

THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER"

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

In *The Times* of July 29, its Brussels Correspondent contributes an article on the transfer of the State railways to a private company, to be called La Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer. For the last two years these railways, he says, have been "admirably handled on the technical and engineering side." This fact "is conceded by everybody." Yet—

"the net result in last year's Budget was a deficit of more than 95 million francs. None the less it is confidently predicted that under a 'strong and independent industrial organisation'—to quote the preamble of the new law adopted by the Senate—the railways can be made to pay, and their shares are being recommended as a profitable investment."

The control of the new company will be in the hands of a Council of Administration of twenty-one members "chosen on the recommendation of various Government departments, or on that of the directors of the Sinking Fund, with three members to be recommended by the employees of the company." *The Times* Correspondent remarks: "It seems curious that no members are chosen directly by the subscribing shareholders," but says that—

"As all the shares are turned over to the sinking fund and sold for its benefit, it appears to be held that the five members recommended by the directors of that fund sufficiently represent the shareholding interest."

He notes that the Belgian State does not surrender the actual ownership of the railways, but "only the rights of exploitation," and is doubtful how far the Council of Administration "will be, and can feel 'strong and independent.'"

No reader of these Notes will require telling that this Council of Administration will be a Council of bankers' nominees. Quite logically so; for whereas hitherto the railways have been run with the prime object of providing an efficient transport service, they are now to be run as a taxing mechanism. The Council will virtually impose and collect new taxes, if it can, to the extent of 95 million francs annually. It will get what it can out of the railwaymen, and the rest out of the business organisation and private citizens who use the railways. Already the taxes are in

process of collection. A 10 per cent. increase in tariffs went into effect in June, and another 10 per cent. is due this month, to be followed by a third in October. Wages are going to be a difficult problem, owing, says the writer, to the "influence of Labour in Belgian politics." The dismissal of railway servants, too, remains in the discretion of the Minister of Railways, who will be the President of the Administrative Council, so that "economies in this direction can be attained, if at all, only very gradually." On the other hand steps were taken some time ago to reduce the rate of new employment on the railways. For instance, between 1924 and 1925 "an increased engine mileage of 0.5 per cent. was attained with a reduction of 3.8 per cent. in engine drivers and firemen, and of 6.6 per cent. in train hands." But, as the writer observes, it would not seem "safe to calculate on much further improvement in this direction."

The value of the transferred railways is put at 11,000 million francs, and is to be represented by the issue of 1,000 million francs of Ordinary shares which will be held by the State, and 10,000 million francs of Preference shares which will be offered for sale. These Preference shares will have a dividend of about 2.70 per cent. guaranteed by the State, after which all profits are to be shared equally between the Preference and Ordinary shares. The "State," of course, stands for the Belgian population, who, as we have seen, are to be taxed to the tune of 95 million francs to balance the railway budget, and then, as we now see, to a further amount necessary to provide at least the guaranteed 2.70 per cent. dividend on 10,000 million francs of Preference shares, such dividend requiring 270 million francs. The Belgians have thus to find a grand total of 365 million francs in new taxation. In so far as the railwayman successfully resists wage reductions, and the users of the railway's tariff increases, they will be rendered liable, as ordinary citizens, to increased direct State taxation. No wonder that the Belgian Government had to be coerced by external attacks on its currency before it allowed itself to be committed to a disruptive

proposition of these immense proportions. *The Times* Correspondent says that the first requisite for success is the independence of the Council of Administration, and concludes his article by hoping that this independence can be assured "in some way which does not yet appear." He is hoping against hope. We predict that the more the Council does to carry out its financial objective the more political agitation and interference will ensue. There would be trouble enough if the Belgians had got the money hoarded away. But since they have not, whatever amount the Council collects will be diverted from some other existing use, and the financial solvency of the railways will be bought at the cost of financial bankruptcy elsewhere.

The Bishop of Gloucester writes to *The Times* on the intervention of the Churches in the mining dispute, and denies their right to call their manifesto "the Christian solution of the problem." The Bishop of Gloucester is a Christian; and does not agree with the manifesto; so there you are. He gives reason for his unfaith in the suggested peace terms—

"Why should the miners not submit to a reduction like other working men, and why should they receive a subsidy which must ultimately come out of the pockets of their fellow workers?"

He concludes his letter thus—

"Serious injury is done to the influence and authority of the Christian religion by creating a widespread belief that its teaching is synonymous with bad economics. The Christian Church has a serious duty to perform in teaching Christian relations between all classes of the community, but it can only do this if it accepts and understands economic conditions."

We note the Bishop's tacit confession that economic conditions set bounds to the power of the Church to promote amicable relations (there is no need to say "Christian" relations—friendly co-operation existed before Christ) between various classes of the community; and we pass on to endorse his logical suggestion that the Church must "accept and understand" economic conditions. But the question is, What interpretation of economic conditions is to be accepted? It is clear from his context that the Bishop of Gloucester has accepted the orthodox exegesis of economic law; but whether before or after understanding it is not so clear. Is he aware that every reduction of wages necessarily restricts the home market and sets industry adventuring abroad in quest of foreign markets at the risk of another great war? Is he aware that some at least of the sponsors of the manifesto to which he objects have grounds for the belief that their advocacy of the subsidy rests on good, and not bad, economic grounds? It is beside the point for him to claim, as he does, that "a large body of Churchmen" look upon this manifesto as "unfortunate," unless he is prepared to claim that this large body has tried to understand the fundamental causes of the present impasse. We assert the contrary. The majority of Churchmen not only have not studied them but consider such study as being outside their duty as Churchmen. What is done is done; but before the Bishop of Gloucester again commits himself to a public pronouncement on this question, we strongly advise him to make himself acquainted with the economic arguments supporting the "subsidy" clause in the Churches' proposals. He would be horrified if anyone were to suggest that the salvation of one man's soul prejudiced that of other men's: it would be challenging the central concept of Christian revelation. In much the same fashion his present attitude amounts to the denial of what is becoming increasingly recognised by careful students as the central concept of economic revelation. The idea that the means of life are a fixed and limited quantity is rapidly retreating before the

achieved demonstration that the industrial power of civilisation is capable of indefinite expansion, and that in relation to normal human needs of food, clothes, and shelter, the potential supply of these things is as boundless as the Mercy of God which he preaches Sunday after Sunday.

Mr. Baldwin's cable to America looks like a political blunder of the first magnitude. But it is a short-sighted view which attributes the ultimate responsibility to him, or even to the Conservative Cabinet. And it is an ignorant view which suggests that the blunder has occurred because a Conservative and not a Liberal or Labour Prime Minister is in power. The truth is that any political Administration which tries to govern the country in accordance with the accepted laws of "sound finance" is inevitably destined to strike in the above manner at its own prestige. Having to act a lie it is bound to tell lies. While actually the agent of a hidden oligarchy it has to be pretend to be a representative democratic Government. The assertion that "there is no foundation for any statement as to starvation among the mining population," which occurs in the cablegram, is true enough in the sense that there are as yet no records of deaths from lack of food; but the claim that "there is little or no indication of the presence of severe distress, even among such miners' dependants as are not receiving poor relief in their own homes," is false. *The Daily News* quotes a Bolton man, who is associated with the organisation of relief, who says:

"We inquired into 123 cases, mostly mothers with babies in arms. A goodly proportion were expectant mothers. Several had not had food for thirty-six hours."

At Rugeley (Staffs) a Mrs. Hotchkiss is engaged on the task of keeping her husband and ten children on 8s. a week. But even if things were much better than they are, and the miners and their families were being given each day their daily bread, the fact of their destitution would be as flagrant as ever. A woman in Pontypridd told a *Daily News* Correspondent—

"I have pawned my wedding ring, the candlesticks out of the parlour, most of my furniture, and all my clothes, except those in which I am standing up."

One has to presume that in the official view "destitution" does not begin until the victim has eaten his life's savings. Contrast this with the same official view when a business organisation is in question. If a business, at the end of its financial year, has had to eat up so little as one pennyworth of its capital, its "destitution" is regarded as demonstrated, and something has to be done about it at once; either its employees and shareholders must yield up wages and dividends, or its customers pay higher prices, in order to arrest the evil in its incipient stage.

Of course, neither Mr. Baldwin nor any of his colleagues desires to alienate the electoral support of working men by misrepresenting the situation in the above manner; but all the same they have to use all their wits to prevent overseas contributions from reaching the miners' relief fund. The general issue is quite clear. If the subsidy is not to be resumed either the miners must be literally starved into submission, or the strike will put an end to the Government. Mr. Baldwin is in the grip of Wall Street finance. He is forbidden to restore the subsidy, and has to watch foreign competitors undermining the mining industry. It is not realised that the prolongation of the strike is a profitable proposition for America, whose coal industries are potentially in the same condition of redundancy as our own, and would be visibly so, but for the temporary artificial boom arising out of the instalment-purchase system. It will be interesting to see what effect Mr. Baldwin's cable has on the fortunes of the miners' representatives, who are now in America with their

collecting boxes. Bearing in mind the facilities that were afforded Mr. de Valera there in his appeal for loans in support of the Sinn Fein objective, there seems no compelling reason to suppose that the Baldwin cablegram will do much to dry up the response for which the miners are hoping.

In Mexico the Church's boycott is reported to be producing its intended effect. Many businesses are already reduced to one-third of their normal trade. The Catholic element in the Labour movement are refusing to co-operate with the main body, who are on the side of the Government. President Calles charges the Church with a "national walk-out," and declares that he is merely acting to prevent foreign priests dominating politics. Let us hope that he finds the domination of foreign financiers equally repugnant. American representative Protestant missions say that they are perfectly satisfied with the situation, in spite of the fact, which they point out, that all Government regulations affect them equally with Catholics. One guesses from this that Americans are not regarded as "foreigners" in Mexico, and the guess is confirmed by the report of a *Daily News* Correspondent, who writes that—

"President Calles and the members of his Government were educated at an American University, and are trying to Americanise Mexican social and industrial conditions. They believe that their work involves breaking the domination of the Catholic Church which has lasted for 400 years, and they say that Mexico is the most illiterate country in the world."

This interpretation of the affair rings true. It is a case of banker versus priest—the searcher of men's pass-books challenging the power of the searcher of men's souls. In another aspect it may be seen as a manifestation of the age-long enmity between Jew and Catholic, or between Protestant and Catholic. Semitic-pan-American-Anglo-Saxonism seems to be extending the Monroe Doctrine to the point of prohibiting even spiritual power exercised from Europe from finding scope for action on the American Continent. The anxiety expressed about the illiteracy of Mexico is a pretty halo above the intrigue. Professor J. Graham Kerr, at the British Association gathering at Oxford, said of the primitive savage that he was kept constantly thinking about the meaning of what he saw and heard; whereas civilised man, freed from the stress of savage life, has got into the habit of not thinking. "His actions become automatic, and he gulps down whatever is served up to him." Another of Mr. Kerr's observations was that "a learned individual may be, and often is, a stupid one." From this point of view the Catholics might put up a good case for keeping people illiterate. One has only to consider for a moment the things "served up" by the Press to-day to realise that the more words a man can read, the more lies he is likely to believe. It is a significant fact that after all the turmoil of the Russian Revolution it is the illiterate peasant alone who has got anything tangible out of it; the intelligentsia are still quarrelling and excommunicating each other. A few months ago we beheld a striking example of Press hypnotism. A man of the artisan type bustled up to a group of friends one evening, his face positively beaming—"Have you seen the news," he said. No, nothing particular, was their challenge. "Why—the pound is at par with the dollar"! His friends looked as though they wondered whether he was pulling their legs or whether he was throwing his weight about as a financial expert. It was, of course, neither. This man had heard the bankers cheering, so he cheered, too. Now, if he had been a poor illiterate Mexican, dominated by his priest, he would have known nothing about it, and would probably be concentrating his thoughts on how to overtake dollars himself. The moral of this story speaks for itself.

Germany and the Future of Europe.

By John Gould Fletcher.

II.

Let us turn back and look a little at the course of European history since the coming of Christianity.

When the Roman Empire broke into two, and the Western Empire was wrecked under the waves of the Barbarian conquests, it was the Goths, a purely Teutonic people, who maintained and preserved the cause of Latin Christianity. From Charlemagne in 800 to Henry V., who was hailed by Dante as the forthcoming deliverer of Italy—that is to say, for 600 years—the history of Europe was the history of the Holy Roman Empire—that is to say of the kings of Germany, who were crowned with this title in Rome. Without this Holy Roman Empire and the work it did in spreading the Gospel, keeping monasticism alive, spreading mysticism, and fighting to keep back pagan barbarian invasions, nothing whatever of Rome would have survived. The historians who are apologists for the Papacy have made much of Henry IV. and his submission to Gregory the Great at Canossa. But there could have been no Gregory the Great, there could have been no Rome at all if Gilbert, the German abbot who became St. Sylvester, had not as Pope crowned Otto III., Emperor of the Western world; unless Otto the Great (one of the greatest characters in European history) had saved the church in its darkest hour of decline, Europe might have become, not Christian, but Mahomeddan.

It is useless to deny these facts. Up to the time of the Reformation, up to the time of Maximilian the power of the German Empire had upheld the power of the Church. And when the Popes turned away from that which had saved the Church again and again, and began to be worldly political schemers grasping at political control, the Germans had no recourse, but to create the Reformation. But before this event, it is necessary to look at the racial configuration of the most vital strains in Europe.

From 500 A.D. to the rise of the Gothic style, Western Europe had one single type of Church building; the Romanesque. The origin of this style was among the Lombards—a German people of Northern Italy; from thence it went to Burgundy, Germany, England. The style is purely Teutonic.

French literature opens with the Song of Roland—not with the troubadours. This, like the earlier English Beowulf, is a Germanic work. It not only looks back to the period of Charlemagne, but is full of Frankish echoes. And this Frankish people were a mingling of Celtic and Gothic strains. From Alfred to Elizabeth, English literature was predominantly Saxon and French in style, and not Italian. And the English people themselves are predominantly Anglo-Saxon. The word "Norman" has no significance. The Normans were Scandinavians, that is to say Teutonic.

Early Italian art of Venice, Florence is predominantly Germanic in quality. Dante himself was a Ghibelline, that is to say a supporter of the Germanic Empire. And there is some reason to think he was of Germanic descent.

The conversion of Europe was due to preaching by monks. The first preachers were Germans and Celts.

Even in the Renaissance the highest achievements were Germano-Tuscan or Germano-Celtic (Leonardo, Michaelangelo, Shakespeare) not Latin.

It was through Germany—that is, through the Teutonic Knights—that Eastern Europe became Christian and the power of the Teutons was checked.

One could go on multiplying such evidences indefinitely. The upshot of them all is that the Ches-

terton-Belloc school which holds that Europe was a unity up to 1500 is perfectly right. But the unity was not Roman and religious; it was not French and nationalistic; it was imperial and racial. The power that maintained feudalism, kept back Mahomedanism, supported the crusades, sought consecration at the hands of the Pope, created the whole Western Church was the power of the Germanic Empire. This power kept North Germany, Saxony, Bavaria, Austria, Burgundy, and Northern Italy together. It was the great civilising force of its time. It fought the Hungarians, the Slavs, the Turks. And it was the petty little Visigothic Kingdoms of Castille and Aragon which broke the power of the Moors in Spain. Finally, it was a Ligurian Celt—Columbus—aided by a Galician (that is to say Teutonic) pilot who discovered the new world.

The greatest force of the Middle Ages was the Holy Roman Empire, the visible and invisible symbol of conquering Teutonism. And though England and France were independent of this Empire, when the Popes assumed the overlordship, not only of the Church, but of Italy, it was precisely England and France that rebelled as well as Germany. England followed the Reformation. France was torn by religious wars.

The greatest crime against united Europe was the revival of the idea of Rome not as spiritual, but as political head of the world—a revival created by the Renaissance. And this very revival destroyed Europe as a single entity. Yet German monasteries such as Einsiedeln and St. Gall had saved all of the old classics that was worth preserving. It was not for nothing that Savonarola denounced the Pope of his day as Antichrist.

A century after Luther, Germany was torn to pieces between Catholic and Protestant, in the most horrible war that Europe has ever seen, up to the time of the recent struggle—the Thirty Years War. Yet out of this struggle came Germany's superb and unequalled development as an art-producing nation. Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven—these are the outcome of the European peoples' failure to keep a unified Church and a unified Empire going together. When Germany could be no longer universal as a ruling power, it seized with magnanimity on the one cause open to it, and became universal through the one tongue which is universal—the voice of great music.

Let us leave the Prussians out of the argument. They only produced one king, and he was both miserly and wicked. Their power was imposed from without, not within, and sure to fail—Nietzsche himself knew that, and it did fail. But let us remember that where France in the nineteenth century produced Hugo, Balzac, Baudelaire, Flaubert, Renan—the Germans had Goethe, Kleist, Heine, Hoffmann, Hebbel, Nietzsche, Holderlin—as well as their philosophers, their architects, their musicians. And the comparison between French literature to-day and German literature to-day would not be so favourable to France that I need draw it, as most who read both languages can testify.

Mussolini himself is but an Italian condottiere trying to restore the empire of Charlemagne which only a Charlemagne can restore. The cry of France for a revival of classicism, so often heard since the war, is dying down. Classicism in France means the rule of the bourgeois anti-England industrialist, and nothing else. The future for Europe now, as after the Napoleonic wars, lies with Germany—with a Germany no longer Prussianised, but a great confederation of Germanic States (including Austria) united as one power. And it is precisely against this ideal that the League of Nations is proving an obstacle. Therefore, the League of Nations and its ridiculous Latinisms must go. One thing alone can save Europe—that Germany shall again be overlord of Europe, as in the Middle Ages.

Medicine and Psycho-therapy.

II.

To whatever extremes, for the sake of their own tried practice, the pioneers of psycho-analysis have moved, their revelations of the human unconscious are nevertheless revelations. They are in line not only with the heart-gifts of the poets, but with the frankness of philosophers and the confessions of saints. Through psycho-analysis that which depended on the apparent accident of self-knowledge vouchsafed to genius is destined to become applicable and common knowledge. Psycho-analysis is in the air. Although the general practitioner may rarely if ever employ the time-eating technique of Freud or Jung—and thus not have to shoulder the responsibility for breaking down a neurotic compensation without being able to ensure re-integration—he cannot nevertheless avoid making use of the tentative conclusions of psycho-analysis, many of which are generalisations applicable to the unmanifest mind of all human beings.

Heaven knows, for Heaven is peculiarly placed to know, that there are risks in giving anybody the power to say that another person died naturally. Heaven probably also hopes that there are safeguards in restricting the privilege to as honourable men as we can find. There are equally risks in allowing anyone to dissect a personality. Yet there are equally safeguards if every person privileged to analyse a personality, conscious and unconscious, has first to demonstrate himself fitted, by intelligence and character, for so responsible a function. All healing is miracle-working, and all miracle-working either of God or Satan. In a sense every art is magic, since even cabinet-making produces something that did not exist in its materials. Surgery is magic, and is exercised on what is beyond market valuation. Indeed, medicine and surgery, working with lethal weapons for instruments, poisons, anæsthetics, and knives, at a task in which the spirit of the patient is as much engaged as his body or the operator's skill, are not and cannot be exact sciences. They are occult arts. The more they are specialised the more occult they become. To dismiss psycho-analysis because a middle-aged single lady psycho-analysed her chauffeur is like dismissing all medicine because a doctor once poisoned his wife.

The resistance of the medical profession to psycho-analysis resembles the resistance of the patient who needs psycho-analysis. Symptoms of the neurotic development at which the sufferer is beginning to realise his repressions, yet still fears to see them face to face, betray themselves in the doctor's attitude. Contemplate their expressed longing for the status of scientists alongside their slow but unavoidable recognition that it is the patient's faith which makes him whole. What surgeon likes to give chloroform to the life-weary sufferer who does not long to get well? Psycho-analysis is that branch of medicine in which the patient almost refuses to co-operate in the agency of the miracle, and prefers to retain the disease he knows rather than face the health he knows not. Psycho-analysis, like all knowledge, is double-edged. It is capable of use for dark ends no less than for light ends, for dominance no less than for setting free. Who practices psycho-analysis requires the Kingdom of Heaven within him. The atmosphere in which the medical profession considers itself too pure and good for psycho-analysis is good neither for the profession nor for the art of psychological healing. Such an act implies the rejection of what the Lord has purified.

Works by the pioneers of psycho-analysis have been studied by many laymen and medical men. Summaries, outlines, and simple text-books have been published broadcast, and perused by the multitude either to satisfy curiosity or to entertain. There are now only two alternatives. Either the revelation

must be open to everybody, thus equalising its magic in the same unequal fashion as that of the multiplication table, or it must be mastered by specialists of such responsible character that mankind will share the benefits while exempt from the task of studying it in detail.

It may be argued that psycho-analysis is the function of a priest rather than of a doctor, on the ground that the priest is peculiarly a specialist in the re-integrated character. There is no objection to its practice by priests. But so sick is the modern world that doctors have already become priests. They endeavour to protect the sanctity of their consulting rooms to the same extent as the priest his confessional. But many who have lost trust in priests are still prepared to trust their doctors, whom they may to some extent select. Yet doctors have come to the point at which they also have to prove themselves worthy of their trust, or see their flock disband in disillusionment, either to lose itself in the desert, or heal itself by its own efforts.

RICHARD MONTGOMERY.

PRESS EXTRACTS.

(Selected by the Economic Research Council.)

"The 'Intimate Papers' of Colonel House constitute an astonishing exposition of the crooked inner workings of politics, perhaps without a parallel since the revelation of the manner of conducting public affairs by that founder of the modern school of scientific politics, Niccolò Machiavelli.

In the time of the famous Italian the public was probably under less illusion than to-day. . . . They constitute one of the most informative contributions to post-war literature. They reveal at every step how the politicians regard the public as the necessary dupe in order to carry into effect what the public might disapprove."—*Courtenay de Kalb*, in "The Manufacturers' Record," April 8.

"Sir Robert Kindersley, senior partner of Lazard Brothers and Co., Ltd., of London, and a director of the Bank of England, has propounded the doctrines of thrift for Great Britain and 'extravagance' for the United States."—*Wall Street News*, April 16.

"It is hard to understand the feeling behind the repeated allusions that have recently been made to a rumour that British and American financiers were endeavouring to impose upon the French Government some scheme of Anglo-American financial reconstruction. This rumour has sprung up since the recent visit to Paris of Governor Strong and several other bankers, including one of the partners of Messrs. Morgan."—*W. T. Layton* in the "Manchester Guardian," June 1.

"One of the most sensational of recent announcements with respect to the international debt situation was that recently emanating from London to the effect that international bankers were hard at work on a 'colossal scheme' for 'liquidation in one great ensemble' of the problem of German reparations and the Allied war obligations. . . . When the London plan states that \$12,000,000,000 of debt can be figured to have a present value on the basis of the funding agreements but little in excess of the \$3,750,000,000 of German mortgages provided for in the Dawes plan, it presents in bold relief the extent of debt cancellation which has already taken place in the eyes of Europe."—*Wall Street News*, April 30.

"Sir Josiah Stamp estimated last September, at a time when depression was probably at its worst, that Britain was adding annually £300,000,000 to her capital. The very strength of Britain's financial position is one reason why her readjustment is taking place less rapidly. If Great Britain were weaker financially, but still held to the gold standard, numerous bankruptcies would force distress goods on the market and break prices to a point that would clear the markets. Terrific unemployment uncompensated by doles would force prompt readjustments in labour costs. Fixed charges would be sealed down and industrial improvement would quickly come."—*Dr. B. M. Anderson*, of the Chase National Bank of New York, in an address reported in the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, May 8.

"Whether the drastic measures of a nature similar to those which were carried out last December in the case of Vickers will have to be taken, it is as yet too early to judge, but it is clear that no reform will be satisfactory which is not thoroughgoing."—*Times Trade Supplement*, June 5.

A Vagabond in Denmark.

By Leopold Spero.

THE BOWLER HAT OF CHIVALRY.—II. XVII.

How sad to wander thus disconsolate in a town where all are friendly and would love to give the shelter they must deny. Here is a policeman, though what Svendborg wants with a policeman it is difficult to understand, for the scenery would shame a bigamist into philately. Well, the policeman does not know; can't think of a thing; in fact, as he hitches his cape over his shoulder, is not deeply inclined to think at all. He would like to help, but people who come to Svendborg, expecting to find a bed waiting for them must not complain if they are disappointed. He extends a dignified palm in the direction of the row of little hotels with canopied frontages that lie to the south immediately over his left shoulder. There might be something there, though he does not think it likely. And he is right, for this stout landlord who is waiting for his empty tables to be filled with returning promenaders, opens his little eyes and raises his faint eyebrows in consternation at the thought that he should have a bedroom free at the height of Svendborg's season. A corner of a table, yes, and a drink of Carlsberg or a whiskey-soda. But not a bed. Not in Svendborg, at this time of a July night. Come, come; there are limits even to the indulgence of foreign fecklessness. And his neighbours are no less uncompromising than he.

So it is back to the policeman now. The policeman is not alone this time. He has a friend with him, a lank, unshaven young man in a greenish, shabby suit and a dented bowler hat, quite outlandishly out of place in this smart little seaside haven. The stranger looks up and takes an interest in the conversation, and despite his suspicious appearance, there is something in the friendly light of his honest blue eye that inspires confidence quite apart from the fact that he is on obvious sound terms with the village policeman, which should be a credential in itself. So the question is transferred to him, and urgently, for now the twilight is falling, and the shadows come stealing out across the water, filching the daylight away. So the stranger and his bowler hat are called into consultation.

He tilts the hat forward over his head, the better to scratch the base of his skull, where presumably the most active part of his brain is situated. He looks to the right and to the left and in front of him across the water to the shipyard, quiet now and almost beautiful, with the gaunt arms of its machinery stretched out over two rusty tramps. He looks up to the sky for inspiration, but no stars come out to greet him with any bright suggestion. He looks at his feet, such immense feet clad in such rambling boots. And then he suddenly hitches his disconnected body together, and with a jerk of his head, in jerky, half-comprehended sentences, invites you to come along with him. You look at the policeman, who twirls his moustache majestically; and this you may take as a personal reference.

So you follow the shabby, shambling gentleman while he makes one or two inquiries at the hotels up the street which you have already petitioned unsuccessfully, and you feel a special resentment, because his company can scarcely be a recommendation where you are already surplus to requirements. Then he goes to the station telephone-box and tells you to wait while he rings up. Once, twice, and the third time he emerges, nodding excitedly, as if he had nothing else to think of but your comfort, and gives you to understand that all is well. Then, as he refuses indignantly the repayment of the money he has spent on the telephone, you begin to feel ashamed of yourself; you begin to think that here

is the strangest of all creatures, somebody who really wants to help you without being paid for it. You wonder what he has found for you, what remote, inaccessible, questionable, insanitary retreat, where you will have to follow him if only in recognition of his efforts on your behalf. After all, you think to yourself, you can wait until he has bidden you and his friend goodnight, and then slip out and lie under a hedge, if there is such a thing in Svendborg. But he takes you down to the shore again, right round by the quay, over the level crossing, and past the shipyards and the mill, to the promenade by the edge of the woods, where you find yourself at last in the line of stately, elegant holiday-makers who are walking between the town and the winking lights that shine through the trees half a mile away. Suddenly he stops to greet a cheerful young woman pushing a pram with a sleeping child. This, he explains, is his family, and he introduces them hastily, whispers a few words to the woman, and bears you off again along the promenade, hurrying with earnest concentration until he suddenly lands you in the midst of a great crowd circulating round a bandstand on the terrace of the bright and gay hotel, and you realise that he has found a place for you in Christiansminde, the smartest corner of all Svendborg, and that on his shabby recommendation you are ensconced among the privileged few. And when he has fixed it all up for you with the head waiter he tries to slip away and hide his shabby bowler hat from all this smartness. And as you drag him with you to a table and sit him down by main force, and order coffee and cakes for two, you realise what a crop-eared snob you are, and what a cavalier is he—what bright plumes of courtesy are nodding at you from that shabby, dented, sentimental bowler.

The band strikes up, the crowd moves to and fro under the lights, and a man sings in a sweet and tender voice. And now your guardian angel must spread his rusty wings and depart, jamming his impossible hat on his head. He has let you talk of many things, but will not listen to your thanks. So he disappears, and you pick your way down the terrace to the promenade, and catch a glimpse of him in the distance pushing the pram back to Svendborg beside his spouse. And now the moon has come out, and with her single lamp of Venus, hanging low in the sky over the gardens of Taasinge, reflected back with double light in the clear and glassy water. The yachts rock peacefully at anchor, and in the distance the red light of the motor ferry brings still more promenaders from the town to the terrace. The white villas slumber in the grassland across Svendborg Sound, and here, at the end of the little wooden jetty the lucky Danish children, who never seem to go to bed at all in the summer time, are playing happily in the hush of the moving waters. The band stops now, and a calm silence seems to fall over the black and white crowds that sit among the gay lights of the terrace. Over to the right dreams the tender little town, over to the left the narrow strait widens out towards Lange Land. And now the silence is broken by the hoot of the ferry boat, and in a few minutes it sidles up and discharges its chattering freight to join the rest. And the band strikes up, and heads nod delightedly to greet with all the fervent applause of fashionable novelty, the last but three of the infamous jazz dances of the swampland which tortured your ears the night before you left London.

"Clearly no re-organisation of the mining industry can meet the difficulty that there are too many men engaged in it at the present time. What is to be done with the men in excess of present-day requirements? That problem concerns not mining alone, but is to be found in almost every direction."—*Times Trade Supplement*, June 19.

The Bank of England.

The Bank of England's foundation marked an epoch in the history of Finance. Before then the national banks pretended to play, and chiefly did play, the part which some innocent folk still believe banks exist to play to-day, the part of guardian for their clients' savings. The great forerunner of the Bank of England, to wit, the Bank of Amsterdam, was supposed to take its clients' hard cash, hand over its receipt in the form of a "note," charge a commission for the trouble, and on demand hand back to its clients in exchange for the notes they held the identical coins they had deposited with it. Its reputation for fulfilling this undertaking gave it great prestige. People didn't trouble to present the notes at the bank very frequently, for they were so much more convenient than a miscellaneous collection of coins in various currencies and various stages of decay, that they were freely passed from hand to hand in the course of making and paying business debts. And the Bank went on, until at the end of the eighteenth century, on its cellars being examined, it was found that most of its supposed resources had long since been lent to the Dutch East India Company in defiance of its statutes and had been sunk without trace in the Dutch colonies.

The characteristic of the Bank of England was that not only did it issue notes against the deposit of cash, but it increased the amount of money absolutely. It was given the privilege, in exchange for its various services to the Government, of issuing notes to the amount of the debt owed it by the Government. This "fiduciary" issue or manufacture of money meant that the Bank parted with cash to the Governments of the day and then printed off new money to the same amount with which to trade. To this day the Bank issues notes to the amount of various sums owing it by the State and not yet repaid, except in interest. The new institution was bitterly opposed by the London goldsmiths, who had originally been the "savings bankers" of London and had discovered the mechanism by which a "reserve" can be made to support a much more extensive system of loans. They were a rascally set, who charged most extortionate interest and practised such tricks as paying out the worst coins they could pick from their tills—a serious matter in those days. The Bank was attacked by the opponents of William III., and the succeeding settlement, because it financed that cause, but the Tories never produced an alternative, except an insane contraption termed the Land Bank, which was still-born.

Like every other bank worthy of the name since then, the Bank of England also adopted the principle of the "reserve." Essentially this is simple. If a thousand people put cash in the form of legal tender into a bank, it is extremely unlikely that more than a few of them will want to draw any out at any one time; under a note-issuing system there will be few presentations of notes over the counter; under a cheque system few cheques will be handed in with a request that they be honoured in coin of the realm. So more obligations to pay cash can be undertaken than the cash in the vaults covers, and the chief problem which faces the banker is to find and maintain the smallest "reserve" to support the largest volume of credits granted; for it is on these credits that he makes his profit—at any rate, until banking becomes highly sophisticated. What is first to be noted in this connection is that note issues are not entirely backed by legal tender and all other forms of credit beyond the legal tender held as a reserve abrogate from the State the once jealously guarded privilege of issuing money and literally make the banker as genuine a diluter of the currency of the realm as those "moneymen" whose pranks at the Royal Mints earned them the loss of their right hands by command of King Henry I.

But the dilution of legal tender is not necessarily an evil. For various reasons, including the monopolistic leanings of the Bank of England, the eighteenth century heard a continual clamour for further credit to finance all those who wished very laudably to add to the production of the country. A shaky system of banking by small partnerships sprang up, and, despite many failures, it stumbled along until in 1826 joint-stock banks if more than sixty-five miles from London were allowed to issue notes. Scotland had long previously had the advantage of branch banking by a few substantial banking firms instead of localised banking by a host of small ones. But a year or two earlier Mr. Joplin had noticed and pointed out that nothing prevented a cheque system being developed; nothing against cheques was to be found in the Bank of England's Charter. And so there followed the cheque as a substitute for the note both as a means of making payments and as a vehicle for credit expansion. Cheques are still much more favoured in England than elsewhere. Other countries still rely on

notes. The system permits easier handling in making payments, enables the banks to carry a smaller reserve in proportion to their liabilities, and is so popular with them that, despite the actual cost of handling each cheque they encourage campaigns every now and again to induce more people to use cheques in place of cash when paying their debts. And, of course, the less cash in the hands of the public the bigger the "reserve" in the banks.

HILDERIC COUSENS.

David in Defence of Goliath.

It is perhaps a feather in the cap of the Independent Labour Party that its proposals for the nationalisation of the Bank of England, and ultimately of the banking industry as a whole, have drawn the National Association of Merchants and Manufacturers to issue a pamphlet,* written by Mr. O. R. Hobson, to expose the fallacies of the Socialist aspiration. How is it that the Banks can always get their defences put up by someone else? And what will the F.B.I. say to some of the arguments advanced by its junior relative? In the autumn of 1923 the F.B.I. issued a protest against banking policy which stated:

"Our Export Trades have made painful efforts to reduce their working costs, only to find that the ground has been cut from under their feet by the further appreciation of the £."

"By a fortunate tradition," writes Mr. Hobson, "the Bank of England recruits its directors neither from among the captains of industry nor officials of State, nor even bankers (in the ordinary sense) . . . [but from] men of wide experience . . . mental independence." Yes, Mr. Hobson! Mr. Pierpoint Morgan and Mr. Kenneth Goschen may have all those qualifications, but what interest have these distinguished citizens of America and Germany in common with the National Association of [British] Merchants and Manufacturers? Does Mr. Hobson approve the inclusion of these gentlemen in the court of the Bank of England?

With a jibe at Mr. Oswald Mosley for proposing to put money into British people's pockets to enable them to "buy British goods"—did anyone ever hear such nonsense!—the author passes to a panegyric on the freedom of the existing banks from political control, and deplores the modicum of influence exercised by Washington over the Federal Reserve Board of the United States, which "betrays the growing ascendancy of sectional pressure over the recognised principles of sound banking practice"—a reference, presumably, to the pressure of American farmers upon Finance to take an interest in the greatest industry of the people of the U.S.A.!

"The State," says Mr. Hobson, "is necessarily incapable of conducting properly the lending side of the business." And then follows an amazing argument to come from a spokesman of British industrialists, that "Finance is an international business," which is presumed to indicate the necessity for freedom of the Nation's central bank from political control.

If there is a sound argument in favour of nationalisation of the Bank of England, it is that its position in International Finance so compromises its (presumed) position as the chief guardian of British industry that it must be rescued from the perilous detachment from British interests that results.

The dangers of political jobbery in the dispensation of credit facilities by a nationalised bank are clearly set forth, but the author's case against the Socialist objective is greatly weakened by his entirely unjustified assumption that national human or trading interests are, or can be, given proper consideration by the existing banking regime, whilst the Bank of England, under control of its international directorate, makes its principal objective the creation of loans abroad, and the careful preservation of the value of the gold in the vaults of the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States. To counterbalance this high financial policy, lordling it over all the requirements of individuals and of trade, Mr. Hobson has nothing to offer but that "The remedy . . . is the better and more liberal training by the banks of their staffs. . . . The degree of initiative and discretion which can be allowed to a branch manager must of necessity be limited to the maximum which can be allowed to the least efficient man on the roll, etc."

A reference to the banks' refusal of long-term loans "because the great bulk of the resources out of which they lend consists of deposits payable on demand or at short notice" completes this "constructive campaign" against nationalisation. Such innocence is unbecoming to a National Association of Merchants and Manufacturers.

W. T. SYMONS.

* "The Case against Nationalising the Banks." O. R. Hobson. (The National Association of Merchants and Manufacturers, 14, Mincing-lane, London, E.C.3.)

Fide, Non Armis.

"Believing, therefore, that ideas are the only victors whose conquests endure, and seeing the vision of the possibility of the family of nations being held together by the power of love rather than driven asunder by the disruptive power of force, we desire ardently to live out this faith in our daily lives."

These simple words from the preface to "A Quaker Adventure. The Story of Nine Years' Relief and Reconstruction," give us the key-note to the whole book. One might well leave it at that, merely adding that the members of the Society of Friends who took part in this great adventure lived up to their profession of faith and have left a record of devoted service which the world will not readily forget. But this book is something more. It is a living protest against the policy of force; it is the incarnation of the spirit of peace.

When the student of history a century hence turns to the literature of the Great War in search of material to support some particular thesis he will be appalled by the formidable array of volumes to be consulted. Nearly every army commander and politician—one hesitates to use the term "statesman" in this connection—has published a book of sorts to explain how he won the war or why the other fellow lost it; and if the budding Gibbon of the twenty-first century throws up his task in disgust or out of sheer despair at ever finding a way through the maze of intrigue, malice, and uncharitableness, and wonders however civilisation could survive such folly—well, small blame to him—but, if he have the good fortune to stumble on this volume, he may, like Lord Cecil of Chelwood, find cause to

"rejoice that humanity can still show such devotion and self-sacrifice, and in contemplating this wonderful story . . . thank God and take courage."

If he perseveres he may find in the incidents of this plainly told tale proof of the persistence of an ideal which helped to save Western Civilisation from deliquescing in utter and foul ruin; he may also come to the conclusion that it was the Society of Friends that "made the world safe for democracy," and not the politicians, generals, and journalists, of whose blatant self-advertisement we have had more than enough.

A glance at the map at the end of the book will give some idea of the vast range of the Friends' activities, which stretch from the Pyrenees to the Ural Mountains, and from the Baltic to the Aegean Sea. Their kindly charity knew no distinction of race or creed, and their help was given without stint to whomsoever sought it. "Ask the Quakers" (words written on the passport of a German-American anxious to get home after the war) became the watchword of all sorts of people in trouble—a wonderful tribute to that quiet efficiency which seems to be the hall-mark of the Quaker in any task he undertakes, and certainly stamps the whole of this far-flung work of relief and reconstruction.

If any wealthy philanthropist inspired with a love of peace is wondering how he may best help the cause he has at heart, here is a simple and effective way. Let him present copies of this book to every school and library in the Empire. He will not only advance the cause he has at heart, but have the supreme satisfaction of perpetuating the memory of these modest men and women in the only way they would desire—not in marble or bronze—but by winning adherents to their ideal,

"that obedience to Christ's spiritual laws is essential to the continuance of the best in civilisation."

Finally, it cannot be too emphatically asserted that this is a book to be read—not skipped—a book to be read and pondered over. It will be found a brave companion in those hours of depression which come to all who are striving to leave their corner of this distracted world a little brighter than they found it. It makes one think better of one's fellow men and fills one with hope for the future. As Professor Rufus Jones, of Haverford, Pennsylvania, says in his epilogue:

"It is immensely important that there should be in the world a body of Christians who are not satisfied alone to bear testimony to the gospel of peace in peace time, but who seriously undertake to continue unswervingly their allegiance to Christ's way of life when the nation to which they belong is engaged in war. . . ."

"This book tells of some quiet endeavours to promote these deeper forces of unity and good will, and therefore it should have a welcome from those who want to see the skirts of darkness pushed back and the area of light widened."

J. S. K.

Therefore—get it.

* "A Quaker Adventure. The Story of Nine Years' Relief and Reconstruction." By A. Ruth Fry. With an Introduction by the Right Hon. Viscount Cecil of Chelwood. (Nisbet and Co., Ltd. 10s. 6d. net.)

Recollections of Rasputin.

By Mme. V. Z.

II.

Coming out into the hall we entered the first door to the right, further away was another door behind which were heard voices—it must have been the dining room. Conducting me into a narrow, long room with one window, the woman left me there and shut the door.

I looked round. Near the wall, by the door, stood a bed covered with a motley, patch-work silk coverlet, and on it was a great number of piled-up pillows; further by the same wall was a washstand—a basin, encased in a white painted table; the ends of the table were covered with white cloth; near the basin lay a piece of pink soap recently used, and on the wall hung an embroidered towel. Near the washstand stood a lady's writing-desk, and on it an inkstand splashed with ink.

The telephone rang in the next room. Dounia answered it reluctantly; then her voice suddenly changed, and she answered hastily that she would at once call Rasputin to the telephone.

I listened with curiosity to Rasputin's abrupt answers. "Yes, I have people here; yes, I am well; all right; you are coming at 6? When then? I shall be busy. Righto, I shall expect you." He hurriedly crossed the room where I was. Shutting the door, he came up quite close to me, moved his chair to mine, and seating himself opposite me, placed my legs between his knees, and bending down he said: "Are you going to tell me anything good?"

"There's very little good in life," I answered. He burst out laughing, and I looked at his animal-like white teeth. "Fancy you saying such a thing! Fancy you lacking good things!"

Stroking my face, he added:

"Listen to what I am going to say to you. Do you know the church hymn, 'From my youth many passions overpowered me, but Thou protectest me, my Saviour? Do you follow it?' And saying 'do you follow,' he quickly screwed up his eyes, hiding them away, and glanced at me with a furtive, slippery glance, which flared up and went out instantaneously.

"Yes, I know it very well," I replied in confusion.

"No, you wait, you wait," he interrupted me, and squeezed my knees more tightly, "I shall prove to you everything. I say, up to the age of thirty you may sin, and after that it is time to lean Godwards, d'ye follow? And when you have learnt to give your thoughts to God, then again you may sin with your lower part"—here he made an obscene gesture—"only then it will be a rather special kind of sin, 'thou protectest me and savest me, my Saviour,' d'ye follow? Well, and as to sin? Every sin can be expiated, do you follow? Repent—and joy is yours again. Do you see, prepare yourself for the sacrament, fast the first week of Lent. Will you?"

"No, I do not want to," I said.

He was shocked, and, bending his face closely, he said, stroking my shoulders and arms: "Now, look here, listen; how impatient you are! I shall prove to you everything; by mere words, my dear, you won't get faith; it must be shown by deeds, I'll prove it to you by deed, you only come more often to me, love me, then you will have faith, my sweet little bee, because, do you follow? First of all, love! From your beloved you'll take anything, but if I am a stranger to you, whatever I may say, you will let it in here and let it out there," he said in a whisper, as he touched my ears with his lips. "Those whoring fellows round you may have told you a precious lot of things, but those fellows are no earthly good to you."

Involuntarily I moved away from him—he was coming up too closely and stickily. Suddenly he kissed the corner of my mouth, but he did it so simply that I could not feel indignant.

"Why do you have so many men running after you?" he whispered with his eyes shut. "You come to me, give them all up, those whore-mongers. I shall make everything clear to you, the whole of life will be made clear. You sit here awhile, and I'll write a letter . . . that fellow wants my help."

He took the pen and began writing, uttering each word in a loud whisper and guiding his pen as though it was fastened to some one else's hand. He wrote crooked, large letters, as though pasting them on the paper. He wrote for a long while, all the time distracting himself by now stroking my knees, now kissing me. At last I said: "The man will have to wait a long time for your letter." He hurried up, saying: "I do not like writing; oh, how I hate it! It's different when I speak. A word is alive, with it the spirit comes forth; but letters—they are soot! Just soot. Look now, that's all I've written: 'Sweet Dear refuse not do my favour they should give it him Gregory.'"

"Why don't you write the name of the person to whom it is addressed?" I asked.

He smiled with a confused smile. "Why write the name? The fellow knows to what Minister to take my letter, and to me it is of no matter, I always write 'sweet dear' and just like that. You wait a while, I want to give him the letter, but I wish to be with you some time longer, and the poor fellow is waiting. You won't be lonely?" and he ran out.

Rasputin came back in a few minutes and sat down again as before, squeezing my knees.

"Well, what were you going to say, my joy?" His eyes darkened, and there streamed out from them a bright gleam. Bending towards me he whispered hastily: "Now I shan't let you go; once you come here, you must not go away, only keep on coming, do you follow? Otherwise I shan't be able to help you; do come, my sweet one," and he ground his teeth.

"I will, of course," I said merrily. "What's your telephone number?" and having reached over my head for a pencil and piece of paper, he held them out to me, whispering "Write it down here." While I was writing he bent over me, squeezed my shoulders, and breathing hotly in my ear, asked:

"And what more are you going to say?" Impatiently I removed his hands.

"I came to you for advice, and it is you who ought to speak to me," I said.

He looked at me fixedly. "You are very nervous," he said haltingly. "Why don't you sit quietly?"

"I don't like to be touched," I said. He laughed and said: "Oh, aren't we touchy?"

Turning away I asked: "You had better tell me, if you know what is truth and what is sin?"

He looked at me inquiringly. "Do you know?" he asked.

"No, I don't."

Rasputin gave an incomprehensible smile, and bending down, began hurriedly:

"It is all because, you read too many books. In them, in the books, there's not always sense; they only disturb your soul. You know, I have one, a reading one, perhaps you know her, Miliza Nicolaevna, the Grand Duchess. Well, she has gone through all the bookish wisdom, she has done it all right; but what she was seeking, she did not find. We talk a lot together, do you follow? She is a clever thing, but she has no peace of mind. The first is love, and then comes peace. If you are like her, you won't acquire peace. She, too, asks about sin, but she does not understand it."

"Have you understood it?" I asked. He screwed up his eyes and glanced straight into mine:

"If you want to know, he only sins who is looking out for sin; but if you go through sin, then you commit no sin. And if you like, I'll show you what sin is. You fast the first week, and come to me after communion when there is paradise in your soul; then I'll show you what sin is; you'll hardly be able to stand on your feet."

"I doubt," I said, and yet I felt awed. Rasputin's reddened face with his narrow, receding and spying eyes came closer to me, and, winking oddly, like a sorcerer, he whispered with a sensual, opened mouth: "Do you want me to demonstrate it to you?"

But suddenly his eyes opened, his wrinkles smoothed out, and glancing at me with a kindly, caressing look of a monk, or of a pilgrim, he suddenly asked in a gentle voice:

"Why are you looking at me like that, darling?" and bending over my head he kissed me with a passionless, monk's kiss, adding quietly: "Oh, my joy!"

In perplexity I looked at him; surely I just saw his dark, glowering face with its watchful stealthy glance, I heard his whisper "I'll demonstrate it to you," and now there stood before me a plain witless peasant, grown over with a dark beard. His bright burnt-out eyes inquiringly and evasively looked at me, and only in the remote depths of those small eyes there imperceptibly flashed and hid another—a sly, lecherous creature.

I got up. "I must go," I said.

"Listen, you must come again, darling." He got up and embraced me closely. "Will you come?" he whispered, seeing me to the door. "And when you feel lonely, just ring me up, I'll come to the telephone. Will you come, my darling?"

"I am busy till Saturday," I said. "Then, please, do come on Saturday evening at ten. Will you?"

"Why so late?" I said. He screwed up his eyes. "Then come earlier, at half-past nine, but you must come. I'll wait for you. I've got to like you, do come, will you come?"

It is his manner—to repeat the last word twice.

"I will." And I went away.

The Theatre.

By H. R. Barbor.

A BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY.

When the Day of Ire dawns, may it be accounted unto me for virtue—that rare and somewhat negative virtue of patience—that for the length of the theatrical year, 1924-5, as the income-tax returns say, I did well and truly visit upon the average five and three-quarter performances per week. My list of shows far exceeded Polonius's, for, to his tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individual or poem unlimited, and what not, I added cabaret, military spectacle, rodeo, circus, film, vaudeville, revue, and all that is between.

A critic who could enjoy all these must needs have a catholicity of appreciation which would annul the critical act. But I can safely say that in every performance which I saw I found some well-defined interest, something germane to the art and craft of the legitimate theatre. To illustrate my point: I suspect that Mr. Lewis Casson will freely admit that his handling of a Greek chorus in the "Medea" has a certain aesthetic relationship to Mr. Felix Edwards' manipulation of his bevy of beauty in a musical comedy. And there is a lesson to be learnt by any dramatist in the simple by-play of a pair of circus clowns. Fundamentally, indeed, the laws of theatrical presentation may be seen operating in the most diversified entertainments, and they are discernible integrally whether it be in the feeding of Christians to the lions in the arena or in the feeding of Christians by Lyons at the Trocadero. And these primal laws of presentation are as hard and fast as those of the Medes and Persians. Woe to the impresario or artist who flouts them.

To come to my case. Our local Girl Guides or Boy Bards, or some such institution, had meritoriously determined to pay some dues to Thalia, and my advice had been requisitioned in regard to throwing some light on their production—electric light, the stage manager hoped. So I took a journey to some distant fastness in hopes of obtaining storage batteries so that the chaos of a village production might not be worse confounded. The meadow-bound fount of power which illuminates our neighbouring market town was some miles from our hamlet, and I was taken by one of the amateur disciples of Burbage and Garrick in his motor-van to discuss matters with the ruler of currents. On the way back he had to pick up a travelling company of mummies who were to appear positively for one week only in our village. My mission in life and in the van having been explained by our cicerone, my downfall was accomplished and another busman's holiday promoted. I strove manfully to avoid it, buying Guinneses on sight for every member of the company who straggled into view. But there was no escape, and when the juvenile lead, sixty and portly, buttonholed me on the Saturday night, "You know, my boy, Sat'dy; somethink to get the money in," and when the grande dame, who also, nobility permitting, did duty at the piano, assured me that she absolutely would not play jazz, not even "though the public demands it nowadays: classics for me every time, the Geisha, Gilbert and Sullivan, and the Love Lyrics," the nemesis of a mistaken career engulfed me. I paid my one-and-twopence, and took refuge in an obscure sixpenny seat, "entouré," like M. Perichon, "de sa femme et de sa fille."

The play presented with such grossly mercenary motives was a version—a very free version, although the licence was not poetic—of the story of "John Lee: Or the Man They Could Not Hang," which told the lurid details of the triply ineffectual attempts of the State a quarter-century or more ago, to mete out capital justice to the murderer of an old woman. I gather that this was one of a number of "script" plays, the property of the manager, who had confidentially informed me that not long before they had played thirteen weeks in one town, six nights a week, with a children's pantomime on Saturday afternoons, without once repeating a show. To perform this notable feat of memorising may seem impossible to the uninformed reader, but when "script" plays are used, the task is not so difficult, for these singular dramas are in fact only a scenario partly illuminated by essential plot-lines, cues for business, entrances and so forth—the mass of dialogue and business being put in by the individual artists as the play progresses.

The basis of "John Lee, the Man They Could Not Hang," is a melodramatic story, the integral narrative of which is compounded of that peculiarly stilted and high falutin' prose common to almost all melodrama. When, for example, innocent John Lee, the sixty-year-old juvenile lead, was suspected of having stolen the gold, his benefactress did not say: "I mistrust him," but: "There is a doubt—a horrid deed came accompanied by the low comedy man, he came 'to accomplish my fell design,' as he confidentially

informed the comedian (who, however, was far more concerned, it appeared, about some whelks which he had had for supper and which had disagreed with him, than he was to keep guard on the heavy man's behalf). The latter was a very troublesome confederate, for it appears that in breaking into the house he had "shattered yonder glass casements," thereby wakening the victim who was sleeping "in yonder apartment." Across the yard, we gathered, "in yonder stables" (much virtue in "yonder") slept John Lee, who was also awakened by the breaking of glass, but only arrived on the scene in time to find "his gen'rous benefactor" supported in the arms of his fiancée, breathing her last, having been "fouly done to death in this ghas'ly manner." Several times he and his agonised beloved demanded of the old lady "Pray tell us ere you pass, wot person 'as fouly done you to death in this ghas'ly manner?" But the old lady, either in the furtherance of some unquenchable and unreasonable personal spite, or being *au bout de ses forces*, could only breathe as she expired: "Beyold my yassassin!" indicating a perhaps inevitably attitudinising John Lee.

These tricks of verbiage were only occasionally used, the bulk of the dialogue being the bare speech of illiteracy decked with shabby, down-at-heel jokes of the last generation's music-hall. But these occasional bursts of melodramatic high faultin' were tallied by a sort of vestigial gesture-technique, which undoubtedly derived from the histrionic method of the period of rhetorical acting—certainly pre-Robertsonian. One was indeed often reminded of the old mummer in "Trelawny of the Wells," and felt convinced that these, his lineal descendants in vagabondage, would probably have complained of a performance by du Maurier, Guilty Pore or John Barrymore: "Yes, yes, yes, I know, I know. But they don't act."

They are fled away and gone. I cannot believe that in their week's sojourn their takings amounted to the hall rent; yet they paid for their "diggings," and every morning cashed up with the local publican for yesterday's beer. How they live, touring the smaller villages of the South Country from year's end to year's end, is one of the minor mysteries of showland. How courage drives them on in face of the bitter competition of the "movies" and radio is another mystery. Yet the rakish cock of the sixty-year-old juvenile lead's battered Homburg, and the bright green much-darned cycling stockings of the heavy lead (worn in the street, in "yonder apartment," as also when he doubled the part of the governor of the gaol on the gallows) suggest that this mystery may be solved by the tragic-comic self-sufficiency of the assured "artist."

They must be seen to be believed—to be pitied . . . or envied. And they must be seen quickly, for we shall not look upon their like again.

Drama.

The Truth about the Russian Dancers and Sleeping Partners: Savoy.

Russian dancers, when Sir J. M. Barrie's burlesque melodrama was written, were a mysterious people from a region of darkness. Since the advent of the light in Russia—light for the whole world means nationalism—the dancers have lost some of their magic, if none of their grace. Practical economists may now marry them, and nobody would pretend that faery, light or dark, could persist against such an ordeal as that. Barrie's play, although a mere one-act affair, is a very tangle of themes, not all of them, at least for Barrie nonsense. For a little while the motive is confined to what would happen in a stately English home if a dancer who could talk only with her feet were loved by the aristocratic scion; afterwards the theme is confinement of another sort; that is, the perpetual Barrie theme.

Indeed, after Karsavina had shown how she, with non-chalant disregard for the rules, would put a golf-ball home, or greet a friend with a kiss, the due exquisiteness of which requires that one toe should stretch to heaven, the centre of the play was a mysterious bag which the maestro of the ballet never allowed out of his reach. The maestro, changing as figures change in a dream, became a doctor, and his bag, that mysterious receptacle in which babies came to deserving homes. A clandestine peep into that bag produced the same fate as entering Bluebeard's private room. Oh, Sir James, what has all this to do with Russian dancers any more than with clog-dancers? Nay, the shoe symbol, as the old woman would confirm, hints that a clog-dancer would have been more appropriate, except that the lovely

symbolic marriage service actually would have been burlesque. As it was, Karsavina gave her responses in such graceful dance and gesture that we would almost be married again for such aesthetic pleasure as that experience. No doubt Sir James and his producers knew the play was a mix-up, but there need be no apology for its revival. Karsavina made even ugliness a matter for joy when she tried to walk on her soles to please her hostess.

"Sleeping Partners" also brought old friends together. Its farcical realism and genial cynicism were strange things to pair with Barrie's fantasy about procreation; but it, too, was magic in its way. Give Seymour Hicks a cocoon, he will spin an airy web of merriment with folds enough to wrap up a whole evening. If anyone possesses the secret of fabricating entertainment out of nothing, and keeping the audience unconscious, and happily dreaming, it is Seymour Hicks, while his lady, Ellaline Terriss, possesses the other divine secret, that even Mr. Shaw cannot penetrate. A he-ancient in a world of Ellaline Terrisses would succumb from heart failure on self-comparison, for hers is the command of enduring beauty. Edmund Gwenn, the husband of one of the sleeping partners, and the only person in the play who could possibly have committed any impropriety—it was only a boast and a rumour in his case—lived up to his company, and contributed his full share to the fun. The whole show was a long way from reality—and it had every right to be.

The Way You Look at It: Queen's.

Mrs. Risley was adorable—Isabel Jeans assured that; and I should have sympathised with Bobbie Rendon more if he had loved her rather than her money. Until she picked him up—the society phrase is "took him up"—Bobbie was a groaning clerk at three pounds a week, a condition of life that nearly excuses a higher valuation of bounty than of beauty. Bobbie would probably have continued to rejoice in his new fortune, especially as the rich and lovely lady loved him, if his friends and family had not been determined to rescue him, which means, of course, to bring his pleasures down again to what could be purchased for three pounds a week.

Bobbie's sister Jill reminded him that he came from the virtuous, hard-working middle-classes, who regard it as dishonour to steal into the upper-classes by woman charming, though I doubt not that she would have licked his boots if he had made a fortune out of patent medicine and bought an honour in open market. What really weakened Bobbie was not sister Jill, nor his goody-goody friend; it was another woman, who also was made a compliment to his taste, if not to his adult intellect, by Edna Best. With his eye on this ravishing maiden, virtuous and innocent, Bobbie handed over his cheque-book, insulted his benefactor, and turned his endowment of a magnificent Mayfair flat into bare walls and a wooden-box. After so much sacrifice he felt clean enough inside to declare his affection for the sweet young Joan, who simply announced in reply that she had already promised to marry a bald-headed old colonel with lots of money. The curtain descended on Bobbie sitting on his wooden-box strewn with straw, and looking as though some dealer had obtained his golden goose as part payment for a pup; and feeling either very saintly or very miserable. Which the author intended him to feel was guesswork; he may have been as good as Joan, or she may have been as bad as he.

It is a trifle, so I gather, for a man to keep a woman in a luxurious flat, but a scandal for a woman to keep a man, though virtue in other respects be hers, and though her title to marry is withheld by an absent scamp of an absconding husband. From this one may take one's choice; one may see Bobbie Rendon either as a martyr or as a depraved adventurer, and even Leslie Howard, who played the part, couldn't tell which. So long as he believed in his right to live where and with whom he pleased, for love or money, he behaved like a fine, clever fellow. Afterwards Leslie Howard stood about looking very sheepish, by which I do not mean repentant, but like a timid, domestic animal.

There ought to have been enough of clashing wills, desires, and standards to make the play grip. The audience, however, sat three parts asleep, as if reading a newspaper account of the upper class's marital draughts on a hot Sunday afternoon. The author, apparently adopting the conventions of the upper class in his play, seemed resolutely opposed to a scene of any kind. It was not dialogue but duologue, and whenever a third character threatened to complete the simplest dramatic figure, one of them was requested to leave the stage because the others wished to be alone. Excepting the silent departure of Sibl

Risley when the cur she had fed bit her hand, dramatic episode occurred only when the stage could not by any pretext be restricted to two players.

There was no good reason for dividing the second act into three. All that happened in the Paris restaurant could have happened in the Mayfair flat, without the dinner. Dinners, indeed, which excuse a crowd of waiters and such folk who have nothing to do with the play walking to and fro aimlessly, ought to be given on the stage only when the actors are famishing. I appreciate the author's point that there are a great many useless rich people with nothing to interest them who take long and ceremonial meals to give their jaws occupation without rattling their brains; and that having dodged service at the earthly plough, they make themselves ill and desperate in a struggle to avoid harnessing themselves to the Heavenly Plough. But the moral issue in this play is not fought out. The dramatist does not really disbelieve in the superficial cleverness by means of which the futile escape from all opinions which would necessitate action. I have treated the play in this manner because I felt, from the second scene of the second act to the end, that it ought to have been so much better, and I came away uneasy that I had seen what was only nearly a good play.

Ask Beccles: Globe.

After much travail the manager of the Globe Theatre has backed a winner. Anybody who has taken an evening off from earnestness and culture, and enjoyed himself with, from "The Ringer," will be able to derive enjoyment from "Ask Beccles." The latter, however, is a crook play, in which the audience is in the secret all the time, and gets its thrills from identifying itself with the criminal, a charming fellow whose head, heart, and manners are superior to those of the folk whom he rifles, robs, and plunders. There is ground, I fancy, for a critique of the philosophical basis of existing political economy in this delight we feel in idealising the criminal, but such a critique is none of my business. It is enough for me that the clever thief was influenced by more generous and purer motives than his honest and successful friend, and that the lovely girl that each desired went to the criminal. It seemed a pity, however, that he had to recant and promise to reform in order to seal the engagement, which shows how man still falls when he finds himself yearning for a woman.

Beccles, who made an honest living out of an information bureau where the public had simply to inquire within to get advice on anything, added dishonest luxury to his honest living by the information which the inquiring public gave him. An ugly woman wearing fine jewels was an irresistible temptation to him to sacrifice morals rather than tolerate aesthetic incongruity. Instead of putting the famous Firth diamond in the safe, or getting rid of it quick when the chance came, he preferred to hide it in a golf-ball, and play with it while in conversation with the police. I wish that his crusade against the decoration of ugly women with diamonds had been a little more sincere, however. It might have led to a philosophy similar in the instance of jewels to that of clothes propounded by Anatole France, who maintained, it will be remembered, that clothes were the invention of ugly women for making themselves equal with the lovely ones; although it appears, paradoxically, that women can be the equal of men only by doffing their clothes again. Perhaps the competition is fixed on these lines by the supreme ugliness of men. Be all this as it may, Beccles was ready to return the proceeds of his thefts to their owners in return for the reward, and to extend his profession to the advertisement strength of achievement surpassing the capacity of the police. Engaged in so refined a profession as this no wonder Beccles ascended to vituperation exceeding biblical heights in holding the mirror up to the diamond-merchant "fence," who came to see him. In fact, the rogue was impudent enough to lecture almost everybody in the play on social duty, common decency, and honour, apart from utterly mystifying the police. At last, after many thrills and curious adventures, the ugly woman gets her diamond back, and refuses to live among her social superiors with their peculiar ways in regard to jewellery any longer, while the clever rogue receives compensation for restoring thirty thousand pounds worth of diamonds to an unkissable neck in the figure of the beautiful young woman. As they embrace behind the descending curtain, and he takes off her ring to give him the size for an engagement token, she extracts a promise from him that he shall really buy it. The play is thoroughly well put together, witty, and moves all the way through. The cast, with reasonably easy though good material, enjoys itself and pleases the audience. Barbara Gott as the wealthy lady who lost her diamond while improving her social conditions kept the audience hugging itself.

PAUL BANKS.

Reviews.

Psycho-analysis for Normal People. By Geraldine Coster, B.Litt., Oxon. Oxford University Press. 2s. 6d.

It is to be hoped that this sane exposition of the outlines of psycho-analysis may have the success it deserves in banishing the "bogies" which have sprung into the minds of comfortable and well-meaning, so-called "normal" people. The book is simple and restrained in matter and style, and should do much to stem the tide of timid prejudice which has risen in response to the inevitable extremity of the views both for and against analysis. Extreme views have given rise to a dreary and often ill-informed controversy in both lay and medical publications. Miss Coster's concise little book certainly adds no fuel to the fire of controversy. On the contrary, its unassuming forcefulness may well do something to abate it.

A chapter is devoted to psycho-analytical nomenclature. It is by no means exhaustive, but is in keeping with the scope of the book. The writer then proceeds smoothly on her way, making the most sparing use of "jargon." Psychological facts are stated in the simplest language and illustrated by well-chosen examples from books and from life.

An impression of the unquestionable value of analytical-psychotherapy in the treatment not only of specifically "neurotic strivings" and compulsions, but of many unfortunate disabilities, not usually regarded as coming under those headings—but nevertheless undermining the happiness and crippling the activities of many "normal" people—is most effectively conveyed.

How to Distinguish Prints. Edited by Hesketh Hubbard. (The Print Society, Woodgreen Common, near Salisbury, Wilts. 21s. net.)

The Print Society continues its useful work in this, its third, publication, which includes a short historical introduction, exact technical notes on the production of prints by sixteen of the most commonly used methods, and a glossarial index. The book is illustrated by sixteen facsimile reproductions, and, in the case of monochrome prints, by a micro-photograph of part of the plate or block and the corresponding part of a proof. Where colour prints are given there are, in addition, miniature reproductions of progressive proofs. As pictures the most effective illustrations are the wood-engraving by John F. Greenwood and the dust-wood-quatint by Cecil Leslie. Most of the other examples, though they may be adequate to demonstrate a process, do not appear to be sufficiently "fine prints" to justify the issue of them in the form of original signed proofs with the limited five-guinea edition of the book.

Modern Art in Finland. By J. J. Tikkanen. (Government Printing Office, Helsingfors. About 2s.)

This is a useful booklet of sixty pages, written in English, and giving over fifty good half-tone illustrations of paintings and sculpture. There is little doubt that Finland possesses a virile school of painters and sculptors and, although their work is not illustrated in the present pages, architects also. Such a body as the Anglo-Finnish Society should be urged and encouraged to arrange an exhibition of modern Finnish art in London for the education and delight of students of contemporary European culture.

Portraits in the London Zoo. By Silvia Baker. (G. P. Putnam's Sons. 15s. net.)

There seems no justification for this expensive book. The letterpress is undistinguished and the drawings poor. One thinks of Gaudier-Brzeska and the good use he made of eyes and hand at the Zoo.

Mystery Cities. By Thomas Cann. (Duckworth.)

Those who are interested in the theory of the possible origin of civilisation in the now submerged Atlantic continent, especially if they have read Mr. Lewis Spence's books recently reviewed in these columns, will be eager to read a book by an excavator in Honduras, with such a title as "Mystery Cities." They will be a little disappointed. Of Dr. Cann's sixteen chapters fewer than two treat of the citadel of seven and a half acres with grand stands and everything complete for the accommodation of anything up to 10,000 spectators of the great ceremonials or dances which probably here took place. The rest of the book is a more or less amusing account of the Indians employed, and given of present-day Indian life, more especially of their surviving dances, are evidently not without value in elucidating sundry archaeological problems.

The inevitable Hedges-Brown combination appears on the scene, but who is, or are, actually responsible for the excavations is not stated. There are some good photographs.

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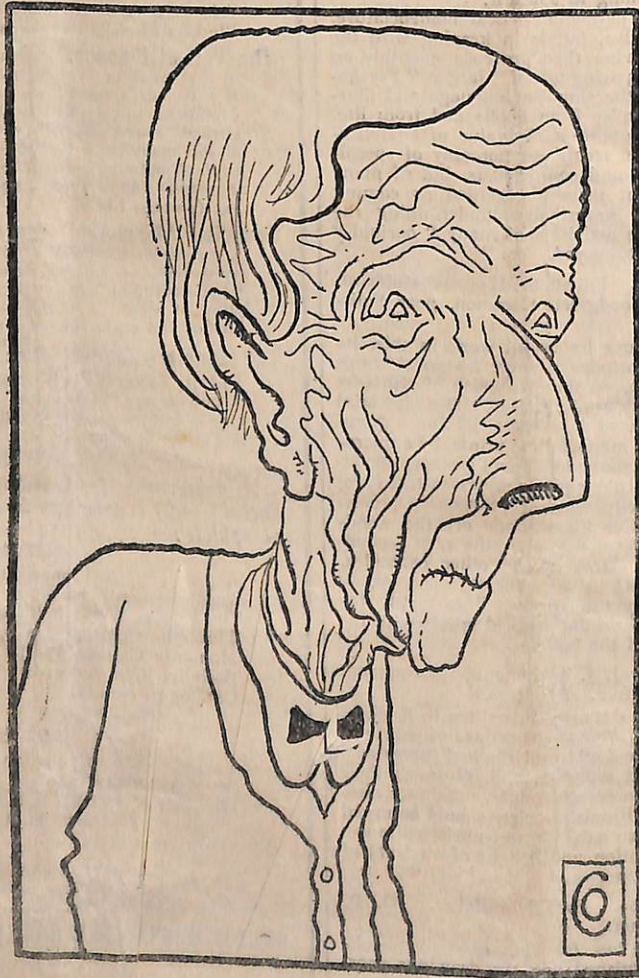
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VIII.—MR. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER.