

# THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER"  
A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, AND ART

No. 1715] NEW SERIES Vol. XXXVII. No. 12. THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1925. [Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] SIXPENCE

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

To parched travellers through the economic desert any oasis is welcome, even though it afford no water, but merely temporary shade. So it is not surprising *that we* have to hold on to our hat in the strong breeze of relieved sighs with which the Stock Exchange flops down under the shelter of rubber trees. Rubber! When did we last talk of rubber? It was in February, 1923, when we commented upon the scheme of restriction in output which was then in operation, and which has since succeeded in bouncing the price of this product up to 4s 6d. a pound. Let us recall one or two facts which we mentioned at that time. (*Credit Power*, February, 1923.) It was estimated that no less than £100,000,000 had been invested in plantations. In course of time (for a rubber tree has to be four or five years old before it can be tapped) the rubber began to pour out into the world in such streams that the price fell away until it reached somewhere in the neighbourhood of sixpence a pound. This was very good business for the motorist or for the Saturday-afternoon gamins who played cricket in Regent's Park, but was ruinous to the rubber planters. Low as the price became, moreover, there had accumulated from 100,000 to 200,000 tons of "unwanted" rubber in the world. So the system of regulating the total supply was inaugurated. At the time we wrote, the price had been forced up to 1s. 6d. a pound by this means. It now appears that the intention of the promoters was to "stabilise" the price in the region of 1s. 3d. a pound, at which level it was calculated that a living dividend could be earned by the industry. But somehow or other the "stabilisation" parrot has flown up to the four-and-sixpenny branch of the tree and turns a supercilious beak on foreshortened trunks of the agitated rubber consumers below. That is the way with all systems of *fixing prices*; they are just like those puzzles where you have to get little shots to run into little holes: you tilt this way, you tilt that way; but those shots will persist in running past the holes in the direction you *have tilted*—never where you *are tilting*. They make

faces at the law of gravitation, and *run up-hill* as merrily as they please. It is quite easy to give a *direction* to prices in favour of producers or in favour of consumers, but never to keep them at rest in a place favourable to both. The shots will not go in the holes. Much less will they do so if two people get hold of the puzzle-box and try to tilt it in different directions at the same time; and that is precisely what happens to any price policy in the existing economic puzzle-box. Some people's livings depend on a higher price, others' on a lower; and both insist in having a hand on the policy. An illustration of the process is afforded by the *Daily News*. It reports that the India Rubber Manufacturers' Association, Ltd., have issued a manifesto demanding a complete withdrawal of the Stevenson scheme (the name given to the above restriction arrangement) or a drastic modification of it. They assert that when Mr. Winston Churchill was piloting the scheme through the Cabinet in 1922 he definitely stated that a price of 1s. 3d. a pound for rubber would give a fair profit to the producer. They also remind Lord Stevenson that when he was asked at the time whether, in the event of the restrictive legislation causing prices to soar through short supply, steps would be taken to unload stocks and bring the price down, he gave an "emphatic affirmative reply." (The signatories ought to have quoted his Lordship's exact words, for sometimes we have noticed such assurances as, for instance, "What do *you* think?"! being accepted as quite definite.) The Association naturally wants to know "what about it?" In other words, it wants to grab hold of the puzzle-box; and there is every prospect of a first-class scuffle, in the midst of which it would not be surprising to see the box dropped and trodden underfoot, leaving the shots and holes to wander the whole world over for years on end like *Arabian Nights* princes in search of their princesses. Sir George Beharrell, a director of the Dunlop Rubber Company, says that "a peak price of more than 3s. a pound could never have been contemplated when the scheme was first put into operation." Exactly. Prices do not advance and retire "according to plan." "Now that the

position has so completely changed," he continues, "the need for a review of the scheme . . . has undoubtedly arrived." It is the turn of the rubber planter to get out of the boat and swim.

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There is another aspect of the situation, one that we recommend to the attention of Mr. Meulen. He has recently stated that in just such an emergency as this the provision of easy credit facilities to would-be competitors (in this case, people willing to plant new rubber areas) would bring prices down. This assumes that these would-be competitors would go into the business with that object. But would they? It is one thing to talk about making credit easy to borrow for a certain purpose of your own, and quite another thing to get the borrower to use it for that purpose. The aspect to which we refer is the psychology of the investing classes as revealed by the rubber boom on the Stock Exchange. Now, remembering that it is these investing classes on whom Mr. Meulen would depend for starting up the rival rubber undertaking (we will concede the point as to where they would go to plant their trees), we have to take particular note of their present attitude. What is that attitude? It can be phrased in the following sentiment: "Here is a business making heaps of profits: let us go into it." But what they ought to be saying, if Mr. Meulen's diagnosis is correct, is: "Here is a business making disgraceful profits; let us finance another one, and force its price down." Again, on the same diagnosis, they ought to be starting an agitation for more credit facilities. But, from all indications, they prefer to gamble on the present rising rubber market than to borrow new credit in order to ensure a falling rubber market. How could it be otherwise? Shall investors put money down for a project which, if successful, will cause them to lose it? Mr. P. W. Martin, in his *Flaw in the Price System*, speaking of the consequences involved in a fall of prices, says:—

The fall in prices means that producers must buy their raw material at a comparatively high price, and sell their finished product at a comparatively low price, so that the small profit they counted upon making may well be turned into a loss. In addition, a host of incidental troubles afflicts them; the sale of bankrupt stocks puts up unequal competition; failure of weaker firms produces a crop of bad debts; falling prices cause goods in stock to depreciate in value; overhead charges, which run on whether production continues or not, swell costs to an impossible figure. Over the whole broods a spirit of pessimistic caution.

Not all of these consequences apply to the immediate case in point, but in general they point the moral that the mere getting down of prices, by whatever means, is no solution of general economic problems, and, in fact, may increase them. Take rubber by itself. The price is threefold what it was. This price is being paid by buyers, and is now being diffused throughout industry as extra costs. For instance, the tyre-makers are warning their customers of a probable 25 per cent. rise in price if raw rubber does not come down. Now, supposing a rival rubber concern were to start operations at the present time. It would have to buy its material on a price-basis which had been raised by the extra charges made by the existing rubber companies. It would be thus handicapped at the start as their would-be competitor. And the more gross was the profiteering going on the greater would be the handicap on the new concern. Widen the survey from rubber to all articles and the impossible position of new concerns with the assumed objective becomes manifest. It would be to assume their incurring costs at a price-level of, say, 120, and subsequently profitably selling their product when the price-level was down to 100; and not only that, but competing against an organisation which had been built up before the price-level had risen to the 120 mark. It is true that many enterprises have been started in the past under such hopeless conditions, and will

again, but in no case did the investors contemplate the subsequent fall in the price-level; they were all counting upon stability—more probably upon a substantial rise in price—but were cheated by events beyond their control. But to assume that any capitalist is going consciously to build up a concern which is to function for the political purpose of general price-reduction is to court almost instant disillusionment. There is another consideration to be noticed. It is estimated that the all-in cost of raw rubber on a properly managed estate should at present not exceed 8½d. a pound. Another estimate speaks of 10½d. as a price at which it could be marketed. If these figures are accurate, they mean that the present rubber planters are in a position to accumulate colossal reserves in order to fight possible newcomers. They would have four to five years' notice. It is true that if the fight took place, the incidental price-cutting would be healthy for rubber buyers (who might or might not pass on the benefit to the consumer) but it would not last. One or other party would go under, or, more probably, there would be a new "Stevenson Scheme" embracing both of them with their combined capitals. These reflections go to confirm what we are constantly saying, that so long as personal incomes are exclusively dependent upon wages, salaries and dividends, so long, that is, as producers (masters and men alike) have to find all their means of life out of selling prices, they will never agree to co-operate in price reduction. And since, as producers desiring to see prices up, they are organised, and as consumers desiring to see them down, they are disorganised, the ultimate attitude of them in both roles together—i.e. as a community—will be opposed to cheap selling. That is why the banks' deflation policy is now being universally criticised. But whether deflation be carried out by the cheap and certain method of withholding credit or attempted by the expensive and futile method of issuing credit to duplicate existing productive equipment, the policy remains the same; and, as a policy, the country will reject it as soon as it understands it. Sooner or later it must be realised that industrial earnings need not be the sole source of the people's incomes. Guarantee them incomes supplementing earnings, and make the basis of these incomes not the price recovered by sales, but the quantity of goods consumed through sales, and you will have removed the psychological inhibition against the logically and practically sound method of arriving at minimum prices through maximum output. Under the existing financial system the reduction of price means the extraction of money from somebody's income. Under Social Credit finance it will mean exactly the opposite; it will add purchasing power to all incomes.

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We turn to a last consideration. There is one consolation in the rubber situation, and it is that a very large proportion of the rubber planters' profits are being collected from American buyers. Britain is therefore repaying debt to America at the rate of 4s. 6d. a pound of rubber delivered instead of 1s. 3d. or 1s. 6d. Since America uses 75 per cent. of the world's output (she makes 55 million tyres a year), the aggregate sum she will have to disgorge if we can only keep the price up will be "some figure." Now what an opportunity is being missed by this country's adherence to a system which says that her own people shall be flogged with the same whip as she is laying about her external creditors. Imagine the situation if by the application of the principle of consumer-credit the weight of the 4s. 6d. charge on British producers were as though it were only 1s. 3d., while at the same time it were imposed in full on similar producers across the Atlantic. See what an enormous competitive advantage we should gain in respect of exports of goods into which rubber entered (and

ultimately in respect of all goods) to the markets which we are both serving. From the point of view of the home consumer it would be immaterial whether rubber rose to 5s., 10s., or any price you like a pound in the world market; he would buy what he wanted on the basis of 1s. 3d. just the same. (He could buy at a great deal less under such circumstances.) And within the limits of the economic system nothing could release American producers from this stranglehold except their creation of an adequate rubber-growing area of their own; and even then Britain would be able to go on taxing them for four or five years while the trees were reaching maturity. Of course, our readers are familiar with the answer to all this. A people driven beyond a certain point within the limits of economics break out from them completely, and commence bargaining by means of battle cruisers and bombing planes. In fact, the whole of economic competition as governed by current financial law corresponds to the old picture of backwoods-men playing cards with revolvers on their knees. The risk of being shot for cheating kept the game fairly straight; and that is all that keeps international over-reaching within some sort of bounds, with the added complication that in this gambling saloon merely being lucky is likely to be imputed for dishonesty. If Britain were generally in as strong position apropos of America as is now the case with rubber, there is no statesman alive who supposes for a moment that Britain would be permitted to exploit her advantage to its theoretically legitimate limits. Mr. Montagu Norman would be called over to Washington as a first step, in the hope that perhaps he might be able to spell-bind our manufacturers to refrain from their advantage: then, if not, there would be war. Already there is a report in the Press stating that the Rubber Association of America has called the attention of the Department of State to the "rapid increase in crude rubber prices and the alleged British monopoly" at a conference which Mr. Kellogg attended and which President Coolidge is said to have arranged. The Rubber Association was restive enough in 1923, when the price stood at 1s. 6d., so its present state of agitation can be imagined. We are not hinting that an Anglo-American war would arise out of this particular episode. It is much more likely that the first sign to this country of American displeasure would take the form of a suddenly increased stream of dollars in China. According to the *Daily Mail's* correspondents there, dollars have already commenced to flow, and the explanation given is that "most of the money paid to the Chinese by Moscow has been American dollars":—

"This money, the Soviet, in the first instance, has collected from American concession hunters, who have been very busy of late months in both European and Asiatic Russia, and with whom the Bolsheviks have been dealing on the ready-money principle."

That is one view of the origin of the dollars, but it does not go very far back. In fact the writer of the above passage continues—

"What rewards these Americans will reap from their money payments, plus their wonderful faith, remains to be seen."

Well, that depends upon what they really paid the money for, and in what their wonderful faith was reposed. It depends upon whether they were commercials after business concessions, or diplomats after something bigger. In the latter case perhaps they were buying a comfortable location for a hall in which to hold the international conference which America proposes to call for the purpose of discussing China's claims for the abolition of the extra-territorial privileges of Japan and European countries in her territory. If so the comments of the *Nichi Nichi* in Tokio may be worth quoting:—

"The proposal discloses that Washington, with characteristic diplomacy, is asserting its own will, with an utter disregard of Britain, who is now left in hopeless isolation.

She must readjust her relations with America or reach a temporary arrangement with Japan to escape from the dilemma."

This is very discreetly worded, for as a matter of fact the old Anglo-Japanese *entente* has never been interrupted, in spite of its having been officially "ended" some time ago under pressure from Washington. However, the rumour that has given rise to these comments is one to the effect that the British Ambassador in Tokio has proposed a "working agreement" between Britain and Japan, whereby they would co-operate to protect their common interests in China as well as Japanese interests in Manchuria. Baron Shidehara, the Japanese Foreign Minister, the rumour goes, has assented to the principle, but has not committed himself to any details "pending information concerning the views held at Washington." Now, if this is true, it has a special significance. Since all diplomats know that there has always been a "working agreement" between the two countries since the Treaty was first signed, the present proposal of the British Ambassador must be construed as meaning something more than it says. And there is little doubt that it is a subtle hint that both Britain and Japan are prepared to resist the imposition of American policy through Moscow and Peking if that policy is what they suspect it is, namely that of stimulating local agitation in China and then of using that agitation as a pretext for depriving them, through an "international conference," of certain commercial (firstly) and strategic (secondly) privileges which they now enjoy. Baron Shidehara, it will be noticed, is waiting to hear what Washington has to say. Naturally Washington can have nothing to say against the principle of co-operation between two countries for the protection of their interests in a third; but what Washington can say, and what the Baron is expecting to hear, is whether those interests are regarded as legitimate in America's view, and if not, whether she proposes to press her objections, and how. The shooting of Chinese students in Shanghai on May 30, unfortunately for Britain, was done by British policemen; and the original cause of the assembly of the "mob" there was the alleged murder of a Chinese worker by the Japanese, unfortunately for Japan. America, luckily, was not there. (Blessed are the absent, for they shall hear good of themselves.) And quite as unfortunately the medical evidence goes to show that most of the bullets (forty-five were said to have been fired) entered the victims' backs. Moreover, only ten seconds' interval is stated to have elapsed between the warning and the firing. We do not know how true these particulars are, but they are vouched for in a typewritten document called *Justice*, published by the Federation of College Faculties in Shanghai, that has come into our hands. The document is accompanied by a letter signed by thirty-six Chinese presidents, professors, secretaries, deans, and engineers, representing engineering and medical colleges, universities, educational associations, and by the editor in chief of *The Commercial Press*. In the letter and document are views, testimonies and protests much the same as those to which we have been accustomed in this country after the suppression of "riots" by violence. A Mr. Sidney R. Anderson, a Mr. Arthur Covey, and a Dr. John Cline (nationality not stated) are all cited to the same effect—that the circumstances did to justify any shooting. But the signatories are fair; they cite another witness, the Rev. Harry Westnidge, whom they quote as follows: "As a missionary I hate bloodshed, but if I were an officer of the law and responsible for the police-station I would have felt obliged to have fired." They add to this the transcript of a letter of protest sent to the China Inland Mission (to which Mr. Westnidge belongs), and signed by seven Chinese gentlemen ("Yours in Christ's service"), in which he is reproved for his disservice to the cause of Christianity in China by utter-

ing such a sentiment. Our purpose in describing these documents is not to elucidate the rights and wrongs of the tragedy, but to convey an idea—especially to readers connected with journalism—their potential power should they be used by American newspapers as a means of bringing their public in behind United States' foreign policy and against the policy of Britain and Japan in China. After the way in which the same influences have recently made Dayton, Tennessee, the centre of the philosophic universe in an attempt to identify Britain with Darwin and Huxley as a principle of wickedness to the elastic intellects of the lynch-law fundamentalists of the Southern States, the other task will be child's play to them.

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Now, we appear to have digressed a long way from rubber, but, as a matter of fact, we have been revolving round it. That is to say, everything which we have brought into discussion is bound up with the price system. Every overflow of animosity connoted by the various episodes we have mentioned in all parts of the world can be connected with a drought of purchasing power in the home markets of the wrangling nations. Being unable to recover all their costs from their own nationals, they must endeavour to recover the balance from each other's. They think it an economic necessity that they should risk war to obtain a call on each other's financial credit, when each of them could create for itself a sum equal to the aggregate amount now being contested for; yes, and justify the creation almost at once out of its physical resources for production. In this connection we are glad to see that the Catholic Literature Association of the Anglo-Catholic Congress, in No. 9 of their series of 2d. booklets entitled *The Church and International Relations*, has noted the identity of the money problem with the war problem. It quotes this passage from Prof. Soddy's writings: "In overthrowing autocracy, democracy had absolutely forgotten all about money, and that the secret of power was the control of currency," and adds thereto these reflections of its own:—

This statement raises issues far too large to be further discussed now, but their importance is vital, and not least in the international sphere. For if a means could be found—as some claim that it can be found—so to control currency that an expansion of credit and a reduction of prices could proceed simultaneously, each nation would find its home market far better able to absorb its home surplus, and the life and death struggle for foreign markets would come naturally to an end, thus eliminating a primary cause of modern war.

This particular Tract is from the pen of Mr. Maurice B. Reckitt—which is a guarantee, for readers of THE NEW AGE, that the whole of its contents are worth while reading. Dr. Gore writes a preface to the series in which he reminds Christians that "all exploitation of one another is sin, incurring God's judgment." A little later he remarks that while "we do not want to introduce our politics into our religion" we want "to re-introduce our religion into our whole life." If we interpret "God" as the transfiguration of our common humanity, and "sin" as the act of outraging this humanity and "judgment" as the ensuing distortion of moral values, we shall see a temporal analogue to Dr. Gore's spiritual one. The Romans used to say that those whom the Gods wished to destroy they first made mad. This raises the intriguing speculation whether these Gods disliked impaired wisdom in mortals more than they did than a knave. If so, we could find it easy to yield them our worship. For if they had to judge a mortal for robbing another of the only existing crust of bread in the world, they would let him off; but if they had to judge two mortals who, having got everything ready for a grand repast, agreed, each one, to rob himself by going hungry, they would

exterminate them both—amid, we should suppose, the loud applause of all sound eugenists. In a profound sense, the prevailing "sin" is not the exploitation of one man by another, or one nation by another, but their common agreement not to exploit nature. The phenomena of acquisitiveness and greed—together with their offensive *sequela*—suspicion and hatred—far from being what they seem to be, the children of moral obliquity, proceed in a direct line from an act of renunciation—an act, too, self-imposed under a highly moral impulse, an impulse again (we must rub this in) which Christian teaching has done more to glorify than any other. There was no necessity for the Church to exclude politics from religion but for the fact that the greater part of politics was concerned with the *legalisation of exploitation*. There is hardly a political controversy in the last century (to go no farther back) which has not involved, in the last analysis, the question of who should go without something in order that somebody else might have more—who should *pay* and who should be *let off paying*. The mistake of the Church, as of every other body in the community, was her assumption that politics had inevitably to take that form; that we were all living in a condition of material scarcity which involved the dilemma that to improve the social life-standard of the many poor was to destroy that of the few rich, and, as another consequence, to destroy both the incentive and the means to that commercial expansion on which both together depended. If that assumption was wrong—and it is our weekly task in these columns to assert and demonstrate that it was wrong—no wonder that "religion" was banished from "our whole life," and the problem of the Church should be that of discovering how to "re-introduce" it thereto. But now this problem no longer exists. It has been proved that the conflict between the science of economics and the religion of humanity was the outcome not of natural laws, but simply of *insufficient knowledge* of them. The New Economic analysis has filled in the gap. It has shown that just as the Grace of God in the spiritual sphere is boundless, and that whosoever will may take of the Water of Life freely, so is the same Grace in the temporal sphere boundless, and that whosoever will may take of the means of life freely. "Take no thought what ye shall eat," said Christ; and the Church hastily interpreted this to mean; "Repress your natural desire for food, clothes, shelter, and leisure,"—as though a man who did his body ill could thereby do his soul good. And now the Social Credit prophets of the New Economic faith appear with a reinterpretation of the injunction; they give it an urgent emphasis, warning all who have ears to hear that the stability of modern civilisation is in daily jeopardy because of man's renunciation of the material gifts which are in potential profusion all round him. Was it a *mistake* of God's to say to a grain of corn: "Thou shalt increase and multiply 1,000, 2,000, yea and even 5,000 fold in a season," and to say to one born in His own image: "Thou shalt increase one-fold or two-fold in a season"? Was He not on the contrary purposely decreeing such a disparity between these progressions to the end that man should have *no need to take thought* what he should eat? Again, why should the spirituality of mankind suffer through the satisfaction of his bodily needs? The heavenward aspirations of the plant called Man, do they differ in evolutionary principle from the scent of the plant called the Lily? And is there any reason for supposing that the law connecting the earth, root, stem, blossoms and scent of the lilies in the field does not also connect the natural resources, the scientific discoveries, the health, the morals and the eternal salvation of human beings?

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Finally; what has been the greatest dilemma of the Church in her controversies with Freethinkers? Has

it not been that of reconciling the goodness of God with the existence of pain and suffering? And has she not been obliged to seek refuge in the formula "The mystery of pain," and to offer the sorry consolation that "we shall know all one day." Well, that day has come. Henceforth there is no challenge to God's goodness inherent in any pain and suffering which arises from a state of poverty. The science of the New Economist has discovered that it need not continue, and that it can be removed without sacrifice, and therefore by general consent. Economic research has done its part. It is now for the Church to do hers, and in the name of God to demand that her penurious charges shall be clothed upon with Plenty.

### Banking Information.

The *Times Trade Supplement* of May 23 contains an International Banking Section of twenty-eight pages. First place is given to a verbose repetition of Professor Cannan's ideas of the advantages of the Gold Standard: "An Undisputed proposition that more money means less purchasing power, Gold means Regulation of Price Level, Stability of Exchanges, and a Check to Human Failings, Barrier against Inflation and the Inherent Perils of Government Management." We've heard all this before; it's not new and it's not true, and Professor Cannan has yet to reply to the letters in *The Times*, January 31, 1924, from Messrs. O. B. Granville and W. O. Field, on the subject of Deposits.

Professor Gustav Cassel next on *Sweden's Return to Gold Standard*. He cleverly suggests that "the way to preserve the gold reserve" is to keep the currency a trifle above its parity with gold. But this is the very thing that those who scream for the Free Gold market do not want. Where, then, would be the advantage of those Bills on London or the flotation there of foreign loans and issues, the importance of which is always being urged by City editors?

Sir Ernest Maes Harvey writes on *London Discount Market Reforms*: "There is, of course, always the risk of over-trading"; Mr. T. E. Gregory quotes from Mr. C. K. Hobson on *British Capital Exports*, and repeats Mr. Keynes; "There is no merit in exports as such, but the return to gold is advisable." Sir John Ferguson laments that "many people imagine that the Banks have curtailed advances to their customers, and attribute the fall in prices recently to contraction of credit, the figures of the big banks do not, however, confirm this supposition. On the contrary, they disprove it." Sir John then proceeds to give figures from April, 1922. Why not from April, 1920?

Sir D. D. Fraser is no more informative on *the Development of Credit*, a glorification of Cheque Currency. He proposes the replacement of our external by internal debt through the use of our overseas investments—three times the amount of our debt to the U.S., and the issue of Post Office Bonds "to tempt the small investor." As to the composition of the National Debt, he estimates that "the bulk of it was raised by day-to-day borrowing from the people direct. The remainder, a comparatively small portion, was raised by the manufacture of credit, more than half of which has already been redeemed out of the taxpayers' money."

It would be interesting to have the figures in support of these statements.

G. B.

### A Credit Reformer's Note Book.

**Administration.**—Difficulties in administration depend upon how far the policy administered is approved by the community. The attitude of the community, in the last analysis, does not rest on theoretical grounds, but on practical grounds of self-interest. So the policy which involved sacrifices in the most numerous directions would be the policy most difficult to administer. And any policy which involved a sacrifice in any direction would encounter some degree of difficulty. Conversely, a generally approved policy would be easy to administer—for the community would cooperate in its administration. Suppose you proposed a scheme which was based on the idea that a holiday was a good thing for everybody, and arranged that everybody should have £50 if he would agree to take a holiday. Then suppose another scheme based on the same idea, but providing that everybody who did not go for a holiday at his own expense should be fined £1. The administrative task of the first scheme would be to establish contact between the holiday-money and the whole number of people in the country. That of the second would be to get into touch with a small fraction of that number. In theory the first task would be far the greater. But in practice . . . ! And "practice" is the essence of administration.

## The Veil of Finance.

III.

We have previously remarked, in discussing the activities of the ten islanders, that in the primitive conditions contained in our hypothesis it was difficult to imagine their troubling to use a money system at all; for obviously they could get on without it. Much more difficult, then, is it to imagine their mis-using one; for obviously they would see through it. For instance, the mere sight of, say, seven or eight ploughs laid by in idleness would have a *meaning* for them—they would instantly draw the conclusion that they were wasting time by adding to their number. And especially so, if at the same time, the people who were making ploughs could be usefully employed in driving those already made and helping to increase the yield of corn. Now to-day, this kind of thing is happening all round us: we have idle machinery, idle men, and, at the same time, short supplies of the things those machines and men are able to produce. Yet, marvellous to relate, when the New Economist points to these facts, and awaits the answering flash of instant realisation of their *meaning*, he is faced with drab gapes in every direction. Why is it? Well, the answer is not hard to seek. The productive system has grown so complex that ordinary people cannot see it *working* like those islanders could theirs. Whereas the latter people could, as it were, *look down* upon their economic activities as a whole, and therefore reason about them as a whole, people living under modern conditions can only *look round* within their economic system, and can therefore only reason about such problems as fall in their limited survey. With the sub-division of labour has come sub-division of reasoning. It is not that our people are less intelligent than the islanders; it is that scientific discovery and organisation have produced almost a super-problems to a degree demanding almost a super-intelligence to comprehend. Little wonder that in the whirl and roar of the machine age bewildered human beings accept the machine, and the appointed end of cation of the machine, as the appointed end of economic activity. Most of them would need no *prompting* to fall under such an hypnosis; it would just happen as a result of the purely physical complexities of the system. Then how much more deep must the trance be when mechanistic *passes* are supplemented by financial *suggestion*.

We may, however, try to imagine, if only as an exercise, how an exponent of "Sound Finance" would present a reasonable case to the islanders. He might be conceived as saying something like this:—

"Now you good people, you must remember that although you are getting along very comfortably at present, there are likely to be bad times to come, and you must prepare for them by working a little harder and eating a little less. This will produce 'savings,' which will be your shelter when the storms break. You are at present reaping and eating 100 bushels of corn by your personal labour, supplemented by 20 ploughs. If you will grow only 75 bushels in future and divert your spare labour to making more ploughs, you will be pursuing the wisest method of saving. It is true, as some of you will be thinking, that growing extra corn and saving that, instead of ploughs, appears a better method, but it is not, it is a worse method. For corn is more perishable than ploughs; and, apart from that, if you accumulate corn, you must also build barns to store it. How much better than storing up things is it not to store up the means of quickening their production? Do this—and every day you live on 25 bushels less corn you will be accumulating your *power of consumption*; and as you watch the growing number of ploughs you will realise that in them you have an iron guarantee against want, and they will become for you a symbol, like the rainbow in the heavens, that nevermore will the flood of penury, which overtakes the improvident, destroy your civilisation. Now, if you agree, we will together work out a scheme based on *saving*. And in order that it is properly organised, it must be controlled—of course, in



progress? Not so. It was but the means, necessary but regrettable, to universal schooling. The entire system of teaching, involved as it is with the very roots of the spiritual life, needs absolute autonomy for the health of the Commonwealth.

Teachers alone should manage the business of teaching, learned faculties the organisation of knowledge. None of the forces at work in State or industry should have any interference in this management. This idea is revolutionary. But the very prejudice which it calls forth is evidence of its need. For what would be the instant objection in the modern mind to such a proposal, if seriously made as a matter of practical politics? It would be an objection, more or less conscious, based on disbelief that the educator has enough practical wisdom to direct his own work. It would meet with an unconscious persuasion that an educator must, almost by the necessity of his calling, be an unpractical person, remote from realities. And no doubt educationists are so. But they are so because, unlike other men of affairs, they are compelled to work upon lines laid down for them. And what is to be expected of us, nourished in mind by persons whose way of thought is generally believed to be remote from life? Is it not almost a necessity that our habits of thought should be similarly unreal and abstracted? How can we tackle problems of such a grim reality as our social problem of to-day? What Steiner claims for the educational life is its emancipation into a *Free spiritual life* of as much dignity and autonomy as the State itself. If we could rise to such a conception, we should already be in a position to solve the social-economic problem of our times. It is because Government and industry trammel the spiritual life that the spirit of man feels incapable of making *them* serve his life, and feels that they are enslaving him.

But it is not proposed that the spiritual life and its autonomous organisation should have any priority over the political State. The contention of Steiner is that it ought to enjoy *equality*. The spiritual, the political, and the economic faculties of the Commonwealth each require independent development. That is the idea of the threefold Commonwealth. Its three constituent faculties, where their agreement is required for the good of the whole Commonwealth, confer together as equals in a diplomatic relation. But all matters falling within their own jurisdiction they order by the principles of their own life, without any darkening of counsel by arguments derived from another plane of existence. The three faculties will be perfectly united, for every man combines them in his own person, being related to life in all three ways.

There are persons who will honestly find it difficult to see the reason or advantage in this new conception of the State. Such persons will not have observed how the modern paralysis of will in the face of modern problems is very greatly due to the fact that life in a modern democracy gives no help, by the nature of its constitution, to clearness of thought upon any of its problems. On the contrary, it throws every question into the arena of discussion to be worried from all points of view at once. There is a dearth of true conceptions concerning human rights, human culture, and human economic needs; because these never get a chance to develop separately and in harmony with themselves.

It is not the fashion to think, and it is unpopular to suggest, that the present social problem of the workers' revolt is due to a general inability to think with right relation to the facts. We prefer to believe in a physical cause—the growth of industrial machinery. Of course, that growth, all unregulated as it has been, is a great modern problem in itself. And yet, when one observes the working-class revolt closely, one sees that the great motor nerve of its being is a particular system of thoughts. It is a

*trend of thought* which has become the centre of the spiritual life of the workers as a class; a trend of thought which they have inherited from the ruling classes, to whom it meant not much, but to the workers it has become a dynamical impulse and a faith. The materialist philosophy of the last century, which was but an interesting ideology to the ruling classes, became, when applied to the problem of the workers, the very faith, the religion, the way of salvation.

Those who keep in touch with Labour opinion, or Labour thinkers themselves, would be the first to disbelieve that there is any force in ideas and thoughts of themselves that could contribute a resolving force to the grim deadlock between the classes of society. To say that there is anything which could help them in a purely spiritual movement would be regarded as mere ideology, if not worse. Inevitably so, because from the point of view of materialist philosophy all that there is in the spiritual life is only ideology, a mere reflected glitter of material facts. Yet it is clear to anyone who knows something of the minds of intelligent insurgents among the workers that the dynamic of their own movement is in thoughts—thoughts which have become their spiritual life, but which nevertheless they are obliged to feel as only ideology. The way of salvation allowed to the proletarian by his new way of thought is in *class-consciousness*—that is the highest conception he can really believe in. But as it is a *human* consciousness to which he truly aspires, this gives him but a miserable religion. There is a real unhappiness in proletarian life.

I have dealt at some length with this, Steiner's criticism of modern economic thought. It shows how a way of thinking is at the root of our social disharmony, which disharmony cannot be resolved until the way of thought is changed, either by the cruelty of events without or by the vigour of a spiritual movement within. The idea that all spiritual life is more or less unreal ideology could never have come into being in a community where the life of the spirit was free and independent. It results from—or at least goes with—its bondage to State and industry. At present, a despotic severance of education from the State might be of little immediate value, for the spiritual life has lost its power of self-synthesis. The various spiritual and educational bodies have now no cohesion, and what is required is no less than a voluntary co-operation between all learned and learning institutions whatsoever, with a basis for conference and common expression. It is no light matter to reconstitute an autonomous spiritual life. Yet, without it, the Community cannot evince its threefold nature, and without this threefoldness clearly expressed in actual organisation, modern democracy cannot understand its own nature. Yet we look to democracy to create the State of the future! Thus the autonomous re-creation of the spiritual life, by itself and for itself, is a condition of the existence of any future democracy. Not that it has any priority over the economic or the political faculties. But the position of each of these in the threefold organisation will require a separate discussion.

#### AT A VIOLIN RECITAL.

A piece of wood, some strings:  
And all the pain's worth while . . .  
But O my God, how long?

A piece of wood . . . some strings:  
A soul that throbs to song. . . .

Who will not work, he may not eat.  
The hopeless lie, the endless cheat!

Who will not work . . . Is leisure wrong?  
O God, my God, how long? . . . how long?

MORGAN TUD.

## Wickedness in High Places.

By C. M. Grieve.

Apart altogether from the question of sodomitical practices (and the propriety of the public presentation, on behalf of some three hundred signatories, including the then Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, and many of our leading literati, made to the late Mr. Robert Ross, Oscar Wilde's literary executor, in March, 1915, in view of his undeniable relationship to such practices—matters which occupy a considerable part of it), Mr. Sorley Brown's pamphlet\* raises other questions of first-rate public, and especially literary, moment not touched upon in the brief review already given in these columns. The signatories to the Ross testimonial stated in the address that they desired to state publicly their recognition of his services to art and literature. "You have long been distinguished by the justice and courage of your writings. . . ." There have been several score of men—and women—contemporaries of Mr. Ross, with better work to their credit, and in far more needy circumstances. I do not think that a single one of the signatories is in the least likely to attempt to substantiate any claim made on Mr. Ross's behalf to even the smallest modicum of literary or artistic greatness. His work literally died with him. Why, then, was he singled out for so unusual an honour? England is not customarily thus generous to even those smaller fry of the arts, whose temporary vogue hides from view, as a rule, the stature of the greater figures whose real significance and comparative size are left for posterity to discover. To go no further afield, no responsible critic anywhere can contend—or support with a single sound argument—that Ross was other than the veriest pigmy compared with such men as Lord Alfred Douglas or the late T. W. H. Crosland. Why was this relative lauded and endowed? If the signatories had been really concerned with authentic servers of arts and letters a multitude of names with prior claims to his should have had consideration. It is exceedingly significant that this public presentation to Ross should have followed two prosecutions brought by him for criminal libel, in the first of which the defendant (Mr. Crosland) was acquitted, while in the second Mr. Ross entered a "Nolle Prosequi" on the understanding that his solicitors paid the defendant's (Lord Alfred Douglas's) taxed costs and out-of-pocket expenses, despite the fact that the answer of the defence was a plea of justification, which plea still remains upon the file at the Old Bailey. In short, the course taken suggests that Mr. Ross was unable to defend his character against the grave charges made against him. And yet, although, as Mr. Sorley Brown points out, "owing to the scandal caused by the whole affair, Ross, some months before the Old Bailey trial, had been obliged to resign the position of assessor of picture valuations to the Board of Trade, which, at a salary of £1,000 a year, had been conferred on him by Mr. Asquith," "in 1917 he was highly honourable position of a trustee of the National Gallery, and, a few months later, was made, by Sir Alfred Mond, director and manager of the Imperial War Museum, a position which he held up to the day of his death, which took place in the autumn of 1918." In view of the facts which he fully details in his pamphlet, and which could not be so detailed in view of the strict libel laws of this country if they could not be proved up to the hilt, Mr. Sorley Brown is entitled to ask the Earl of Oxford once more for answers to

the following four questions: (a) Does he consider that by attaching his signature, and thus by implication lending the name of the country to the Ross Testimonial, he acted with the discretion we have the right to expect from a Prime Minister? (b) Before signing the testimonial, did he take reasonable steps to acquaint himself with the circumstances in regard to the two abortive prosecutions started by Mr. Ross? (c) Is he prepared now to assert that it was to the public interest for him to sign the testimonial? (d) Is he prepared to make a public retraction of his support of that testimonial?

Mr. Asquith and the other signatories are unlikely to answer these questions; but, having been time after time challenged to do so, must be held by their silence either to be condoning practices which they dare not openly advocate or to be afraid to repudiate them.

But the matter goes much further than that. Certain London papers, to their credit, refused to take any notice of the Ross Presentation, but Mr. Sorley Brown adds: "The magnitude of the scandal was admitted on all sides, but sheer 'funk' and dread of reprisals on the part of the powerful coterie involved prevented any protest against the outrage to public decency involved in the action of the Prime Minister and the other signatories." Mr. Herbert Moore Pim, the well-known Ulster poet and *litterateur*, shows that they had good cause to be afraid. He writes:—

"One of the most remarkable instances of Press boycott occurred when Lord Alfred Douglas wrote a mildly-worded letter of protest to all the London journals in connection with the Ross Testimonial. Every newspaper, with the exception of *The Globe*, refused to print the letter. *The Globe* printed part of it, and the paper was immediately suppressed under D.O.R.A. by the Asquithian Government, but it was allowed to resume publication on the understanding that its editor (Mr. Charles Palmer) would be 'sacked,' which he was."

Mr. Pim found himself unemployed when *Plain English* and *Plain Speech* collapsed. He says:—

"Crosland, to whom I applied for advice, assured me that if I desired to secure a job or get work placed, I must hide my identity as a former assistant editor of *Plain English*. To do this was virtually impossible, and I did not attempt to take Crosland's advice and, though I am a qualified journalist with a long record as a successful editor and assistant editor, I found the Press boycott complete. With the exception of an anonymous article in the *Morning Post* and another anonymous information in *The Times*, in which I had exclusive information, I have failed since and a signed poem in *The People*, I have failed since January, 1922, to get a single article into the London Press. Although I published four books in the years 1919-20, I have since been unable to get a book published. One publisher held a book of mine for five months, and refused to reply to letters. With difficulty I managed through my agent to gain an admission from him that he had the MS. And after keeping it for some time he returned it without apology. A similar trouble occurred with another firm of publishers in connection with another book."

I wish that I had space to quote Mr. Pim's account of how his book "Unconquerable Ulster," with an introduction by Lord Carson (which nevertheless ran into three editions), was boycotted by the newspapers, who refused to insert advertisements of it, and by the wholesale firms. Mr. Pim's comments on a certain hard hit at Lloyd George and the subsequent dismissal of Mr. Sansome from the editorship of *The People* are illuminating. Facts such as these indicate the extent of Mr. Sorley Brown's fearlessness in publishing this pamphlet, and in his long fight to vindicate Crosland and Lord Alfred Douglas. Alvindeicate Crosland and Lord Alfred Douglas. Although the pamphlet has been extensively reviewed by the provincial and Colonial Press, the boycott has again been practically complete so far as the London Press is concerned—mention of it having been almost invariably withheld even from the lists of "books

\* "T. W. H. Crosland: A Scottish Appreciation," by W. Sorley Brown. (Galashiels, 2s.)

received." I cordially commend it to all interested in two of the greatest and most shamefully ignored of our modern poets, to all interested in contemporary morality, and to all interested in questions of Censorship, Press Control, and the extra-political intrigues of "powers that be."

It is good news that the whole matter is to be dealt with in a forthcoming volume by Frank Harris, who completely vindicates Crosland and Douglas against Ross and the champions of Wilde, and reveals the urgency and heroism of the great fight Mr. Sorley Brown and one or two others have put up on their behalf against literally "impossible odds." It will be interesting to see if the "conspiracy of silence" can prevail against a pen of the calibre of Mr. Harris's sufficiently to prevent a first-class social sensation, and the complete public exposure of the prevalent degeneracy in high places at which the facts given by Mr. Sorley Brown so unanswerably point. The Earl of Oxford may yet be forced to answer the questions he has so persistently ignored, and better elements of British life and letters than the Ross signatories may combine to make tardy recognition to Lord Alfred Douglas for the wonderful fight he has put up by a public presentation to which none of the signatories of the Ross Testimonial will be permitted to contribute unless they have first publicly retracted their share in that outrageous scandal. Some such counterblast to "wickedness in high places" is long overdue.

## The Arts in Utopia.

By Haydn Mackey.

### VIII.

By haphazard questions and hasty reminiscences and contrasts, it has been attempted to call the reader's attention to the changed mentality of our times in two classes. A *bizarre and popular "barbarism," on one hand, and an accompanying support, given by an erudite propaganda of sophisticated barbarism by our critics and opinion-makers, on the other hand.* It may be the aftermath of the acceptance of a materialistic science in place of any mind controlling and spiritually concentrative religion in the Industrial period—a mind atrophy and lack of concentration, as some believe—or, it may be a genuine, even if misdirected desire for a "greater directness of expression," "a swifter grasp of essentials," a return of fundamental spirit, and a juncture in simplicity with the pristine mystery and wonder and magic of Man's childhood. In any case, for our present purposes, it is in a considering between the itch and urge of the "experts" and the natural *amateurs* that a direction for the future, if existing, is to be found.

Our subject here is dependent on an idea so unfashionably antiquated as to attach a good deal of importance to the "influence of environment," actually assuming that some effect will be caused when the vehicle of credit is no longer artificially restricted. In fact, more. It is assumed that circumstances may not only influence, but may themselves be foreshadowed! That, for example, such "Futurist" works and much frantic pattern of the times, might have been read as a forecast of the late great European War, for:—

"Often do the spirits  
Of great events stride on before the events  
And in to-day already walks to-morrow."

And now, to look at our Intelligentsia and our populace in this matter. If we assume that a coincidence of movements in European culture on the whole with

an increase in the vehicle of credit, referred to recently in these pages by Mr. Hilderic Cousens, is something more than a mere coincidence, we find, curiously enough, that two of the greatest art movements coincident with the enhanced accessibility of the medium of exchange, and to which modern times are indebted, are exactly those most decried by our Intelligentsia: The Italian Renaissance and the Northern European Renaissance! If we look at our populace, we find a tawdriness or trinket and a rawness of intelligence intolerable to those periods!! If we try to connect these two observations we might first jump to the assumption of a tendency towards a poverty-struck pagan barbarism!!! But New Economists know that at least material poverty is unnecessary. But what of the pagan barbarism in the Arts? Let us look again. First at our Intelligentsia and then at our populace. To the plain person, it really seems as if our modern experts in art opinions are very ingenious, with all the right arguments in support of all the wrong things—(Palæolithic, Peruvian, Persian, or Picasso. Very archaic or very novel, or incomprehensible to our times)—and all the wrong periods—(the rigidly controlled authority ridden periods). That is, our experts give us the right arguments in support of individual expression, even to the somewhat illogical extent of decrying the acquired skill or science of its age, as if the finest art of an age must not reflect the "intellectual ripeness" of its time, and then, as pointers to their arguments, produce an ancient sample of Egyptian or Babylonian or Negroid art! In fact, they support a return to the discipline of barbarism by civilised libertarian argument! Ruskin thundered in defence of an art and an age which seemed to him best because he visualised it as the outcome of the individual liberty of the artist. He claimed its very failings and average mediocrity as a virtue, with admittedly ethical and not æsthetic arguments. But at least logically enough.

Our moderns, whilst arguing for liberty, enthuse chiefly over those periods, when, so far as we have sufficient knowledge to form even an effective conjecture of them, the artist seems to have been strictly bound by superstitious taboo, caste inhibition, priestly rule, or patrician tyranny! They use, admittedly, æsthetic and not ethical arguments, but is it possibly a right æsthetic? Surely, liberty in the arts means a greater reliance on individual intuition and less on current authority. Is it possible that the senses have found expression best in bondage! It looks almost like a queer variation of the old sentimental view, that suffering and poverty are essential to the artist and not conceivable to him without their actual experience!

Now, turn to our populace. For some years all liberty has been widely discussed amongst all classes, on the lines, amongst others, of sex ideas, and some results are to be seen in the reaction against many social conventions inherited from the pharisaic Victorians, who, in their turn, had inherited much and developed more, from the Puritan blight. Greatly stimulated by the war, expression is found in what are liberties and loosenesses as compared with the formalities of our grandparents, liberties not nowadays so concerned with a latch-key as with what has come to be considered the frankly pagan and barbaric. Corroborative evidence of this "barbaric" may be found in the jewellery and trinkets, "mascots," and toys of the times; the gaudiness and scantiness of attire (a new philosophy of clothes could be written on synthetic silk stockings for the mob); in prevalent patterns and furnishings and fabrics; in the enthusiasm for the "heroes" of physical sports; in the popularity of "cavemen" in fiction and "Tarzans," on the "film"; and in the many crude taboos and superstitions developed by our advertisers, whether rooted

in "Kruschen" or Coué. It is beside the point that the present-day popular expression of the "barbaric" bears no more relation to the genuine thing than did Victorian Gothicism to the Ages of Faith. It is barbaric in crudity, though missing much of the discipline of the barbarian. It is merely the same confusion as that remarked of the Intelligentsia—an attempted expression of personal liberty by manifestations of servility. *Liberty amongst men is a civilised growth.*

But individual expression is best to be considered in pleasures and pastimes; in amateurism and art, and the extraordinary spread amongst all classes of dancing invites attention for our present purpose. Much may be learnt in the cruder cabaret shows and the public dance halls. The modern most popular dance, called a "fox trot," has dispensed with practically every rule and convention of historic European dancing, and is the product of the initiative, passing fancy, and individual whim of each performer. (Pavlova was reported to have remarked it as an improvement, that the modern "fox trot" depended more on the individual and spontaneous initiative of the dancer than did the previous rigidly-controlled and conventionalised ballroom dancing.) At any rate, it appears to be an attempt at a *spontaneous technique of crude individual expression.* But how can we explain the "music"? The cacophony excreted by the half-educated dance bands! The monotonous noise! The "Eastern" melodies composed at Clapham, the Negroid jingles from the purlieus of some sailor town; produced on instruments of a largely bastard American invention, "Banjolins" and "Ukuleles" supported by untuned drums, and dominated by that European atrocity, invented somewhere about the 'sixties, but ignored till now, the ubiquitous saxophone! There is certainly something here of an ill-instructed attempt at the monotony of the barbaric. At least they are more suited to the sensual expression desired than would be the concertina and the mouth organ of this people's earlier mood in the "good" days of Queen Victoria, 'appy 'ampstead, the Salvation Army, and the "Free Thinkers!" It is at least a spirited advance in art to have moved from the mere "free thinker" to the free doer, even if the doing be disastrous! This is an age when the traditional arts are dead. We have had to go to our "bunny-huggers" and our public conveniences to get examples of the unsophisticated art of the people, and there we find in it the primeval bias.

Sex worship has been described as the most ancient form of natural religion, and phallic draw-turn has been found amidst post-tertiary remains. We turn to our experts, and we find them with civilised argument and theory, supporting barbaric art not far removed from its phallic origins and slave production.

We turn to our artists, and we get similar hints in certain works of some of the best of them, but the important thing to be seen is, that they, like the populace, emphasise the vital principle and not the "slavery" of barbarian production, and are also in search of a *direct spontaneous technique of expression.*

Whether our civilisation is tumbled in ruins by violent disaster, or is saved by the efforts of the New Economist, the story of Art has come full circle, and it is back at the origin of its beginnings. Art like all the flowers of a civilisation is an emanation of love. Whether that love is sacred or profane depends upon liberty and self-imposed rule. What then can we deduce for the future? This: That in the Age of Plenty, individual liberty being enlarged means that rule must be more self-imposed, implying that some faith must inform our arts and make sacred its expression. *A technique for Inspiration is the desire, and its quest has begun!*

## Prebendal Obscurantism.

Th' high-titled care of adult strife,  
Which we our duties call,  
Trades, arts, and politics of life,  
Say, have they, after all,  
One other object, end or use,  
Than that, for girl and boy,  
The punctual earth may still produce  
This golden flower of joy?

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

When we read\* that "what we need to improve is the character much more than the circumstances of our people these days," and that these consoling words were penned in "my comfortable cabin on the Saxon," we know that we are once more face to face with one of those obtuse reactionary priests, the despair of all loyal sons of the Church, who are striving to improve the lot of their fellow-men. The monotonous depreciation of comfort by one who evidently enjoys a fair share of this debilitating commodity is positively indecent. Furthermore, when we learn that

"we cannot exercise the amiable privilege of ministering to age and infirmity as the chief preoccupation of the State, and at the same time continue for long to stand possessed of an Empire which is the envy of the nations," we are inclined to retort that if this object of envy is to be maintained at the cost of the aged and infirm, to say nothing of the young lives wilting in slums and in insanitary cottages, whose "character" has little chance of "improving" under conditions which render common decency impossible, then the Empire is of doubtful value! But, as a matter of fact, the rev. gentleman is talking nonsense. The possession of a great Empire surely implies such an increase of resources as should enable Government, directly and indirectly, to promote improvements in the material conditions of its subjects. Even cosmopolitan finance admits that "trade follows the flag," and we all know, from our youth upwards, that without trade we cannot support our comfort-loving population! Prebendary Gough, like so many worthy clergymen, and others, is dreadfully afraid lest any of us should get "something for nothing"—it would be "so bad for us"! The London clubs, too, are crowded with awful examples of the evil effects of "eating without working."

Fortunately for his reputation, the good man's heart is sounder than his logic. Does he not insist that "the Christian religion was not intended to treat the goodness and beauty of humanity with contempt," and that

"Jesus Christ was the supreme discoverer of the worth of man. He is the Saviour of the world, not because He reveals its desperate sinfulness, but because nothing could destroy His belief in man's incalculable worth." Adopting these as our premises, one might be pardoned for arriving at the conclusion that the "crown of creation" might be entrusted with a little personal comfort as a free gift without risk to his immortal soul—or danger to the stability of the Empire.

This booklet, for it is nothing more, is replete with exaggerations and distortions of the aims of those who believe that fresh air, spacious rooms, and good food are essential factors in the "improvement of character," and that a wise use of the triumphs of science could make "a comfortable life a dictum; not a thing to be attained."

Prebendary Gough forgets that the class he adorns is accustomed to these things from infancy, and if it be feasible—as we know it is—to extend these advantages to his ible—as we know it is—only charitable to hope that less favoured brethren, it is only beneficial results. Like in their case also it will have equally beneficial results. Like so many of his cloth, the reverend gentleman does not seem to have the remotest idea of the purposes of an industrial and commercial system are intended to serve. Of the evil worked by international finance he has not the vaguest conception. He is a product of those discredited economic theories, based on "rewards and punishments," the outcome of Calvinistic Protestantism, whose final product is industrial chaos and a C3 population. Neither is the Church of Rome guiltless of certain dallings with commercialism and cosmopolitan finance, which defeated the best efforts of some of her high-minded prelates who strove to shorten the agonies of the Great War.

Now the writer has the most profound reverence for all that is connoted by Catholicism, in the broadest, deepest sense of the word, and the fascination exercised by the economics of Social Credit mainly consist for him in their more than accidental concordance with the teachings of

\*"The Fight for Man." By the Rev. Prebendary A. W. Gough. (London: Boswell Printing and Publishing Company, Ltd. 3s. 6d.)

Christ. The appreciation, and the eventual absorption of the New Economics by the Catholic Church seemed to be a natural corollary far transcending anything offered by the Christian Socialism of certain bishops derided by Prebendary Gough. Here was reform without red revolution, and the excision of all bitterness from the struggle for a saner social order.

On the other hand, the attitude taken up by the author of "The Fight for Man" epitomises all that is worst in that obscurantist interpretation of Christianity, based on a spurious exegesis, and the misinterpretation of isolated Scriptural dicta about "poverty and work" torn from their context, which deprives vast sections of humanity of all hope of ever winning those amenities which make life something more than a sordid struggle for existence, which would free the human spirit for self-expression in the realms of art, music, science, and literature, with results undreamed of in the world of to-day.

The lack of response on the side of the Church has been a bitter disappointment. Shall we be driven in despair to turn from the faith of our fathers and seek consolation in the "religion of humanity?" The responsibility lies with the Church. We would remind her of the awful words of her Head:

"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" Will the historian of the future have to record that the fairest opportunity ever offered of grafting the teachings of Christ on the body politic was lost because the Church "knew not the time of her visitation"?

J. S. K.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

### "THE ARTS IN UTOPIA."

Sir,—I have never imagined that THE NEW AGE has appealed, nor, as its well-wisher, do I hope that it ever will appeal, to those "level-headed" folk who refuse consideration to an economic proposal on the grounds of an objection to a certain critical estimate of current draughtsmanship.

I note "Artist's" bare assertion, charging me with "most objectionable nonsense," but as it is unsupported by any apposite comment or argument, it invites no further attention than my bare contradiction, and the reiteration of my statement that an evidence of intention is a criterion in art.

HAYDN MACKEY.

Sir,—Haydn Mackey needs no blue pencilling, but rather red underlining. He is right, and "Artist" is bemused. There is no fear of frightening the "Level-Headed Business Man." He will never reach the "last paragraph." Why should he? The articles are esoteric, technical, and are for the artists of the new age. "Artist" should re-read. He has missed the point, which is that *as drawings*, i.e., as eloquently direct pictorial statements, the atrociously vulgar ornamentations of our public conveniences are often better than the conscientious hand-photography sent up to South Kensington in quest of Art Master Certificates. They are more *lucid*. There is no suggestion that this furtive pornography, however good as drawing, should be promoted to our picture galleries. Like any good expositor, Mackey knows the value of the "shocking example." That's all.

As for the articles being tedious, I find them thrillingly clear-headed. Mackey is posing questions which are being asked by all thoughtful artists to-day, and answering them with a vivid ingenuity compared with which our late leaders in this department, Messrs. Fry and Bell, are pathetic obscurantists.

Carry on Mackey!

JOHN RIMMER.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Sir,—Permit me to thank all those who have notified me of their readiness to assist, either as speakers or in other ways.

Our opening meeting has been fixed for *Saturday next*, July 25, and will be held on the grass space at the north-western corner of Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), from 4 p.m. onwards. Visitors will quickly notice our four-armed sign, which bears the words, "Banking," "Production," "Prices," "Poverty."

The presence of as many supporters as possible is earnestly desired to ensure an effective send-off to our campaign. Furthermore, we wish to compare notes with others and to discuss future plans. Social creditors should seize this opportunity to bring their friends to hear our message.

ERNEST A. DOWSON.

23, Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.2,  
July 18, 1925.

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Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed and made payable to "THE NEW AGE PRESS."

All communications should be addressed, Manager, THE NEW AGE, 70, High Holborn, W.C.1.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

The Subscription Rates for "The New Age," to any address in Great Britain or Abroad, are 30s. for 12 months; 15s. for 6 months; 7s. 6d. for 3 months.

Published by the Proprietor (ARTHUR BRENTON), 70 High Holborn, London, W.C.1, and printed for him by THE ARGUS PRESS, LIMITED, Temple-avenue and Tudor-street, London E.C.4.