

# THE NEW AGE

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, AND ART.

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE results of the General Election which were announced on Saturday are surprising only in the degree of their fulfilment of the general forecast. Most of them were expected, but few of them were expected to be of their actual overwhelming character. The Irish Nationalist Party and the Liberal Imperialist Party of Mr. Asquith have both practically disappeared; the Labour Party has increased its Parliamentary strength, and is now the largest single party in Opposition; and for the rest Mr. Lloyd George's personal and party popularity has ensured him the virtual period of political dictatorship for which he has always craved. There is a Government almost without an Opposition; a popular Government in the sense that the mass of the electorate think well of it and is disposed to give it the longest of long ropes; and a Government of which no man can in the sequel complain that it had either no mandate or insufficient power for anything it may choose to do. It is a Government, in short, that coincides well with the situation we have been analysing in recent issues. For if it be the case that capitalism and the wage-system are upon their last trial, it is fitting, for the purpose of historic education if for nothing else, that the circumstances of the experiment should be laboratory circumstances. Nothing should be omitted that a nation can provide for ensuring that the final effort of capitalism (and we believe that it will be final) should be made under conditions of maximum favour, so that, when discredited, no man may doubt that its fate is due to its inherent defects and to no mere chance or external opposition. Mr. Lloyd George has, in fact, the opportunity, not of a man's lifetime only, but of a nation's lifetime. We are about to see what capitalism, with everything in its favour, can accomplish for the good of the world of which it declares itself to be the appointed saviour. We are to see the policy of super-production inaugurated and executed under practically ideal con-

ditions, and to watch for the promised consequences in vast ameliorations of the wage-system and in the establishment of peace, justice, and plenty. This is the drama that is now staged to begin; and intelligent observers will watch it with all the attention it deserves.

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Other people may draw other morals from the results of the Election, but we cannot refrain from commenting upon the complete defeat of the "pacifist" Labour candidates. As far as we can see, not a single anti-war Labour candidate has been elected. But not only have the pacifist Labour candidates brought defeat upon themselves, but there is not the smallest doubt that they have been the cause of the defeat of others. At least a million votes which would otherwise have been cast for the Labour Party have been cast against it in consequence of the action of men like Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. Snowden. Now these gentlemen may say, if they please, that it is thanks to their virtues, their adhesion to principle, and their political courage, that the results are what they are; but the fact remains that under a popular system of government it is the popular candidates who will be elected. Unless we are to quarrel, therefore, with the whole basis of popular government, it is impossible for Mr. MacDonald and the rest to deny that they have been defeated upon their chosen ground. Moreover, it will not do to dismiss the electorate as ignorant or as filled with ill-will towards the Labour Party in particular; for whatever may be the ignorance of the mass of the voters, it is the notorious fact that it is not only the stupid who have been alienated by the war-conduct of the Labour pacifists, but the intelligent. Hundreds of as good Socialists as Mr. MacDonald have voted in this election *against* the Labour Party with their eyes wide open and with as good knowledge as Mr. MacDonald of all the issues involved. Even if, therefore, we might suppose that the forces of stupidity have been responsible for the overwhelming defeat of the pacifist candidates, the presence of large numbers of men of intelligence in the triumphant majority is a fact which the pacifists should take into account, for it condemns them, not merely on the ground of numbers, but on the ground of reason. But what have we left unsaid during the course of the war that we can now

say to convince the Labour pacifists that they have had hold throughout of the wrong end of the stick? And if upon a question of such magnitude as the war they have been proved to be lamentably wrong, we are the last to deplore the refusal of the electorate to trust their judgment in minor affairs. The defeat of the Labour pacifists, among whom, by the way, THE NEW AGE has never been able to count even in pre-war days a single supporter, is no less deserved than complete.

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Upon another phenomenon of the election also, it may be useful to make a note. We refer to the undoubted influence and character of the women's vote. It is calculated roughly that fifty per cent only of the registered electorate went to the poll; and of this fifty per cent. we may fairly estimate that three out of five were women. This means, in effect, that the results of the election are due, in the vast majority of cases to the women, whose vote has, under the circumstances, been decisive. Now what is to be concluded from this? In the first place, we may conclude that, on the whole, the women's vote is conservative, or, if you like, reactionary. Certainly, it is significant that, with few exceptions, the women have voted in accordance with the opinions of the cheapest halfpenny Press. But this allows us to conclude, in the second place, that with the appearance of the women's vote as a considerable factor in the elections, much of the work of democratic political education is to be done all over again. Political education, we may say, consists of two parts, of which the first and the infinitely more easy is the discovery of the most popular candidate or policy. The second consists in discriminating between two more or less popular policies the more lasting, the best founded. It appears, in the case of the women's vote, that their vote has been cast, on the whole, for the immediately and grossly popular; there has had to be no doubt about the popularity of the women's candidate; but once assuredly popular, and he was overwhelmed with support. Reflection or discrimination was plainly seldom exercised; and thus it may be contended that the women's vote for years to come will be hostile to independence, to young causes, to anything but the popularly established fact. We always said that this would be the case, and that, relatively to the Labour Party in particular, the enfranchisement of women would prove to be a reactionary step. It was not necessary on that account, we admit, that the Labour Party should have opposed women's suffrage; but was it necessary, either, that the Labour Party should have been so enthusiastic about it? The Conservative and Capitalist Parties might have been trusted to bring in the women's vote when they could no longer hold their own against the votes of working men. It was, therefore, all the more gratuitous in the Labour Party to bring it in for them. Here, at any rate, are the first electoral results of the policy. Far from expressing gratitude to the only party that has consistently and actively sought their enfranchisement, the women generally have been the means of defeating the Labour and Liberal candidates everywhere. We must in future reckon with them politically as a reactionary or conservative power.

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The public declarations of President Wilson during his visit to Europe and culminating, perhaps, in his speech at the Guildhall, after his conversations with the British Government, suffice not only to define his policy, but to reveal some recent modifications of his earlier formulæ. The League of Nations in its original endorsement by President Wilson accepted as axiomatic the inclusion at once of our late enemies and of Germany in particular; and it excluded, as a necessary consequence, the creation of a League consisting, if only in the first instance, of the Allies alone. With his

speech at the Guildhall on Saturday, however, we may conclude that this more ideal attitude of President Wilson has given place to the more practical policy of a permanent alliance among the existing Allies, who are to constitute a "nucleus" of a Universal League in the form of a "single, overwhelming group of nations," with power enough, it is implied, to ensure by their common exertions, the peace of the world. Such a limited organ of world-control was, as we have often said, likely to be dictated by the circumstances in which the war has left us; for nothing is more plain than that for years to come neither Russia nor any of the defeated Powers of Europe will be in the position of equal partners of the stable Powers of world. Together with the young nations whose birth we are now witnessing, Russia and the rest must be regarded as in tutelage to the nations whose survival in the war has demonstrated their relative superiority. The proposed League of Nations, we may now take it, is therefore to consist in the first instance of the present Allies, with England and America at their head; and only afterwards to include, as and when they are qualified for membership, the "enemy" and other nations. In a word, the existing Allies are prepared to assume responsibility for the peace and, to a limited extent, the government, of the world. It is, however, to a speech by Lord Northcliffe that we must turn for an understanding of the more intimate bonds and powers of the new Alliance. President Wilson is a statesman of the Gladstonian tradition, apparently pre-occupied with political considerations, and careful not to let his right political hand know what his left economic hand is doing. Lord Northcliffe, on the contrary, is no politician, but a commercial economist, and his words on the subject are illuminating and practical. "The strong basic fact," he says, "is that America and England between them control almost every piece of raw material in the world, and a League of Nations without facts like that behind it would be a pretty thing to read about, but would not stop a scrapping match between Chile and Peru." There we have the economic "sanction" of the authority of the nucleus of the League of Nations in plain statement. Between them the two major Powers of the new Alliance control the raw materials of the world; and they are thus in a position to exercise that preponderant economic power which Lord Northcliffe rightly suggests is decisive in political affairs. It is by economic power that the new Alliance will rule the world.

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We have already remarked on the fatality which has led the Labour movement to bring about the enfranchisement of women to its own undoing; but in comparison with Labour's agitation for a League of Nations the former error was a trifle. Without, again, opposing in principle the new demand—for the League of Nations is in its way as liberal and progressive a principle as the Enfranchisement of Women—we can still observe that, while the wage-system continues, the operation of the League of Nations in the form it is bound to assume is likely to be even more hostile to Labour than the reactionary vote of women. Lord Northcliffe, with his habitual candour, has made clear what we may expect of a League sanctioned by its control of economic power. It is not only the control in each of the nations composing the Alliance of the servile proletariat, but the control by the League of the policy of the whole nations outside of it. And in so far as the dominant members of the League are capitalist, it is obvious that the control exercised by it will be in the interests of capitalism everywhere. Socialist parties within any given State, and, still more, Socialist nations, will receive short shrift from the new capitalist International, armed, as it is, with supreme economic power. At a word of

serious revolt, whether in a class or in a nation, down will descend the economic weapon of the League, and the punishment of starvation will be inflicted on everything that ventures to defy the new world-authority. That neither President Wilson nor his indiscriminating Liberal and Labour supporters in this country are fully aware of the evil potentialities of the new League we are willing to admit. Nevertheless, the seed of evil is contained in it; and international finance, watering the seed in the dark, may expect to reap the harvest. The League will, indeed, eventually establish peace on earth; and for those who place peace above justice—these being our pacifists—no price is too high for such a blessing. The price, however, is the perpetuation of capitalism and the wage-system all over the world.

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As this prospect dawns upon the eyes of Socialists, it may be expected to provoke reaction into Bolshevism, and not only in Russia, but in countries that never thought to have to contemplate Bolshevism as a practical factor in their affairs. Clear-sighted into the evils of international capitalism, but short-sighted in the matter of preventatives and remedies, the "revolutionaries" everywhere will almost certainly begin to agitate for a Bolshevik revolution in their own country and to defend such a revolution when it occurs elsewhere. It is interesting, indeed, to observe that the latter phase of reaction has already begun, and chiefly in the very circles which have advocated a League of Nations most strenuously. The Liberal and Labour pacifists, after having, in spite of our warnings, brought about, or assisted in bringing about, a capitalist International League, are now particularly loud in their appeals to the League to spare, O spare, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. And this attitude has even been assumed by the "New Statesman," which upon other occasions is anything but a pacifist journal. The bad logic of the situation is as obvious as the inconsiderateness of the support of Bolshevism; for, in the first place, for what other purpose than to preserve the capitalist system from destruction was the idea of the League of Nations accepted by international finance? And, in the second place, it by no means follows, as revolutionaries cheerfully suppose, that because a revolt is directed against capitalism it is an essentially anti-capitalist revolt, or would establish in its success a non-capitalist system. There are, indeed, revolts backwards as well as forwards—revolts calculated to restore the earlier phases of capitalism as well as revolts calculated to supersede capitalism. Bolshevism, as we understand it, is a revolt of the reactionary order; and everything we read of the present Russian Revolutionary Government confirms us in this diagnosis. Lenin and Trotsky, for all we know, may be Socialists of almost divine omniscience; they are certainly in revolt, like ourselves, against capitalism; but these allowances do not alter our conclusion that on their actions Lenin and Trotsky, and their followers everywhere, are attempting to reverse capitalism in the belief that they are really superseding it. Apart from other considerations, let us take the acid-test of the organisation of industry. Every industrial organisation calculated to supersede Capitalism must, we assert, include the managerial functions and personnel, that is to say, the "bourgeoisie" or "salaried" class as well as the manual proletariat. The emphasis we lay upon this necessity differentiates our propaganda of National Guilds from every other conception of Socialism. But it is obvious that under the flag of the dictatorship of the manual proletariat, not only is our assertion of the indispensability of the salaried denied, but in practice the Bolshevik régime has implied the forcible elimination of the salaried altogether. In a word, Bolshevism tends to reduce industry to its primitive condition of simple manual toil. The fact, as

we say, that incidentally it is a revolt against Capitalism is of secondary importance. The more important fact is that it is a revolt against civilisation. In the face of this dilemma, what is the duty of intelligent Socialists? Whatever sympathy we may have, as common sufferers with the Bolshevists, it is plainly not our duty to demand that they shall have a free hand to establish what we foreknow to be only a condition precedent of a subsequent capitalism. We do not want a revolution that merely puts back the hands of the clock. Our duty, on the other hand, is to direct the anti-capitalist revolt into progressive channels, and to ensure by this means that when Capitalism is at last overthrown it shall never rise again. Russian Bolshevism, we fear, even in spite of the peculiarities of the Russian situation, is doomed to only a brief success. With or without the intervention of the Allies, which, in any case, can only force the pace of events, Russian Bolshevism is unstable. Its theory is wrong, and its practice will only make it worse.

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On the testimony of the special Stockholm Correspondent of the "Times," who is not unknown to our readers, and who has lately paid a visit to Germany, the condition of things in Germany is one of "universal deprivation and exhaustion." The period of Christmas has seen peace on earth, but no more of goodwill to man than when the message of hope was first uttered. Starvation, however, as President Wilson has said, is an evil counsellor; and, in the circumstances of the distress of Germany and the popular Allied indifference to it, we should not wonder if the extremists among the German political parties succeed for a while in establishing their rule. The arguments in favour of it are, from a short-sighted point of view, exceedingly plausible—as what half-truths are not. Herr Liebknecht can point to the collapse of the old régime as an unparalleled opportunity for a radical Socialist reconstruction; and he can justify his case by an appeal to the prospects of a Germany rendered a tributary to the Allies. With nothing vis à vis of the Allies to gain—for the Allies promise no more to an orderly democratic Germany than to a Prussian, or even to a Bolshevik Germany; and with nothing apparently to lose, save the responsibility for an indemnity—for the Allies cannot get blood out of a post or an indemnity out of a Bolshevik Germany—the circumstances of a thorough revolution may well appear to Herr Liebknecht and his friends to be favourable in the extreme. At a single stroke, they can relieve themselves both of their capitalists at home and of the demands of the capitalist Allies abroad. We may be sure that this is the real argument employed among the Spartacus group led by Herr Liebknecht; and we may be equally certain that it must be met and mastered before there can be peace in Germany. Whether, however, there is sense enough in Germany to crush it at home; or sense enough among the Allies to crush it by instantly feeding Germany and inviting her into the League of capitalist Nations, we doubt. Our new electorate will probably not hear of the latter; and, besides, the complete elimination of Germany from among the competing Powers of the world is altogether too entrancing a prospect to our super-producers to be easily given up.

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With this we may resume the consideration of our own affairs, and particularly of the policy of super-production which the New Unionist Government, instrumented with the League of Nations, is certain to pursue. Already, it appears, our criticism of this policy has attracted some attention—for the super-producers are strangely nervous, as if they suspected their intellectual weaknesses; and in the "Sunday

Times" of a week ago Sir H. E. Morgan, of the Federation of British Industries, set himself to reply to some of our points. His case is the familiar plea that as there can be no distribution without production, an increased production is necessary to an improved distribution; in short, that higher wages, etc., depend upon increased production. Now nobody on reflection is going to declare in reply that production is unnecessary to distribution; or that, other things being equal, an increased production is not an essential condition of an increased distribution; or, again, that in the abstract an increased production is undesirable. Such a reply may be made by Bolsheviks anxious to return to the conditions of primitive agriculture; but it cannot be made by us. We desire to get through capitalism and not to revert to its embryonic forms. What, however, we can reply to Sir H. E. Morgan and his school is, in the first place, that until they tell us what they propose to produce, we cannot be sure that the consequent distribution will really be "better"; and, in the second place, that there is no necessary connection between a better distribution, in our sense of the word, and their increased production. We see, in fact, much of what the increased production is likely to consist in. Turning over the Press during the last few weeks, we observe that plutocratic "sports" are being everywhere resumed with increased intensity. Aviation, motoring, yachting, golfing, hunting, shooting, travelling and a score more pastimes are likely to absorb an enormous amount of labour and to be responsible for an enormous amount of "production." Would the super-producers contend that the increased production of the means of such sports necessarily makes for a better distribution in any popular sense? On the contrary, by so much as capital is employed in luxuries of this kind, the tendency is to raise the prices and to diminish the production of the necessities upon which the poor must live. It will be seen that we have reason for inquiring of the super-producers what it is they mean to produce. Secondly, it is not even the case that if the production were of necessities, the distribution would inevitably be "better" for the mass of the population. The mass of the population, we cannot too often repeat, depends for its living upon the sale of its labour-power, the price of which is fixed, not by the abundance or scarcity of other commodities, but by the abundance or scarcity of the commodity of labour-power itself. Conditions have not been unknown in which granaries were bursting while Labour was starving. If there were the relation of cause and effect between production and distribution, this could never be the case.

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It appears, however, that a still more striking example is before our eyes. If super-production is the essential condition of a more generally "better" distribution, then we should expect that in a period of reduced production, distribution in general would suffer a proportionate reduction, or, at best, show signs of "badness." Notoriously, however, not only has the period of the war been a period of reduced production, but it has been a period of better distribution than has ever been known in our history. The annual report on "Our Legal Poor" which the "Times" published last week shows "a remarkable decrease" in pauperism for the fourth year of war in succession. There have never been fewer paupers in our midst than there were after fifty months of reduced production; and there is no doubt, as the "Times" says, that "the war conditions are responsible for the present flourishing conditions of the poorer classes." But which of the war conditions has conducted to this effect? It is not super-production, the only possible begetter, we are told, of a flourishing condition of the poorer classes, for there has been under-production. Is it, then, an access of reformatory zeal among the capitalist classes?

Not that either. But is it due to a Socialist Government ordering all things in the interests of the wage-earning classes? Again, no. The explanation is far simpler, and has nothing to do with super-production, reform, or Socialism. The fact is that during the war the demand for the commodity of Labour has been in excess of the supply, with the consequence to this commodity as of others submitted to the same law, that the price of Labour in the market has risen. Here we see at work the real "iron law of wages," independently of all the conditions supposed to regulate wages, and notably in defiance of the super-producers' axiom that wages can only rise in a period of super-production. The same law will be found to be at work when the era of super-production sets in. If, as is probable, the demand for Labour is less than the supply, wages will be low, whatever the amount of production. If, on the other hand, the demand is greater than the supply, wages will be high, whatever the amount of production also. We should like Sir H. E. Morgan's reply to this observation; but prudence will suggest to him the wisdom of ignoring it.

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The Report of the Archbishops' Committee on the subject of our "Industrial Problems" is an advance upon anything hitherto officially published by the Church of England. The reference of the Committee was "to consider and report upon the ways in which the Church may best commend the teaching of Christ to those who are seeking to solve the problems of industrial life"; and in his Introduction to the Report, Dr. Talbot confesses that hitherto the Church has shown "an undue subservience to the possessing, employing and governing classes." After reminding his readers with what reluctance the Church consented to the abolition of slavery, Dr. Talbot courageously observes that there are some features in our modern industrial system which bear a strong resemblance to the evils of slavery; and of these the Report affirms that the chief is the use of men as instruments of production. The Report is commendably explicit upon the doctrines of Christ in their application to the industrial system. Christian ethics, it is first affirmed, are "as binding on economic as on personal conduct." In other words, a man cannot escape Christian censure on the ground that his business is conducted on business principles. He owes it to his religious profession to square his business with his private life. Next we are told that "the pursuit of wealth [shall we say super-production?] as one of the main ends of man, and the organisation of society for the purpose is not so much non-Christian as anti-Christian." The super-producers, in other words, who would pull down their barns to build greater, are in peril of forfeiting their souls. Finally, we are assured that the Christian doctrine of the "sanctity of personality" makes the subordination of men to the wage-system definitely un-Christian and immoral. It might be supposed, after this, that the Report would conclude in favour of a moral crusade designed, like our own, to abolish the wage-system root and branch. There can be no compromise for a Christian upon a clear doctrine of Christ. The Report, however, while affirming the immorality of the wage-system, contents its signatories in the end with suggestions for its mere ameliorations—better wages, greater leisure, security of employment, and all the rest of it. In other words, having pointed out the moral ground, the Report allows the Church to continue its stand upon the old ground of "undue subservience to the possessing, employing and governing classes." It is clear that no great help will be forthcoming from the Church to "those who are seeking to solve the problems of industrial life" in the light of Christian doctrine. The Church may not be anti-Christian, but it is still non-Christian.

## Foreign Affairs.

### AN OPEN LETTER TO AN ITALIAN FRIEND.

MY DEAR M—,

I am much obliged by the parcel of books, pamphlets and leaflets which you have sent me, though I may say that such is the efficiency of the Italian Information Committee in London that I was already familiar with the contents of most of them. Your parcel, however, and still more your personal letter, have given me an opportunity of reviewing the situation as it extends between us, and have persuaded me to reply to your "case" in as frank a manner as our friendship will permit.

Permit me to say, to begin with, that you appear to me to be labouring under the delusion that we English journalists have not sufficiently appreciated the services rendered by Italy to our common cause against Prussia. You remark, in fact, that "nobody in England" understands either what Italy has done or against what difficulties she has done it; and you naturally go on to conjecture that it is on account of this alleged ignorance that we are disposed, as you say, to grudge Italy her share of the spoils. Believe me, however, that not only is this conclusion wrong—for reasons I propose to give you in a minute or two—but the assumption upon which it rests is altogether gratuitous. Speaking for myself, who am one of the humblest of the tribe of students of foreign affairs—a life's work to begin to understand in detail, as you know—I flatter myself that there is nothing essential either in your achievement or in the difficulties you have had to surmount with which I am not fairly well acquainted. And if I, what of the rest, setting aside, of course, the question of the value of their judgment? Let me briefly rehearse. With a population of some 34 millions Italy found herself on the day that war broke out with no fewer than 7 million of her people abroad, of whom the considerably largest proportion were men of military age. Nevertheless, by the end of the war she had mobilised over 5 million men, of whom in the course of the war a million and a quarter were lost owing to casualties of one degree or another. Italy's industrial situation at the outset of the war was equally disadvantageous relatively to that of the rest of the Allies, excepting, perhaps, Russia. In the first place, Italy has always, even in normal times, to import both coal and iron; and this in time of war was of enormously enhanced difficulty and cost. In the second place, Italy has always in recent years been compelled to import food stuffs, for, strange to say, though mainly an agricultural country, Italy still does not grow enough food for her own needs; and I need not remark that the importation of food has been another enhanced difficulty of the war. Finally, I will remind you that I am aware of the peculiar difficulties under which your armies were compelled to fight—in a mountainous country where as the crow flies bears little or no relation to the distance to be covered on foot. In all these circumstances, which, as I say, are fully realised by serious students in this country, the wonder in my mind is not that Italy has done no more, but that Italy has done so much. You are well within the truth in my judgment when you say that scientifically weighed the contribution of Italy to the war is at least the equal of the contribution of any of the Allies.

On the admitted strength of this contribution you and your friends then go on, first, to claim that Italy is entitled to "share in the common spoils of war" (you will allow me to quote the phrase); secondly, to claim that such and such territories and spheres of influence—duly particularised—should be transferred to Italy; and, finally, when some of us hesitate to accede to your demands off-hand, to denounce us as either ignorant of the merit of your services or disposed to grudge you the proportionate reward for them. One or other, you say, must surely be the truth; for if we

realised your services we should not hesitate to concede your claims; and since we do, in fact, hesitate, then it can only be because we grudge you your reward.

Several remarks, however, are to be made before I can permit you to ride off upon a grievance in which there is, from my point of view, no substance whatever. As between friends I invite you to consider them. I have shown you, I hope, that to the charge of ignorance we can reply confidently Not Guilty; for we are, indeed, almost as well aware as you are both of what Italy has done and of what it has cost Italy to do it. Remains, therefore, the charge that we grudge Italy her reward; and it is to that charge that I am now about to reply.

Let me say, in the first place, that however it may appear to you, the phrase contained in your letter (and not only in your letter unfortunately)—"sharing in the spoils of war"—is utterly out of key with the accustomed vocabulary of current discussion. Like the still more unfortunate phrase of one of your statesmen—"Italy's sacred egotism"—the phrase "sharing in the spoils" grates upon the ears, if not of our sense of reality, at any rate, of our hopes. You may regard this, if you like, as a piece of Anglo-American sentimentalism unworthy of statesmen; but you ought not, all the less on that account, to attempt to ignore or flout it; for it is a fact, and a powerful fact; and the more "realist" the politics, the more certainly will the fact be taken into account. I advise you, therefore, my dear M—, to forswear the phrase and, if possible, the idea as well. You prejudice your case in the eyes of the most considerable of the Allies by attributing to the peace settlement the motives of a band of robbers about to distribute the swag.

Then, in the second place. You have assumed, not only that the peace settlement must consist of the distribution of rewards for war services and in the proportion in which they have been rendered, but that each of the parties is entitled, without reference to the common good or even without reference to its own good as commonly conceived, to select its particular portion and to have it allotted to it as a matter of right. Such assumptions naturally arise from the axioms contained in the phrases you have employed; nevertheless, they can be and they are disputed. Let me ask you two questions. Would Italy be justified in persisting in a demand the effect of which would be to rob the Allies as a whole of the fruit of *their* victory? Again, would Italy be justified in attempting to enforce a demand which, in the common judgment of the Allies (not to say, of the world), would be detrimental, not only to the world's interests, but to *Italy's*? Is Italy, in short, entitled to commit both murder and suicide, because it is her wish and we are under an obligation to her?

You naturally deny, of course, that any of the demands contained in your letter and literature can bear one or other, or still less both, of these constructions. Without entering into the dangerous region of detail, however, I think I can hint to you the reasons I have for these conclusions. My hints can be put in the form of interrogations and suppositions, but you will be aware of their foundation in fact. Let me then ask you: Would it be to the advantage of the Allies that the Balkan block upon which we depend for our defence of nearer Asia should be divided again just when it shows signs of at last becoming single and indivisible? Can the Allies afford, even now, to forget the existence of the doctrine "Drang nach Oestern," and to weaken the opposing front? Then as to the interests of Italy herself—recalling Italy's peculiar and difficult economic problem—absence of coal and iron in sufficient quantities, etc.—would her acquisition of territories devoid of these desirables add to her strength? Would it not constitute an additional burden? And this is without considering the very *serious* question of the opposition Italy would be likely to encounter, say the Allies what

they may! Couple these facts together, and you may see that we *have* a reasonable ground for hesitating to accede to your claims, and not only in Allied or world interests, but in Italy's. I claim, indeed, to see Italy's need more clearly than you see it; and far from grudging Italy her reward, I tremble for her lest she obtain that for which you ask.

There are many other things to be said. For instance, I have not attempted to define what appears to me to be Italy's proper reward in view both of her services and her real economic needs. But perhaps I have said enough to suggest that my attitude to you, if apparently unfriendly, is not really so. We do not wish the world-war to be fought over again; nor do we wish to see Italy involved in a war with the defenders of the Eastern Gate.—Yours,  
S. VERDAD.

## The Influence of the War upon Labour.

### Being the Second Chapter on Transition.

#### IV.

#### THE MENACE OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

THE second danger confronting organised Labour is post-war unemployment—the tedious, exasperating, cumbrous return to civil life of millions of soldiers, a large proportion moved by new ideas, impatient of conventions, men who have cast out fear, no longer sheep easily sheared. As their unemployment insurances melt in the flux of time, we shall witness a fateful race between their methodical absorption into industry and the perils of acute discontent in men inured to death and destruction. In the previous section, we have seen that organised Labour must embrace the new army of dilutees; the old army of soldiers is a problem demanding equal statecraft. The easy optimism springing from war's artificial prosperity, now feeding on grandiose schemes of reconstruction, can hardly be sustained when faced with the cold facts of constant delays, and innumerable misfits in the process of demobilisation. If we grant the possibility of a spurt in production to restore the waste and losses of war, a reaction is inevitable, unless we pursue peace as we did war, by providing unlimited credit facilities, either as a nation or in industrial groups, with the consent and co-operation of Labour. That depends upon Labour's growing control of production; but the control tends to diminish precisely as Labour disregards the meaning of dilution and the danger of unabsorbed labour.

In normal conditions, unemployment is labour in reserve, partly seasonal, partly casual; the unemployment that now threatens us is entirely casual, consisting of men who for years have pursued the profession of arms and are now compelled to seek another trade. It, therefore, becomes a gigantic task of decasualisation. In the worst periods of unemployment during the past thirty years, we have rarely touched ten per cent., more often seven or eight per cent.; this roughly would imply an unemployed army of a million or a million and a quarter. Making allowance for soldiers who return to their previous occupations and even their previous jobs, it is prudent to expect, with the disbandment of the army, plus dilutees, nearer three than two million unemployed. Yet, so far as I have observed, statesmen and politicians of every school ignore this probable development with all its grave implications. One would at least expect the Labour Party to prepare for the worst. Like the fool of holy writ, its eyes are on the ends of the earth; its little barque floats fatuously down the rivers of Pharphar and Abana.

The question naturally arises whether there is any principle which we may apply to the solution of unemployment. Broadly stated there are two. Since all are agreed that unemployment is no crime, it follows

that the unemployed are entitled to maintenance. One school would throw the cost upon the community; the other upon the industry. The first recognises the validity of the wage-system and therefore assumes that if an employer has no market for the reserve labour commodity, he is under no obligation to maintain it. This granted, the logic of the situation throws the ultimate responsibility of maintaining the unemployed upon the community. To this school, unemployment is a visitation of God, a public calamity and a social responsibility. The second school denies the validity of the wage-system, contends that unemployment is an essential function in capitalist industry, and is therefore a capitalist liability. For, just as capitalists buy reserves of raw material, and since labour is to them a commodity in the same category as raw material, so ought they to maintain their labour reserves. The first school replies that, even if it admits the fundamental contention that the employers should maintain their own labour reserve, it is impracticable, because a large proportion of the unemployed is composed of casual labour and a further proportion is unemployable. The second school retorts that it is our urgent business to decasualise all casual labour by attaching it, definitely and formally, to an industry. As for the unemployable, that is *hereditas damnosa* from the capitalist system, a social burden, to be treated as a disease. The problem is further complicated by Part II of the Insurance Act, which, in the selected trades, practically divides responsibility between the employers, the trade unions and the State.

We cannot, however, adopt either of these principles without taking into consideration the *role* played by the trade unions in regard to unemployment. For a century or more the main function of the trade unions has been to maintain the labour reserves. This was recognised long before the unions began to bargain with the employers for higher wages. But as the unions, in earlier days, were manned by the more highly-paid or "skilled" workmen, the social result of unemployment was that, in trade depressions, one class fell back upon their trade-organisations for support, whilst the other was left to the tender mercies of the Poor Law. It is well within the recollection of the middle-aged of to-day that not many years ago *bona fide* unemployed were automatically disfranchised, becoming "paupers" through the ordinary working of the Poor Law. But whatever the position, to-day or yesterday, the trade unions have become legally recognised as the natural protectors of the unemployed. It is not only because they are organised for that purpose—a good reason in itself—but because unemployment in a dozen ways has a vital bearing upon wages and conditions. To remove the function of unemployed maintenance from the trade unions would be therefore to add to industrial embarrassments when the purpose should be to simplify them. In so far as the community supports unemployment through its own machinery, acting in a civic and not an industrial capacity, it runs counter to the scope and function of trade unionism, robs trade unionism of one of its most powerful appeals to its members, and sets in motion definitely anti-social forces. Curiously enough, it is this civic solution that more generally appeals to trade-unionists. That is one of the anomalies created when the political tail wags the industrial dog.

Those of us who reject the commodity valuation of labour, whose analysis of the wage-system has led them to the conclusion that wage-abolition can only be accomplished through Labour's monopoly of labour, are clear that unemployment is an economic process which can only yield to an economic solution. This economic solution is found not in civic action, but in the industrial processes, one of which is the operation of the labour reserve as a wage regulator or, on due occasion, as a market support. It logically follows (a) that the industry must maintain its own labour

reserve, and (b) that the maintenance must come through the trade unions. There is another inference equally important: if the unemployed must claim maintenance upon an industry, they must be definitely affiliated to an industry, by service over a period of time and by formal registration. I know of no other way to affect decasualisation. Whatever training the State may give either the unemployed or unemployable, it remains true that they are industrial Ishmaelites until they join the fellowship of a trade or occupation. Once in the fold, their claim to support, subject to good conduct, is in principle equal to all the others, be they employers, the salariat or their fellow-workers.

The demobilisation of the army is obviously a civic responsibility, because the soldier is a civil servant, set to a task that is national and not industrial. But the principle here stated clearly applies. So far as the State is the employer of the soldier, it is the duty of the State to maintain him until he is definitely transferred to industry. The soldier "belongs" to the army until he "belongs" to his industry.

When in 1912 and again in 1917\* I argued that the cost of unemployment should fall upon the industry and not upon the community, I was not only motivated by the historical fact that the trade unions had met out of wages the charges involved in unemployment, like a dog eating its own tail, but also by the Guild argument that every Guildsman must be entitled to maintenance in sickness, in old age, as well as in unemployment. These are obviously burdens to be properly borne by the future National Guilds, but burdens to be taken over from the developed industry and not from the State. It is the logic of the theory; it is the logic of the facts. Little did I dream in 1912 that war would bring the principle into operation within five years. In 1917, even as I was writing and unknown to me, the Cotton Control Board was crystallising in action what I had argued in theory. The "Rota" system of unemployment, in the textile trades, did organised Labour but know it, constitutes one of the most valuable precedents created by the war. I propose therefore briefly to outline the story for future guidance.

The shortage of raw cotton due to the loss of shipping, coupled with the industrial unsettlement caused by the war, compelled the leaders of the cotton industry, both masters and men, to face the problem of unemployment from a new standpoint. The Cotton Control Board had to ration the mills and to license the percentage of spindles to be worked week by week. This percentage varied according to war requirements or to the quality of the cotton spun. Thus spindles were licensed up to 80 per cent., 55½ hours per week, if engaged entirely on Egyptian, Sea Island, or Surat cotton. If, however, it was American cotton or other growths, they must only work up to 50 per cent., at 40 hours per week. These variations naturally affected employment, spinners and weavers being "played off" as circumstances dictated. In former years, the unemployed would have taken benefits from their unions or "clemmed." Obviously, this was a new situation, which was met by an arrangement under which the spinners and weavers took turns of unemployment in rotation. They were maintained during unemployment out of dues levied upon running spindles or looms, a fund of over £2,000,000 being raised in this way and distributed amongst the unemployed. In September, 1917, the rates of unemployment pay amongst spinners were:—adult men, 25s., adult women, 15s., young people, full time, 12s., young people, half time, 6s. The weaving rates were similar. In the regulations I observe that the term "young people" must be interpreted broadly:—"The question of age must not be the sole determining factor, but

the actual work and wages earned and family circumstances must be taken into consideration." In August, 1918, the pay was increased from 25s. to 30s. and the others in proportion. In July, 1918, the rotation system, contrary to the wishes of the unions, was withdrawn, but the unemployed payments were maintained to those "continuously played off." We need not enter into the reasons for the change from the rota to the continuously unemployed; it does not affect the main point that the unemployed, owing to the Cotton Board's restrictions, were maintained by the industry.

Valuable though the adoption of the principle undoubtedly is, Labour would be justified in regarding it askance unless to the principle of trade-liability for unemployment were added the equally fundamental principle of Labour's control of labour. In discussing this problem, Mr. Cole wisely insisted that unemployed payments should be made through the trade unions. This is essential; for, unless organised Labour becomes the medium of pay, it would leave the employers in control of a vital factor in the trade union organisation. This was recognised by the Cotton Control Board who directed that "payments both to unionists and non-unionists should be made wherever possible at trade union offices. Where any employer is unaware of the existence of any local union, at which the workpeople whom he is temporarily discharging can receive payment, he should communicate with the secretary of the nearest joint committee, employers' association or trade union, and if it is found that there is no local union which can undertake the work, the Control Board are prepared to make special arrangements." Thus, however partial or restricted, we have in this great industrial experiment the recognition of two essential principles: (a) that the industry is properly liable for the maintenance of its own unemployed; (b) that the administration of unemployed benefits is the function of the trade union.

The premature adoption of the principle, however, brings more than one danger in its train. Unless the trade unions are strong enough to maintain at least the former wage rates, it is certain that the employers would exploit the concession by bargaining for a wage reduction proportionate to the cost of unemployed maintenance. Some employers have already hinted as much. But I do not think the trade unions need be unduly nervous; the textile unions have not been deterred from striking for an increase of 40 per cent. merely because their unemployed have drawn £2,000,000 direct from the industry. A greater danger is the coming attempt to include the maintenance of the unemployed in a comprehensive agreement between Capital and Labour to humanise whilst still continuing the wage system, "A systematic application of the principle of security," writes one of our critics,\* "would involve no revolutionary change in the organisation of industry. It would be, indeed, merely the carrying out in the spirit of the social contract implicit in the wages system. Until the wage earner has been given a position of economic security which nothing but his own fault can destroy, the wages system as a system has not been tried. For the basis of it surely is this: the employer takes the risks of industrial enterprise and the profits as reward, the workman is paid a regular wage without any share in profits because he is not expected to share the risks." So that the "wages system may be tried," so that the employer may take the risks and the profits, so that quantitative production may restore to paper money its old purchasing power, in short, so that capitalism may yet flourish, Labour will be asked to protract the old system in return for "security." I do not know whether this "security" is to be at the expense of the State or the industry—probably the former—but it is evident that the capitalist leaders are feeling their

\* "National Guilds," p. 83 et seq. "Guild Principles in War and Peace," p. 121 et seq.

\* "The Round Table," December, 1918, p. 161.

way towards a new wage charter. They will ask Labour to accept it at the psychological moment when Labour is weakest, when its percentage of unemployment is highest, when it is distracted by financial stringency, deliberately contrived by the banking interests. Under such duress, the older Labour leaders, trained in the school of wavery, may plume themselves upon their bargain. But, as we have seen, there are younger men, the new shop-stewards and their congeners, who, in their turn, are feeling their way to a new security rooted in industrial control; who are already suspicious of the "security" guaranteed by employers who take "risks."

S. G. H.

## A Mechanical View of Economics.

By Major C. H. Douglas.\*

ELSEWHERE an attempt has been made to show the dangerously false premises on which the New Unionist Party bases all its hopes of Reconstruction. As THE NEW AGE has pointed out, the keynote of the symphony we are to play under the conduct of Mr. Lloyd George and the industrial federations behind him is production, production, yet more production; and by this simple remedy we are to change from a nation with a C<sub>3</sub> population and many grievances into a band of busy B's (or is it A<sub>1</sub>'s?) healthy, wealthy, happy and wise.

It is a simple little remedy—one wonders why we never thought of it before. You seize any unconsidered trifle of matter which may be lying about, preferably on your neighbour's territory, and you make it into something else quite unspecified. You assert by a process of arithmetical legerdemain known as cost accounting that the value of the original matter, which we may call "a" is now  $a+(b+c)+(d+e)$ , "b" being labour, "c" overhead charges, "d" selling charges and "e" profit, and that the "wealth" of the country is increased by this operation in respect of a sum equal to  $(b+c+d+e)$ . With the aid of your banking system you now create credits which show that "a" is  $a+etc.-(x+y)$  (where "x" is loss in trading, etc., and "y" is depreciation) and there you are—A<sub>1</sub>.

The chief objection to this otherwise fascinating idea is that despite a large body of most respectable and even highly paid accountants and bankers who will produce quantities of figures to prove that "a" has now become  $(a+b, etc.)$  and that the wealth of the country has been increased, etc., etc., the facts do not, unfortunately, confirm their statements.

The power used in doing work on "a" has been dissipated in heat and otherwise; the tools have been worn, the workmen have consumed food and clothes and have occupied houses, and *what you have actually got is "a" minus any portion of "a" lost in conversion*; b, c, d, e, etc., are the price paid by the community for the increased adaptability of "a" to the needs of the community, which price must in the last event be paid for in effort. The question of the gain in adaptability depends on what you produce; but payment is inevitable.

It is not the purpose of this short article to depreciate the services of accountants; in fact, under the existing conditions probably no body of men has done more to crystallise the data on which we carry on the business of the world; but the utter confusion of thought which has undoubtedly arisen from the calm assumption of the book-keeper and the accountant that he and he alone was in a position to assign positive or negative values to the quantities represented by his figures is one of the outstanding curiosities of the industrial system; and the attempt to mould

the activities of a great empire on such a basis is surely the final condemnation of an out-worn method.

While the effect of the concrete sum distributed as profit is overrated in the attacks made on the capitalistic system, and is far and increasingly less important than the overhead charges added to the value of the product in computing its factory cost, it is the dominant factor in the political aspect of the situation, because the equation of production is stated by the capitalist in a form which requires it to be solved in terms of selling price while "e," the profit, is always a plus quantity.

Now the prime necessity of the situation, which is world wide at this time, is to realise that in economics we are dealing with facts and not figures; and mechanical facts at that. The conversion of a bar of iron into a nut and bolt and its change in price from 2d. or 3d. to, say, 1s. means absolutely nothing at all beyond the fact that we have transformed a certain amount of potential energy into work in the process of changing the bar of iron into a nut and bolt, and that an arbitrary and totally empirical measure of this potential energy in various forms is contained in the figures of price. The factor which gives real character to the operation is the "inducement to produce."

If the object of this use of material and energy is simply finance, we shall get a financial result of some sort—but two real things result in any case. First we have definitely decreased the energy potentially available for all other purposes, and secondly we have obtained simply a nut and bolt, in return for a bar of iron and a definite amount of energy dissipated.

If by wealth is meant the original meaning attached to the word—"well-being"—the value in well-being to be attached to our bolt and nut depends entirely on its use for the promotion of well-being (unless we admire bolts and nuts as ornaments), and bears no relation whatever to the empirical process of giving values to a, b, and c, etc.

Let us particularise: The immediate necessity as to which all political parties are agreed is improved housing. The financier says, "Yes, you shall have money for housing as the result of building gunboats for Chile," thereby implying that there is a chain of causation between gunboats for Chile and houses for Camberwell. Not only is there no such real chain of causation, but the building of gunboats for Chile, or elsewhere, decreases the energy available to build those houses, and when the total available energy is utilised, as has been approximately the case during the war, and may easily be so again, not all the gunboats ever sold, no matter what the accounting figures attached to the transaction may indicate in added wealth to this country, will produce one house at Camberwell, or anywhere else. What is, of course, common to the two is the "inducement to produce," but that may or may not be a sound inducement.

The matter is really very serious. The economic effect of charging all the waste in industry to the consumer so curtails his purchasing power that an increasing percentage of the product of industry must be exported. The effect of this on the worker is that he has to do many times the amount of work which should be necessary to keep him in the highest standard of living, as a result of an artificial inducement to produce things he does not want, which he cannot buy, and which are of no use to the attainment of his internal standard of well-being. While the mechanism of the process is possibly too technical for his general comprehension, he has grasped the drift of the situation and shows every sign of a determination to make things interesting. On the other hand, we see a good sound reason for the capitalist's hatred for internationalism; failing interplanetary commerce, he will have nowhere to export to, and will be faced with the horrible prospect of dividing up the world's production amongst the individuals who produce. In which case a larger num-

\* "English Review" for December.



ber of people than at present will agree that it is possible to overproduce gunboats. Given this situation, what will be the result of a "strong" Coalition Government?

## A Reformer's Note-Book.

IMPERIALISM.—Give an idea a bad exponent and you may as well hang it. The association of imperialism with Prussia has certainly done more to discredit the idea than any other criticism. We may say, in fact, that Prussia has killed imperialism as she has killed so much else. Nevertheless, in fairness to the idea it should be explained that imperialism is not so black as it has been painted red. Whoever thinks of the difficulties likely to be encountered in the formation and maintenance of a League of Nations, and, still more, of a world-commonwealth of nations, large and small—the injured jealousies, rivalries, treacheries, and idiocies that are certain to be its accompaniment—cannot fail every now and then to wish that there existed some Power mighty enough to impose peace without waiting for everybody's consent. But this would be successful imperialism; for imperialism and the imperialistic aim are nothing more than the attempt on the part of one nation to impose its will upon the world. The possibility of such a consummation, however, has now passed away, and need not be expected to return for several millennia. The condition of a successful world-empire is the existence of a single immensely superior race inspired with the mission of universal conquest. Such a race, *ex hypothesi* intelligent, single-minded, and powerful, might conceivably bring into a more or less willing subjection all the other peoples of the world, and so establish an empire. Such a race, however, does not exist. On the contrary, the leading races to-day are too nearly equal in all respects to be able either to rule universally or to suffer themselves to be ruled. They must therefore be content at best to divide the world between them. Such a division of the world into groups is not properly imperialism, which aims at nothing less than world-dominion; but neither can it be said to be a world-commonwealth. It is rather the reflection in international politics of the system of Trusts in the sphere of economics. Three great trusts of nations are at present either formed or are in process of formation: the British, the American, and the Japanese; and each of these, as far as can be seen, is likely to be permanent. It is fortunate, perhaps, for us Westerners that of these three, two are by character, race, and ideals so closely related that in any dispute between the trinity America and Britain may always be expected to stand together. No war is conceivable in which America and Japan will be on one side and the British Empire on the other, nor, again, is a war conceivable in which Britain and Japan would be opposed to America. This happy circumstance allows us to anticipate that the future of the world is safe in the hands of the two imperial branches of the Anglo-Saxon race—the British and the American. Between them they will be able in course of time to guarantee peace in all the world outside the sphere of the Japanese Empire; and even within that sphere their joint action will be powerful. Thus we can say that, except for civil wars, no wars need henceforth be regarded as inevitable. At least for a millennium or so. Thereafter, however, a race will arise, either superior or thinking itself superior, and imperialism will once more be born.

VOTES FOR WOMEN.—It is significant that not until women found themselves in industry in considerable numbers as a consequence of the war were they able to obtain the franchise. And then they obtained it almost as a matter of course and against practically no opposition. This establishes once again the axiom

that economic power precedes political power. For it is almost certain that but for the war the demand of women for the vote would have continued to be effectively opposed. Several interesting questions arise, however, from the circumstances in which the franchise has been won. If it has been proved that economic power precedes political power, it has still to be shown that economic power also determines political power. This will be made manifest after the war when the demand for women's labour (or economic power) is reduced; and when it will be found that their political power will shrink with it. Nothing, it is true, is likely to disfranchise the classes of women already enfranchised. On the contrary, it is quite possible that the tendency to uniformity will require that the vote shall be given to women on the same terms on which it is held by men. Nevertheless, as mere numbers are unimportant in all matters that do not involve a physical contest, even the increased voting strength of women will not set off the reduction of their political power arising from the reduction in the demand for their economic labour. On the whole, therefore, we may conclude that if the demand for women's labour decreases after the war, the political influence of women, in spite of their vote, will be no greater than it was before the war, or only as much greater as the demand for their labour may be relatively greater. A second consideration is as follows. Besides symbolising the possession (whether temporary or permanent) of economic power, the vote is also a kind of latch-key to an economic future. It is the key of industry. From this point of view, we may say that the conquest of the vote, though made possible only by the temporary circumstances of the war, is at the same time a guarantee that those circumstances, as they affect women, may become permanent. In other words, it will be found that women's occupation of industry will tend, in consequence of their possession of the vote, to become normal. But this, again, gives rise to another problem, that of the organisation of industry under circumstances in which the amount of wage-labour available has been doubled. It is obvious that tremendous reactions will take place affecting the whole set of problems connected with Capital and Labour, and affecting them, on the whole, unfavourably to Labour. Before the war it was a simple calculation to predict with practical certainty the duration of the wage-system. The men's trade unions had only to achieve the final monopoly of their labour to be able to demand the abolition of the wage-system and the partnership of their unions either with the State or with Capital. But with the introduction of women's labour into the labour market, first, during the special circumstances of the war, and, hereafter, in consequence of women's possession of the vote, the monopoly of labour which before the war the unions were on the point of obtaining has and will become indefinitely more difficult to obtain. The race between Votes for Women and a Men's Monopoly of Labour (or, let us say, the abolition of the wage-system by men) has been won by women; with the consequence that the effort to establish a monopoly of labour must be begun all over again. The misfortune for Labour in general would be more pitiable than it is if it had not been brought about by the folly of the men's unions before the war. Instinct, if not reason, should have persuaded them that women's demand for votes was a knocking at their doors, and meant that unless they hurried up their own monopoly it would shortly be made more difficult, if not impossible, by the swamping of the market with women's labour. The year 1906 was the critical year for men's trade unions. Between then and 1910 the wage-system should have been and might have been completely abolished by the action of the trade unions. Now, however, the problem of women's labour is added to the problem of the wage-system.

## Surrey Preserved.

I WAS sitting on the crest of Leith Hill, which, as all the world should know, lies some six miles away from Dorking and is the highest point south of London the whole way to Devonshire. Surrey, Sussex, Kent, and Hampshire lay below me, and I was regarding them all in a meditative spirit, tinged with sadness. For I had just been reading one of Mr. Belloc's books about Sussex, and I was amazed at the arrogant and bellicose spirit that breathed through it. "Sussex über Alles!" it seemed to say.

Looking down from my perch on Surrey soil over the spreading plains and towns of Sussex, I realised in a flash what was wrong with Sussex. Consider its position! On the south is the sea, and the high rampart of the Downs; on the east is Kent, on the west Hampshire; the borders in these cases are well marked and present no difficulties. But on the north—there's the rub! On the north, Sussex comes to an end, and Surrey begins, under the huge bulk of the Surrey hills. This range absolutely commands the whole of Sussex; the inhabitants of the latter look up at the high, over-towering hills with impotent rage. What would not the proud hearts of Sussex give to storm these hills and to turn them into the northern wall of their own county!

It occurred to me, after reading Mr. Belloc's book, that if he is a genuine representative of the Sussex men, these would be quite capable of launching a surprise attack upon the Surrey hills in the hope of adding them to their own territory. Once this suspicion had come to me, I thought it only right, although a neutral myself and peace-loving (being a Middlesex man), to discover how far a sudden raid by the Sussex braves upon Surrey's borders might be likely to meet with success, and, if possible, to endeavour to frustrate it in the interests of inter-county peace.

No sooner thought than done. Early next morning I snatched my stick from the rack, laced on my shoes and took a tender farewell of my kinsfolk. Then I turned into the road that led down from Leith Hill into the plain. At first my way was without danger. I was still on good Surrey soil and had nothing to fear from its enemies. In the space of ten minutes I met three wayfarers—all postmen, who could, no doubt, be mobilised in a defence corps the moment the Sussex men came on to the attack. After a mile or two I came down into the plain. I turned round for a few moments to gaze back reverently at the giant outlines of the Surrey hills, murmuring, as I did so, "If I forget thee, Leith Hill, may my tongue forget its punning." And then I turned my face resolutely southwards.

For the next few miles the road led between hay-fields and under an avenue of oaks. Without halting I breakfasted on a handful of blackberries plucked from the hedge. Then, suddenly, I came upon a cross-road with a disconcerting sign-post. It said, "To Horsham"—pointing towards the very capital of the enemy's country. I paused only for a second, then, crying with all the force of my lungs, "à Berlin!", I continued my appointed way towards the border.

I passed along miles of quiet country lanes and crossed a hard, tarry, unpleasant motor-road. Then a church tower came into sight and I knew I was approaching Rudgwick—the border village. The road was flanked on either side by builders' yards, full of stakes and planks and corrugated iron; I recognised in these the concealed frontier defences of Surrey. Rudgwick is a hamlet built up and down a little hill, with a church on the summit, which, I suppose, marks the border between Surrey and Sussex. I saw that a supreme test now lay before me. I had intended to keep always within the Surrey border and to trace it across country wherever it led, up hill and down dale, through meadows, woods and hamlets, but never to cross it into Sussex. But in Rudgwick the bold idea

came into my mind to venture a little way into the enemy's country. I plucked up courage and marched off down the Sussex side of the hill as bravely as if I had been but a peaceful traveller.

At first sight, there was not much dissimilarity between the Sussex and the Surrey sides of the border; but I soon discovered that the people were different. Sussex men do not greet strangers as the Surrey men do. It may be that their courtesy lies deeper; perhaps, with them, it is more in the heart than on the surface. Be this as it may, the grim faces of the Sussex men I met and their ominous silence frightened me more than I care to say. I feared that my mission might be discovered, that they would learn my purpose in patrolling their frontier. The moment of this discovery would, I knew, be my last.

So, when the road forked again, I took the turning which led back to Surrey, determined not to expose myself to unnecessary risks. I was only a mile from the Surrey border, when, suddenly, I heard the whirr of an aeroplane overhead. Swift as lightning, I jumped into a ditch at the road-side and hid under the hedge; I knew well that the aeroplane was searching for me. At last when the aeroplane had passed out of sight and the immediate danger was over, I came back upon the road and ran for my life towards the frontier. In a few minutes I was safe and sound in Surrey again!

After this adventure, I kept strictly to my original plan. Mile after mile, hour after hour, I tracked with map and compass the unmarked frontier from village to village, through meadows and woods and swamps, taking care always to keep on the Surrey side.

At Alford village, however, I found myself again in imminent peril. I was sitting in an inn there, enjoying ale and bread and cheese, which I had chosen, not so much because they were the proper things to order under the circumstances—they savoured far too much of Sussex and Mr. Belloc's books for that!—but because nothing else was obtainable. I took the opportunity to ask an old man how far we were from the Sussex border. "The Sussex border" he cried, fixing me with a terrible gaze; "Why, you're in Sussex now!" Unwittingly, I had crossed the frontier, and was on hostile territory! Luckily, the inn was almost empty, and I was able to make a precipitate escape.

During the afternoon, I came unexpectedly out of a wood into a farmyard. I reckoned from my map and the lie of the land that I was about half-a-mile on the wrong side of the border. If the Sussex men captured me, I knew what my fate would be. But I still hoped to be able to pass through the farmyard without attracting attention, and then to get back somehow into Surrey again. There were three or four men busy in one of the farm-buildings. Just as I was congratulating myself on having passed them without remark, one of them looked up and shouted to me. I turned round, and my heart stood still. For there was the identical man who had spent the previous summer burning charcoal up on Leith Hill itself. I had met him daily then, and we knew each other well.

He greeted me with effusion; but I feared that at any moment he would think to ask me what I was doing on Sussex soil. I trembled as I asked him after the health of the baby—his daughter's child, whom he and his wife had adopted after its father's death in Flanders.

"Doing fine," he said. "Her can walk by herself very nearly almost; her can, indeed. This good Surrey air be the making of her."

"But," I said—and could have bitten my tongue off for my imprudence—"This is Sussex, is it not?"

"Sussex," cried he, in a tone of utter contempt. "Sussex! No! Sussex! Her be Sussex, down over that hedge yonder! You be in Surrey now, do make no mistake." In my joy, I almost embraced him. I was safe in Surrey, after all.

I have never in my life heard so much concentrated

contempt as this Surrey man's voice expressed for Sussex. I ceased, then, to wonder at the bitter inter-county jealousy that stands out from every page of Mr. Belloc's Sussex books: it must be unpleasant enough for Sussex to be overlooked from end to end by the mighty Surrey hills, without having to recognise that the Surrey men realise your degradation.

As for me, I reached Haslemere the same evening without any further adventure of great note. Here the boundaries meet of Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire, and there was no longer any Surrey-Sussex frontier for me to patrol. I had accomplished my task. I hope that, when Surrey rewards its heroes, it will not forget that I (although a Middlesex man) have done my bit to preserve her hills from their southern foes—and to maintain the peace of our quarrelsome counties.

C. E. BECHHOFER.

## Ibsen and His Creation.

By Janko Lavrin.

### III.—THE STRENGTH OF HIS WEAKNESS.

#### I.

ONE of the sad facts of our epoch is that Art is not the expression of the fulness of life, but rather a protest against the growing barrenness and poverty of life. Moreover, instead of emanating from life as its organic product, modern Art vegetates apart from it as in a conservatory—vegetates as an escape from, and even as a negation of, life. Thus, instead of tending towards a synthesis, we see a growing antithesis between Art and Life; and this antithesis is equally dangerous to both. Our life becomes more and more devoid of beauty, while our art becomes an æsthetic sport, a kind of acrobatics and spiritual narcotics whose chief aim is to make us forget, at least for one moment, the vulgarity of our everyday existence. Our Art is as poor as our life and as barren and shallow as our artists. Contemporary artistic creation is therefore not the spontaneous result of an overflowing strength and creative ecstasy, but rather of the strain of the will which endeavours to mask our poverty, impotency and inner emptiness. A modern artist is not charged with inner contents like a volcano; he creates not because he *must* create, but because he *wills*. Instead of a royal scattering of an immensely rich and vital personality, we see rather a slow and painful assembling, piece by piece, of one's split and dismembered Ego.

That is the reason why we have so much brooding, pondering, analysing and doubting, in all the domains of contemporary art. Especially doubting. And the more the artist doubts himself and his creative forces the more insistently he seeks for strong external means by which to kindle his creative impulses and prove his strength—not so much to others as primarily to himself.

The most frequent means in such cases is the protest or rebellion which arises in the "will to power" and becomes more a psychological than an ethical necessity. In other words, one wants an external enemy on whom to test and prove one's own strength—in order to believe in it. Revolt against society, against the age, even against mankind, gives that permanent inner tension which is so often mistaken for inner strength. And the greater the rebellion with its aggressive criticism the stronger the feeling, or rather the illusion, of one's power.

Another similar and successful means is the noisy egotistic "individualism" and the so-called spiritual aristocracy with its assumed "pathos of distance," spiritual pride and continuous scorn. The true egotist opposes the "truth" of his petty self to the whole of mankind, while the "aristocrat" takes refuge from all the "human too human" upon his spiritual heights wherefrom he looks contemptuously over the valleys

beneath—oblivious of the fact that to desert them and curse is infinitely more easy than to remain active in everyday life in order to transform it by deeds and not by words and romantic thundering.

It is just by this spiritual pride, or even arrogance, that one recognises and distinguishes at a glance the small man who wishes to be great from the really great man who is usually ashamed of his greatness (as of something undeserved) and therefore tries to conceal it—beneath humility. The former is proud from weakness, the latter is humble from strength.

It would lead us too far to investigate the "decadence," i.e., all the different aspects and disguises of the inner creative poverty in contemporary art and literature. The posing egotism, the so-called romanticism, the iconoclastic "Sturm und Drang," the insistent quasi-aristocracy, the emasculated æstheticism and many other "isms" bear witness that we cry for strength only in order to forget how weak, doubtful and bankrupt we are. At any rate, a penetrating psychology of our modern "protestants," professional rebels and deliberate pessimists (i.e., passive rebels) would discover many surprising, not to say unpleasant, things. . . . The most interesting point, however, is that these eternally criticising, eternally rebelling spirits would become still more unhappy if a sudden fulfilment of their aims took place. They would then probably protest against perfection in the same manner as they are now protesting against imperfection; they would rebel against their own former rebellion. For their secret lies not in the fact that they want perfection, but that they want protest as such, as well as a permanent pretext for protest—since protest is the most successful disguise for their impotency and almost the only remaining stimulus to creation. Rob them of their protest and you rob them of everything; you bring about their spiritual ruin.

It is symptomatic enough that even one of the most original spirits of our age, Nietzsche, is in many respects an illustration of what has just been said. His very cry for the "will to power" is the best proof of his lack of power. . . . And on closer examination of Ibsen's works and personality we come to the conclusion that Ibsen himself, the most manly and virile of modern artists, belonged in part to the same category—at least in so far as his exclusive individualism and protesting criticism were the result of the struggle with his doubts of himself and of his "calling."

#### II.

It is not difficult to guess that during the whole first period of his creation Ibsen was tortured by doubt of his "power," as well as of his poetical vocation. His first dramas even give the impression that he wrote them chiefly in order to prove to himself that he really was a creator and that being a "skald" was his true calling, the true meaning of his life. Great protest, great heroic figures of Viking-times, great sorrow, even great pessimism—everything that could strengthen his creative impulse was welcomed; for in creation he saw the meaning of his existence. As early as in 1858 he wrote to his friend Carl Anker: "Believe me, it is not agreeable to see the world from the October standpoint; and yet there was, strange to say, a time when I wished for nothing better. I had a burning desire, I almost prayed, for a great sorrow which might round out my existence and give life meaning."<sup>\*</sup>

And yet his doubts often seemed stronger than himself. How great and oppressive this self-mistrust was, we may gather from the colossal figure of Jarl Skule (in his "Pretenders").

"Tell me, Zatgeir, how came you to be a skald?"

\* The quotations of letters are taken from Mary Morrison's translation (Hodder and Stoughton), of dramas from Archer's edition (Heinemann) and of poems from Streatfeild's translation.

Who taught you skaldcraft?" asks the doubting King Skule of the bard Zatzgeir.

"Skaldcraft cannot be taught, my lord," answers the bard.

"Cannot be taught? How came it, then?"

"The gift of sorrow came to me, and I was a skald."

"Then 'tis the gift of sorrow the skald has need of?"

"I needed sorrow; others there may be who need faith or joy—or doubt—"

"Doubt as well?"

"Ay; but then must the doubter be strong and sound."

"And whom call you the unsound doubter?"

"He who doubts his own doubt."

"That, methinks, were death."

"'Tis worse, 'tis neither day nor night!"

And the brooding Jarl Skule adds here "quickly, as if shaking off his thoughts":

"Where are my weapons? I will fight and act—not think. . . ."

And is it not typical just of Skule, as well as of many another of Ibsen's heroes, that the more he doubts of his own power the more egoistically he clings to others' belief in them. "I must have someone by me who sinks his own will utterly in mine—who believes in me unflinchingly, who will close to me in good hap and ill, who lives only to shed light and warmth over my life, and must die if I fall."

Just the same psychology we see in a modern doubter of himself. If he is, however, more active than Jarl Skule, then he seeks for struggle on purpose—in order to paralyse his doubts. And the more "will to power" he has the more he yearns for eternal enemies with whom to fight. In order to justify his protest and strengthen his impetus, he wants, of course, a moral or ethical sanction. The climax of such a sanction he often finds in the self-delusion that he has been sent by a higher Power, even by God Himself, in order to fulfil great things—as a reformer, teacher, judge or prophet. (Such a self-delusion we see in Ibsen's "Brand.") He struggles alone against the whole "compact majority," and the consciousness of his being alone only emphasises the illusion of his power. He endeavours to drown his doubt in passionate criticism of all and everything (except himself), as well as in a fanatic insistence upon his individual "mission"; he considers his subjective *idée fixe* as the only truth, and all that does not agree with it as lies and error. He accepts with a strange inner pleasure injustice, anger and even martyrdom—since they appear to justify his "standpoint" and thus invigorate the power of his protest.

It was in the period of his greatest doubts that the unacknowledged poet Ibsen declared through Falk (in "Love's Comedy," 1862):

. . . . "the battle flag I'll rear!

Yes, it is war I mean with nail and tooth

Against the Lie with the tenacious root,

The lie that you have fostered into fruit,

For all its strutting in the guise of truth."

And some few years later (1867) he writes to Björnson apropos the bad reception of his "Peer Gynt" by the public: "However, I am glad of the injustice that has been done to me. There has been something of the God-sent, of the providential dispensation in it; for I feel that this anger is invigorating all my powers. . . . If it is to be war then let it be war! If I am no poet, then I have nothing to lose. I shall try my luck as photographer. My contemporaries in the North I shall take in hand, one after the other. I will not spare the child in the mother's womb, nor the thought or feeling that lies under the word of any living soul that deserves the honour of my notice. . . ."

Or take the significant passage from Ibsen's letter to Peter Hansen (1870): "During the time I was writing 'Brand' I had on my desk a glass with a scorpion in it. From time to time the little animal was ill. Then I used to give it a piece of soft fruit, upon which it fell furiously and emptied its poison into it—after which it was well again. Does not something of the same kind happen with us poets? The laws of nature regulate the spiritual world also."

But while struggling fiercely with all the "liars that are dupes of their own lie," he makes from time to time private confessions of great psychological interest—confessions which show that the struggle was necessary to him first of all for the sake of the struggle itself. While complaining in 1870 to Brande that Rome had been taken away from human being and given to the politicians, he exclaims: "Where shall we take refuge now? All that is delightful—the unconsciousness, the dirt—will now disappear; for every statesman that makes his appearance there, an artist will be ruined. And then the glorious aspiration after liberty—that is at an end now. Yes—I must confess that the only thing I love about liberty is the struggle for it; I care nothing for the possession of it. . . ."

In another letter we read on the same subject: "He who possesses liberty otherwise than as a thing to be striven for, possesses it dead and soulless. . . . So that a man who stops in the midst of the struggle and says: 'Now I have it'—thereby shows that he has lost it. It is, however, exactly this dead maintenance of a certain given standpoint of liberty that is characteristic of the communities which go by the name of states—and this is what I called worthless."

And again: "Dear friend, the Liberals are freedom's worst enemies. Freedom of thought and spirit thrive best under absolutism; this was shown in France, afterwards in Germany, and now in Russia."

In other words, it is not liberty and truth, but rather the struggle for them that matters. The struggle for ideals is more important to him than ideals themselves—which, by the way, are not absolute and permanent. For "neither the conceptions of morality nor those of art are eternal. To how much are we really obliged to pin our faith? Who will vouch for it that two and two do not make five up in Jupiter? . . ." In fact Ibsen believed more in struggle than in any permanent improvements. "All development hitherto has been nothing more than a stumbling from one error into another. But the struggle is good, wholesome, and invigorating," he declared in another letter. And, as we know, the favourite themes of his dramas were those where his individual will struggled against Society, State, tradition, Church, against his country, against the "ghosts" and the sick consciousness of the whole age, and finally—even against his own struggle. . . .

That is why he unconsciously even prefers the dark side of life to "heaven's light," for the latter would perhaps only paralyse his impetus as well as his "mission." He is like his "Miner" who wanders in the "mountain's living womb," and finding there nothing but a growing darkness exclaims:

"Have I failed then? Does the way

Lead not to the upper day?

Yet I know the heaven's light

Would but blind my dazzled light."

And therefore goes on striking for striking's sake:

"What though darkness be my lot,

Strike my hammer, falter not;

What though every hope be vain,

Strike my hammer, strike again."

### III.

In close connection with such a psychology is, of course, also the Individualism of the "alone-stand-

ing," proclaimed by Ibsen. However, the last consequences of such an Individualism may become very dangerous—in so far as they lead towards ego-mania. For if I proclaim war against Society for my own sake (or for the sake of my subjective "truth," if you like) then I consider my individual ego not only as equivalent to the whole of society, but even as much greater. My ego becomes for me the only focus of earth and life, and I do my best to find for such a view a philosophical, moral or even religious sanction. My ego is the only reality, and all the rest is of no great importance.

As an eloquent illustration, we may quote Ibsen's sincere advice to Brandes (in 1871): "What I chiefly desire for you is a genuine, full-blooded egoism, which shall force you for a time to regard what concerns you yourself as the only thing of any consequence and everything else as non-existent. . . ."

The man with such an attitude towards the non-ego must logically consider any solidarity as a danger to his individual exclusiveness, as well as to the intensity of his protest. As it is known, Ibsen himself had the greatest aversion towards corporations, or any societies, unions, in short, towards all those forms in which the single personality is subdued to the collective. "I have never really had any firm belief in solidarity," he writes; "in fact, I have only accepted it as a kind of traditional dogma. If one had the courage to throw it overboard altogether, it is possible that one would be rid of the ballast which weighs down one's personality most heavily."

On another occasion he wrote to Brandes: "I hear you have organised a society. Whether you may be strengthening your position or not, I cannot tell; to me it appears that the man who stands alone is the strongest. . . ." And objecting to his having translated Mill's "Utilitarianism," he acknowledged: "I must honestly confess that I cannot in the least conceive of any advancement or any future in the Stuart Mill direction. I cannot understand your taking the trouble to translate this work, the sage-like philistinism of which suggests Cicero and Seneca."

In emphasising the "duty towards one's self" against the duty towards the collective, he went so far as to shun friends and friendship, for they are "an expensive luxury; and when a man's capital is invested in a calling and a mission in life, he cannot afford to keep them. The costliness of keeping friends does not lie in what one does for them, but in what one, out of consideration for them, refrains from doing. . . ."

Thus he proclaims, "Be thyself fully," and in the name of such a fullness he tries to cut his self off from the collective, rebelling against the latter not for the sake of a super-individual value, but for his own sake. "There are actually moments when the whole history of the world appears to me like one great shipwreck, and the only important thing is to save one's self."

However, Ibsen remained at the same time a highly ethical temperament. Owing to that, as well as to his self-anatomy, he could not hold definitely such a "saving" as the highest aim of one's struggling and striving, and still less of one's true self-realisation. Besides this, the end of Brand and many pages in "Peer Gynt" prove that he profoundly suspected the real psychological basis of such an egotistic individualism. Already in his "Emperor and Galilean" he had made a desperate endeavour to overcome it and to find "anything tenable in the present situation—with its untenable ideals." In other words, he tried to find that positive and super-individual aim which should bring his personal will into harmony with a higher will and give to his protest a real creative direction, not only for his own sake, but for the sake of humanity which he saw on the wrong track. But it was in this attempt that his seeking will stopped at a dead wall over which he could not pass.

In order to understand this tragedy of the will, we must analyse "Brand," "Peer Gynt," and "Julian the Apostate," for—in spite of all their outward difference—there exists a profound inner connection between these three figures.

## Recreations in Criticism.

By Edward Moore.

THERE are three classes of literature: that which appeals to everyone, that which speaks to the most exalted minds, that which is addressed to a school. The former pair contain works of the first rank; the last, no work above the second. The universal and the sublime, once we possess the key to them, have this quality, that they seem as spacious and as inevitable as Nature herself; but the third division never loses its artificiality and its narrowness. The laws which govern the former are like the laws of Nature: we are not conscious of them, and if we investigate them it is a task for philosophy. Those which regulate the latter resemble the rules of a game: we must remain watchfully cognisant of them if we are to enjoy the work. To the first two divisions belong the works of Homer, of Dante, and of the broadly human artists from Shakespeare to Dickens; to the last, those of Flaubert, of Maupassant, of all the theoretical realists. In an artistic sense this division must always be called provincial.

It seeks to produce the illusion of reality, and succeeds in being one of the most artificial of modes: the paradox of realism. Compared with Scott and Fielding, for instance, how forced and conventional are Mr. Moore and Mr. Bennett! The former are natural; the latter, naturalistic. It is the fault of the realist theory of art. This theory failed not because it was too elaborate, but because it was too simple. We can never escape from this simplicity; this too exacting simplicity; this simplicity of logic rather than of art; this simplicity which is in the last degree artificial. Fielding and Scott were natural in their attitude to their subject: Mr. Moore and Mr. Bennett, in order to be more rigidly faithful to Nature, become in their attitude signally artificial and even unnatural.

There is in literature a higher as well as a lower realism. The former consists in truthfulness to the imagination; the latter, in truthfulness to fact. When the poet has by the power of his imagination created his world, he then reproduces it with the utmost honesty, the most exact realism. This was the realism of the Greeks, and, in modern times, of Goethe and Stendhal. How complete and how natural are these figures to which nothing essential has been denied, and nothing unnecessary added! They have the beauty and the completeness of the nude. In two ways modern writers have fallen short of perfection: the ideal artists have been cloudy; the exact artists have been without ideality. In short, modern literature is divided between the romantics and the realists.

To fight over again as if they were real and in the belief that they are real the battles of the mind which long ago were decided for good is an infallible sign of provinciality. It is in our age provincial, for instance, to combat the Victorian era, or to slay convention. Both are dead. The provincial is a man who lives in the past believing it to be the future: his anxieties, his battles, his very triumphs are obsolete. Never to say "But what now?"—that is provincial.

The obscurity of Heraclitus, for instance, differs radically from that of Carlyle. The former was obscure to his readers; the latter, to himself as well. If we were as exalted as Heraclitus, his most obscure sayings, we feel, would appear to us perfectly simple and natural.

The pathetic and the tragic differ from each other not in the incidents which they treat, but in their *backgrounds*. Calamities are not tragic or pathetic in themselves: the self-same calamity may be as easily the one

as the other. When is calamity pathetic? When it overtakes one who seems framed for happiness. When is it tragic? When it falls upon someone plainly foredoomed to suffering. The conception of the artist decides the matter. If he believes man is framed for happiness, he will treat calamity pathetically. If he believes man is fated to suffering, he will treat calamity tragically. The modern world—the world, that is to say, since the Renaissance—has held a view of existence which is in the highest degree optimistic, and its literature has been, in the main, pathetic. The Greeks, on the other hand, possessed a conception of life pessimistic and “natural,” and their literature was pre-eminently tragic.

In the works of pathos calamity is an accident; in those of tragedy it is a fate. In the former it is a blunder set against a background of normal felicity; in the latter there is no contrast between it and its background. The pathetic is the sentiment of what might have been, or, rather, of what should have been; the tragic, of what is, of what must be. “Othello” is pathetic rather than tragic. How happy, we feel, Othello and Desdemona would have been but for that crucial blunder! But Oedipus could never have been happy; there was no escape from his woes, which were fated.

The pathetic rends the heart; the tragic moves the soul. What gives the former its poignancy is the very fact that the calamity is accidental. In witnessing it we feel grief and we feel regret—an emotion not properly tragic; and, lastly, to these there is added the pain felt at the contrast—the contrast between the calamity itself and the eternal, smiling “background.” What makes tragedy profound, on the other hand, is its necessary fatal character; its universality. The tragic appeals both to the mind and the emotions; the pathetic, to the emotions alone.

Religion is the immemorial background against which man has always viewed his drama. The conception of heaven makes all existence pathetic.

There is a pathos of tragedy which is almost the antipodes of pathos proper. Whereas in the latter the background is gay and the figures are sombre, in the former the background is sombre and the figures are gay. To the tragic artist it is happiness that seems pathetic. The transience which weighs down the wings of the most airy, flitting, radiant things is felt in his very portrayal of them. Compared with the creations of artists whose métier is the miniature, how profound, how moving, how pathetic are the trifles of Beethoven and of Goethe! For these have background, and sport on the very breast of tragedy.

What do we mean when we speak of the terrible? Often simply those things which are too mighty to be conceived—by us, that is to say. The play of the gods—assuming there are gods—would seem terrible to us. But not to them: to the terrible the terrible does not exist. Those who blame nature or God for the alleged cruelty of the universe are therefore expressing only once more the incorrigible anthropocentrism of man. If the laws which govern universal life were conscious, they would not appear terrible to themselves any more than we appear terrible to ourselves. It is the old question whether the universe exists for the sake of man. This, however, is no longer a question.

When a man's deepest thought assumes absolute dominion over him, making him regardless of his friends, his duties, his health, his happiness, his life—we then call him an egoist.

The critic is the amiable scandalmonger who carries tales between the philosopher and the artist. They could not get on without him. Ideas which are divorced from art become fruitless, and an art which lacks ideas quickly becomes second-rate. The critic is the busy bee in the meadow of art and philosophy. While gathering the honey for himself he carries the pollen from flower to flower, from philosopher to poet: he is not the

fertilising principle, but he makes fertilisation sometimes possible, sometimes more easy.

Exquisite taste is the enemy of perfect taste. It is taste which has lost its balance—that balance which is itself the first constituent of perfection—and, being without a check, has gone from the choice to the recondite, and from the recondite to the recherché. The two things which would have given it vitality—the sense of reality, the sense of greatness—it lacks altogether; and this accounts for the curious satisfaction with which it occupies itself with an unreal world, and a world, moreover, infinitely smaller than the world of fact. This artistic specialism, this astonishing obscurantism of the aesthetes arose because they had seized perfection only in one of its aspects. But the essence of perfection is completeness, and to insist upon one aspect of perfection alone is to fight against perfection. The perfect taste, on the other hand, while as fastidious in its demand for style in a work as the exquisite, asks in addition, Is it true? and, Is it noble? Thus, in spite of the technical superiority of his style, Pater did not approach perfection so nearly as Arnold did. For Arnold apprehended the ideal of literary perfection, it may be imperfectly, on all its sides; while Pater grasped it completely, consummately, but only on one.

Authors who possess strength without delicacy, and delicacy without strength, will write, as a rule, in the ornate style. Those who possess both will use, it is almost certain, a style at once simple and severe.

All admiration is a little shameless: we take liberties with the celebrity which we would not dare to take with the private citizen. Yes, let us admire with sufficient ardour, and we lose even our manners!

*Spiritual Eugenics.* You desire to be born again? Ah, believe me, that is because you were not born properly the first time!

A man who is habitually self-possessed will acquire, without any other qualification, a reputation for sarcasm.

In his conduct and in his practical conclusions about life the cynic will very often be found to agree with the philosopher. Nine times out of ten he possesses everything the philosopher possesses—except a philosophy.

## Music.

By William Atheling.

MOUSSORGSKY. Rosing, Stroesco, Haley.

*Guilhermina Suggia*, with New Queen's Hall Orchestra, Nov. 30, chaotic.

*Gwen Mathers*, Aeolian. Dec. 3, was excellent in her intention to be expressive, but should not confuse intention with result. Naive, vegetarian *joie de vivre* is not enough. The singing was buttered rather than sculptured; physical equipment satisfactory, and Miss Mathers might do something if she were sufficiently worried, persistently worried, and worried for a long enough time. The bass-voiced bulbul, the words of the late A. Tennyson, and other objectionable features, including the cute, were obtruded.

ROSING gave a full Moussorgsky programme at the Aeolian on Dec. 3, insufficiently announced. There is very little need of the critic in a case of this sort. The opinion of a Russian diplomat that “Moussorgsky might have developed into a Russian Wagner if he had lived” is the most succinct explanation of the fall of the old Russian regime that I have, up to date, encountered. An aristocracy holding such views was certainly too far from reality to weather any social disturbance.

One really wants some strong form of commendation for a man who will give twenty Moussorgsky songs (numbers and encores) in one programme, following his solid all Russian programme of the previous month. This is heavy work, seeing that it contained

the Hopak, and three of the Death Cycle songs: Tre-pak, Serenade, and Field Marshal. The rich semi-low tones showed in the Yeremoushka; Savichna was, I think, better done than even Rosing had done it before. The matt-colour, the mode verging on speech, and the soft notes were never better than in "The Soul." The Sorotchinsky Foire is of the most exquisite both in melody and in the economy of notes used. Rosing may have been a shade tired in the Hopak. If there were any adverse criticism to be made of his manner during the whole programme it would be that he did not seem to be quite at his maximum of physical energy, but there were no errors of feeling, and only one slip in judgment: an epigram like "The Goat" should not be used as its own encore. Encore the audience would have, and rightly, at this point, but it should have been a different song. A "point" loses with repetition. "Is it honourable for a Bayar" was a new piece of irony, broad noted. Specially to be commended was the mastery of the longer and less apparent rhythm-lengths in "Serenade" and all through the programme one observed how Rosing takes with faultless instinct the central significance of each song and how the right details are magnetised to it (even when he forgets or neglects certain paginal indications). In short: a fine artist, singing great music, a concert unique in the season, and wholly commendable.

STROESCO (Aeolian Hall, Dec. 7) gave a recital charming save for certain selections, and justifying the interest we have taken in him. There were, however, tactical errors, concerning which we may set down certain "laws" of the concert programme for the salvation of any and all singers, irrespective of their natural talent or demerit.

1. In a recital consisting of four groups of songs, the third group must be the climax; it must contain the most important pieces. Stroesco's third group was the weakest in his programme. If he had put his fourth group third, used his "Manon" encore for a fourth, and sung perhaps most of his third group in encore he would not have seen so many people leaving the hall. Observe that Rosing used his three songs from the Death Cycle as his third group, and followed them by the satires.

The fourth position is often used for popular numbers by singers not sure of their audience. Note that Rosing avoids this, without making his fourth group an anticlimax. One time he will give folk song or Siberian convict songs; on Dec. 3 he gave the satires, Stroesco's fourth group, folk songs, beginning with the best thing in his programme, Ravel's setting of the Greek song "Wake, my dear," would have been an admirable fourth group if he had sung a third group of sufficient magnitude.

Obviously there is no use in a singer's announcing a masterpiece for his third act, if he cannot keep his audience in the hall during the first groups; or if he is unable to sing the "big" song. Art consists here in his recognising his own scope, and *grading* his concert from some simple and quiet opening up to his greatest achievable work.

2. A concert should not consist of songs "all the same size and shape," or even all in quite the same mood. Also a series of songs all sung softly at the beginning and ending in a fortissimo squall, becomes monotonous.

A concert should not, on the other hand, be all shreds and patches. There was more variety in Rosing's concert of one composer than in Stroesco's containing songs by twelve.

3. There are divers roads to variety. The surest is that of realising the meaning of each song. Most songs worth singing have something which distinguishes them from other songs. Careful study reveals this. Rosing omits details, forgets or mispronounces his words, and nobody minds, *because* he has in every

case a vivid concept of the main emotion or main situation of the song.

4. On the other hand a close study of the words will save errors. If Stroesco had been more possessed by the speech quality of

Il sole imbionda si la viva lana

he would not have accented it wrongly. (Note that the mistake was not Da Parma's who has followed D'Annunzio's speech cadence at this point with exactitude.) This same set of cautions concerning detail would apply with great force in a more detailed critique of the Mathers' recital.

A poem to be worth setting to music must either be of some interest, or it must permit a beautiful sequence of notes. If singers, in singing the first kind of song, would first study the poet, they would get over more than half the difficulties of singing well-set songs. (Ill-set songs they should, we believe, eschew.) The voice is more favoured than the oboe *because* it can articulate words. One should not surrender this asset too lightly. If one is not intent not only on the word-sounds but on their meaning one should sing beautiful arias on open vowels, where the mood and meaning is fairly simple. Modern French song-setting is supposed to have specialised in the literary values. It probably demands closer attention to the meaning of the poems than does Bel Canto.

If a singer has decided that a song means something in particular, even if his concept is wholly "wrong," he will probably make something of it.

5. Granting that the singer has got at the essential meaning of each song, he should not make a programme of songs "all the same size and shape," all sung in the same way, or all in the same mood, or with the same meaning, or with meanings too similar, even though their shapes and sizes be different.

6. The singer should never sound as if he was making *all* the noise possible. He must always sound as if he could if necessary sing louder. Mullings yells in opera and spoils one's pleasure. Stroesco's piano and pianissimo notes easily reach the last seats of the Aeolian; he should grade his volume of sound up to a *forte* which *appears* easily taken. I have marked four places when he exceeded this to the detriment of his effect. One must "leave some water in the bottom of the bucket." One wants to feel that the singer can go on singing next morning, not that he is splitting his weazand.

If Mrs. Edward Haley really loved the young lady who is, we presume, her daughter, she would not play her accompaniments publicly. Miss OLGA HALEY has a fine voice, as we have noticed before; she sings the ends of her words more distinctly than she did last season; she should pay a little more attention to the pronunciation of her French and Italian, and she might concentrate more attention on the *meaning* of the words she sings, but how any one could keep their mind on the meaning of anything with Mrs. Haley at the piano passes my imagination. Neither can I conceive how "Seguidille" could have been worse sung, or more abominably played. Miss Haley should avoid for a while songs demanding temperament, and those with complicated rhythms. The Rummel experiment was interesting but unconvincing, the accompaniment very cunningly made, but the words and voice-part open (wide open) to question.

Notice of Rosing's recital (Dec. 14) held over. But I cannot close without a special word of praise for Di Veroli's remarkable work in the Moussorgsky recital.

Raymonde Collignon whom we have praised here at various times is now at the Coliseum, and we hope that the grace and precision of her art will not be lost in that great and horrible auditorium. She deserves every success and has all the good wishes at our disposal.

## Recent Verse.

EDMUND HOLMES. *Sonnets to the Universe.* (Humphreys. 1s. net).

THESE one and twenty sonnets are by a writer who has already published three named volumes of verse and an anonymous etcetera. They should show, at least, good workmanship. The theme is large, it is true, being nothing less than everything; but an emotion about the cosmos is not an impossibility; it may even be what Clifford used to call a cosmic emotion. Let us see how the first sonnet begins. It is entitled "You and I"—you being understood to be the Universe.

It is enough that in the heart of me  
You are a lamp of light, a flame of love.  
It is enough for me that for my sake  
Your springs of life are ceaselessly renewed.

Pausing here, it may be observed that the phrase "the heart of me" for "my heart" has the effect of pathos, of a belittling pathos. It is impossible to employ "of me" for "my" without reminding us of the Irish school who have made a special sob of it. It is weak unto snivelling. In the second line "a lamp of light" is a pleonasm. What else is a lamp but a lamp of light? "Flame of love" is very commonplace. The last two lines express a thought somewhat out of key with the humility conveyed in the phrase "of me." It is enough, says Mr. Holmes, that the Universe lives for his sake. What more could be expected of the Universe we cannot think. The final line it is difficult to dissociate from Tottenham Court Road, where springs in another sense are renewed. The poet must be held responsible for the company his images keep. The sonnet closes with these two lines, reminiscent of parlour conundrums:—

You are the riddle which will ne'er be guessed.  
You are the answer hidden in my breast.

In a subsequent sonnet, "The Dewdrop and the Sea," we read as follows:

Your life-pulse beats with rhythmic ebb and flow,  
For you are in the cloud, the mist, the rain,  
The bubbling spring, the freshet foaming free,  
The sea-like river winding through the plain,  
The river widening out into the sea.

A sonnet consists of fourteen lines into which it is the custom of poets to pack as much as they can. Repetition must be avoided; likewise anything in the nature of a catalogue. It is a consummate exercise in taste, for nobody is allowed in the space of a sonnet to have two words where one would serve. Mr. Holmes, however, is very extravagant of his little room; he cannot let a word do its duty, or find a single image to represent his picture. He must add to both. For instance, "life-pulse" (ugly word as it is) is perfectly expressive; and it already connotes the phrase that follows it—"beats with rhythmic ebb and flow." This explanatory phrase is really, therefore, superfluous; it adds nothing to the meaning of "life-pulse," and only occupies space. The same criticism may be passed on the enumeration of the objects in which "You" is found: cloud, mist, rain, spring, freshet and river. Why all these, and *just* these? What have snow and hail and sleet and lakes and canals done to be omitted? There is nothing peculiarly representative in the list chosen. We feel they are there by favour and not by right. The two last lines illustrate the same error. "Sea-like river" is a commonplace image which needs no elaboration to be fully understood and appreciated. Yet Mr. Holmes must needs stretch it out into two lines, like a concertina, in the hope, presumably, of getting some music out of it. But, at best, the music is an old song.

The remaining sonnets are upon much the same level. They are all in the grand style commonplace. "Faith" contains the best couplet of the volume:

I find life's treasure in this endless quest,  
And peace of mind in infinite unrest.

And the best complete sonnet is on page 9, which begins thus:

To waken consciousness in depths unknown:  
To lift into the sunshine from the cool,  
Damp, silent cisterns, arched with dripping stone,  
Life's hidden waters, drawn from pool to pool.

There is a faint suspicion of poetry in the two middle lines of this passage.

CLAUDE COLLEER. *Youth and Age.* (Sidgwick and Jackson. 1s. net).

The general form of this volume of verse, which must be read as a whole, is modelled on Greek tragedy. Youth sings the airs, and Middle and Old Age supply or, rather, croak, a cynical chorus. Middle and Old Age, it seems, determine that war must be declared; and they summon Youth to do battle for them.

And Youth sprang up with his flashing eyes,  
With his supple limbs and his pride of race,  
Taut as a bow ere the arrow flies,  
He met his hour with a laughing grace.

It is well; and Middle and Old Age deserve all the contempt Youth bestows on them. But it is not always expressed to command our admiration.

Who trod the earth like young transfigured gods,  
Your heads among the stars.

It is a commonplace that Youth should have its head among the stars; we only complain of the banality of the image. And why "transfigured" gods? The gods need no transfiguration. Mr. Colleer comes nearer both to genuine sentiment and to poetry in his verses to the young men who died at Gallipoli.

These are the peers of Roland's men  
Who died at Roncevalles;  
These would have won the courtesy  
Of mighty Hannibal.

They shall be told as you, be sung  
And woven into dreams;  
They shall be known in many lands,  
And wept by other streams.

The last two lines quoted are worth all the rest of the volume; and a faint echo of their simplicity is heard in the final line of a chivalrous passage addressed to the German troops:

Fighting as bravely for the same sweet hopes,  
And dying the same way.

Mr. Colleer cannot be too simple to please his Muse and us.

T. W. MERCER. *Harvest and Other Poems.* (Plymouth Printers. 1s. net).

For an illustration of the difference between a plain statement of fact and a plain statement of poetry, Gradgrind's description of the horse may be compared with Job's. The difference, it will be seen and felt, is fundamental. Gradgrind's description is true to fact; but Job's is true to life. The distinction is worth bearing in mind, since an appreciation of the nature of poetry depends upon it; for poetry aims at being true to life rather than to fact. It is not, of course, the case that poetry and fact are necessarily incompatible; poetry can include the fact. The aim of poetry, however, is so to state the facts as to arouse the super-consciousness to take an interest in them. It aims at interesting the divine part of man (which otherwise is usually asleep) in the happenings of common humanity. With this preface we pass to the opening lines of Mr. Mercer's first poem—"Harvest."

To-day we reap ill fruit of evil seed,  
Sown by Earth's lords while Labour was asleep;  
The bitter fruits of jealousy and greed,  
To-day we reap.

The assonant pair of rhymes cannot conceal from the reader the commonplace sentiments expressed; nor do



they do anything to lift the subject to the level of interest of poetry. The author, no doubt, feels his subject sincerely; there are many evidences, indeed, of his sincerity throughout the volume; but he no more succeeds in arousing our interest than if he were to declare in verse that he is suffering from the toothache. A statement of fact, even when the fact is a real feeling, is not of necessity a statement of poetry: it needs to be made into poetry. 'A Song of March' should be a more favourable subject; and here is Mr. Mercer's opening:

O winds of March! O winds of March!  
Blow thy fierce gales through me,  
Blow then away all fog and mist,  
That cloud my brain, my judgments twist;  
And set my caged thoughts free.

It is not a riot, but a scuffle of images—each commendable in itself, but a deadly enemy of its neighbour. One line alone deserves to be quoted:

Horsemen have ridden down the corn.

It is a cry from the heart, but a voice in the wilderness.

STEPHEN MAGUIRE.

## Views and Reviews.

### MODERNISM.\*

It is fitting that the "Modern Outlook" series should begin with a study of Modernism by the friend of George Tyrrell, who was its chief English exponent. The form that the controversy took tended to obscure its meaning from the general public; but its spirit and its object were familiar, and to most English people, seemed a little belated. For our struggle between science and religion ended with the victory of science; the coming of age of the "Origin of Species" coincided with the early period of popular education, and the right of inquiry, which is the method of science, was added to the other rights of man. But our biologists differed from the Modernists in this respect, that they only desired to establish the right of inquiry with its corollaries; the Modernists, on the other hand, were chiefly concerned to reconcile the results of inquiry with the dogmas of Catholicism, and to attempt to reform the Catholic Church. Science, here, fought to establish itself as an autonomous system of knowledge acquired by inquiry and experiment; there, it strove to reconcile itself with a professedly revealed system of knowledge, and to delimit the respective boundaries of knowledge and faith. The object was not so much to secure the triumph of the scientific method as to reform the Catholic Church by simplifying the basis of faith, to maintain Catholicism by saving the Catholic Church from degeneration into a sect of wilfully ignorant believers. The bitterness with which the struggle was finally waged was indicative of its importance; the Catholic Church was fighting for its life, and it showed no mercy. Translated into political language, Modernism was a vote of no confidence in the Government; and as the Catholic Church is an autocracy, such a vote could only be described as rebellious, and the Church took the necessary measures of discipline.

Miss Petre says in her preface: "To blame Modernism for this attitude of combined revolt and attachment is to blame it for being itself—a form of criticism which is not true criticism." It is of the very essence of Modernism to maintain the need of both life and form; to uphold the primary necessity for the former, but also the secondary necessity for the latter. He asks for self-determination, but not at the cost of going out of his own land into a desert to exercise it. He asks to be respected, listened to and represented in the administration of his Church; he does not ask to

pull down or abandon the building which was his home. The Modernist sets forth, in things religious, the claim which we are making in things political; the claim of a people to live on its own soil, but to live there in peace and freedom."

I differ from Miss Petre in her very definition; the only valid criticism of a thing is criticism of what it is, any other criticism is simply misrepresentation. Modernism was fundamentally wrong in its dual intention; no one can have an argument both ways, no one can both be and not be a believer in anything. Sooner or later, one has to come down to definition; and Modernism, driven to definition, declared itself Catholic and the Papacy an usurpation. Modernism could not combine revolt and attachment, and the valid criticism of it must be directed to its assumption that it could. There is no obvious limit to the application of the scientific method, even the "varieties of religious experience" can be tabulated, and compared, and systematically treated as a contribution to psychology; but there are obvious limits to the acceptability of the results of scientific inquiry. If a guest at a country house party, for example, were to tell his host that, after careful inquiry, he had discovered that his host had no valid title to his estates, he could hardly expect his host to appreciate the careful research and the precision of its results. Modernism did something very similar for the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Church of Rome, and Tyrrell himself recognised it at the end. In the last lines that he ever wrote, he exclaimed: "What tyranny ever voted its own destruction or admitted a truth fatal to its interests? Will the Roman bureaucracy, that exploits even the Papacy, ever resign their revenues and their ascendancy? Modernists do not believe it for a moment. Their whole hope is in the irresistible tide of truth and knowledge, which must at last surround and overmount the barriers of ignorance, buttressed up by untruthfulness; and, above all, in such inward and living Christianity as may still be left in a rapidly dying Church." Strictly speaking, this is a recantation of Modernism, of the attitude of combined revolt and attachment; and Tyrrell at last saw what both his friends and his enemies declared, that his proper place was outside.

The controversy has a wider reference than to the theology of Roman Catholicism; for Modernism is not a creed, it is a spirit that, as Miss Petre says, is akin to that of some political developments. The analogy is even more perfect than she imagines, for in modern politics there is the dual intention of the Modernist, the desire not to be governed and to enjoy the benefits of government. The Modernist is really the conscientious objector to theology, and, like the conscientious objector, he mis-states or at least misunderstands the first principles of organisation. The first principle of the State is not the guarantee of freedom of conscience, but of preservation of the State; the first principle of the Church is not the promulgation of historical fact, but the preservation of its own existence. And although it is true that there is a history of mythology which puts Catholic theology in its place as one among many systems of inaccurately observed facts and unwarrantable inferences from them, it is no part of the duty of the Catholic Church to promulgate the findings of that historical research. Its first duty is to itself; and if the conditions of its continuance have changed (and they certainly have), it is none the less subject to the vital imperative of fulfilling those conditions if it would continue to exist. The Modernist tried to make the Church return to what it was originally, making the history of the development of dogma, sacrament, and organisation deny the validity of the very development it recorded; the Church quite properly refused, because it was unable, to cancel its own history or to cut its own

\* "Modernism: Its Failure and its Fruits." By M. D. Petre. (T. C. and E. C. Jack. 6s. net.)

throat. That the Church is no place for an honest man, is not a new discovery: "My Father's house was a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves," is as good Gospel doctrine as any other. But Christ's attempt to reform the Church of the Jews failed as signally as the attempt of Barebones' Parliament to reform the Court of Chancery; and with more wisdom than the Modernist, Christ left the Church, cursed its officials, and communicated a new spirit to the interpretation of old maxims. He did not wait to be banished; like Coriolanus, He banished them, and offered His teaching to those who wanted it. Modernism wasted time in its attack on the Church; if it had succeeded, it would, like the Reformation, have given the Church a new lease of life, and wasted the time of generations. Its failure has defined the Church of Rome as a communion of all those who do not know or will not accept the truth; all the believers in autocratic government, secret diplomacy, the censorship of knowledge and opinion, et hoc genus omne, may now find in the Catholic Church their proper refuge. The result of Modernism is the definition of Roman Catholicism in the old terms, the enemy of the human race; but as it was not the intention of Modernism to establish this definition, Modernism must be adjudged to have failed. A. E. R.

## Reviews.

**A Pier and a Band.** By Mary MacCarthy. (Chatto and Windus. 6s. net.)

First novels are usually autobiographical and full of passion; but Mrs. Desmond MacCarthy has set an example that, we hope, will not be generally followed. She has discovered that novels can be written, and set herself to write one without wanting to do anything in particular, except to provide "a little quiet reading" for Cecilia, to whom the book is dedicated, "before she goes to sleep." The book does not "pull together," it has no focus of interest; it produces the impression, so flat and toneless is its general effect, that Mrs. MacCarthy either did not know enough of her subject or care enough for her characters to do justice to either of them. She does not show us her people, she only tells us about them; she poses a conflict, and evades the drama of it. She is too explanatory, too reasonable; she is more concerned with the solution of the quarrel than she is with the quarrel, and therefore her people are so and do such and such things because she says so. The dispute between the landed aristocrat who wants to preserve a beauty spot intact, with all its poverty, disease, and misery, and the vulgar, self-made man who wants to develop the place, to give it a pier and a band and some hotels and red-brick villas, and so on, is one that has all the elements of great drama. It is a subject of national importance; it contrasts two opposing conceptions, the value of the preservation of beauty and the value of the utilisation of national resources for the benefit of large numbers of people; it opposes two characters that, if only they could become alive, would typify for this generation the men who do and the men who oppose. The book implies far more than it realises, because Mrs. MacCarthy is chiefly concerned to state a solution. The problem, she thinks, is mainly an architectural problem; if Mr. Tippits had been directed to build in the style and stone of the country, instead of in red brick and the Decorative Democratic, there would have been no objection to, on the contrary, there would have been everything in favour of, his proposed development of the place. His was simply an error of taste, while the landlord's was a fundamental error of character, thinks Mrs. MacCarthy; and so it may well be (although the thesis as stated is very provocative), but it is not the business of the novelist to pass judgment on her

people, it is her business to make them so real that insensibly they induce the reader to decide between them. She touches on several public matters, an election, a disputed private Bill for a railway, and so on, and treats them diffidently and speedily forgets them. Nor does she compensate us by her treatment of the characters; the love-episodes are just as unreal, just as reasonable, as the rest. It is true that there is nothing to be done with people who refuse to live in the present but to leave them to expire as gracefully as they can in their chosen backwaters; but Mrs. MacCarthy does not make this mean anything to either party. Antony just becomes his grandfather's heir in spirit as well as possessions; Perdita just marries Fitzgerald because he seems to be alive—and the everlasting "Why?" to everything remains unanswered. Mrs. MacCarthy is not interested enough to explore, not enthusiastic enough to create; she is only clever enough to describe, and reasonable enough to show how silly it is to quarrel. This levelling-down to reason produces a singularly inartistic effect; the characters are as flat as oleographs, and their story more tame than that of a domestic cat. It is a pity, because Mrs. MacCarthy shows real talent in her description of the spineless Mr. Villiers; she is really only at ease among the moribund, and her equanimity is the impartiality of a hostess who knows that her guests are "safe" even if some of them are supposed to be singular.

**General Smuts' Campaign in East Africa.** By Brig.-Gen. J. H. V. Crowe, C.B. (Murray. 10s. 6d. net.)

This is, in Brig.-Gen. Crowe's own words, "little more than a diary of the events of the campaign" which he has had no opportunity, and no immediate prospect of an opportunity, of re-casting in more literary form. Even so, it is valuable as a record of the facts of one of the most extraordinary campaigns in history. General Smuts' summary, in a preface, of the difficulties of the campaigns puts into a paragraph what the book tells us in detail. "It is impossible for those unacquainted with German East Africa to realise the physical, transport, and supply difficulties of the advance over this magnificent country of unrivalled scenery and fertility, consisting of great mountain systems alternating with huge plains; with a great rainfall and wide, unbridged rivers in the regions of the mountains, and insufficient surface water on the plains for the needs of an army; with magnificent bush and primeval forest everywhere, pathless, trackless, except for the spoor of the elephant or the narrow foot-paths of the natives; the malaria mosquito everywhere, except on the highest plateaux; everywhere belts infested with the deadly tsetse fly which makes an end of all animal transport; the ground almost everywhere a rich black or red cotton soil, which any transport converts into mud in the rain or dust in the drought. In the rainy seasons which occupy about half the year much of the country becomes a swamp, and military movements become impracticable. And everywhere the fierce heat of equatorial Africa, accompanied by a wild luxuriance of parasitic life, breeding tropical diseases in the unacclimatised white. These conditions make life for the white man in that country far from a pleasure trip; if, in addition, he has to perform real hard work and make long marches or short rations the trial becomes very severe; if, above all, huge masses of men and material have to be moved over hundreds of miles on a great military expedition against a mobile and alert foe, the strain become unendurable. And the chapter of accidents in this region of the unknown! Unseasonable rains cut off expeditions for weeks from their supply bases; animals died by the thousand after passing through an unknown fly belt; mechanical transport got bogged in the marshes, held up by bridges washed away, or mountain passes

demolished by sudden floods. And the gallant boys, marching far ahead under the pitiless African sun, with the fever raging in their blood, pressed ever on after the retreating enemy, often on much reduced rations and without any of the small comforts which in this climate are real necessities. In the story of human endurance this campaign deserves a very special place, and the heroes who went through it uncomplainingly, doggedly, are entitled to all recognition and reverence. Their commander-in-chief will remain eternally proud of them." Brig.-Gen. Crowe's matter-of-fact is probably the only way of dealing with this epic campaign; in no other style could the facts of the campaign have been stated in a reasonable compass of space. The book has a frontispiece photograph of General Smuts, and four maps; and should provide material for the consideration of military students, and keep the poets supplied with subjects for a century or two.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

### NIETZSCHE IN AMERICA.

Sir,—As a footnote to "Zarathrustrian's" interesting article on Nietzsche in France and America—and incidentally as a corrective to "R. H. C.'s" gloomy picture of the "condition of real culture in America"—may I call attention to the account of Nietzsche which appeared last spring in the American "War Cyclopædia"—an official handbook prepared for the use of teachers, speakers, and editors by the Committee on Public Information? I do not know who wrote the sentences that follow, but I am sure that they deserve to stand with the books of M. Huan and Professor Salter as one more assurance that a League of Cultures is not an impossibility:

"Nietzsche's intellectual career presents four phases, and this undoubtedly has led to misunderstanding of his position: (1) He is one of the severest critics of contemporary German culture; (2) later (1877-1880) he is rationalistic, recalling Montaigne; (3) yet later (1881-1882) his forecasts of the superman and of the attack on Christianity as a religion of slaves appear; (4) in 1883, with the publication of "Thus Spake Zarathrustra," he formulated the ideas which are said to have seduced Germany. They are the superman, master morality (the morality of superior persons, who ought to enforce it), antichrist, and the will to power. Nevertheless, so late as 1888, he also remains the most caustic protestant against materialised Germany, and thus his possible relation to the doctrines which produced the spirit of ruthless conquest in Germany is obscure. This much may be said: Nietzsche insists that individuals of higher culture must assert themselves for the sake of civilisation. They must adopt an anarchistic attitude toward conventional notions and customs, particularly toward the exclusive national State, of which Germany is the great example. Their right to do this is nothing less than a sacred duty. In short, he is an egotistic aristocrat. This teaching seems to have been torn from its context by popularising or political writers, and to have been patched on to a wild theory of Teutonic race superiority, stolen from Gobineau by the notorious Teutonised Houston Stewart Chamberlain. In form, probably with little reference to its original setting, it was incorporated in imperial, junker, and Prussian self-glorification. The process was facilitated unquestionably by the fact that Nietzsche, so far from being a systematic thinker, is rather a prophetic mystic, of the type familiar to English readers in certain works of Thomas Carlyle."

RONALD S. CRANE.

### CHEAP LABOUR.

Sir,—Given that  $x$  = hours of labour required to build a locomotive, and  $y$  per hour the rate of wages in the locomotive trade, both in 1913. Then the cost in labour for building a locomotive in those days was  $xy$ . Now suppose in 1919 the number of hours required is  $x/3$  and wages rise to  $2y$  per hour, the cost is  $2/3 xy$ . Here you have at once cheap labour ( $2/3$  of what it was) and high

wages (twice what they were). Does not this solve your difficulty about high wages and cheap labour? My figures are fictitious, but founded on a motor business, and the decreased hours were due to more efficient machinery. S. C.

[We do not doubt that in particular cases high wages and low labour costs are compatible. But conceive this condition widely spread, and it will be seen that the demand for labour in general undergoes reduction, with the consequence (other things being equal) that Labour in general must submit to a reduction of its price, or wages. While Labour remains a commodity, its selling-price in general is fixed by Supply and Demand; and particular cases to the contrary do not affect the main rule.—ED., N.A.]

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### ART: OLD MASTERS AND MODERN.

Sir,—May I urge all students of art to visit the delightful exhibition of recent acquisitions to be seen at present in Room XIX of the National Gallery? Though the works range from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century, it is not the old and the new which clash, but what I would call, using the words in no narrow sense, the sincere and the insincere. At least eleven paintings widely different in technique and idea hold their own without conflict between themselves. These are "Adoration of the Magi," by Bellini; "King René's Honeymoon," by Ford Madox Brown; "St. Ursula Leaving Her Father," by Carpaccio; "St. Catherine," by Garofalo; "Poppæa Offering Alms to St. Peter," by Girolamo da Cremona; two "Heads of Saints," attributed to Lorenzetti; "A Soldier," by Manet; "Sacrifice of Isaac," by Piazzetta; "The Philosopher," by Rembrandt; and "Virgin and Child," by Hugo Van Der Goes. The contrasts in the display are so interesting that it should be worth while, when the Gallery is again fully open, to set aside a room for the study of the older and newer work together. Mr. C. J. Holmes would further earn the gratitude of many if he could induce the directors of other institutions to co-operate in order that paintings by Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Persian masters might be brought here too, that the East (whose influence on modern art has been so great) might meet the West on the same walls. It cannot be doubted that by such means a truer understanding of the vital principles of art would be encouraged and advanced.

ERNEST H. R. COLLINGS.

### RECENT VERSE.

Sir,—While in general I agree with your reviewer's remarks upon my book, "Folly, and Other Poems" (for no one can see more clearly than I do the many faults it contains), I wish to make one or two comments upon his use of the word "vulgar." To call a poet "vulgar" is to offer him the greatest possible compliment, and I accept the compliment greedily. Though Mr. Maguire intends to be not complimentary but insulting, the very reasons he gives in justification of his criticism seem to add (if possible) an increased glory to my work and to my poor self. I pass over the insolence of an unbeliever presuming to teach religious deportment to a Christian and solemnly reproving him for being terribly at ease in Zion (which, by the way, was what Matthew Arnold said that Carlyle was reported to have said of Socrates). My point is that if, as a poet, I ought to be vulgar, and am glad to hear that I *am* vulgar, I am equally glad to hear that reproach as a Christian. For there is this paradox in the Faith that, whereas other religions worship God for His power, Christians worship Him for His weakness, and that deeper than the deep mystery of the Divine Wisdom is the mystery of the Divine Foolishness.

I do not quarrel with Mr. Maguire's criticism upon its literary side (it seems that he was trying hard to say something nice before his space was exhausted, and would have said it if the foot of the column hadn't been reached too soon), but there is amusement to be drawn from the reflection that "the two sonnets, to relative and absolute Beauty respectively, which are, perhaps, the best of which Mr. Maynard is yet capable," are, perhaps, the best because they first appeared in THE NEW AGE!

THEODORE MAYNARD.

## Pastiche.

GERMANY, 1918.

Dry-eyed we watch our crumbling, falling State  
In agony of soul! our voices dumb!  
Our very sense of feeling quite, quite numb.  
We can but gaze while others carve our fate.  
'Tis not more easy, though 'tis now too late  
To learn we lived beneath a despot's thumb,  
Who gave us death, knowing that shame would come,  
And pledged our honour for ambition's bait.  
We have no eyes to vision Freedom's way,  
Nor heart to understand had we the choice.  
We only feel our utter misery.  
O World, could you conceive such tragedy,  
Then would you lift your just, condemning voice  
In this the hour of our Gethsemane?

LESLIE FREEMAN (Lt.).

### NUIT D'ETE.

Sweet silent hour when ever gentle night  
Drawing a final curtain to the west  
Holds high to heaven her burnished lamp whose light  
Falls softly where earth's children lie at rest,  
Tired with their solemn play,  
To wait the coming of another day.

The trees have cast their glowing coat of green  
And filled their arms with hushed melodies,  
Each flower a tinted shadow where it lies  
Steeped in the pallor of the moonlight sheen.  
Then from his hidden hermitage the bat  
With crookèd flight  
Joins the mysterious legion of the night,  
The uncouth owl, wide moths whose cumbrous wing  
Beats the dew-laden air, sleek-coatèd rat,  
And many a creeping thing,  
The glow-worm who his tiny lantern bears  
In secret paths where birds that never sing  
People a world that only now is theirs.

O kindly hour of dreams that flee the dawn  
Release my soul from fetters of the day,  
And thou still silent sentinel withdrawn,  
Leave fancy to her play.  
Shy thoughts who own her sovereignty now spread  
Uncertain wings and circle o'er my head.  
Echoes of earth-born voices slowly die  
While night winds breathe eternal harmony.

T. A. COLLINS.

### LIFE.

#### I.

One day I lay along the mead  
And saw upon my coat  
A tiny, tiny mote:  
It was, I found, a seed.  
"Get off!" I said, and it began to float  
To earth. It cried, "Hip-hip-hurray,  
I must take root to-day!"

#### II.

As I was walking in the clover,  
I trod upon a root  
And cried, "You clumsy brute,  
You nearly tripped me over!"  
It whispered, "Sorry, I'm about to shoot."  
"And what the devil will you be?"  
"I'll be," it said, "a tree."

#### III.

In love I sought a tree to cut  
The names I sha'n't forget,  
For they are stuck there yet,  
And in a heart I put  
The twining signs of Ruth and Triboulet.  
The tree said, "I, too, am a lover,  
I'm growing leaves all over."

#### IV.

One afternoon on picnic bent  
I sought and found a shade  
Within a lovely glade.  
The sunbeams vainly spent  
Their fury on a screen by thick leaves made.  
"Oh, thanks!" I said. "The pleasure's ours.  
We're catching light for flowers."

#### V.

The blossom was so very high  
I only could admire.  
I reached in vain, for higher  
The branches seemed to fly.  
The blossoms sniggered seeing me perspire.  
"Oh, dear, you'll spoil your Sunday suit.  
What would you do for fruit?"

#### VI.

'Twas Autumn and I heard the fall  
Of something soft. I seized  
The thing and crushed and squeezed  
It up. "Oh, is this all,  
A rotten mass?" I cried. "Is Heaven pleased  
To waste its work for this?" "Take heed,"  
God said, "You hold a seed!"

TRIBOULET.

### IN A BURST OF ENERGY.

In a burst of energy I wrote one day  
An epic, an ode, and a roundelay;  
Five sonnets; an elegy; a gloze;  
A ballad; a lengthy satire in prose;  
A Discourse on Art; an address to Pan;  
And concluded with a Treatise on Man.  
I wrote all day, till at eve I felt  
Like a pound of butter about to melt.  
—Then I suddenly thought of Horace's saw,  
About keeping your poems nine years or more.  
Pardieu, I said, nine years to wait;  
'Tis easy enough to preach and prate.  
But perhaps it would be as well to take  
A glance over in case of an odd mistake.  
And so I carefully read them over;  
And little to alter could discover.  
—But, in a burst of energy, quire after quire,  
I pitched the whole damned lot in the fire!

C. S. D.

### THE KNIGHTLY DAMOISEAU.

There was a knightly damoiseau,  
And Godfrey de la Tour he hight,  
Who forth to range the wood did go,  
Most brightly clad and bravely dight.  
His surcoat silken, broad and white,  
Embroidered was like hawthorn tree,  
That blossometh in the yellow light  
For the delight of fly and bee.

And forth along the waters' marge  
With rushes set and fleurs-de-lys,  
He rode with spear and leathern targe:  
And well and manfully rode he  
By flowering bush and budding tree,  
Till the blue heaven 'gan to gloam—  
Then turned him back, and hied him home.

RUTH PITTER.

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