THE

NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER"

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
NOTES OF THE WEEK	197
Crime in Chicago. Synthetic nitrates and Chile's economic situation. Wedding rings and the French gold reserve. Dean Inge on good-will in industry.	
THE "NEW ECONOMIC" DISTRIBUTISM (Editorial)	198
Mr. Vincent McNabb on Mr. Philip Kerr.	
LABOUR BANKS. By C. H. Douglas . .	200
VIEWS AND REVIEWS. By R. M. . . .	201
Poetry and Criticism: Anonymity: In Retreat.	
THE PHILOSOPHY OF YAWORSKI. The Chief Human Problems. By S. de Nicolaij (Translation)	202
THE DECLINE OF THE WEST. By John Gould Fletcher	203
Spengler's *The Decline of the West.*	
SOLITARIA.—IV. By V. Rosanov (Translation)	204
DRAMA. By Paul Banks	205
The Queen was in the Parlour: The Idiot.	
LIFE IN PRISON.—II. The Unofficial Visitor. By Harry J. Woods	206
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	207
From John Gould Fletcher, William Repton, W. Diamond, Philip T. Kenway, and J. W. Ewing.	
CARICATURES. By "Cyrano." . . .	208
IX.—Sir Felix Schüster.	

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

Mr. R. C. Saunders, manager of the Illinois Bankers' Association, has vouched for the fact that in 1924 the operations of criminals and crooks in America cost the banks no less a sum than £750,000,000, and declares that there is no economic problem more serious and urgent than that of suppressing crime. In view of this statement, the incidents following the assassination of Angelo Genna last year are discouraging enough. Genna himself was a paid assassin who, at the time of his death, was credited with having killed twenty men personally or by deputy. Although a Catholic, the Catholic Church refused him a Church funeral: yet at his burial in Chicago thirty automobiles heaped with flowers preceded the hearse. His coffin was made of silver. Among those who followed him to the grave were not only many notorious gangster leaders, but many City officials, including two municipal judges, one former judge, an alderman, a State senator, and two members of the State House of Representatives. It is not surprising to know that in Chicago there are three times as many murders in a year than in the whole of Great Britain—the respective figures being 350 and 103. And this in the heyday of America's prosperity, when, according to her British newspaper adulators, there is a good job and plenty of wages there for everyone with grit and energy. One wonders what sort of task America will have on her hands when her turn comes round again for a trade slump and unemployment.

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In consequence of the discovery how to make nitrates synthetically in North America and Europe, the exports of natural nitrates—Chile's main industry—fell from two million tons in 1923 to one and a third million in 1925. Nitrate mining enterprises have closed down, and many men have been thrown out of employment. To meet this situation it is being suggested that Chile should foster agriculture, for which her soil and climate are said to be peculiarly fitted. The difficulty is, as always, the landowners' lack of "liquid capital." It must be reassuring for those who have feared that the population of the world was going to graze the earth bare of foodstuffs, to hear that it is now overstocked with a food-forcing chemical. And it is amusing to gather that Chile, who once fertilised the world, is only now beginning to think of fertilising herself. Let us hope that her example will be followed by other countries who have much less excuse for neglecting such salvation.

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There is a proposal that the married women of France should give up their wedding rings to add to the gold reserve of the Bank of France. It is estimated that these would yield no less than 4,000 metric tons of gold, with which the franc could be stabilised without recourse to foreign credits, and then "nobody would need to worry about ratifying inter-Allied debt agreements." This proposal is a near relative of Mr. J. F. Darling's. He recommended the mobilisation of the Empire's gold resources for the purpose of remitting them to America in order to face her with the dilemma of receiving something she did not want, and had too much of already, or of (if she liked) withdrawing her demand for payment or accepting it in the form of goods. While the French proposal does not proceed from any authoritative quarter, it is just one of those moves in the game which would appeal to the French imagination. The snag, of course, is that it takes two imaginations to bring the scheme off. The men's mischief may summon rings from the vasty deep of their wives' sentiment, but the story will probably end there.

* * *

The Dean of St. Paul's keeps missing his way to Damascus. With the old dispensation in the throes of disruption he stumbles among its ruins, pointing out the beauties of fallen edifices to an imaginary group of sightseers. A superannuated guide not quite all there. He announces in the *Evening Standard* that when he visited America he was told that there was very little Socialism there "because every working man is himself a capital-

ist." Very good. One gathers that there will never again be any strikes in America. "The American employer grudges his men no wages that they can really earn." In other words, the American employer will pay any wages which he can get back in prices with a good profit. Yes; but why the implicit suggestion that the British employer will not? "The (American) workman understands that if he wants good wages he must earn them." So does the British workman. "The American workman does not feel that his employer is his natural enemy, whom he must try to injure in every possible way." Well, does the British workman? If Dean Inge means that there are no strikes to speak of in America, that can be granted. But are we to assume that strikes occur in this country solely, or even chiefly, because workmen suddenly conceive a prejudice against their employers?

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He cannot logically uphold this theory, for he explains the existing good-will in America as arising from an antecedent economic circumstance. This circumstance is that there have been "enormous investments in industrial securities by the American working man;" and that "trade unions have established banks and investment trusts to encourage saving among their members." Yes, yes; but we are going too fast: how did the American working man get the money to put by after paying for his keep? Surely not simply by touching his hat to his employer and hoping his health was good. You can't cash an obeisance—at least, the average working man cannot; although the miracle has, we believe, been occasionally worked sometimes by an employer's bowing low and offering a cigar to someone in a bank parlour. There are few workmen who would not grasp the hand in which a pound-note was stuck. On the other hand, there is no workman who, holding a pound note, would hurry to press the gummy palm of his penurious master. Which accounts for the phenomenon of what Dean Inge refers to as "the egregious A. J. Cook."

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But, from another angle, why "egregious"? Mr. Cook is after all only asking that his clients in the Miners' Federation shall have wages sufficient to provide a margin for investment. The Dean should approve, whereas he inconsistently appears to object to the inclusion of miners in the investment class. Again: "It is ill-will—fed by false and poisonous social teaching—which makes our economic problems so unhopeful, and our people so unhappy." The Dean might reflect on the curious circumstance that this supposedly causative ill-will never appears until after the economic problems have become unhopeful. Might it not be as well to invert the theory? To do so would, of course, give him the trouble of finding out what was the cause of the problems which caused the ill-will; but it would be a task worth while. We hardly like to mention the word "deflation" to him: for St. Paul's is so near to the place of origin of that policy that we might almost think of him as the Dean of Threadneedle Street. We notice that he takes his stand by Bishop Hensley Henson (to whom, by the way, we offer our apologies for inadvertently referring to him as "Dean" last week) in reprimanding the Ten Bishops, to whom he obviously intends to refer when he speaks of "muddle-headed moralists" who have not realised "the impossibility of settling economic problems by flabby sentiment." We will propound a question or two to him in this connection. As he knows, England has excused France and Italy a substantial part of their debts. Did this help to settle an economic problem? If so, was the remission dictated by sound financial principles? If not, what impelled the Government thus to give what amounts to a large subsidy to those countries? Was it love, or fear, or anything else that can reasonably be construed as "sentiment"? "Sentiment in international relationships and none at home" seems to be Dean Inge's motto. A very unpatriotic one.

* * *

Major Douglas, in enunciating at Swanwick three possible alternative ideas about the policy of an economic system, formulated two of them (both of which he dismissed as illegitimate and unworkable)—

> "The first is that it is the end in itself for which man exists.
>
> "The second is that while not an end in itself, it is the most powerful means of constraining the individual to do things he does not want to do; e.g., it is a system of government. This implies a fixed ideal of what the world ought to do."

Dean Inge quotes Dr. Johnson approvingly—"A man is seldom more harmlessly occupied than when he is making money," paraphrasing him in the following comment of his own: "What he says is that to work hard at some productive task is an admirable way of *keeping out of mischief*." (Our italics.) The attitude of the Dean, it will be seen, is faithfully reproduced in the second of Major Douglas's formulæ. And it is against the power of fixed ideals such as are here exemplified that the scientist and the industrial engineer—not to speak of credit reformers—are struggling. Of what use demonstrating the possibility of more leisure, more income, and higher purchasing power to a man or body of men who have got it into their heads that leisure is synonymous with mischief? As if the holiday months of the year were the peak months in the national crime chart. Happily for those who consciously combat this false view, every section of society is unconsciously kicking against the mechanism employed to give effect to it. Every disturbance in industry and society is at root a revolt on the part of the ordinary individual against this attempt to use the economic system as a reformatory.

The "New Economic" Distributism.

MR. VINCENT McNABB ON MR. PHILIP KERR.

The necessity for Distributists to do some hard thinking on what they mean by Distributism is made manifest by an article contributed to *G.K.'s Weekly* of August 28 by Vincent McNabb, O.P. He has come across a letter in *The Times*, written by Mr. Philip Kerr, the late Secretary of Mr. Lloyd George, in a discussion on "The New Spirit in Industry." Mr. McNabb is so struck by Mr. Kerr's views that he says of this letter, "Does it mean the turn of the tide?" and in fact heads his article on it, "The Turn of the Tide." Mr. Kerr's proposition, according to Mr. McNabb, is "so true and fundamental that the acceptance of it would be the one necessary revolution without which all other revolutions would beget chaos." Clearly, Mr. Kerr must have said something of tremendous import from a Distributist point of view. Let us, then, reproduce the passage which has so moved Mr. McNabb. Says Mr. Kerr:

> "Not the smallest cause of the old bad spirit in industry has been the perpetual spectacle of profits made, perhaps at the expense of reductions in piece-rates or wages being spent on luxurious living by the fortunate inheritors of capital; whilst the employees, their wives and children, do not receive a living wage. . . . I do not think that any single step would more contribute towards a new spirit in industry than the acceptance by the owners of capital of what seems to me the manifest truth, that the inheritance of wealth is in its analysis a public trust, and that as good citizens *they should not spend more of its proceeds upon themselves than will enable them to discharge their responsibilities properly, and should put the balance into capital improvement or public service of some kind.* It would certainly transform the whole problem if it became an accepted rule that no citizens, however wealthy, were entitled to spend more on their personal standard of living than is deemed sufficient for the holders of the highest offices in the gift of the State."—*The Times*, December 11. (Our italics.)

Mr. McNabb discerns in these sentiments two "fundamental principles" which he shows were laid down by St. Thomas Aquinas. The first of them he formulates thus: "*A man's state of life is not determined by his wealth, but a man's wealth should be determined by his state of life.*" The second is that "*Wealth superfluous to a man's state of life should be distributed.*"

We are not concerned to discuss these principles. We quote them rather to explain Mr. McNabb's enthusiasm. What we are concerned with is Mr. Kerr's suggestion for giving effect to them—in particular the second of them. Readers of THE NEW AGE will already have recognised that Mr. Kerr's technique is as old as the hills. Far from offering any escape from the economic evils in which society is submerged, it would plunge society still deeper in them. We are where we are precisely because the rich have been doing just what Mr. Kerr now proposes they shall do more intensely, i.e., refraining from buying consumable goods and spending their money on capital development. Moreover, it puzzles us to see Mr. McNabb single out Mr. Kerr as a pioneer of Distributism on this evidence; for, Mr. Kerr's proposal can be matched in the case of hundreds of other publicists. Lastly, and most significant of all, this proposal is not simply being advocated in public speech and correspondence; it is today being actually imposed on capitalism and society by the financial oligarchy who rule this country through the Bank of England. If, as Mr. McNabb claims, Mr. Kerr is "decidedly on the side of the angels," Mr. Montagu Norman is an archangel. There used to be a theological conundrum concerning how many angels could stand on the point of a needle: if Mr. McNabb's views were correct he might appropriately initiate a discussion on how many angels can pack themselves into the Court of the Bank in Threadneedle Street.

Now if Mr. Kerr had suggested that the rich should sell all they had over and above what was necessary to a reasonable standard of living, *and give the proceeds to the poor*, Mr. McNabb's enthusiasm would have been justifiable from his point of view as a disciple of Christ. But Mr. Kerr says no such thing. What he says to the rich amounts in terms of economics to this: "Refrain from spending money on yourselves, and spend it on new factories and machinery—*charging the amount in your future prices to the poor.*" Mr. McNabb must be on his guard with people who prophesy in the name of the Lord of Distributism—their Lord may one day disown their acquaintance.

Let us make three assertions. First: The total amount of money that could be saved by the proposed abstention of the rich would represent only a negligible mitigation of the condition of the poor if shared among them. Second: The amount, whatever it were to be, could not be effectively shared; i.e., the poor either would not receive the extra money, or, if they did, their increased incomes would not buy them more. Three: The self-indulgence of the rich is not now an obstacle to the enrichment of the poor.

The first of these assertions can be proved statistically. But in view of the other two, there is no need to go into the figures. The second assertion depends for its demonstration on the facts of accrediting and costing under the existing financial system. Supposing the rich were to set aside, say, £100,000,000 a year which they had previously been spending on articles of consumption. For the purpose of clarity imagine that the business of making and supplying these goods had been handled by a single firm—say, the Plutocrats' Manufacturing and Supply Company, employing perhaps some 20,000 workers. The first effects would be (1) the dismissal of these workers, (2) the closing down of the Company, (3) the disappearance of the money value of its shares. If the Company had been making a net profit of, say, 5 per cent. one can assume the value of the shares to have been £100,000,000. This value would now be wiped out. A certain number of the victimised shareholders would be poor people who held the shares either directly or at one remove through holdings of their trade unions and other societies. The bulk of the shares we concede would be in the ownership of business houses or well-to-do individuals. But to a considerable extent these shares would be in the custody of banks who had advanced loans on them to the owners. As soon as the rich had decided to curtail their expenditure as we have seen, the banks would have called in their loans. To repay these the business houses (we will ignore the private borrowers) would have to raise the money somehow. They could only do this by marking down prices in order to force sales to collect revenue. They, in turn, would suffer losses, which would react on their profits, and thus on their share values, with the ultimate result that business depression would widen out in a succession of concentric waves until the whole community had absorbed the initial financial shock.

What benefit would exist on the other side of this account? Merely the fact, for what it is worth, that £100,000,000 a year was now going to be invested in new capital development (according to Mr. Kerr's programme). But how could the rich depend on continuing to get this sum per annum under the new conditions arising out of their abstinence? And if that problem were overcome, where would they be likely to place their investments?—in their own country where depression was stalking round, or in the Government bonds of countries where rich men were still indulging themselves and stimulating trade?

Now let us look at the question in a different way. By common consent the difficulty among capitalists generally is that they have a lot of factories and machinery and few orders. There is hardly a board of directors in the country which is not kicking itself for having spent its war profits on extending its productive equipment—for having, in a word, done what Mr. Kerr says ought to be done again now—for having tried to be what Mr. McNabb would call "Distributists." They could have had a good time with the money, yet did not; and in the event find themselves in a worse state than if they had spent it all on champagne and oysters. There is no mystery about the cause. It is set out for all to read in books like Foster and Catching's *Profits*, and P. W. Martin's *The Flaw in the Price System* and *The Limited Market*, not to speak of the complete and final economic analysis and synthesis contained in Major Douglas's *Social Credit*, *The Control and Distribution of Production*, and *Economic Democracy*, whose researches have inspired the investigations of these other authors. If Mr. McNabb will study any of these books he will discover that it is the re-investment of profits by the rich, and not their spending of them on articles of life and luxury, which accounts for stagnation, unemployment and poverty. He will find, too, the interpretation of what must have appeared to him mysterious in Mr. Chesterton's recent reference to the power of the banks to turn the shilling in a man's pocket into a penny.

We must say a word or two about the second principle of St. Thomas Aquinas. *Wealth superfluous to a man's state of life should be distributed.* We agree. It certainly should. Only there is no need for anyone but that man himself to decide the point above which his wealth is "superfluous." Professor Soddy has said, "Wealth is a flow, not a store," meaning that wealth is wasted if it is not consumed as and when it appears. If anyone were to suggest to Mr. McNabb that the rich ought to have their access to the spiritual benefits of the Sacraments restricted because they were depriving the poor of their share, he would assuredly rub his eyes. But the sug-

gestion would not be a whit more absurd than the suggestion that natural forces, amplified by generations of scientific discovery, are unable to serve all the needs of the poor after having supplied to the full every conceivable demand of the rich. "Production is indefinitely expansible: Consumption is not," said Major Douglas in one of his books. Hence the practicability of what we will call the New Economic Distributism—namely, the removal of all inhibitions against Consumption.

It is a fallacy to suppose that capitalists, in the conventional sense of the term, would be opposed to Consumption as a principle if left to themselves. Each one, of course, would like to reduce Consumption among *his own* employees, i.e., to lower their wages; but he would prefer that his brother capitalists should pay their employees high wages—for these employees are potentially and ultimately his customers. A clear distinction must be drawn between the Working Capitalist and the Finance Capitalist—or, as we should prefer to put it, between the capitalist and his banker. It is the business of reformers to recognise that the capitalists' attitude towards the wage demands of labour is imposed upon them by the conditions of their dependence upon the banks. Other things equal, the capitalist who pays the lowest wage stands first in the borrowers' queue at the bank door. Since modern industry has to be run on bank credits, capitalists have got to restrict wages whether they want to or not on the pain of being put out of business if they do not. The capitalist will pay any wages you like provided he can be assured of recovering them together with other costs, plus a good profit, in the sale of his products, and provided—mark this—that such a happy situation will be continuous, that he has not to reckon with the contingency of a collapse of demand on the part of his customers. His anti-labour attitude arises from the absence of such guarantees, and upon nothing else. Such anti-Consumption *principles* as he may credit himself with are nothing but the steam off the economic stew in which he is immersed, and will disappear when the pot cools down.

Now the banks have the power, in conjunction with the Government, to make and fulfil those missing guarantees. The way in which they can do so is described in Major Douglas's credit proposals. The principle involved is the creation and issue of new credit to be used by private individuals in the purchase of articles of consumption. Thus the whole problem turns on whether the banks and the Government wish to finance Consumption, in contra-distinction to financing Production (which they would of course continue to do). If they do, the consumers will manifest themselves as natural Distributists, every man, woman and child—Distributism will be an accomplished fact without supervision from philosophic Distributists. But the banks and the Government at present decline to change their policy. Not only so, they decline to discuss the new policy. In these difficult circumstances the duty of Distributists is at least to keep the main issue clear. They must use all their ingenuity in unmasking the pretence of our financial institutions that they are powerless to solve the problems of industry. By all means let them continue to jibe at Capitalism, not, however, for starving Labour, but for not using its wits to discover who and what is forcing it to do so—and against its own vital interests. For after all Labour is Capital's best customer. Saturday's wages are Monday's till-receipts, Monday's profits, Monday's share values, and Monday's borrowing powers. It has been said often enough 'Where would Capital be if Labour ceased working?" But there is a much more startling question: "Where would Capital be if Labour worked for nothing?"

Labour Banks.

By C. H. Douglas.

I am stimulated by the interesting letter of Mr. Alexander Thompson in THE NEW AGE of the 26th inst., to deal with this matter at some length.

It is necessary in the first place to admit at once, what no doubt is fairly obvious, that my views in regard to the practicability of using the organised Labour movement for the purpose of restoring to the individual his rights and privileges, have undergone considerable modification. When I say Labour organisations, I mean exactly that, and not the individuals whose function in regard to Labour is exploited by those organisations.

It has been said, with a certain amount of truth, that Trades Union and Labour organisations are an organised complaint. As such, they throw up into positions of power, men whose personal attributes are most suitable for voicing this complaint, and who identify themselves with it. It does not require very much acquaintance with practical affairs, to realise that the specialist in voicing complaints is very much like any other sort of specialist. There is nothing like leather to him, and, subconsciously, he regards with distaste anything which would put him out of a job.

That is a short and inadequate treatment of the theoretical difficulty in using a Labour organisation to emancipate the individual. But a much more solid ground for the modification of my views arises from the fact that when in 1919 I put forward what is known as the Draft Mining Scheme for consideration, and, with the able collaboration of Mr. Orage, endeavoured to secure its consideration, we were met with active hostility on the part of every Labour leader that we approached, although our efforts were in many cases actively backed from amongst the rank and file. It is fair to say that, with the exception of Mr. Frank Hodges, who was quickly made to repent of his broadmindedness, every national Labour leader with whom we came into contact, in so far as he considered us worthy of any attention at all, devoted the conversations that we had with him to proving, on very inadequate grounds, that nothing effective could be done, and that his own policy was the only possible one, rather than devote any mental effort to acquiring a grasp of what we were both most eagerly anxious to explain to him. That was not always the case with provincial leaders, but it was general in the case of national leaders.

This attitude is so characteristic of the usual British attitude towards anything new that it ought not to, and in fact did not, surprise us. I have myself been connected during the whole of my working life with industrial pioneering of various descriptions, and I have frequently been met with the statement in so many words, that there was no reasonable argument to be advanced against the course which I was advocating, but that the concern to which I was at the moment addressing myself would prefer to do it second. The exceptions are now for the most part millionaires.

It did not, therefore, cause us any surprise that the first tangible evidence that our efforts had got home came from the United States; and at the request of the organisers of what was called the "Plumb Plan," which was Americanised Guild Socialism, I went to America at the end of 1919 to explain my views to, amongst others, Labour leaders there. It took about as many days as it did years in England to convince the persons concerned that they were barking up the wrong tree, and at my suggestion the first steps towards the foundation of the first Labour bank in the world, that of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers at Cleveland, were taken. This was followed by the Clothing Workers' Federation Bank, under the leadership of Mr. Sidney Hillman, one of the ablest Labour leaders I have ever met, and, incidentally, a Jew. At the end of 1924 there were 30 Labour banks in the United States, all of them highly successful—as banks. In self-defence, I ought to say that I did everything in my power to emphasise my view that no objective of importance would be achieved by any plan which did not deal with prices.

The best commentary on the result of the formation of these banks is contained in the "International Trades Union Movement," by Dr. Harry W. Laidler. He says: "We can, however, say in the first place that the fears of certain Trades Union leaders have not been realised in believing that the banking movement would give immediate birth to a number of fantastic projects which would ruin them and bring discredit upon the whole Labour movement. On the contrary, the banks have been the most complete success *from the financial point of view* (my italics). At the end of 1924 they uniformly published gains and profits. There has been no case of a deficit. Their operations are, in general, conducted on a *more conservative basis even than is practised by the ordinary commercial banks*, seeing that the aim of the Labour banks is, above all, to assure the security of their deposits and to render service rather than to achieve profits by speculation, and, in consequence, the *officials feel that they are invested with a responsibility to the whole Trades Union movement*" (my italics).

It will be agreed, I think, that we are in possession of sufficient data to be able to say that no scheme which depends for its success on the personal qualities of those administering it, is worth pursuing. All *purely* banking schemes are in this class. There is no hope for the individual, in a mere transfer to them of the power of dispensing money. The features of the financial system which contain the key to the emancipation of the individual are the Dividend and Prices, and I think that the situation has now reached such a stage that the onus of comparatively irrelevant issues such as Labour banks can be well left to others, while the Social Credit movement, if one is obliged to call it that, can concentrate as steadily as possible on dealing with these neglected but fundamental aspects of the problem. It is possible, even probable, that some sort of *ad hoc* bank will have to be organised by the movement itself, but as a means to an end only. I am not inclined to think that the right moment has yet arrived.

Views and Reviews.

The half-crown series of Hogarth Essays, published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf, presents the latest strivings of the eccentrics to express themselves. Eccentricity which ensues as the consequence of self-expression may be of interest; but eccentricity as the means of self-expression is merely curious. To escape from the common rut is a wretched aim if it is the whole aim. Miss Sitwell's essay on "Poetry and Criticism," although amusing, reveals—to the darkening of all else—her desperate longing to isolate herself from the herd. While her negations convince, in consequence, her affirmations breed emptiness.

Her determination to break free from the established metaphorical convention arouses only sympathy among lovers of poetry; cheap fountain-pens have been known to write orthodox verse, without even the medium of hands, so far has invention progressed since Byron. Yet this determination is not a novelty. What is novel in Miss Sitwell's method is the cantrap for escape, which consists in transposing sensory impressions, and consciously weaving uncommon associations not for beauty but for uncommonness. No divine fire is breathed into poetry. Precious nonsense like the alleged prose of Miss Gertrude Stein, the beauty of which, Miss Sitwell says, can hardly be denied, might be uttered by any flapper under laughing-gas. If setting free the unconscious meant this sort of thing the unconscious might as well remain in its dungeon. To break the strings of words which business men, critics, and young lovers, together with all the other victims of time, have been forced to adopt, is necessary work lest our souls hang in them. But in putting together the words again let us respect sense.

Miss Sitwell's essay is mainly a critic-hunt, which is the usual first step to joining the critics. She spends a long time detailing our many previous convictions, and the sins of our grandfathers. Even critics, however, sensitive as they are, toughen if continually whipped with the tale of their unkindness to Shelley and Keats, to the risk of their imminent repentance. If Miss Sitwell found the whole tale necessary, of course, as a setting for the information that Tennyson, of all men, was once attacked for not being respectable—for sanctifying a bigamist in his verse, to be plain—she is justified.

Poets and critics, in their mutual relations, are undeniably stimulating; one is provoked to wonder about their origins. A youth whose young lady inquired whether he could write poetry, answered that he had never tried. When ultimately, for her sake, he did try, he lost his love and got a job as a critic. Poets, on the other hand, are born. They require no making. Light on their development, however, is shed by another story of a young lover. Asked by his lady why he went to all the trouble of writing "poetry," he is reported to have explained that it sounded so flat in prose. By reading more into these stories than they contain the strife between poets and critics becomes intelligible. When a poet and a critic begin to abuse one another, the only gainer is the crowd, which enjoys a row.

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Mr. Forster's study of "Anonymity," a further volume in the same series, gently satirises the world of writing in which matter whose truth every reader can test by experience or revelation, such as poetry, usually bears the explicit signature of the author, while matter whose accuracy can neither be tested nor believed, such as news, bears no signature. The cry to be allowed to express one's self has contributed to a pretence of property in things which are common; the impersonality of newspapers has contributed to the pretence that trivial, temporal, and personal things are oracular, if not universal. Nevertheless, something is to be said for the anonymity of newspapers, both in the leader and news. The man who writes them may not be the author. Though poets may only be agents and not authors, it is well that they sign their work, since one hope for the world is that poets should be known.

* * *

The sub-title of Mr. Herbert Read's "In Retreat," also published by the Hogarth Press, describes it as "A Journal of the Retreat of the Fifth Army from St. Quentin, March, 1918," a more exact description than "essay." Into his straightforward narrative, as free from embellishment as an official war-report, Mr. Read has intruded neither opinions nor musings. He has put down what he did, decided, felt, and observed. Although his tale is as plain, however, as the censored account of a war-correspondent, it bears the stamp of a man who took part in it. The reader shares the writer's responsibility for decision and action. The result is a straight beam of light illuminating one episode of war, revealing of the whole that the only things proved worthy are the men whom the institution is entirely designed to destroy. Mr. Read is entitled to gratitude for this journal, and the Hogarth Press for publishing it. Had there been no shadow of the censor over the men writing home, a few restrained letters would have read like this.

R. M.

The Philosophy of Yaworski.

THE CHIEF HUMAN PROBLEMS.

By S. de Nicolaij.

I.

Dr. Jaworski is a thinker who is more than original. His ideas are not so much new in their essence as in the extremity of their development. His stride into the future discloses an abyss between contemporary science and the science which is to come, in which even those who travel with most faith towards the goal of truth are left, as it were, suspended.

His profound and extensive knowledge is united with a metaphysical intuition often disconcerting to the classical mind. His system, which is exposed in several works—*L'Interiorisation*, *l'Arbre, Biologique*, *La Période Geologique*, *l'Humanité, sa Croissance*, and *les Etapes de l'histoire*, is not only based upon the study of life, but extends to its least explored limits. It is from Biology that he is led naturally to the sociological revelation: from the discoveries of the cell to those of the Universe. And in traversing this immense field, he gives a reply to every question of philosophy.

LIFE.

Before discussing Man, who is the predominant study of this most erudite thinker, he defines Life. Completing and surpassing the present data of Science, he has enlarged the chemical formula of Claude Bernard: "Life is characterised by movements of assimilation and excretion," replacing it by another which embraces every vital phenomenon: "Life is characterised by specific movements, constant and simultaneous, slow and varied, of Interiorisation and Exteriorisation." Life, in short, is thus conceived as a vibration or oscillation in a double sense—internalising, externalising—that is to say, a bringing in to, and a sending forth from, the subject. These movements are specific and constant. Their arrestment, or radical transformation, puts an end to what can be properly called Life.

They are simultaneous, adds Dr. Jaworski. Indeed, one of the characteristics of the living being properly so called (for in this philosophy everything is alive) is the complexity of the organisation. That complexity increases with the elevation of beings in the Biological Tree to the point where the individual simultaneously digests, breathes, secretes, moves, thinks, speaks, feels, touches, and so forth.

Moreover, the movements of Interiorisation and Exteriorisation are slow. Our life is only compatible with movements of definite rapidities. In the theory of Jaworski, the cosmic movements are also vital movements, but it is evident that atomic or colloidal life have not the same rhythms as the strictly vital movements of assimilation and excretion. These last phenomena are relatively of a very great slowness. The speed of the nerve current, for example, calculated at 40 metres a second, is hardly comparable with the 300,000 kilometres which a ray of light covers in the same time. The very delicate cells of the retina of the eye cannot perceive a movement which exceeds one sixteenth of a second, and our hearing cannot detect sound-waves of a frequency above 36,000 per second: and this is nothing compared with the 20,000,000 vibrations frequently encountered in wireless waves.

On the other hand, the fundamental vital movements are particularly slow: 72 cardiac contractions to the minute, 16 respirations, three or four periods of alimentary absorption per day, one fecal exteriorisation—not to speak of the movements of walking, gesture, etc., in which fractions of a second are practically negligible, whilst in ordinary physics one deals in millionths of a second. What has been just described shows also the variety of these speeds of movement.

These two movements combine and counter-balance, but never confuse with each other. Interiorisation and exteriorisation are but a specific form of cosmic movements which have, in the depths of reality, the same essential nature. Considered as polarity, Interiorisation and Exteriorisation differentiate each of the poles. Attraction is interiorising force, centrifugal force is exteriorising movement. Dilation is exteriorising, concentration interiorising. The solid condition is dominated by Interiorisation, the gaseous state by Exteriorisation, while the liquid is the equilibrium between these two movements and the foundation of every vital manifestation.

DEATH.

All of these movements are partial, might be called sub-movements. The subject internalises or externalises a part of itself or of its surroundings. If the movement attains a higher order of magnitude; if the individual, for example, exteriorises a part of its being, it surpasses the scale of individuality to attain that of the species: that is a reproductive action, which we must regard as another plane of movement.

If the movement is amplified yet more, it is the total being which is exteriorised into its environment: that exteriorisation constitutes *death*, from the standpoint of the individual.

THE SOUL.

Dr. Jaworski, having in reality a great contempt for individuality as something ephemeral and contingent, attributes but little importance to that conception. His theory admits the existence of one soul only: the collective soul of which ours is but one manifestation. The universal consciousness *alone* comprises our desires, our actions, our emotions; and there alone, harboured from every disaster, reappear our survival, our memory, and our most intimate aspirations.

Although this question may be outside the sphere of verifiable philosophy, or, at least, may have so far escaped verification, Dr. Jaworski believes that a remainder of the individuality survives, a sort of synthesis of acquired knowledge. Here he approaches a spiritualist conception, but only to relinquish it immediately, for this which the spiritualists consider as essential, is for him, on the contrary, destined to rapid dissolution.

This partial survival of the individuality appears as a correspondence with the embryonic period in the formation of the being.

MAN.

Man is the subject most searchinglv studied in the Yaworskian philosophy.

Considered from the evolutionary point of view, he appears as the summit of the Biological Tree. He is more than the synthesis of all the beings that precede him, as the whole is more than the sum of its parts, since it is projected upon a different plane of being. Physiologically, Man is a colonial being to the fourth power. He is an organism, formed by secondary organs (e.g., liver) formed by tissues or by organs of the first order (e.g., conjunctive tissues, adipose) formed by cells.

Philosophically, Man is a microcosm who not only contains the macrocosm in himself, but repeats its evolution. His embryonic period is like a miniature of the geological evolution. Finally, we arrive at Man as a social being, whose life is a condensed recapitulation of the great stages of History.

The birth of the individual repeats the movement of the quaternary man issuing from his cavern, his growth, as we shall explain later, is a miniature of the world-evolution of Humanity.

Translated from the French by P.M.

The Decline of the West.*

In every age, mankind are only able to describe what is happening to them by a process of externalization. This process is a double process of will and of representation; upon the unknown borderland of the future is projected continually a series of images of our lives at their most valuable and revealing moments, images compounded of knowledge and desire, an eternal stream of becoming fixed into symbols of being. This process, which is familiar to every artist, that is to say to every free and intelligent man who is determined that his life shall have some universal significance, some vital meaning, is unknown alike to the scientist and to the mob. The scientist deals with a sliding scale of values, on which arbitrarily fixed points—labelled "cause and effect"—are placarded. The mob, incapable either of willing or of representing to themselves any end, do not create the truth of it of themselves, but cling to such common symbols as once had validity until the time when the few superior men, superior in that they both will and represent, renew in struggle and determination, the sense of life that has been suffered to grow less through lapse of time. Such is the process of life, through all times and ages.

This age has been called an age of relativity, also an age of science, also an age of democracy. It might be called with more meaning an age of pure mechanical industry without any aim or object beyond that of unlimited devil-take-the-hindmost competition. The business man, the "psychologist," the scientific opportunist are the heroes of this age—not the artist, the religious leader, the heroic idealist, or the master of life and of life's meaning. Such people are held as comic by the great majority—and the majority, whether of dollars or of votes, now rules. Let anyone write a book, or even an article against the majority, and the chorus of Yahoo laughter that goes up from all the well-paid reviewers is loud enough not only to stun the wretch, but to strike dead whatever angels may remain in Heaven.

Oswald Spengler is not a relativist, not a scientist, not a democrat. He is a historian, that is to say an artist. And he has made a real and a serious contribution to our knowledge of life. He has done this by deliberately turning aside from the alleged progress of our epoch, and by fastening his gaze upon the past. Not upon the past solely of Greece and Rome, but upon the whole human past. Not upon the past of political or economic root-grubbers, or of archæological rubbish-sifters, but upon the past that has bloomed and fruited for man in immense cultures, arts, and religions. From start to finish of his book, Spengler writes about the soul—the soul of man as expressed beyond the individual, the religious soul, or, if you prefer, the "over-soul." No wonder that such howls of execration have gone up from all the reviewers turning from all their radio-sets to the latest newspaper with the latest pronouncement of Mr. Stanley Baldwin! For Spengler's book contains no Aldous Huxley or Anita Loos chatter and sparkle. It contains not one single epigram. It is a silent man's silent effort at thought. Ye gods! Think of that!

Criticism of this book hitherto has taken one of three possible lines. Either the critic objects to the series of historical parallels by which the author seeks to prove that we are at present in a late stage of megalopolitan city culture which will inevitably lead to decline and collapse within the present century, or the critic objects to the treatment of Greek and Roman culture, which in Spengler's view is not only not central, but also of far less importance in the formation of the present-day European consciousness than has been supposed; or the critic asserts that the book is badly written, that it has no central argument, and that it is incoherent. Let us take these three arguments in turn, the last first.

The argument concerning Spengler's incoherence may be quite easily refuted. The fact is that a man with a mind like this shows us not one thing but many things. The historian of the present day, if he wishes to deal not with one race or nation, but with the world, cannot, so long as he is honest, say that there has been any single drift, any one force making for righteousness, any unified effort in the world so far. There have been, it is apparent, not one, but several worlds. The world of Egypt, the world of India, the world of China, the world of Western Europe—there is nothing in common between them. And there is no reason why there should be. It is better and more interesting to think that man has been able to create all these fine and various things than to hold that man should create one thing—one truth. The only persons I know who would not infinitely rather have men different at whatever damage to morals or "truth," than have them the same, are the typical modern magnate of the Henry Ford type, and the typical modern radical of the H. G. Wells type. Mr. Henry Ford would have all men riding around in cars of one pattern, and Mr. Wells is so infuriated by the fact that history shows a number of lines of development, but no unified progress, that he would have all minds become of one pattern, or in other words, he would construct a world of his own, filled with replicas of himself. Spengler, being a historian, does not think that way. He offers us a crystal with many facets. He turns it this way and that. It is for us to see a gleam in the depths. He is not a prophet, nor a vendor of any nostrum, wishing to make it easy for us to follow him. He is a historian and a teacher of history, and unless you can give his book the dispassionate attention you would give a fine piece of carving, or a mathematical problem, or a well-worked-out diagram you had better not read it at all.

The second argument is more serious. Spengler does, undoubtedly, belittle Greek culture at the expense of Teutonic culture. And a great part of what we call Imperial Roman would be called by him Magian—early Arabic. But after all he is dealing with Western Europe mainly—and has either Greece or Rome been central to Western European experience during the past nineteen hundred years? Western Europe has been racially and culturally Teuton-Saxon, Gothic, Frankish, Lombard. Since the fall of Nero there has been no such thing as the Roman Empire, in the Latin sense. There was merely an army of provincials, led by provincial generals, some of whom made themselves emperors. Gibbon and Ferrero alike have shown this. And after the fourth century this too ceased to be a unifying force, and the unifying force became Christianity. To talk, therefore, of being the heirs of the Greeks or of a revival of Latin culture—in the one sense in which it was Latin, the sense of Julius Cæsar, Augustus, and Tiberius—is absurd.

The last criticism is that Spengler is a pessimistic fatalist, inasmuch as he believes that we are at present in a stage of megalopolitan lateness which will inevitably be followed by decline and collapse. This is in a sense true, but in another sense it is not true. It may be true that the whole of the West has reached a stage of megalopolitan overripeness, and mechanical pattern-effort, which can only lead to inner collapse. That is also the theory not only of Spengler, but of the Englishman Flinders Petrie, put forward some years ago in a little known work, "The Revolutions of Civilisation." If it is true, we should know about it, and profit by the warning, if possible. But Spengler says nothing whatever about the East—he does not say that the

* "The Decline of the West." By Oswald Spengler. Vol. I. (London. Allen. 21s. net.)

East or that Russia will take this path in any of his pages. And if he is fatalistic or pessimistic, I find such an attitude not unbecoming in a historian. For my part, I could do with a great deal more condemnation of the West than he would allow. The real blot upon his book is not his general fatalism, but such particular passages as the following (p. 293):—

"Look where one will, can one find the great personalities that would justify the claim that there is still an art of determinate necessity? Look where one will, can one find the self-evidently necessary task that awaits such an artist? We go through all the exhibitions, the concerts, the theatres, and find only industrious cobblers and noisy fools, who delight to produce something for the market, something that will catch on with a public for whom art and music and drama have long since ceased to be spiritual necessities. At what a level of inward and outward dignity stand to-day that which is called art and those who are called artists! In the shareholders' meeting of any limited company, or in the technical staff of any first-rate engineering works, there is more intelligence, taste, character, and capacity than in the whole music and painting of present-day Europe."

If Spengler had been a wise man he would not have allowed that passage to stand. For to say that art is now something inferior to shareholding or engineering is incidentally to strike at the value of his own work, which is either art or nothing. And yet more: to say that no one nowadays has the great personality, or the super-personality, enough to make art a thing of determinate necessity is to talk something like nonsense. Personality is not lacking, but the public is lacking. That is why there are so many "box-office artists." We have to deal with a "bread-and-circus" fed mob, as in Alexandria after 200—true. But that is not our fault, nor any artist's fault, but the fault of industrial democracy. And so long as there is one artist who starves and suffers and is ignored alike by the mob, and by the "shareholders and engineers" of Spengler's admiration, let us never say that art is dead.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

PRESS EXTRACTS.

"A suggestion that the leading countries of the world, principally Great Britain and the United States, combine in a move to regulate the production of gold was presented to the House Committee on Banking and Currency on June 10 by R. A. Lehfeldt, of Johannesburg, South Africa. He stated that his plan would supplement the Irving-Fisher commodity dollar plan. He gave the latter his approval. He compared his plan with one now in operation in South Africa in the diamond mining industry. The fact that the diamond mining stabilisation committee had been so effective had led him to suggest an international committee representing the various countries of the world to bring about gold stabilisation. This committee would study all the elements entering into gold requirements throughout the world, and could bring about the speeding up or the retardation of gold mining operations as the needs of the world would require. By controlling the amount of gold mined they would guard against the wide fluctuations in price levels caused by over or under production of the metal at the mines. He *indicated how the production of gold has an effect upon the price level*."—*The Statist*, June 26.

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Solitaria.

By V. Rósanov.

(Translated from the Russian by S. S. Koteliansky.)

IV.

Literature has soared up like an eagle to the skies. And has fallen down. Now it is quite clear that literature is not the "sought-after invisible city."

* * *

*Happiness is in effort—says youth.
Happiness is in rest—says death.
I shall overcome everything—says youth.
Yes, but everything will end—says death.

(*In a railway car, Eidtkunen—Berlin.*)

* * *

I don't even know how they spell "morality"—with one *l* or two.

* * *

And who her father was—I know not; and who was her mother, and whether she had children, and what is her address, I don't in the least know.

(*On morality, St. Petersburg—Kiev, railway car.*)

* * *

Oh, my sad "experiments." And why did I want to know everything? Now I shall not die in peace, as I expected.

(*1911.*)

* * *

Old age in its gradualness is a loosening of attachment. And death is final coldness.

Nearing old age one is above all worried by one's irregular life—not in the sense of "one enjoyed it so little" (this does not even enter one's mind), but that one did not do *what was needed*.

To me at least the idea of "duty" only began to occur towards old age. Before, I always lived by "motif," i.e., by appetite, by taste, by what I wanted and what I liked. I can't imagine even such a "lawless" person as myself. The idea of "law" as "duty" never even occurred to me. But I only read about it in the Dictionary, under letter *D*. But I did not know what it was, and was never interested enough to know. "Duty was invented by cruel men to oppress the weak. And only fools obey it." Something like that. . . .

But I always had *pity*. Yet this, too, is my appetite, and gratitude—my taste.

* * *

It is surprising how I managed to accommodate myself to *falsehood*. It has never worried me. And for this odd reason: "What business is it of yours what precisely I think? Why am I *obliged* to tell you my real thoughts?" My profound subjectivity (the pathos of subjectivity) has had this effect, that I have gone through my whole life as though behind a certain irremovable, unbearable. "Nobody dare touch that curtain." There I lived, there *with myself*. I was truthful. . . . And with the truth of anything I said on the other side of the curtain—it seemed to me that no one had anything to do. "I must say what is useful." Your criticism should go only as far as this: am I saying what is useful? And even that on the condition: "if it is harmful then don't take it." My aphorism at the age of thirty-five: "I write not on stamped paper," that is, you can always tear it up.

If nevertheless I did in most cases (I should say nearly always) write sincerely, it was not because of my love for truth—a love I not only lacked, but could not even imagine—but because of carelessness. Carelessness is my negative pathos. To tell a lie, for which purpose it is necessary to "invent," to "make ends meet," to "build up"—is more difficult than to say "what is." And I have simply put on paper what is: which constitutes my whole truthfulness. It is natural, but it is not moral.

* * *

"I grow like this," and if you don't like it, don't look at it.

And therefore it often seemed to me (and perhaps it was and is so) that I am the most truthful and sincere of writers, although there is not a single grain of morality in this attitude.

"So God has made me."

• • •

The fusion of my life, *fatum*, especially of my thoughts, and above all of my writings with the divine *volo*, was always in me, from my very childhood, from my adolescence. And hence maybe sprang my carelessness. I was careless for this reason, that an inner voice, an invincible inner conviction, told me that everything I said God wanted me to say. This conviction was not always equally

* These sections reprinted, by courtesy, from the Calendar of July, 1926.

intense; at times this conviction, this belief, approached a kind of white heat. I became, as it were, *strung up*, my soul became strung up, my thoughts acquired a perfectly different flow, and my tongue spoke of itself. Not always in such cases had I a pen close at hand; and then I *uttered* what was in my soul. . . . But I felt that in *what I uttered* was such a propulsion of force that walls would not endure, that institutions, laws, other people's convictions would not remain safe. . . . At such moments I felt that I was saying the absolute truth, and exactly under precisely the same angle of inclination, as it is in the universe, in God, in truth *qua* truth.

In most cases, however, it was not written down (I had no pen).

• • •

The feeling of criminality (as Dostoevsky had it) I have never had; but there always was in me a feeling of my boundless weakness. . . .

Weak I began to become ever since the age of seven or eight. . . . A curious loss of will-power over myself, over my actions, over the "choice of an activity," of a "job." For instance, I entered the Faculty of the University because my brother was at that Faculty, without any intellectual or any other whatever (at the time) connection with my brother. I always went through "the open door," and it was no matter to me which door was open. Never in my life did I make a *choice*, never did I hesitate in that respect. It was a strange lack of will, a strange impassivity. And always the thought: "God is with me." But whatever door I passed, I went not in the hope that God would not desert me, but through my sole interest "in God who was with me," and hence the resultant lack of interest as to what door I went in by. I went through the door where there was "pity" or "gratitude." Thanks to these two motives I still think that I was a good man; and God will forgive me much.

• • •

She gave birth, therefore she had the right to give birth. "Can" nowhere else coincides so well with "I have the right," as in giving birth.

Your old fellow said: "I can, therefore I must." He surely had in view Hoffrats setting off in the morning to their various offices, and also young men who can ("and therefore . . .") abstain from girls. Let us suppose it is so. But surely not different would be the reasoning of young men: "I can beget a child on her, therefore I must beget it on her." What would your Königsbergian sage say to this?

(*In a railway-car.*)

• • •

What is the pathos of égalité? Standing (in my own opinion) rather high in literature, I would never dream of rushing up to her, or of avoiding her (égalité). "It is all the same to me." But Popryschin[1] would rush to égalité so as to feel the equal of the King of Spain, and Bobchinsky[1] would certainly long to be on égalité with the Governor-General. What does it mean then? Shall we say that the spirit of égalité is the longing of all that is abased, self pitying, of all that is "halved" trying to be on a level with an entity?

* * *

Darwin, in pronouncing the égalité of the chimpanzee to man, has done much more for the French spirit than for the English (so people thought; so did N. Y. Danilevsky think).

(*In a railway car.*)

* * *

Look, I too am ending by beginning to hate everything Russian. How sad, how terrible.

It is especially sad at the end of my life.

* * *

Those sleep-worn faces, unswept rooms, unpaved streets. . . . Disgusting, disgusting.

(*In a railway car.*)

* * *

And why have a friendly reader? Do I write for the reader? No, I write for myself.

"Why, then, do you publish?"

They pay for it.

The subjective has coincided with an external circumstance. Thus occurs literature. And only thus.

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway car.*)

* * *

* And what was the arrow I always felt in my heart? And from which, in the main, comes all my literature?

It is my sin.

Through sin I got to know everything on earth, and through sin (repentance) I was related to everything on earth.

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway car.*)

[1] Characters from Gogol.

Drama.

The Queen was in the Parlour: St. Martin's.

As the author of two plays running in different theatres at the same time, Mr. Noel Coward may be taken without hesitation as a good judge as well as a first class executant of either art or what the public wants. "The Queen was in the Parlour" is a frank essay in the latter mode. Knowing Mr. Coward's cleverness I even suspect him of constructing his plot with one eye half closed, satirising the pious patrons of conventional plays for their condemnation of some of his previous amoralising. In any other event the play is melodrama dished up in the personal manner of Mr. Coward. On the morning of the day when Nadya, who has lost a libertine husband, and lived a hectic artificial light-life to put herself straight with him, was to be married to Sabien, her true lover, General Krish, genially played by Mr. C. M. Hallard, arrives from her native Kraya—a fabulous country somewhere in Europe—with the news that she is queen.

After-events proved Kraya a country that any woman might leave for her good, and Nadya sensibly wanted to stay in Paris with her lover. She had so little help for herself, however, that her country might have been Russia, for she made ready to depart while reiterating her determination to remain. This was in the first act. In the second, an attempted assassination of the queen had been foiled; a stranger just behind the gunman in the crowd jerked his arm at the right second. When the life-saver, to whom the queen had been advised to give an interview and a smile, is announced, the audience, before the man comes into view, whispers in loud, tense unison: "Sabien." And Sabien, ye gods, it was, to argue away the queenly beloved's preference for duty before love by impudently asseverating that fate or something equally concerned in directing our feet must have had a share in the amazing concatenation of events which brought him there. It didn't look to me like fate.

Some time ago Mr. Coward was the centre of a newspaper stunt, in which the bishops took part, advertising the sexual immorality of the stage. Incidentally it advertised Mr. Coward as an author of plays that anybody wishing to work up vehemence for the sincere condemnation of wickedness ought not to miss. It is possible in this light to see Mr. Coward as a moralist. In fact, though I say it alone, he is a moralist. He seems to me to choose as his characters people whose lives are hopelessly tangled to give his moral opponents the choice of ground. Here is a queen with a memory marred by the pangs of undiluted love, threatened with revolution and assassination, arranging to marry an apparently respectable prince, and followed about by a lover who, never having possessed her, cannot overcome the mobilised emotions of a frustrated wedding-eve; yet she speaks the truth simply to all whom it may concern. Mr. Coward's moral critics would have hidden the universe behind a patchwork of earnest lies long before they had had to live in so many places at once as she. Mr. Coward's confidence in his case is its weakness. His contempt for dissimulation is expressed through the medium of characters who attract attention to anything but their virtue of truthfulness under temptation to lie, with the result that it is noticed only by sympathisers.

While the arrangements for the queen's marriage with the prince are in progress she warns him; what would he do were she grossly to betray him? That night, after the state has been put to bed, she dines, according to the mode of Paris, with her lover. But the State is sleepless; the prince and the general arrive in the small hours to help the queen and her household to escape from the mob, which the queen ultimately subdues, and the prince sends home to bed. A report is heard in the queen's bedroom, and the general announces, with a sailor's wit and a soldier's devotion: "A man has been shot while attempting to enter Her Majesty's window." The prince already knows, however, that her lover has committed suicide, though I personally think he was shot trying to get out of the window.

Some of the conversation between the queen and the prince is delightful, including the need each confesses, before a trying ceremony, for aspirin, and his confiding in her that to look boyish and a little shy pleases the old statesmen. These two again are frank with each other. They confess the external complications of their affairs at the start. Indeed, Mr. Coward's slogan is that if these people with so much to hide can get along better truthfully, what excuse for lying have hypocritical puritans with nothing to tell?

Miss Madge Titheradge submitted to the caprices of a queen with distinction, a little more at home in the heavier parts than in the lighter ones. Mr. Francis Lister's Sabien was as satisfying as could be expected, insomuch that this character was of greater importance to the idea of the play, in my opinion, than the execution provided for. Ada King's

narration, in her part of grand dame secretary to the queen, of her visit to a café in the town testing the temper of the people, was one of the good things of the evening. I enjoyed most, however, Mr. C. M. Marshall's Prince Keri. He convinced me that a puppet of state could be fully conscious of his condition, and nevertheless take an amused and equanimous interest in the show, including himself.

The Idiot: Barnes.

The re-opening of the Barnes Theatre restores to London the dramatic freedom of the world. After a comedy by Mr. Guy Pelham Boulton, and Mr. John Drinkwater's adaptation of "The Mayor of Casterbridge," the prospect of another Chehov season with M. Komisarjevsky as producer whets anticipation. The adaptation of Dostoevsky's "Idiot," by Michael Hogan, produced by Mr. Hogan in co-operation with Mr. Donald Macardle, was not completely successful. Moving as it was, one suspected that those who had enjoyed the novel were a favoured audience, and that any who expected an easy road to the appreciation of Dostoevsky's "Idiot" would be unfortunate. Judged on its own merits as drama Mr. Hogan's adaptation finished in a state of incoherence, which was threatened from the second act.

The stage-presentation invited the addition of the plural sign to the title. The first act was clear and beautiful. Ion Swinley's Prince Muishkin—the idiot—maintained the child-like truthfulness of the character without the slightest Anglican degradation to goody-goodiness. At the end of that act one had experienced the man who had not grown up, in the sense of not grown complicated. For me, indeed, the outstanding episode of the production was the idiot's conversation with the wife and three daughters of General Epanchin in the first act. His description of the execution at Lyons, witnessed while wandering abroad, was first-class both as acting and as interpretation of Dostoevsky. When the simple soul began to turn into the sentimental moraliser of the second act, typified in so many English plays for young and poor people, whose whole gospel is non-resistance, and at the same time turmoil overcame the stage, the affair grew too much like life anywhere and too little like art in Russia.

Nastasia Philipovna, the real focus of the play, was performed with beautiful restraint by Stella Arbenina. Her love for the idiot, whose offer to marry her without dowry she refused, in face of her past, in order not to ruin him, was portrayed with great understanding. She had a past to ruin anyone in Europe, and ought to have emigrated to America, instead of remaining in Russia to be murdered. Stella Arbenina's quiet acting in the last act, where the young tiger of a girl who wanted the Prince Muishkin for herself heaped contumely upon Nastasia commanded the audience to admiration. Beatrix Thomson, as the young tiger, hardly did so well. The gesture with which she ended the first act made us expect something other than the hysterical passion that followed. At the end of that act the idiot sits at a table to show by his handwriting his fitness for work—and presumably his partial sanity. The mercenary Ivolgin presses Aglaya—the young tiger—for the word that will save him from selling himself by marrying Nastasia to set her previous paramour free. "Write," she calls to the idiot, "I never condescend to bargain." The lovely lady who could bring that off as magnificently as Beatrix Thomson did ought not to make us fear afterwards that she might scratch and bite—not even another woman. But what a play it was up to that point!

Lawrence Anderson's Rogojin, whose crazy passion for Nastasia made him bid openly against the mercenary Ivolgin for her, offering him a hundred thousand roubles, was consistently and full-bloodedly rendered. The scene in which Nastasia, foreknowing that Rogojin would murder her body for the infidelity of her soul, gave herself to him, nevertheless, to free the idiot to accept Aglaya, was impressive. But the play came to an end too abruptly. The idiot, fearful for Nastasia, goes to her, only to find that Rogojin, as he feared, has killed her. The two sit playing cards, and at length break down in lunatic laughter. When Aglaya runs in and throws herself at the idiot's feet, which is to say Prince Muishkin's, since Rogojin is a lunatic by this time, followed by other characters, one feels that what ought to have been illumined was only darkened. The difficulties, of course, in dramatising a Dostoevsky novel might deter anyone from the attempt. Perhaps they ought to. The duration of a stage-play is so brief that only the spine of a word like the "Idiot" could be squeezed into it. Conscious of the magnitude of Mr. Hogan's task one can only acknowledge that he has struggled with it heroically to succeed in holding and moving his audience.

PAUL BANKS.

Life in Prison.

II.

THE UNOFFICIAL VISITOR.

The most important change in prison administration during the last twenty-five years has been the appointment at all local prisons of unofficial visitors.

This appointment has its roots deep in the soil of a great idea, and is essential to the development of the remedial policy of present-day prison administration. This scheme is the subject of much discussion in prison circles, and its continuance is strongly opposed by the older uniformed officials.

The appointment marks an entirely new conception of the whole problem of the prisoner and his treatment, and is chiefly significant for the suggestion it contains of the limitations of the specialist or trained official, and the possible need of an alteration in the personnel of the general staff of the prison. This is no reflection upon the prison warder. The writer has some experience of prison treatment in recent times, and found the average warder an ordinary working-class man, faithfully discharging the duties imposed upon him. But the Prison Commissioners have boldly set their faces toward the light of a new day in prison affairs, basing their administration upon ideas entirely opposed to the principles in which their staff have been trained.

Traditions die hard, and the firmly established tradition in prison is that the prisoner is purely a physical problem. This was the old conception, and in this idea warders were carefully instructed. It was no part of their duty to be interested in the moral welfare of the prisoner. Officially, so far as they were concerned, the prisoner had no moral welfare. The whole business of the warder was, and is, to see that tasks of labour are properly carried out; that the cells on the landings are in clean condition, and that the prisoner is securely locked up at night. He is not a social reformer; he has little interest in the prisoner beyond curiosity, and his main concern is to avoid trouble and make his pension secure. The high water mark of efficiency for him is to carry out without slightest deviation the cold, lifeless creed of the Standing Orders.

The problem of the prisoner is no longer regarded as merely physical. A great and deep humanitarian note has been sounded, and to-day the question is viewed as one of social, moral, and religious interest. It was speedily discovered that men trained in the old ideas lacked the capacity to operate the new. There has thus been developed a curiously incomplete state of affairs. Throughout the working day, from six in the morning until the same hour at night, the old idea reigns supreme. Strict silence, absolute compulsion, the suppression of social instincts, lack of real association, and the cold, hopeless hardness of a life lived to order are the dominant features. It is when labour ceases for the day that the warm humanitarian spirit of the new conception comes as a stranger to a strange land. But the idea that the prisoner has a possible future civic value can only be operated by those who understand and appreciate such an outlook.

To meet this difficulty the commissioners appoint, upon nomination by the local governor, a limited number of visitors to the men in their cells. These visitors are selected with great care and are men and women with business and professional interests or with some local standing, usually identified with one of the religious bodies in the town. Those I have met have been sane, level-headed people, animated by love of humanity and belief in the essential goodness of things, but fully alive to the difficulties and disappointments of life. Usually when appointed they know little or nothing of prison conditions. This is their great qualification, for the essential need in prison to-day is a freshness and buoyancy of outlook that refuses to be quenched by the traditional deadness devitalising the inhabitants. They are not hampered by the limitations of the trained warder. The warder has looked at the problem for so long from one compulsory point of view that he fails now to see it. To him a prisoner is not a new personality; he is just the usual man in the usual place. The unofficial visitor is unspoiled by years of usage. He comes to the prison as a friend, the tangible evidence of the practical interest of the commissioners in his welfare. At first there was a tendency to regard these visits as a piece of strategy on the part of the authorities to obtain further information concerning the criminal history of the prisoner. That has passed away, and along the broad highroad of a human understanding the man in visitor finds his way of approach to the mind of the man in the cell.

The visitor has a definite object in view. He strives to show the prisoner the folly and wrong of the way that leads to prison; to discover any evident defect of character, and to present a report to the Discharged Prisoner's Aid Society

on the character and future possibilities of the man. These visits play a vital part in the life of the prisoner. Many men who were convinced of the hopelessness of attempting to win their way back unaided have been encouraged by these visits to take up the struggle of life afresh with a big measure of success. In unobtrusive fashion the visitor keeps in touch with the man after his discharge, and as he proves worthy he is introduced to those who will help him on his upward way. In the provincial town where I live I frequently meet men who have left prison under the guidance of an unofficial visitor. They have been found employment, and in many cases are justifying the confidence reposed in them.

There is some danger of this movement becoming a sort of middle-class hobby and the fad of religious extremists, but with careful selection and wise development it may become a powerful factor in the re-making of the broken brotherhood of the city of cells.

HARRY J. WOODS.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

GERMANY AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPE.

Sir,—Your correspondent "A. J.," is perfectly correct in pointing out the anachronisms and mistakes in the second article of the series which I have written on "Germany and the Future of Europe." By a slip of the pen I wrote "Gregory the Great," when I should have written "Gregory VII." And hasty preparation and still more hurried proof-reading, led me to overlook the fact that it was not Henry V., but Henry VII. whom Dante hailed as liberator of Italy. My only excuse for these mistakes is that in common with most English-speaking people, I have been led to believe, by all the devices of early education, that the only civilised nations worthy of historical study have been Greece, Rome, England, France, and Italy—with the result that my knowledge of the Holy Roman Empire remains to this day fragmentary and imperfect.

In regard to the Prussian king who was both "miserly and wicked," I was referring to Frederick the Great. In my third article, I attempted to redress the balance, and to show that the Prussian monarchy, besides having but "one king," produced at least one great emperor—Frederick William IV. of Prussia and I. of Germany.

As regards my remark that French Classicism is really a defence of bourgeois industrialism. I stand by this statement, at least as regards the nineteenth century. Ingres, whom my correspondent cites, was an upholder of the essentially bourgeois king Louis Phillippe, and the bourgeois emperor, Louis Napoleon. Let us contrast him with the greatest of French Romantics, Hugo, with his open admiration for England and Republicanism. In the early twentieth century, the mask has fallen from French Classicism. Such upholders as Charles Maurras and Maurice Barrès, with their combined vituperation of Germany and England, show only too clearly that what they really aim at is a "restoration" in the interests of the French manufacturers.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

WHERE THE GHOSTS PROWL . . .

Sir,—Mr. Cyril D'Arcy must try again, for doubtless he can be more offensive with an effort than without. Before a reply is necessary to the charge of "self-congratulatory" he must produce the evidence; my services to THE NEW AGE, other than buying it weekly for fourteen years, are negligible, but the time spent in opposing the Insurance Act has made me realise the truth of Mr. Hervey's remarks. Also let him produce evidence of conceit, and any suggestion of a sneer about money making; the phrase was "many have found consolation in money making." To describe me as a foolish cockney would have had point if he had stated when and where the particular foolishness lay, and it is with regret that neither my parents nor my birthplace do not even make him correct on the latter count. Again, it is a pity, for Providence ought to be on the side of one who is terribly at ease on Golgotha, and, with an overspill of Christian charity can refer to Mr. Hervey as an ex-convict after the victim has presumably satisfied justice with a period of imprisonment.

On reference to THE NEW AGE, January, 1913, and July, 1913, Mr. Hervey's "pavement antics" were being published; the Editor evidently thought they were suitable then; the present Editor is of the same opinion; and the Australian hit more than one nail on the head when he wrote: "The supreme problem and struggle of this age is to convince all men that they *are* men and not beasts."

The complex of Mr. D'Arcy escapes me for the moment; but perhaps the clarity of his letter is obscured by the fact that he is not himself. Banana skins and bad eggs must be small beer to him, but it is to be hoped that his inside knowledge of Golgotha has left him with some regard for his own species. Mr. Hervey wants Orage back for England; this shows discernment, whatever label may be stuck on the one who says it. But discernment is not a feature with one who wanted a "rough house" with me at the expense of more important matters than Mr. Cyril D'Arcy, the man himself, or

WILLIAM REPTON.

"AMERICA, EUROPE, AND THE EMPIRE."

Dear Sir,—Thanks for your article under this title in your issue of July 8th. Mr. Garvin's wallow in emotion disgusted me and I only wish the gentleman would pay us a lengthy visit in order to view his beloved "Yanks" from this side of the water and the U.S. border. He might then be persuaded to change his mind about American exploitation of the Empire. Ye gods, we have enough of it now in Canada, and the noise being made about it already should be sufficient to warn J. L. G. that he is on the wrong track.

Incidentally, one of our Wheat Pool representatives paid a visit to the Dakotas on behalf of the State Wheat Pool, and his remarks on his return as to the state of "efficiency" in that part of the world were comical to say the least. The farmers in Western Canada will have solved their economic problem long before the Yanks wake up to the fact that they are miles behind.

W. DIAMOND.

Saskatoon, July 26.

INTERPLANETARY COMMUNICATION.

Sir,—In his article, after a lot of hazy talk about astrologers and what not, "P. M." states that by concentration of thought, "Buddhist seers have frequently reached the Sun's corona." If he would tell us in plain language what the word "reached" actually here means, we might form some opinion of how much the statement matters.

PHILIP T. KENWAY.

Sir,—In his article on the above subject "P. M." says, "The claims which have been made by certain seers and mystics, to have visited the heavenly bodies . . . are perfectly allowed by astrology. Swedenborg announced that he had several times visited planets. . . which must have happened in a supreme feat of concentration, without thought of any kind."

What Swedenborg did claim was that with his thoughts about him, and in a full state of wakefulness, he spoke, in the Spiritual World, with angels and spirits from other planetary bodies, that is, with men and women who lived and died on those planets, to come into the world of spirits and thence to heaven or hell after death, just as we of this planet shall, in due course.

Swedenborg was a leading Cosmologist, and many eminent astronomers attribute to him the initial discovery of the nebular hypothesis of astronomy.

I do not necessarily disagree with astrologists as to communication with other earths; in fact, I think it highly probable it will be an accomplished fact in years to come. But it is certain Swedenborg made no claim to have visited other earths, and equally certain that no one will visit them (or know he has been there if he does go) without thought.

J. W. EWING.

P. M. replies.—The phrase, "without thought of any kind," did not mean without consciousness. On the contrary, it was in reference to a higher state of consciousness in which normal human thinking is superseded. We think in words. Interplanetary consciousness thinks in "language" only suggested by the ultimate "categories" described by our philosophers. I regret I cannot at the moment identify the passage in which Swedenborg describes his communication with a sphere entirely beyond the solar system and the length of time it took him to return to earth-consciousness. In reply to Mr. Kenway: such statements do not matter at all if one has an *a priori* conviction that certain things removed in space or time cannot possibly be united in consciousness; but if so united they are said to be "attained" or "reached."

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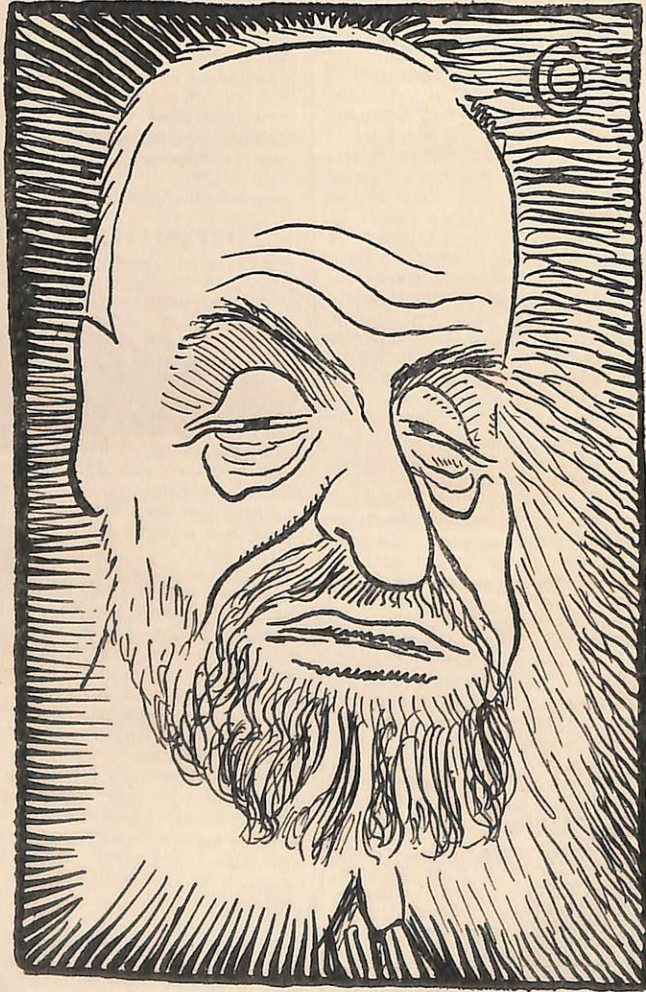

IX.—SIR FELIX SCHUSTER.

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