs. One has always pictured Mr. Gales as a gently genial rural parson, a grower of roses and a reader of books; one did not imagine (as appears to be the case) that he ever spent threepence on THE NEW AGE; and certainly not that he would ever indulge in "grins and snarls and sneers." Judge, then, our sensations as we read his words. We feel, to use the classical illustration, like a man who is being charged by a furious sheep.

As it happens, the sheep is only charging at wind-mills. These tasteful ecclesiastical polemics against THE NEW AGE are introduced in the course of a hearty eulogy on the "jingles" of Mr. Kipling, Mr. Belloc, and Mr. Chesterton. These are the sort of men that Mr. Gales likes: Mr. Kipling, who is so free from any taint of Asiaticism, and Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton, who are so jolly and hearty and picturesque in their Europeanism. "They frolic," says he, "they revel, they bubble over with boisterous high spirits and spontaneous good humour." So unlike this morbid, gloomy NEW AGE, with its perverted melancholiacs of writers and its abnormal readers, who walk about scattering Asiatic snarls and sneers, eschewing laughter, disbelieving in goodness and taking problems with every meal.

It is not our business to express our opinion about the literary qualities of THE NEW AGE. We leave that to our abnormal readers. If we have taken satisfaction (we will not say delight) in ugliness, if we have run a small literary clique, and, above all, if we have ignored the existence of every day, may our sins be on our own heads. But we are bound to say that our belief in goodness (had we lost it) would scarcely be restored by the perusal of Mr. Gales' remarks. For it is plain on the face of it that either he is abusing a paper he has never read, or that he is saying something he knows is untrue. And as sole necessary evidence of this one may observe that of his three jingle makers, two have been frequent contributors to THE NEW AGE. Mr. Chesterton has written for these columns, and Mr. Belloc has been one of THE NEW AGE's most frequent contributors. Much more could be said on the point, but it is not worth while; it is sufficient that Mr. Gales is damned out of his own mouth.

Nazareth is in Asia.

So is Jericho.

FOUR POEMS.

By A. Cull.

TO ANNA PAVLOVA.

(Written on a Wednesday evening, towards seven p.m.)

I rode towards eve, where many a galleon
Spread towering sail above the bronze-blue Nile,
Like wings of red flamingoes for a while
Each vessel waved its sun-stained gonfalon.
Yet sorrow reigned despite the benison
That sunset cast athwart the dim defile,
And all these glories could not reconcile
My loss of one more splendid than the Sun.

For as I rode it seemed to me that you
Had cast your spell upon the East and West.
Yea, all the world held purple carnival;
And when the mountains took their deepest hue,
As if besprent by blood from red grapes pressed,
I knew you danced the Autumn Bacchanal.

TO ANNA PAVLOVA.

(In her dance "Le Cygne" Musique de Saint-Saëns.)

I.

There came to me a vision of sweet song
Borne faintly forward on melodious streams,
A white Chimaera such as stirs the dreams
Of men, who sleep in solitudes and long
To people the dead wastes with strange desire
And breathe between the lips of ancient Death
Stretched mummified in deserts that new breath
That should revive them with its living fire.

II.

White was the vision, white as fiercest fire
And paler far its face than pallid Death,
Begotten of that brood, the Swan's desire
Raised from frail Leda with its hissing breath.
And as it came its superhuman song
Sang of all those, whom wide relentless streams
Divide from their beloved, towards whom they long,
But whom they ne'er may clasp except in dreams.

III.

They strain to one another in their dreams
But never hear their lovers' silent song
Pass spectrelike with gliding feet along
The halls of Sleep to Lethe's stealthy streams
Till comes Old Age, a fouler foe than Death,
To mar the house of their divine desire
And smother with white ashes their young fire
Stifling their bodies' perfumes with his breath.

IV.

Who of us mortals with ephemeral breath
That saw the vision, did not straight desire
To pass from perfect happiness to death
A holocaust of joy within the fire beneath
That from your cloudlike eyelids streams.
Having for elegy your supreme song
I would have died your death and passed to dreams
On that white breast, for which I longed so long.

V.

Half goddess and half swan, you seemed to long
With yearning eyes for those immortal dreams
Of far Olympus, where Peneus streams
Through Tempe's hallowed vale. Yet in the song
Of feet and face and form I saw the fire
Of love for men, whose evanescent breath
Lends charm to wayward pleasures, watched by
Death,
Who casts a glamour on short-lived desire.

VI.

All mortal sufferings and vain desire
Wept from your eyes and shook your tortured
breath.
Yea, goddess though you were, the immortal fire

That shone from your white shape grew dim as
 Death.
 I questioned of your Sorrow—Did you long
 For Youth's brief summer passed in rhythmic
 dreams
 By winding ways of water, where the song
 Of many birds mixed with the murmuring streams?

VII.

But though no answer pierced the splash of streams
 Your arms that wavered swan-like seemed to long
 And beckon for some mystery, which song
 Might not reveal lying hid beyond our dreams.
 Was it eternal youth, that your last breath
 Invoked with prayers so passionate, that fire
 Rekindled in those eyes, whose last desire
 Was unto life, till clanked the feet of Death?

VIII.

For as you felt the drear approach of Death,
 Your limbs relaxed and from your eyes the fire
 Fled fainting forth: You drew one sobbing breath
 That shook your shuddering wings, and your desire
 Quailed before Death: Your hair, where darkness
 dreams,
 Where Moon and Stars hold festival along
 With queenly Night, fell forward in dark streams
 About your face, and silenced was your song.

ENVOY.

Anna, my dreams find voice within the song
 That from the fire of your sweet footsteps streams.
 Though dreams and breath and song may pass along
 Death's ways, yet my desire defieth Death.

LA TERPSICHORE IVRE.

(Ou la triste et mortelle aventure, que patit la Muse de la
 Danse dans la saison des vendanges. Dédié à Anna
 Pavlova et suggéré par l'Automne Bacchanal de
 Glazounov.)

I.

From the roseate gold of the silken clouds,
 Red-stained like an autumn leaf,
 There broke on the sight of the awful crowd
 A vision of joy and grief.
 Of joy for the purple fountains
 That spring where the red feet tread,
 Of grief for the mists on the mountains
 And the roses dead.

II.

Lo the dying roses around thy feet
 Turn blood of the vintage pale
 In their heavy scent as it rises sweet
 Thy mad steps stagger and fail.
 While the drums and the trumpets thunder
 Thou dost stand in a passionate trance,
 Encircled by worship and wonder,
 O Muse of the Dance.

III.

As we watched thee the gloom of the streets was gone,
 And the gates of the woods were unbarred,
 The dancing circles of sunlight shone
 On the green grass golden starred.
 While the roof of the forests above us
 Concealed Jehovah's abyss,
 The old pagan gods seemed to love us
 And waft us their kiss.

IV.

Is it one of these who pursues thee fast
 Through the thickets and falling leaves?
 Is it he, Dionysus, that holds thee at last
 As thy bosom breathlessly heaves?
 Dost thou lean in reluctant abandon
 In the clasp of his arm, as he rests
 One daring and desecrate hand on
 The bloom of thy breasts?

V.

O stay thee, thou wilt not abandon thy rose
 To him of the wine-stained lips;
 Thou wilt not those virginal teeth unclose
 To a tongue whence the grape-juice drips.
 Wilt thou no longer faithfully follow
 The singer, pæans enhance
 All dances, thy teacher Apollo,
 O Muse of the Dance.

VI.

Dost thou totter, O Muse, inebriate with wine?
 Or drunken with music and song?
 What is this on thy bosom? The fruit of the vine?
 Round thy feet? Twine the tendrils so strong?
 Ah, dead is the Terpsichorean,
 The sacred pure memories are blurred;
 Unstrung is His lyre and His pæan.
 Resoundeth unheard.

VII.

But harken, the music grows soft; see her sway
 With fainting provocative eyes;
 The flowers of her bosom are bared for the fray
 And her lips are parted with sighs.
 Say who then a Muse will account her,
 As with laughing, lascivious glance
 She courts the ecstatic encounter
 And the gold of the lance.

VIII.

She has turned from the virginal measures of old,
 That were lilylike, silvery pure;
 Bacchanalian orgies of scarlet and gold
 And the rose of Love's lips now allure.
 But will the awakening repent her
 When the Dawn's heavy eyelids unclose,
 When the white bloom of love at the centre
 Shows blood on its snows.

IX.

But lo! the wild music has ceased and she starts
 At the call of the plaintive strings;
 She strains from the grip of her lover, who darts
 Her a glance as the other god sings.
 She is free—but her conqueror hardens
 His heart as his victim goes;
 Revengeful the god of the gardens
 Strikes her dead with his rose.

ENVOY.

A moment's joy and a life-long pain
 Are the gifts thou givest to me;
 To find thee, then lose thee, if never again
 I may hope thy face to see.
 For the music of life brings but sorrow,
 If we meet on this day to part,
 And joy will be dead from to-morrow,
 O Pavlova, Muse of my heart.

TO ANNA PAVLOVA.

(In her dance "La Nuit" de Rubinstein.)

I see thee, Anna, dancing down my days,
 Like a blue moonbeam, flitting through the night;
 And wondrous are the workings of thy ways,
 Most wonderful the movement of thy flight.
 I fain would watch thee till the daylight lays
 Upon Night's brow his rosy lips of light.

On fairy limbs thy blue veils lie so light
 That wondering one would say the summer days
 Had lent their radiant skies to robe thy flight
 With fleecy clouds of white to veil the ways
 Of mysteries multi-coloured as the Night,
 To whom pale poets tune their amorous lays.

For as the red moon rising heavenwards lays
 Amid Night's hair a rose of ruby light,
 And starlight sheds a gold more soft than Day's
 About the rose and black of pallid Night,
 So are the mysteries of thy flesh, whose ways
 Are no more trammelled than the falcon's flight.

Alas, that it should waste beneath Time's flight;
Time, who on all his curse relentless lays.
Alas, that she, who danced the dance of Night,
Should one day thither pass and leave the day's
Light laughter for that bourne where no sun's light
Relieves the gloom of Acherontian ways.

SESTINA.

Would that like Pheidias I might find me ways
To fix in store those fluid lines of flight,
And like the Lesbian leave undying lays
To hymn thy beauty, that eternal light
Might burn about thy statue, would my days
Might all be given for one perfect night.

So should I pass content to that long night,
Wherein I ne'er shall see thy magic ways;
So should I have one memory to light
My longing eyes until the Death Lord lays
On them His sombre hand, or stays the flight
Of thy fleet feet adown the darkening days.

ENVOY.

Anna, my ways lie towards the Eastern light,
And on my flight Fate this dilemma lays;
With or without thee days shall pass as night.

Moby Dick.

By E. H. Visiak.

"WHENEVER I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street and methodically knocking people's hats off—then I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can."

Thus Herman Melville; and I recommend any grim-mouthed ones who cannot get to sea to read "Moby Dick," which has salt physic. It is the most dynamic sea-tale that has ever been written. It is Leviathanic! We are transported to a vast theatre, to tremendous scenes of storm and tragedy upon the sea. The monomaniac Captain Ahab is not the less real because his spirit moves in a Miltonian atmosphere of hell; a demoniac old man, blasted and terrible, with method and policy in his madness, possessing his soul with that frightful patience which makes his every act impressive and grand and condenses every sentence that he utters into drama. How vividly he stands out from his foils, the staid and lovable first mate, Starbuck, and the little, thick-set, dark-bearded, jolly, careless second mate, Stubb! With what wild magnetism he captures the minds of his astonished crew!

"'Captain Ahab,' said Starbuck, who, with Stubb and Flask, had thus far been eyeing his superior with increasing surprise, but at last seemed struck with a thought which somewhat explained all the wonder. 'Captain Ahab, I have heard of Moby Dick—but it was not Moby Dick that took off thy leg?'"

"'Who told thee that?' cried Ahab; then pausing, 'Aye, Starbuck; aye, my hearties all round; it was Moby Dick that dismasted me; Moby Dick that brought me to this dead stump I stand on now. Aye, aye!' he shouted with a terrific, loud, animal sob, like that of a heart-stricken moose; 'aye, aye! it was that accursed white whale that razed me; made a poor, pegging lubber of me for ever and a day!' Then, tossing both arms, with measureless imprecations he shouted out: 'Aye, aye! and I'll chase him round Good Hope, and round the Horn, and round the Norway Maelstrom, and round perdition's flames before I give him up. And this is what ye have shipped for, men!—to chase that white whale on both sides of land and over all sides of earth till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out. What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now? I think ye do look brave.'

"'Aye, aye!' shouted the harpooners and seamen, running closer to the excited old man: 'a sharp eye for the white whale, a sharp lance for Moby Dick!'"

"'God bless ye,' he seemed to half sob and half shout; 'God bless ye, men. Steward! go draw the great measure of grog. But what's this long face about, Mr. Starbuck? Wilt thou not chase the white whale? Art not game for Moby Dick?'"

"'I am game for his crooked jaw, and for the jaws of Death, too, Captain Ahab, if it fairly comes in the way of the business we follow; but I came here to hunt whales, not my commander's vengeance. How many barrels will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? It will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market.'

"'Nantucket market! Hoot! But come closer, Starbuck; thou requirest a little lower layer. If money's to be the measurer, man, and the accountants have computed their great counting-house the globe, by girding it with guineas, one to every three parts of an inch—then, let me tell thee, that my vengeance will fetch a great premium here!'"

"'He smites his chest,' whispered Stubb, 'what's that for? Methinks it rings most vast, but hollow.'

"'Vengeance on a dumb brute!' cried Starbuck, 'that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous.'

"'Hark ye yet again—the little lower layer. All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event—in the living act, the undoubted deed—there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's nought beyond.* But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and to be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. . . . Take off thine eye! more intolerable than fiends' glarings is a doltish stare! So, so; thou reddest and palest; my heat has melted thee to anger-glow. But look ye, Starbuck, what is said in heat, that thing unsays itself. There are men from whom warm words are small indignity. I meant not to incense thee. Let it go. Look! see yonder Turkish cheeks of spotted tawn—living, breathing pictures painted by the sun. The Pagan leopards—the unrecking and unworshipping things that live, and seek, and give no reason for the torrid life they feel! The crew, man, the crew! Are they not one and all with Ahab in this matter of the whale? See Stubb! he laughs. See yonder Chilian! he snorts to think of it. Stand up amid the general hurricane thy one tost sapling cannot, Starbuck! . . . † Constrainings seize thee, I see! the billow lifts thee! Speak, but speak! Aye, aye! thy silence, that—that voices thee.' (Aside): 'Something shot from my dilated nostrils; he has inhaled it in his lungs. Starbuck now is mine; cannot oppose me now, without rebellion.'

"'God keep me!—keep us all!' murmured Starbuck, lowly.

"But in his joy at the enchanted, tacit acquiescence of the mate, Ahab did not hear his foreboding invocation; nor yet the low laugh from the hold; nor yet the presaging vibrations of the winds in the cordage; nor yet the hollow flap of the sails against the masts, as for a moment their hearts sank in. For again Starbuck's downcast eyes lighted up with the stubbornness of life;

* "I had moments when I thought of him as of a man of pasteboard—as though, if one should strike smartly through the buckram of his countenance, there would be found a mere vacuity within. This horror . . ."—"The Master of Ballantrae."

† The sign ". . ." denotes omission. The use of . . . for emphasis, and what not, necessitates this note.

the subterranean laugh died away; the winds blew on; the sails filled out; the ship heaved and rolled as before. . . .

"The measure! the measure!" cried Ahab.

"Receiving the brimming pewter, and turning to the harpooners, he ordered them to produce their weapons. Then ranging them before him near the capstan, with their harpoons in their hands, while his three mates stood at his side with their lances and the rest of the ship's company formed a circle round the group, he stood for an instant searchingly eyeing every man of his crew. But those wild eyes met his, as the bloodshot eyes of the prairie wolves meet the eye of their leader ere he rushes on at their head in the trail of the bison, but, alas! only to fall into the hidden snare of the Indian.

"Drink and pass!" he cried, handing the heavy charged flagon to the nearest seaman. The crew alone now drink. 'Round with it, round! Short draughts—long swallows, men; 'tis hot as Satan's hoof. So, so; it goes round excellently. It spirals in ye; forks out at the serpent-snapping eye. Well done; almost drained. That way it went, this way it comes. Hand it me—here's a hollow! Men, ye seem the years; so brimming life is gulped and gone. Steward, refill!

"Attend now, my braves. I have mustered ye all round this capstan; and ye mates, flank me with your lances; and ye harpooners, stand there with your irons; and ye, stout mariners, ring me in, that I may in some sort revive a noble custom of my fisherman fathers before me. O men, you will yet see that—ha! boy, come back? Bad pennies come not sooner. Hand it me. Why, now, this pewter had run brimming again, were't not thou St. Vitus' imp—away, thou ague!

"Advance, ye mates! Cross your lances full before me. Well done! Let me touch the axis." So saying, with extended arm he grasped the three level, radiating lances at their crossed centre; while doing so, suddenly and nervously twitched them, meanwhile glancing intently from Starbuck to Stubb, from Stubb to Flask. It seemed as though, by some nameless, interior volition, he would fain have shocked into them the same fiery emotion accumulated within the Leyden jar of his own magnetic life. The three mates quailed before his strong, sustained, and mystic aspect. Stubb and Flask looked sideways from him; the honest eye of Starbuck fell downright."

The frenzy passes from the crew, but by various devices is rekindled from time to time by Ahab, whose obsession rages ever more and more to the catastrophe. Their minds lie numb beneath his spell, and the least murmur is blazed by his terrors from their lips. Starbuck alone keeps his integrity, or strives to keep it, falling into counter-superstitions at last while resisting Ahab's. Starbuck, too, is a tragic figure (in the Greek sense), nerving his inferior will to brave the furies of its superior.

A writer, says Melville, rises and swells with his subject; and, in writing of and quoting from "Moby Dick," one requires sea-room. I would quote from the marvellously real and picturesque New Bedford Inn scene, from the heartrending story of the "Rachel's" wavering quest over the bereaving sea, from the chapter of the horror of whiteness, from the character studies of the mysterious and august Bulkington who goes to sea to save his soul, and of the desolate old negro who takes to the sea as an alternative to suicide; from the terrific deck scene in which Ahab outrages the most awful superstitions of the sea by tampering with the cospositans, the holy candles of St. Elmo's fire. I quote a fragment from Stubb's baiting of the old negro for its thrilling flash of pathos:

"Come back, cook!—here, hand me those tongs—now take that bit of steak there and tell me if you think that steak cooked as it should be? Take it, I say—holding the tongs towards him—'take it and taste it.'

"Faintly smacking his withered lips over it for a moment the old negro muttered: 'Best cooked 'teak I eber taste—joosy, berry joosy.'

"Cook," said Stubb, squaring himself once more, 'do you belong to the Church?'

"'Passed one once in Cape Down,' said the old man, sullenly.

"And you have once in your life passed a holy church in Cape Town, where you doubtless overheard a holy parson addressing his hearers as his beloved fellow-creatures, have you, cook? And yet you come here and tell me such a dreadful lie as you did just now, eh?" said Stubb. 'Where do you expect to go to, cook?'

"Go to bed berry soon,' he mumbled, half turning as he spoke.

"Avast! heave to! I mean when you die, cook. It's an awful question. Now what's your answer?'

"When dis old brack man dies,' said the negro slowly, changing his whole air and demeanour, 'he hisself won't go nowhere; but some bressed angel will come and fetch him.'

"Fetch him—and fetch him where?'

"Up dere,' said Fleece, holding his tongs straight over his head and keeping it there very solemnly.

"So then you expect to go up into our maintop, do you, cook, when you are dead?'

"Didn't say dat 'tall,' said Fleece, again in the sulks."

"Moby Dick" is a master panorama of the sea (the "Cachelot" and the "Narcissus" sail after it in vain) and an exhaustive study and history of the great Sperm Whale, of its hunting and of the mysteries of its life. "Moby Dick" abounds—abounds!—with curious and far-fetched lore, imaginative divagation, and "thoughts that wander through eternity."

The quality of Melville's philosophy and style is seen in the following apostrophe, which occurs after an account of one of those strange psychic experiences which were undoubtedly experienced:

"Look not too long in the face of the fire, O man! Never dream with thy hand on the helm! Turn not thy back to the compass; accept the first hint of the hitching tiller; believe not the artificial fire, when its redness makes all things look ghastly. To-morrow, in the natural sun, the skies will be bright; those who glared like devils in the forking flames, the morn will show in far other—at least, gentler—relief; the glorious, golden, glad sun, the only true lamp—all others but liars!

"Nevertheless, the sun hides not Virginia's Dismal Swamp, nor Rome's accursed Campagna, nor wide Sahara, nor all the millions of miles of deserts and of griefs beneath the moon. The sun hides not the ocean, which is the dark side of this earth, and which is two-thirds of this earth. So, therefore, that mortal man who hath more of joy than sorrow in him, that mortal man cannot be true—nor true or undeveloped. With books the same. The truest of all men was the Man of Sorrows, and the truest of all books is Solomon's, and Ecclesiastics is the fine hammered steel of woe. 'All is vanity'—ALL. This wilful world hath not got hold of unchristian Solomon's wisdom yet. But he who dodges hospitals and jails, and walks fast passing graveyards, and would rather talk of operas than hell, calls Cowper, Young, Pascal, Rousseau poor devils all of sick men; and throughout a care-free lifetime swears by Rabelais as passing wise, and therefore jolly—not that man is fitted to sit down on tombstones and break the green, damp mould with unfathomably wondrous Solomon.

"But even Solomon," he says, "the man that wandereth out of the way of understanding, shall remain' (i.e., even while living) 'in the congregation of the dead.' Give not thyself up, then, to fire lest it invert thee, deaden thee, as for the time it did me. There is a wisdom that is woe; but there is a woe that is madness. And there is a Catskill eagle in some souls that can alike dive down into the blackest gorges and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces. And even if he forever flies within the gorge, that gorge is in the mountains; so that even in his lowest swoop the mountain eagle is still higher than other birds upon the plain, even though they soar."

[The best edition of "Moby Dick" is published by G. P. Putnam, 24, Bedford Street, Strand. But it is included in Everyman's Library.]

"O Rare L. Johnson."

A PECULIAR interest attaches to the appearance of this book*—an interest which attaches in some sort to every attempt to observe the rise and progress of a literary man's reputation and to account for his success either with the public as a whole or with the more cultured portion of it. Temporary success may be due to innumerable causes. While it is to be achieved by mere good fortune or clever puffery, it awaits any author who can turn out really well any kind of literature which the public or any considerable part of it want, whether that kind be good or bad. There is a market for every kind, though by no means for every degree of literary capacity. But for a lasting reputation something quite different is necessary. Our author must now appeal to the cultivated tastes of his readers, to their feeling for truth or beauty; he may have to educate that taste; and, finally, he must expect to wait longer for wide recognition the better he is.

It is in view of this that Johnson's position is interesting. When he met with his early and tragic death in 1902 he had already been contributing to the public Press for more than ten years—in fact, it is largely from the pages of the "Academy," "Daily Chronicle," and "Spectator" that these scattered essays have been collected. He had, moreover, published two volumes of verse—"Poems" and "Ireland"—which had met with a flattering reception from the critics, and an extraordinarily fine study of Thomas Hardy, and was, in fact, regarded by a certain following as the finest literary critic of his day.

Yet it is probably true to say that to the vast majority of the younger members of that increasing class to whom the best literature means something his name is hardly known. Only after a lapse of ten years are his scattered essays—or, rather, some forty, constituting about one-fourth of them—collected and given to the public. It is a curious and illuminating thought that hitherto no enterprising publisher has thought it financially worth while to publish his work. We are dealing with no unknown genius who struggles for long years against poverty or obscurity, with no Francis Thompson or Baudelaire, but with a man who was, indeed, never in the least rich, but who had, at any rate, a fair competence; who had the public ear for years; and was, moreover, one of the most brilliant of that very brilliant literary group of which Yeats was one of the bright particular stars; with a man, finally, who had himself gathered together a band of enthusiastic admirers.

To whatever cause the present state of Johnson's reputation is to be ascribed, let us, at any rate, be thankful that we have at last even a quarter of his work. Literary criticism of the finest sort has always been rare, and probably always will be. Work of equal merit in other fields of literature is produced far oftener and receives much more recognition. Yet for that great class who aspire to read the very best literature and find that they "somehow don't seem to like it," a first-rate critic can do a work of real service, even if he succeed merely in inciting them to further effort. And Johnson, almost more than any other critic of first-rate literary taste, has an enthusiasm which is catching. Few men could read his "Erasmus, My Darling," without wanting to rush away and buy "Erasmus." And this is the finest thing criticism can do. Analytical criticism is, no doubt, a pleasant and harmless occupation suitable enough for students, and of great importance; but the lover of literature, like any other lover, is a born propagandist and loves to communicate his delight. Johnson had the good fortune to be able to undertake this pleasant task freed, at least partially, from the restrictions that hedge in the average critic, and to do it supremely well.

He had nearly every quality which could make his work charming, that is, effective. To a singularly graceful and easy style he adds a suggestiveness of phrase and a happiness of allusion that give a distinction to every page, while his sweet and generous nature

pours itself out in praise of the books he knew and loved so well. His writing is the result of "that leisurely travel of the mind among great things," which to him had a passionate appeal not to be guessed at by those who saw in him merely an aloof and dreamy student living apart from the world.

And, in fact, he is at his worst when he has not his subject at heart, as in the Essay on Marie Bashkirtseff. No doubt the memoirs of that troubled spirit, consisting as they do largely of mere notes, are not good literature. But Johnson is not content with this. He delivers a violent and uncalled-for attack on her memory. So with Byron, who as a romantic poet was long ago decently but firmly buried. Johnson disinters him, and, after a brief but brilliant encounter, is able to assure us "that he will never more rise from the dead"—wisely enough, considering the unnecessarily brutal treatment he received.

Such attacks are useless and finally indefensible, though it is natural that a writer who from his enthusiasm gives us things so fine as "O rare George Borrow" and "Father Izaak," should also, equally from his enthusiasm, become unpleasantly violent on occasion. In any case, literature is not the only or even the most valuable thing in life; and even if it were, it is desirable that every kind should be welcomed and should flourish exceedingly, as so much bad literature does.

Himself a Mystic (who else reads the Mystics?), Johnson is, nevertheless, usually unsatisfactory when he deals with them. It is not a matter of any importance whether Blake was mad or not—and certainly it is not worth the space and indignation he spends on it. Nor is the matter likely to be improved by a defence of Blake, which starts without even a working definition of madness. In his zeal he claims too much. The interpretation of visions, like the interpretation of anything else, requires practice. Just as it is rare for the various witnesses in a Law Court to give the same account of the same incident, it is rare for mystics to give even approximately the same account of the same vision. Each describes it naturally and inevitably in terms of his own particular creed. Now Blake is at a peculiar disadvantage here. As von Eckartshausen says, those who have desired to translate the things of the Spirit into language, the Alchemists, for instance, used a conventional symbology accepted by all of their own school. And there have been many of these systems of symbology, all particular ways of regarding and partial attempts at expressing the underlying Reality, all "facets of one intolerable gem," as a modern poet has said. But Blake availed himself of none of these attempts of his predecessors. He created his own system, and as he was, moreover, by no means a high type of visionary, the result is not so perfect as Johnson would have us believe.

The Essay on Walter Pater's "Plato and the Platonists" is perhaps the finest in the book, and is of itself sufficient justification for calling him the best critic since Matthew Arnold. To him Pater is something more than the Pater "pontificating; stiff and stately in his jewelled vestments; moving with serious and slow exactitude through the ritual of his style." He can even add a certain charm to Plato, that rare combination, an intellectual and spiritual giant, whose colossal calm has in it something earthly, a grandeur and a deep peace as of high snow mountains. In this essay Johnson is superb. Such a critic who feels and writes from the heart lives when twenty critical Macaulays are forgotten; for his work and his influence are abiding and good, and his charming and cultivated soul laughs with joy through his work at the good things he has discovered and invites us to share. It is impossible to praise him too highly. When a man adds to a wonderfully refined taste and an unusually wide acquaintance with literature, a striking power of analysing and conveying his delight, we have a great critic; when he adds to these an honesty of purpose and a magnanimity and generosity of disposition such as are at all times rare, we have also a great soul; and we understand his "genius for friendship."

V. W. E. EVANS.

* Post Liminium: Essays and Critical Papers." By Lionel Johnson. Edited by Thomas Whittemore. (Elkin Mathews. 6s.)

Pastiche.

A FABIAN FABLE.

"DON'T be silly," said the anti-Socialist. "A man's a man; you can't get away from that. Recently descended from a worm, indeed! You're getting so hot-headed nowadays I don't know what to do with you. If you'll only take the trouble to read the New Testament you'll know something about Adam and Eve. Worm, indeed! Oh, now I see what you were driving at: Which was there first, the chicken or the egg?"

C. E. B.

* * *

The Disciple searcheth for a meaning.
The Result figured in a simile.

—By R . . . T B . . . G.

As when of old the steeple-hatted Hag
Trotted to cupboard questing bone for tyke,
Snout-snuffling, tail-stump-dithering cur ey'd crone
Agape i' th' crocks and clattering kitchen-delft
Who nosed in vain for belly-stuff to stretch
Tyke's bagging hide with; but a cupboard bare
Affords no feast Amphitryonic, so
Poor dog had none. . . .

Nor he.

JOHN JOHNSON.

* * *

Parliament has ceased to be the national school of taste and good language. In Johnson's day, in Swift's, even in Dickens' and Meredith's, Parliamentary models of eloquence, form and substance were accepted by the best minds. Good sense, above all, characterised Parliament, as it certainly did not in literary men's judgment, either the church or the law. With the recent decline of reason and the rise—whether as cause or effect—of the system of the caucus, all this reputation has begun to dissolve and with just cause. Parliament now makes no sacrifices to the graces, scarce any sacrifices to the mere appearances of reason. Hence the graces, with all their charms, are fast deserting her. A polished phrase now sounds out of place in the House of Commons, affected, recherché, suggestive of a minor poet or a naive innocent, more likely. A speaker almost apologises for it, as if he felt that the use of these phrases was a weakness for which indulgence is necessary. Nay, without an apology such phrases do indeed arouse the suspicion of the House of Commons. This man, they say, is either too simple or too subtle for us. We must be careful. On the other hand, a Latin quotation still intrigues them without offending them or making them nervous. What they would say to a Greek quotation our generation has no notion. No speaker has ventured to try one upon them.

This decline of Parliament as a school of taste is very sad, nor is the situation hopeful for the future. The Bœotian characters of the new candidates and members give no promise of immediate improvement in the taste, manners or good sense of the House of Commons. The contrary, indeed, I would whisper. With Mr. Lloyd George in command of the language of England and using Parliament as his sounding-board, we shall do well to save our tongue from degradation. Graces we must not expect to be able to maintain at Westminster under the Lloyd George régime. Let us pray that English of a not too corrupt kind may continue to be spoken, so that our happier posterity may recover its purity with only a little labour.

But what must otherwise be done? Since Parliament has ceased to be a model of English graces, is it not clear that we must create a model elsewhere in a more favourable soil? But where? I leave it to the theatre to reply. But our dramatists are too busy making money or propagating ephemeral opinions to care about creating new models of taste. I do not know, indeed, that in the corruption of taste they have not been pioneers.

S. V. L.

* * *

We are fond of saying that we have in England a "republic of letters." But it is a republic without a president, and consequently no republic at all. The last president of the English republic of letters was R. L. Stevenson—the last and incomparably the smallest. Since his day we have had no president at all, only personages of the cliques, such as Henry James, Bernard Shaw, W. B. Yeats. The proof—if proof is needed—that we have no president is that we have no consistent body or even drift of literary judgment. Nobody's word counts more than the word of another.

The demagogue Douglas is as good as the émigré Hueffer, and both in the opinion of others are bad. Furthermore, nobody lays himself out now to assume the presidency. It is the office of a president to know all that is going on, to see that praise and blame are fairly distributed, to ensure that talent shall not languish in obscurity or incompetence flourish in the sun. But who among our literary men even aspires to fill this office? Each of them is too greedy to swallow all the praise there is going to be able to spare a thought for its proper distribution. We are indeed commercial in the literary as well as in the economic sense. Our literary men are bitten with the mania to get on, to make their pile of praise, to become millionaires of popularity, leaving talent to live as best it can in slums. Thank goodness, however, THE NEW AGE in literature, as in politics and economics, is Socialist and Republican.

S. T. R.

* * *

There is only one religion possible for a literary man: it is the religion of posterity, faith in to-morrow. Alas, it is in just this respect that our literary men of to-day are atheists. Their faith is in the accessible, the contemporary, the present; their worship is of the judgment of to-day, and their reward, above all, is not in heaven but here and now. To revive the literary religion it is therefore necessary to depose the gods of to-day—success, present fame and name, contemporary favour. The literary god must once again be exalted beyond our time and even our recognition. To reverence posterity is to serve a remote, inaccessible, yet omnipotent omniscient deity, and our reward is to be happy—in heaven!

F. R. M.

THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF T. E. HULME.

AUTUMN.

A touch of cold in the Autumn night—
I walked abroad,
And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge
Like a red-faced farmer.
I did not stop to speak, but nodded;
And round about were the wistful stars
With white faces like town children.

MANA ABODA.

Beauty is the marking-time, the stationary vibration, the feigned ecstasy of an arrested impulse unable to reach its natural end.

Mana Aboda, whose bent form
The sky in archèd circle is,
Seems ever for an unknown grief to mourn.
Yet on a day I heard her cry:
"I weary of the roses and the singing poets—
Josephs all, not tall enough to try."

CONVERSION.

Lighthearted I walked into the valley wood
In the time of hyacinths,
Till beauty like a scented cloth
cast over, stifled me. I was bound
motionless and faint of breath
By loveliness that is her own eunuch.
Now pass I to the final river
Ignominiously, in a sack, without sound
As any peeping Turk to the Bosphorus.

ABOVE THE DOCK.

Above the quiet dock in midnight,
Tangled in the tall mast's corded height,
Hangs the moon. What seemed so far away
Is but a child's balloon, forgotten after play.

EMBANKMENT.

(The fantasia of a fallen gentleman on a cold, bitter night.)

Once, in finesse of fiddles found I ecstasy,
In the flash of gold heels on the pavement hard.
Now see I
That warmth's the very stuff of poesy.
Oh, God, make small
The old star-eaten blanket of the sky,
That I may fold it round me and in comfort lie.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

THE COAL STRIKE.

Sir,—I am not clear whether your correspondent, Mr. P. J. Dollan, is for or against a General Strike of Miners. The title of his letter suggests that he is opposed to it on the ground that a strike under any circumstances would be ineffective. But his suggestion of a summer instead of a winter strike, and his admission that the coal-owners will only pay a minimum wage under compulsion, convince me that his objection is taken entirely to the time and manner of the present threatened strike. For that I am really not solely responsible.

With regard to the practicability of a minimum wage under existing conditions I take leave to say that Mr. Dollan is less well informed than the coalmasters themselves. Mr. Dollan, I believe, was once of the opinion that of the 63 millions annually pocketed in profits, etc., by coal-owners a proportion might fairly go to wages. Short of nationalisation, however, he did not see how the coal-owners could be compelled to disgorge. Well, the threat alone of a General Strike has done more than ten years' political foolery by the Labour party has achieved: it has brought offers from the masters, not only of a general advance of 10 per cent. in wages, but of a "not unsympathetic consideration of the minimum wage." After all, coal-owners may be supposed to know whether this is practicable.

THE WRITER OF "NOTES OF THE WEEK."

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES.

Sir,—In your issue of January 18 you remark in "Notes of the Week":—

"The rates of wages may be actually raised for those who find employment, but at a high minimum of actual wages the number of the rejected, and consequently of the unemployed, will be increased. . . . In short, the rates of wages may be raised without bettering the condition of labour as a whole. . . . Unless other demands go with it."

The case of the Post Office women clerks furnishes an illustration of your statement. From January 1, 1908, after seven years of patient agitation, the women clerks had their meagre salaries raised. The scale £55-£100 was altered to £65-£110, and the increment also increased. Now, on December 8, 1911, scarcely four years later, Mr. Herbert Samuel departs from the findings of the Hobhouse Committee and issues a scheme of *assistant* women clerks earning from 18s. to 34s. a week, with an eight hours' day, who are to do a large part of the routine (though important) work now done by women clerks. This, of course, will tend to make women clerks proper cease to be employed. Mr. Samuel has already admitted it, in answer to a question in the House of Commons on December 14, 1911. Vacancies as they occur are to be filled by the new class, and soon there will be numbers of them appointed; the work is constantly increasing, women clerks have to give up their employment on marriage, and now they are being invited to volunteer for posts under Part II of the Insurance Act.

I ask you, can Mr. Samuel seriously think a grown-up woman can lead a decent, cleanly life on eighteen shillings a week in London? It will take her nine years to reach the thirty-four. He calls himself a "reformer by conviction" and yet he is deliberately creating still another class to swell the ranks of sweated women's labour. Flesh and blood are cheap, of course.

To turn to a side issue of the question. These miserably-paid women are first introduced into the Money Order Department. Now in the Money Order Department takes place the examination and book-keeping of the Old Age Pensions. There were almost 40 million Paid Pension Orders dealt with by the women clerks in the official year ended March 31, 1911. Therefore it is easy for outsiders to see what an enormous increase of work and consequent increase of staff there has been; yet all promotions have been withheld since the introduction of Pensions in January, 1909. Now there is the further lowering of the staff's wages bill referred to above. Mr. Lloyd George gets much credit in the Radical Press for using existing machinery, and administering the Old Age Pensions Acts as cheaply as possible. This is how some of it is done.

WOMAN CIVIL SERVANT.

"NOTES OF THE WEEK."

Sir,—They should be printed in ten-foot letters and pasted all over the Houses of Parliament! This may sound extreme, but I am in a "New Age" mood, a mental state in which the political sanity of your paper forces one to realise the insanity of our popular political ideals.

This afternoon I converted an anti-Socialist to "Notes of the Week." I left him in Joseph Lyons' with a wondrous radiance in his hitherto leaden and lifeless eyeballs. I felt as elated as a Primitive Methodist who had saved a soul from Hell-fire. I read him "Notes of the Week" to an

accompaniment of rattling dominoes; by the second paragraph he was interested, by the third he was hypnotised, by the sixth he was for "Notes of the Week" body and soul. He had never seen THE NEW AGE before. It set me thinking. I wondered how many hundreds of thousands of such individuals who are seeking political light are doomed to provide prey for the various "paid organs." Also how many such individuals can afford threepence a week for the best political review extant. I left my convert devouring page two and toasted scone, but I am afraid that he will only be interested in the political portion of THE NEW AGE. Is there no means of getting into touch with such individuals as this. The tone of "Notes of the Week" is ideal: they are intensely Socialistic without appearing anything like "Red Peril." In a "New Age" mood one sees them being distributed like theatre throw-aways, or being sold for a halfpenny. Am I too Utopian?

ARTHUR F. THORN.

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"MIDDLE-CLASS" SOCIALISM.

Sir,—Mr. A. H. M. Robertson wants to know why I think the German Socialists middle class. (I said lower middle class, but that is by the way.) I said they were lower-middle-class people because I lived among them for some time and became acquainted with their mentality as well as their position in life. I presume Mr. Robertson will take the evidence of so well-known a war correspondent and journalist as Mr. Charles Hands, even though Mr. Hands writes in the "Daily Mail." I quote him because early in January he attended a Socialist meeting in Berlin and wrote his impressions of it in the "Daily Mail" of January 8. He was surprised to find the cloak-room presided over by a man in evening dress, and he was surprised to find the usher in evening dress also. The men at the table, he says, wore black coats and white ties, and the entire audience was exceedingly well dressed, apart from the fact that the speechifying was moderate. "It was little like the Socialist gathering I had expected. It might have been the annual meeting of a Congregational chapel in a prosperous industrial town. . . . You may listen to more violent extremist talk from Liberal aldermen."

The German "Socialists" are simply lower-middle-class Liberals. They are approximately in the position of the English manufacturing classes before 1832. They want parliamentary government, with a Cabinet responsible to the Reichstag instead of to the Kaiser, and if they had this they would be as quiet as lambs for half a century or more. This fact is so well known to all followers of German political events that I need not insist upon it. I have no doubt that in time the Germans will get their parliamentary government, after which the workman will be exploited in Germany just as he has been exploited in England under parliamentary government and "Liberal" ideas.

As for German industry, it is merely beginning; and an enormous proportion of the donkey-work in connection with it is being done by Poles, not Germans. Heaven forbid that I should have to convince a Tariff Reformer of this, or of anything else.

Had Mr. Robertson been more familiar with German politics he would have seen that I made no "glaring howlers"—how easy these exaggerated phrases roll off the pens of superficial writers nowadays! I am obliged to my critic for getting up in order that I might have the pleasure of knocking him down.

S. VERDAD.

* * *

MR. BELLOC'S ANTI-SOCIALISM.

Sir,—A correspondent in your issue for January 11 has raised a point of very singular interest and importance in attributing the reverence of a distinguished patriot for the institution of private property in the means of production to his membership of the Church of Rome. Mr. Warren's suggestion is in no way novel, however, and the Catholicism of Mr. Belloc has long been a source of interest and admiration for those Protestants who think with him about the Common Weal-or-Woe.

Most assuredly there is, as I hope to show in a moment, a connection between Mr. Belloc's Catholicism and Mr. Belloc's Distributivism. But when Mr. Warren goes on to declare that "in opposing the expansion of the power of the State, Mr. Belloc is negatively attempting to establish the Catholic Church"—let the lists be set—I, as a Protestant disciple of Mr. Belloc—join issue at once.

Your correspondent suggests that devotees of Roman Catholicism are accustomed to separate themselves and the thoughts of a select group of co-religionists from the nation and from humanity at large. As to humanity at large—perhaps if Mr. Warren includes the whole realm of Paganism in his survey, he is right. Christianity, Catholic and sectarian, is, in respect of the rest of the world, an exclusive minority. If, however, he contemplates Christendom, he can be no historian and no traveller or he would realise that to dub Catholics a "select group" is an entirely ludicrous proposition, and, further, that the Catholic Church has, as the

sole organisation of Christianity which has really "worked," identified itself with the activities, the ideals, the fortunes of a portion of mankind more successfully and thoroughly than any of the sects.

As to the nation, if Mr. Warren means that, legal disabilities apart, English Catholics have separated themselves from the secular life of the nation, he is talking nonsense (and if he will consider the history of this country before the Reformation, he will most easily realise that he is talking nonsense); if from the religious life of the nation, the same might be said of any English sect, established or free, since we have in this poor England of ours no corporate language of devotion, no coherent system of worship or endeavour.

Now to the main question, the relation between Mr. Belloc's Catholicism and his view of the instinct of property and its use.

Your correspondent asserts, without argument, that the development of civilisation has "obviously" been the denial of the dogma that men desire to own privately. A question of history—not to be discussed here, though I should delight privately to talk with Mr. Warren of Teutonic institutions, and "Mirs," and Tubneys, and poor Gerard Winstanley, and so on—what other collectivist topics we could discuss historically I am sure I don't know. Mr. Belloc at any rate—an historian of good repute, and a Balliol man, to wit!—has failed to discover in the economic régime to-day the perfection or the embryo of that "development" towards Communism of which Mr. Warren speaks: has observed, on the contrary, the passion for ownership, growing as it feeds, and uncontrolled by a system of government which at the crisis (i.e., in the 16th century) found the capitalist useful for dynastic purposes, and which in the 19th century, controlled by its insidious ally, salved its conscience with Adam Smith's invisible hand and the national balance, and has thus countenanced economic anarchy, called in the books "laissez-faire," and recently, for the sake of the bourgeoisie, tempered by humanitarian legislation and "social betterment," and other pranks of the employers; this uncontrolled passion for property, Mr. Belloc has seen created the status quo which, with yourself, sir, he deplures and would remove.

He can discover, moreover, no epoch at which private property has not been the inseparable accompaniment and basis of the only kind of life worth living, no epoch at which only the people who owned exercised civic activities and led a life in which will and reason were, consciously, to a degree harmonised. He has been struck, further, with the fact that the existing economic structure, the wage relationship, the cash nexus, if you like, has not and cannot preserve to the employee such property in the means of production as will fulfil the function of private property in being the apparatus of the life that is worth while, and, in so functioning, will provide the citizen with a more effective means of reacting upon the State than the vote (alas!) and even the strike.

The problem, then, is this: The present industrial system does not fulfil or tend toward fulfilling such an end of the State as any thinker can accept. Three policies are possible (1) Laissez-faire. Let the employer, having discovered that the bourgeoisie is troubled a little with uncomfortable statistics, and that an operative on the margin of subsistence is an incompetent tool, raise the standard of life and degrade the standard of citizenship for the employee by adding to an insufficient wage such a dole as the Insurance Bill, such a circus as Bourneville or Port Sunlight. That is making the wage relationship tolerable. (2) Collectivism. Set up one employer, the best possible, the most enlightened, the most benevolent. This is the apotheosis of the wage relationship. And, it would imply the abolition of private property in the means of production. Its institution might be possible. But its institution would mean that the end of the State would stop short of the fullest possible development of the civic activities of the individual because such development can be brought about only by means of the apparatus property. The State must make impossible and difficult the living of the un-civic life, if it is to make possible and easy the living of the civic life.

(3) The Distributive State. But Mr. Belloc's historical investigations have introduced him to an industrial system which was not based on the employment relation and did not hazard the furniture of citizenship. It existed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and broke down from definite and ascertainable causes, now in part non-existent, in part removable. I mean the gild system.

The gild system was only made possible by the fact that men's economic activities in the Middle Ages were permeated with and directed by a moral sense, and the lucky were restrained by moral considerations from exploiting the unlucky—by "moral sentiments," shall we say? not of the inoperative kind of Adam Smith, but backed by custom and by legislation. The custom was the institution of the Catholic Church, the legislation the work of the State while still in the tutelage of the Catholic Church—before the en-

throned Machiavellis of the Reformation divorced politics and ethics and took the capitalists to their hearts.

Now, it is Mr. Belloc's Catholicism which has convinced him that economic activities can once more be permeated with a moral sense, and property be kept equably distributed. Not in any kind of State. Not in the Servile State, for instance; but in a *societas societatum*, whose economic and civic unit is the co-operative society whose citizens have been reared to think and to talk and to produce coherently, as members of a small and of a larger fellowship. Obviously, however, in such a State, the smaller societies will fight if they can. There is needed some greater organisation which will keep the peace as the Catholic Church kept the peace in the Middle Ages.

Now it is our hope that such an organisation will be found in the State—no longer secular, no longer pro-capitalistic; nor yet, either, the owner of the means of production; its criteria of intervention not reduced, not expanded, but altered. By uniting government and morality and industry and morality, we hope to rear the Christian State. But not, as Mr. Warren suggests, with the help of the Catholic Church as represented by the Church of Rome. Since the Middle Ages there have been developed reason and nationality. But, fundamentally, the Catholic Church is no good to us because the Distributive State must be built not on a cosmopolitan, but on an English, basis.

In this sense I must oppose Mr. Warren's contention. But in linking up Mr. Belloc's Catholicism and Mr. Belloc's ideals for the commonwealth, his contention is useful and suggestive.

N. J. SIEVERS.

THE BASES OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

Sir,—In your issue of the 11th inst., under the title of "Proportional Representation," Mr. Sharp rightly complains that I did not correctly state one of his points in making my reply. That is a most objectionable proceeding, and I beg him to accept my apology and assurance that it was unintentional. I have no desire whatever merely to score cheap points by ignoring difficulties, but to get a profoundly interesting and important subject discussed upon its real merits.

Mr. Sharp contends that "Under proportional representation there would be a grave danger of men being elected on single issues, and being wholly irresponsible on other issues." Here is a real point: if this were to occur to any great extent it would be a serious drawback. But, to quote my last letter, which applies to this other aspect also, "when, if ever, there is a sufficient fraction of the electorate so unbalanced as to return more such members than can be kept in order by the remainder, it will take more than electoral systems to keep the old country on the rails." In a five-member constituency, as I also pointed out, Mr. Sharp's rabid Prohibitionists would have to number one-sixth of the community to get their special irresponsible member.

Most people will agree that the great majority, even of those holding strong opinions on any one subject, would prefer to be represented by a man of their general political trend. The party managers would then have a motive for putting forward one candidate holding the particular view in question, who would not therefore be "irresponsible" on other matters, or, as I prefer to put it, being wholly in sympathy with Burke's view of a representative, he could be a man whose general philosophy could be relied upon to deal with each question as it arose in the *spirit* of his constituents. Instances are not wanting of the Catholic Party in Belgium putting forward professed "Independents" in their list—I can obtain chapter and verse if Mr. Sharp insists. Do we see anything like that in this country? This is an indication, even under the comparatively inflexible Belgian system, of that elasticity in party organisation which might be hoped to replace most beneficially the water-tight English parties of to-day.

I welcome the opportunity of admitting that the tendency which Mr. Sharp fears would exist as proof that I am not engaged on the silly task of trying to predict perfect results from imperfect humanity. But I see no likelihood that its probable effects can in any fair sense be termed "grave" compared with the other evils which it is contended proportional representation would go so far to eliminate. For the rest, Mr. Sharp has misconceived the whole position. Let me briefly review it. You, sir, have drawn attention to very serious defects in the working of our so-called representative institutions. You have pointed out that the great need is a really representative House in the sense that Burke understood the word, consisting not of Delegates carrying out instructions, but of representative Englishmen expected to act for England as a whole. My thesis is that, while the evident failure to attain this is doubtless fundamentally due to a mistaken political philosophy, the defects of the existing electoral machinery seriously aggravate the trouble, and that there is now little hope of better things until it is radically changed. Further, that in proportional

representation (an appalling title than which the English language seems to have nothing better to offer, and which I will in future refer to as "P. R.") we have by far the most hopeful method of attaining that end (together with other gains of no small importance). It is a large subject, and in my first letter I could do no more than indicate the grounds for that opinion. Mr. Sharp taxed me with holding "manifestly false hopes," and brought forward two objections, the second being that dealt with at the beginning of this letter, the first being that it would increase rather than decrease the power of party managers, instancing Belgian experience of the list system of P. R. as a case in point. In reply I pointed out that the Belgian system differs materially from the transferable vote method advocated in this country, deliberately playing, as it does, into the hands of the party organisers. (Even then, as explained above, it is far more flexible than the existing English system.) Mr. Sharp now admonishes me a little acidly that he is tolerably familiar with these facts, which presumably, therefore, he thought it bad tactics to mention. I cheerfully accept this information. (But, oh! Mr. Sharp, was it quite cricket?) I further went on to point out that the transferable vote in multimember constituencies undoubtedly would afford the option of selection, adding, "Can he (Mr. Sharp) suggest a better method? If not, it is to be remembered that nothing is easier than abstract criticism, and that the practical comparison is between the new proposal and the existing system. Does he really consider it to be choosing a representative, even if he be on the winning side, to make Hobson's choice between two men, each selected by the party machine on the understanding that they will obey the party whip?" Mr. Sharp's reply to these, as I conceive, somewhat pertinent questions, is that I have ignored (!) his point, which he proceeds, as he puts it, to restate. In doing so he remarks:—

"It is no use Mr. Topley urging that under his system the elector need only vote for one or two men on the list, and can ignore the rest if he does not know them. For it is not the first choice, but the later choices that will decide the fate of the election and the ultimate complexion of the House of Commons. In, say, a seven-member constituency it will be the third, fourth and even fifth choices that will matter—a fact which the majority of the electors will never appreciate, but which the party managers will know how to use."

How third and later choices are going to affect matters if they are not there Mr. Sharp does not explain, but I think I see what he means. Personally I should do what I liked with as many choices as I liked, and the party managers could go to Brighton. Party men could follow party blindly, as all are obliged to do at present, blind or otherwise. Also Mr. Sharp is out in his facts. In the last Tasmanian elections the proportions of the various choices which became effective in six-member constituencies were as follows: First, 77 per cent.; second, 15 per cent.; third, 5 per cent.; fourth, 2 per cent.; fifth, 0.7 per cent.; sixth, 0.33 per cent.; remainder 0.08 per cent. The Tasmanian system, by the way, if Mr. Sharp will permit me to say so, is not exactly "Mr. Topley's system," as the method of dealing with surplus votes differs slightly from the method advocated in this country. But the difference is immaterial to the present purpose. I must, with your indulgence, sir, leave Mr. Sharp's treatment of my list of "advantages" to be dealt with next week, tempting though some of his answers are, for it is in his final paragraph that he unmasks the full extent of his misconception of the position. He writes: "Finally, let me quote a sentence which occurs earlier in Mr. Topley's letter: 'The parties are,' he writes, 'at any rate in fair proportion to their supporters.' Here we have the assumption on which the whole case for Proportional Representation rests, namely, the assumption that it is desirable that the proportions of the different parties in the House of Commons should correspond with arithmetical accuracy to the proportions of those parties amongst the electors. My opinion is that such a correspondence is not only undesirable, but would, if invariably obtained, destroy the whole basis of representative government. If Mr. Topley were to consider this fundamental assumption of his he might come to agree with me or he might not, but, to judge from his letter, I doubt whether he has yet even realised that it is an assumption or that there are any other theories of representative government besides the crude *a priori* propositions and the superficial logic of John Stuart Mill."

Putting aside the question as to whether it is quite cricket thus to isolate a sentence thrown in as a kind of balance to the disadvantages of the Belgian system, Mr. Sharp's own assumption as to "the assumption on which the whole case for proportional representation rests" will not do at all; nothing like it. It is a conclusion that a certain system, described in my last letter, would, for various reasons, be a great improvement upon the existing electoral methods; that system does, in fact, so work as to give all

important trends of opinion representation in proportion to their strength, but it is not the main gain aimed at. What said the Royal Commission of 1910? This method is entirely different from the two so far described (the Belgian and French). For while these subordinate the candidate to the party, and have for their primary object the return by each party of the proportion of members to which it is entitled, the transferable vote owes its peculiar merits and defects to the fact that, subordinating as it does the party to the persons, it is not in its origin a system of proportional representation at all." Mr. Sharp's doubt is therefore quite justified. I do not know how to realise an assumption which does not exist. But I am still constrained to submit as a sound conclusion that until parties are abolished the proportional result is *per se* desirable, though of subordinate importance. Suppose we regard it as a feature which will attract the support of the arithmetical individualist, while providing the machinery necessary for the effective working of what Mr. J. M. Kennedy calls the true representative philosophy—a philosophy which, if universally held, would merely render the proportional idea not wrong but superfluous. Has not that prospect a certain attractiveness?

Mr. Kennedy mentions that when Mill brought forward his motion in favour of P.R. in 1867 the Marquis of Salisbury, after entirely dissociating himself from Mill's general position, went on to support the motion, "for entirely different reasons." I do not know just what those reasons were, but it is sufficient for the moment to draw Mr. Sharp's attention to the fact that they exist and were advanced by such a man.

There are curious individuals to be found who seem to assume that no advocate of P.R. has read any of the men who have seen from the vantage ground of Mill's shoulders, and that they have only to pronounce the mystic word "psychology" to see them wilt away.

In the meantime, returning to our mutttons, these divergent trends of thought and corresponding associated bodies exist, and what is going to be done about them? Mr. Sharp will have nothing to do with proportion, the accursed thing! May one ask him, after the modern quantitative method, how much disproportion he desires? More, or less, or all over the shop as at present? He does not apparently want the point ignored altogether, since he speaks of the "strong tendency of the electors to stick to their parties," and suggests that the general inclination in single-member constituencies to exaggerate a swing over of votes is to the good as neutralising that tendency to some extent. (The inclination, by the way, is not invariable; in two general elections in recent years the majority in the House has been returned by a minority of votes. One wonders whether Mr. Sharp's love for disproportion is sufficiently extensive to include these cases.) "A strong tendency"! What in practice would Mr. Sharp do himself when allowed two alternatives only? What use is the "personal factor" to him even if he dines with both candidates daily for weeks before the election, if he dislikes the character of the man whose party he prefers, and vice versa?

A word on the only remaining alternative on the carpet, the second ballot or its equivalent, the alternative vote. I cull the following, referring to the working of the second ballot in Germany, from the "Daily Mail" of the 15th inst., a paper of whose news service you, sir, have recently spoken with respect: "The Government's object is to persuade the Liberal and Radical voters in 36 second ballots where the balance of the power rests with them to withhold support from Socialist candidates. The appeal will fall on deaf ears if the utterances of the Liberal and Radical organs are any criterion. These scornfully reject the Government's overtures and openly advise their adherents to vote Socialist rather than assist in perpetuating the Conservative-Clerical majority." What kind of representative German, in any real sense of the word, is likely to be evolved by that process?

The democratic franchise is here to stay. If we are to try to persuade people to vote for better men than themselves and to treat their representatives accordingly, under which of the three systems is such a spirit most likely to develop? I have left a fair sprinkling of question marks. I can make no complaint if Mr. Sharp answers this one only—and substantiates his answer. I very much hope, however, that he will also expound the amount of disproportion he advocates.

J. W. M. TOPLEY.

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"EAST ON WEST."

Sir,—I was extremely glad to see Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall's letter in your last issue, and should like to thank him for it.

There is nothing so likely to hinder a right understanding and real respect between East and West as the sloppy familiarity which passes, with sentimentalists, for sympathy and understanding. How far it is from any shadow of understanding it would amaze these kind and well-meaning

people to know. If the European woman who adopts, and the European man who encourages her to adopt, European intimacy with Easterns could for one moment read the mind of the Oriental gentleman he or she seeks to propitiate by familiar relations, they would at once cease their misguided efforts to promote that "sympathy" which their every action serves to alienate.

While reading Mr. Pickthall's instructive letter, a young lady sitting near me (in a resort where sentimental habits of mind are sedulously cultivated) was making my flesh creep by discussing "The Miracle" with an Oriental gentleman! I have no manner of doubt that her appreciation of the piece left him in the happy frame of mind as regards the value set by European women on virtue, so well portrayed by the correspondent to the Egyptian paper quoted by Mr. Pickthall.

It is the thick-skinned stupidity of it that shocks me, and the bad breeding. One does not smoke in the drawing-room of a woman who thinks smoking fast; one does not make scriptural jokes in company that considers such jokes objectionable; and one does not, unless grossly ill-bred and *gauche*, expose oneself to misconstruction where such misconstruction may lead to serious results. And the question of a harmonious *entente*, each on our own lines, between us and the Eastern peoples is a deeply serious one. For the sake, then, of good-breeding and respect for prejudices we do and prejudices we do not share, and for the sake of European women whose lives and work may take them to Eastern lands, I would join with Mr. Pickthall in imploring these racial enthusiasts to pursue their well-meant cult of "sympathy and understanding" with more restraint and discretion. In this I shall have the support of all well-bred and understanding Oriental men and women; it is only those whose influence and opinion among their own people are nil who will differ. C. NINA BOYLE.

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THE ART OF THE NOVEL.

Sir,—I have been interested in the recent flurry between "Your Novel Reviewer" and "A Publisher's Reader." I think I agree with the "Reviewer," but I do not find his letter in last number of THE NEW AGE sufficiently explicit: I think there may be a number of readers in like case with me. I should perhaps do better to stick to my own corner, but prose does interest me, though I know little or nothing about it.

"With the possible exception of Mr. Hardy," who seems rather of an older order than part of "contemporary letters," I read only two living novelists with anything like respect or attention, to wit, Anatole France, who is very uneven, and Henry James, who is interesting when he has the tact to choose an interesting subject. They are neither of them "English." France is perhaps better designated as "*causeur*." But "La Rotisserie de la Reine Pedanque" is certainly written from "the masculine point of view." James is, of course, quite as good, or better in short forms than in the novel. As for the "prevailing and tufted" name of Meredith, there is certainly nothing in his work that could not have been written by a female and a spinster. I drag him into the matter because his school and progeny we have with us in excess.

I am not here with a thesis, I am not a "novel-reader." I am an outsider, interested in all the arts, trying to ask questions about "the art of the novel," or at least trying to provoke such further discussion as will clarify the criticism of that art.

The "circulationist" howls about the borders of my Arcadia, and I want, if possible, some bacteriological explanation of him.

In a novel which appeared a couple of years ago I saw what seemed a gleam of hope, at least something explicable as art to me an artist. I speak of "A Call," where the author seemed to be aiming at something like definite "form," at a form that is as precise in comparison to prose as the sonnet is to verse. EZRA POUND.

* * *

PICARTERBIN.

Sir,—Perhaps the easiest way of explaining what I meant by "emotion" is to say that I need it as the opposite of "intellect" and "logic." Mr. Carter will apparently have none of it, and recurs always to the logical view. It seems to me that "logical art" is rather a contradiction in terms, but if Mr. Carter does not like this word any better than the others which I have tried, I hope he will suggest one himself, using it *if possible* in its dictionary meaning. The second paragraph which he quotes seemed to me almost a platitude, and certainly his remarks do not appear to have upset it. I feel that Mr. Carter does not quite "spot" the real cause of my displeasure, though I have tried to suggest it nicely. Perhaps a paraphrase will help. Suppose that an Englishman—we will admit for the sake of argument that he is earnest, wise, with many great and valuable ideas—were to undertake a series of lectures in

London in Chocktaw. Personally I think he would have been wise to have considered the sad incident in the "Snark" and remembered that "English is what" the majority of his potential audiences would "speak." If, however, he feels that he can express himself to himself—and perhaps also to a favoured few—better in Chocktaw than in English, I have nothing to say against the plan. But if the journalists step in—as they sometimes do—and suggest to the reading public that Chocktaw is "all the go," and that it is a sign of a second-class intellect not to understand Chocktaw, I think they are doing a wrong. No doubt the lectures will be crowded, and there will be much applause; but certainly the majority of the audience will be dependent on the spoof journalists for their knowledge of what they have listened to, and also pretty certainly this will bear but a very vague resemblance to the great utterances of the speaker.

So much for Picasso and Herbin. The picture by Segonzac in the last issue seems to me of quite a different order. It has a proportionalism which expresses itself, and there is no question whether it should be called static or dynamic. The picture attracts me, but at the same time repels me too. The attraction is no doubt due to the method—that it is really dynamic and living—in fact, the artist has succeeded. The repulsion is probably to a great extent only personal, and though quite clear, is less easy to put into words. It is due not to the method, but to the subject-matter and texture. To me they both belong—not to the world—but to a dream country which may be called Queerland. Though the action is living action the flesh is corpse-flesh, and even the object which occupies the position of keystone in the composition is not without significance. M. B. OXON.

* * *

Sir,—Controversy makes us acquainted with strange bed-fellows. I never thought I should live to be comfortably tucked up with Mr. Wake Cook (like the oleograph of the black and the white baby you see in frame-makers' windows).

I agree with Mr. Cook about lithography. Transfer-lithographers can only by courtesy be called lithographers at all. The grain of the stone acts *as a rasp*, taking off the crayon in a manner that no transfer-paper can do. The microscopic cones on the surface of the grained stone are of varying heights, and their entire depth (to say nothing of their hardness) greater than the whole depth of the thin layer of composition of which transfer-paper is made. Hence the stone has a larger range of tones than can be got out of transfer-paper.

Then the white line is a great resource of the true lithographer—(Daumier, Shannon). The white line is got by scraping, and negative stipple with the needle, or the scraper, and can only be got to any reliable extent on the stone.

"Grained paper"—I quote from "The Grammar of Lithography," by W. D. Richmond (E. Menken, 50, Great Russell Street), the best book that exists on the subject—"grained paper is eminently suited to the purpose of the amateur by reason of its extreme portability as compared with stone, and not requiring the drawing reversed as regards right and left."

My friend Mr. Huntly Carter will always remain one of my purest and most inexhaustible joys. I am glad he throws over Matisse, and admits the commercial element in the boom. I confess I should like to make the acquaintance of the Paris that considers Picasso the greatest painter while Forain, Vuillard, Bonnard, Valotton, Signac, Marquet are in their prime, and Degas, Monet and Renoir still working. "Boujou! T'es ma belle gâtée. Cause toujours!" as we say in Dieppe. W. SICKERT.

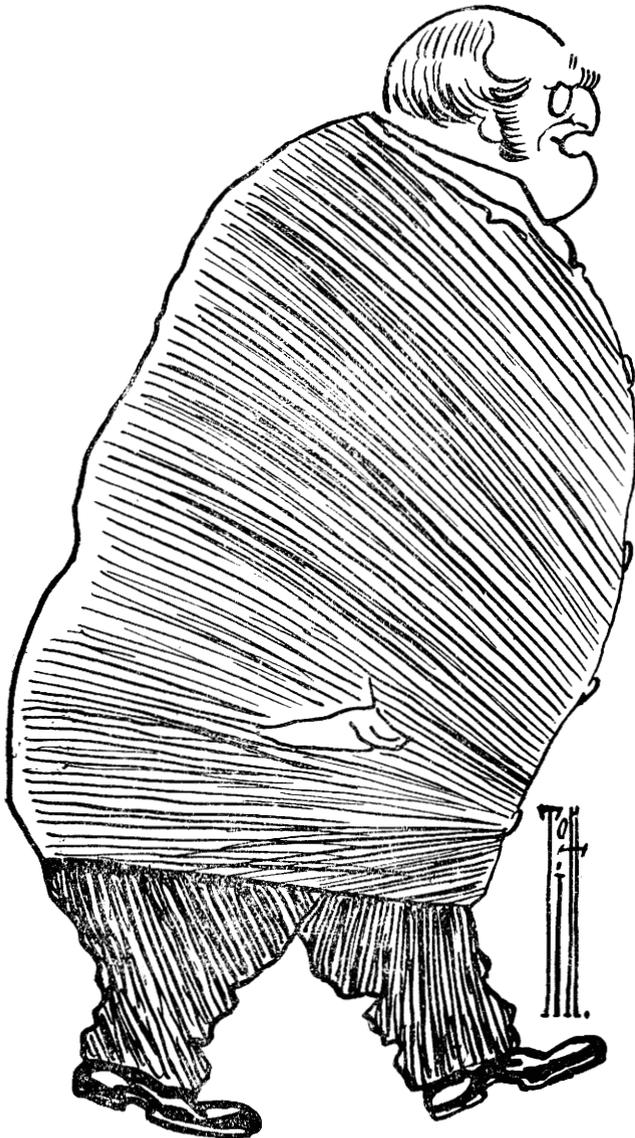
* * *

Sir,—Allow me to thank Mr. Wake Cook for his kindly appreciation of my effort. I thoroughly agree with him. There is a great deal to be said in favour of ears: doubtless they signify quickness of apprehension—"gleg at the up-tak."

Does not Whistler say somewhere that the first critic was Balaam's ass? And is not their first wiseman Lao-tsz affectionately known among the Chinese to this day by the name of Old Ears?

I know that I am only an underman, but I have enjoyed this Herbin-Picasso stunt immensely, and I am very grateful to Mr. Huntly Carter for introducing it to the readers of THE NEW AGE. I repeat, I am only an underman, I am less, I am a mole, and no man; but I know that my big brother the eagle, and my little sister the fly, see far more of this universe than I do, and look upon life from a very different angle; therefore, for all I know these drawings of MM. Herbin and Picasso may be portraits of the Fourth Dimension, seen through the different idiosyncrasies of the two artists, and projected on a plane surface by means of light and shade. Have I at last obtained a glimmer of the true intent and meaning?

HAROLD B. HARRISON.



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