

THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER."

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

In view of the certainty that the Snowden Commission of Inquiry will be the centre of political controversy we think it will be of advantage for our readers to get a clear idea at once about how they may best exploit the situation. If, as we assume as a foregone conclusion, the terms of reference exclude the essential line of inquiry that we have been advocating, the exclusion will be reflected in the discussions that will take place throughout the country. The arguments on all sides will necessarily have loose ends, and it appears as if the activities of the individual advocate of Social Credit will be largely limited to tying them up. There will, however, be so many of them that his difficulty will be to make a selection. The course which the controversies take will do a good deal to limit the field of selection, but there will still remain a considerable margin of choice.

In our judgment there is no better policy than to concentrate on the subject-matter covered in Mr. J. F. Darling's Address to the Manchester Association of Importers and Exporters in 1925, and published under the title *Economic Unity of the Empire*.^{*} Many readers already have this publication. Those who have not obtained it should do so. There is, of course, Mr. McKenna's *Post-War Banking*, which is full of matter relevant to the less comprehensive. Mr. Darling addressed an audience of active business men. Mr. McKenna addressed simply the shareholders of the Midland Bank. Mr. Darling's was a practical and political address, whereas Mr. McKenna's addresses have been much more theoretical and technical. Although Mr. McKenna's name is more familiar to the public than is Mr. Darling's, still Mr. Darling, as a Director of the Midland Bank, will be accepted as a sufficient authority by the public when his position and statements are presented and explained to them.

^{*}P. S. King, 1s. On sale by the Credit Research Library, 70, High Holborn. (Postage ½d.)

Nothing in the foregoing suggestion must be interpreted as involving the policy of eliminating the case for Social Credit. It is, on the contrary, a suggestion of the best strategic point where that case may be insinuated into the controversy. In strict logic, of course, the advocate of Social Credit would lump the Bank of England and all its authoritative critics into the same category and subject them to the one condemnation that in the final analysis the persistence of the present financial reaction, or the adoption of the financial reforms that are going to be investigated by the Commission, cannot make a scrap of difference to the lives of the people of this country. This, in fact, is the attitude of the Social Credit Movement regarded as a collective body; and, as Mr. Rivers stated last week, steps are being taken to get this attitude recorded as emphatically and conspicuously as possible on behalf of the Movement. What those steps are will be communicated in due course. But there is a vast difference between a formal repudiation of the Snowden Inquiry by a collective body and a personal boycott of it by every constituent member of that body. Collectively we all declare: "This is a sort of private controversy and won't settle anything"—but individually each of us feels: "Private or not, I'm not going to be out of it." The Irishman in the story asked: "Is this a private row, or can anybody join in?" The answer, applied to the present issue, is: "It is a private row but everybody may join in."

Now, in the case of an ordinary riot it is advisable to get hold of a weapon before you join in. And in a polemical riot the effective weapon can be called by the name "authority," or, if you like, "advertisement." Now the individual advocate of Social Credit is weaponless in this sense. He has no prestige of his own. His only chance of some fun is to attach himself to someone who has. He can put on a similar rosette, stand by, sometimes suggesting to his associate what head to hit, sometimes warning him what club is aimed at his own, and perhaps doing a little first-aid work in the in-

tervals. Then, when the row is over and the victory is lost and won, he may come off the field with a weapon of his own, lifted from the corpse of some friend or foe. In other words, he will have picked up a little authority by reason of his temporary allegiance to a recognised faction, and can now get his friends to listen to his explanation why they lost, if they have, or why there are no spoils of victory if they have won. Bruised heads are prone to reflection.

It is somewhat along such a line of reasoning that we recommend the "Darling" colours to the scattered "gentlemen-adventurers" who propose to enter the conflict as isolated individuals or groups. The book *Economic Unity of the Empire* is the initial weapon for an ultimate purpose. Its use is twofold. Firstly to yourself. Get its contents well in your mind: learn them by heart if you can. Secondly to those whom you want to influence: recommend them to read it: say to them: "This is the book that will explain what it's all about." And as a general policy, on this basis do all you can to become known as an expert exponent of the "Darling" financial policy, or, as you may, and had better, call it, the "Midland Bank" policy. So far as you commit yourself to advocating it you can always make the reservation that the policy is "incomplete"; you can explain that the factors necessary to complete it are not within the Snowden Commission's terms of reference, and that therefore it is of no immediate use talking about them. The point to emphasise is that the Midland Bank policy goes further in the right direction than any other under official examination.

This idea is put forward only for the consideration of those readers who are in need of any ideas at all. The methods involved in it are admittedly oblique, and will not satisfy propagandists who stand by the uncompromising affirmation of Social Credit without intermission and in all circumstances. Nor do we wish them to, for we believe in the doctrine that the most efficient method of advocacy is the one you like best. Enthusiastic action in carrying out your own idea is more efficient in the long run than perfunctory action in carrying out someone else's. Again, the suggestions we give are only provisional. That is why we have so framed them that if adopted they will involve only the minimum of labour and expense. At any moment the circumstances may so change as to indicate a direct Social Credit policy of attack. Such circumstances may arise out of the transactions of the Snowden Commission, or out of some most remote development at home or abroad. For instance—to take one indication of significance, Mr. Oliver Baldwin's article in *Reynolds's Illustrated News* of October 13. In it occurs the following passage:

"Snowden has promised us an inquiry into these [gold-standard anomalies] and for that we are indeed grateful, but it must not be a packed inquiry, and it ought to be public. Let us see men like Arthur Kitson and Major Douglas on this inquiry, so that their theories can be refuted (if they can be) and let the public hear both sides of this question as well as the opinions of those who only want to patch up the thing so that it can pass muster for another few years." (Our italics.)

The fact that Mr. Oliver Baldwin is labelled a "Socialist" in political life does not lessen the importance of the fact that he is the son of an ex-Prime Minister in private life. He has, so to speak, a rover's ticket in the theatre of High Society, and comes into contact with eminent persons of all sorts of political persuasions and none at all. And since there is no public man who says as much in the press as he does in private intercourse, Mr. Oliver Baldwin's specific public reference to Major Douglas may be taken as direct evidence that he

does not allow his friends and acquaintances to pretend to themselves that there is no such person. As an official Socialist he need not have mentioned either of the two names, because Major Douglas, and, we believe, Mr. Kitson, belong much more to the right than the left wing of party politics. In another passage in his article he quotes Mr. J. M. Keynes, who, again, is a Liberal, not a Socialist. A curious feature about the article is that he does not mention Sir Oswald Mosley, who is a Socialist as well as the author of "Revolution by Reason," and a public critic of financial policy. There are two or three economists, too, in the Labour Party, but none of them is noticed. We have no reason at present to attach any significance to Mr. Oliver Baldwin's apparent discrimination: we merely want to record it for future reference. Before this article appeared—in fact, soon after the last Election—something stimulated our respect for him. In an interview he told a Press representative that he was not particularly enthusiastic at the prospect of sitting in Parliament; he thought there was much more fun in fighting an election than in winning one. We gave him full marks for this. "Here," we said to ourselves, "is the expression of an attitude reminiscent of the House of Commons in the good old days when the private Members belonging to the Party in office made no bones about kicking out their own Government if they took a dislike to it." There was then no compromising with political convictions for the sake of "avoiding the disturbance" of elections. And if anyone says that their convictions were based on their interests, our main point still remains valid, that at least they fought each other in the open for their spoils, and did not share up the boodle behind the Speaker's chair, and only go to the polls to raffle the empty bag among their constituents. Subsequently to reading of the above interview, we saw a picture of Mr. Oliver Baldwin's face. He has the wide head and the square jaw of the man of action—the very antithesis of the high-domed uplifters who would leave the country to rot while they sat and contemplated Perfection. We rather fancy that he has joined the Socialist Party as what the Americans would call an "observer." We shall see.

Reverting to the Snowden Commission, we came across an interesting fact with regard to Commissions in general. It is contained in a comment by *Nature* on the Royal Commission on the Civil Service whose personnel and terms of reference have recently been announced by the Government. This comment is to the effect that the appearance and examination of witnesses by a Commission is not of itself enough; but that there ought to be persons on the Commission itself who have an understanding of the point of view which the witnesses have been called to propound. The reason lies in "the need for exposition and elucidation after the witnesses have withdrawn." The importance of this statement cannot be over-emphasised. It is true of all inquiries whether by Governments or other bodies. It explains something which puzzled a good many readers of THE NEW AGE when it happened, namely, the refusal of Major Douglas to give evidence before the Labour Party Executive's Committee of Inquiry into his Proposals some seven years ago. "What a pity to lose such an opportunity," they said. What he lost was an opportunity of wasting his time. The Committee, otherwise than its neutral nonentities, contained members who were psychologically resistant to Major Douglas's proposals, and one member who was, so to speak, intellectually hostile, for he was a banker. Imagine the scene when Major Douglas would have withdrawn—the banker "expounding" and "elucidating" the Douglas Proposals to a Committee whose most influential

members wanted to hear all that could be said against it from the technical side. In our opinion the Report would not have differed from that which actually appeared. It is now out of print, so the question is of no practical importance.

And so with the Snowden Commission. It is at least an even-money chance that Major Douglas would have declined to appear before it. If he had been in England and had done so, we should have supported his decision, and our ground would have been that having regard to all the circumstances, his proper place was not at the witness table but in a Commissioner's seat. A lot is made of the fact that the Commission will sit in public. But that simply means that it will hear and examine evidence in public. *It will not allow the public to hear or to read the subsequent "exposition" and "elucidation" of the evidence.* But so far as we and our supporters are concerned, it is the private deliberations that we need to be made acquainted with; not the evidence. We need, of course, more than that, namely that Major Douglas should take part in those deliberations, expounding expositions and elucidating elucidations for the instruction of the bewildered "neutrals" whose only contribution to the deliberations will be their signatures to the Report. Seeing however that our need must be denied, we console ourselves with the reflection that Major Douglas as a star turn on tour is doing more good immediately than he would with a minor part in London. His chance will come.

We were once very well acquainted with a lady (the late mother of the writer of these Notes) who had a great weakness for stories about Irish "bulls." We naturally collected them for her consumption. We would go home on an evening and announce that we had a new one. She would smile expectantly, and we would begin: "There was an Irishman on a ladder, painting a ——" Then we would have to stop, for she had commenced to giggle. And, if you will believe it, we had to sit still while the giggle became a laugh, then a hearty laugh, then an uproarious laugh, and eventually culminated in a maelstrom of merriment and tears into which the rest of the company had by that time been sucked one by one like tiny fishes. There was nothing left for us to do but literally roar the rest of the story through the noise. Well, we fancy that we have inherited something of this weakness from her. At any rate, we feel sure that directly we see by the headlines of some newspaper the announcement that it proposes to recite the names of Snowden's Commissioners we shall have to grab our ribs with the right hand, snatch out our handkerchief with the left, and beseech "Jock," as best we can, to "stop his tickling."

Listen to *Nature* on the personnel of the Civil Service Commission just referred to.

"When, however, we turn to the list of the members of the Commission, our emotion can mildly be described as one of bewildered amazement. Of sixteen members, including the chairman, who is an eminent lawyer, not one is a scientific man, not one is engaged in the application of science to the needs of the community, and not one is in the public mind as having devoted consideration to the problems of public administration. Instead, we find that no fewer than seven are or have been connected with the administration of education, and six are Members of Parliament, mainly not with wide administrative experience. Apologists have stated that the aim of the Government has been to select persons —"

(now sit back and hold tight)

— who have not revealed any prejudices on the matters referred to the Commission, but in an age when progress is so completely dependent on scientific knowledge and methods it is almost incredible that absence of opinion flowing from lack of either experience or study of

a subject is to be deemed a primary qualification for service on a public inquiry of this importance." (Our italics.)

This is excellently put; and we need hardly trouble to point out how exactly this passage seems designed to serve as a criticism of the coming Commission on Finance.

Reverting to Mr. Darling's pamphlet, the section on the Federal Reserve system is worth special attention. Its credit basis is "not gold," but "gold and goods" (as represented by bills of exchange and promissory notes) and *Government securities*. Mr. Darling shows that Britain is on a different gold-standard from the American. (What is the gold standard?) Another interesting item is the method by which the Federal Reserve Board demonetizes its gold at will. Federal Reserve Notes have a 40 per cent. gold backing. But in addition to this form of currency there are gold certificates, which represent a 100 per cent. gold backing. The Federal Reserve Board has the power to ring the changes on these issues.

"If gold came in too fast, gold certificates could be substituted for Federal Reserve Notes, that is, a 100 per cent. gold Note for a 40 per cent. gold Note."

That is to say that given a stock of £40 worth of gold, the Board can issue £100 worth of dollar-currency in Reserve Notes. Given an increase of gold-stock to £100 worth, it can withdraw the Notes and substitute £100 worth of dollar-currency in Certificates. Thus it can put £60 worth of gold out of work. Alternatively it can bring this gold into service on the 40 per cent. basis, and issue a total of £250 worth of dollar currency. And, to generalise, the gold-ratio is anything the bankers like; and the only intelligible reason why it is fixed at any level for any country is that the international banking trust agrees to like it to be at that level in that country. If politicians and industrialists choose to accept these likes and dislikes as equivalent to "good" and "evil," or to "economic law" and "economic anarchy," then there is nothing to argue about and no use for any "inquiries." But if not, these people had better watch out lest the Snowden Commissioners tacitly assume their identity as an over-riding axiom.

... it is found that the machine unmans the user. What he gains in making cloth he loses in general power. There should be temperance in making cloth, as well as in eating. A man should not be a silkworm; nor a nation a tent of caterpillars. . . . But harder still it has proved to resist and rule the dragon Money with his paper wings. Chancellors and Boards of Trade, Pitt, Peel, and Robison, and their Parliaments, and their whole generation, adopted false principles, and went to their graves in the belief that they were enriching the country which they were impoverishing. They congratulated each other on ruinous expedients. It is rare to find a merchant who knows why a crisis occurs in trade, why prices rise or fall, or who knows the mischief of paper money. In the culmination of national prosperity, in the annexation of countries, building of ships, depots, towns; in the influx of tons of gold and silver; amid the chuckle of chancellors and financiers, it was found that bread rose to famine prices, that the yeoman was forced to sell his cow and pig, his tools, and his acre of land; and the dreadful barometer of the poor and his rate was touching the point of ruin. The poor rate was rates was touching the point of ruin. The poor rate was sucking in the solvent classes, and forcing an exodus of farmers and mechanics. What befalls from the violence of financial crises, befalls daily in the violence of artificial legislation."—*Emerson's English Traits*.

"As he which was desired to go hear the nightingale counterfeited naturally: I have (said he) heard the nightingale itself."—*Plutarch* (an instance of *Laconic* speech).

(Paris, 1848.) The boulevards have lost their fine trees, which were all cut down for barricades in February. At the end of a year we shall take account, and see if the revolution was worth the trees."—*From Emerson's Journals*.

About Things.

I have received this week from two separate sources some copies of articles on "The Great Pyramid's Prophecy," which have been reprinted from the advertising pages of the *Morning Post* where they have appeared from time to time during the last year or two. Others of the same series have come into my hands occasionally in the past, with invitations for comment. They all appear to be elaborations, by a Mr. D. Davidson, M.C., M.I. Struct. E., of a book of his called *The Great Pyramid—Its Divine Message*. He issues other books, also pamphlets, on the subject, which are published by Williams and Norgate, Ltd., of 38, Great Ormond Street, W.C.1. Beyond giving Mr. Davidson this free advertisement I do not see what I can say to help him further. When I was young I put in some years at the study of the prophetic books of the Bible, but luckily for me at the outset I had got into contact with two elderly relatives, each of whom was a deep student, and each of whom belonged to a different school of interpretation. One was an advocate of the "historical" method of interpretation and the other an advocate of the "futurist." The first method involved the belief that the prophecies began to be fulfilled from the time that they were uttered, the fulfilment having extended over thousands of years, and being still in process of unfolding. The other involved the belief that the fulfilment would not begin until within a short period of the Second Coming of Christ, and would consist in a quick succession of dramatic events culminating in Armageddon. Was, and is, the Roman Church the "Whore of Babylon" mentioned in the Book of Revelation? The Historicists said "yes"; the Futurists said "no." Naturally enough a third school—a sort of Liberal Party—appeared as the product of their disagreement, and it said both "yes" and "no," i.e., that the prophecies were susceptible of a dual fulfilment.

With such disagreements and compromises in my mind I suppose I did not "let myself go" when trying to relate the prophecies to their supposed fulfilments. I noticed that the "Mark of the Beast"—the figure of evil, "666"—was variously held to apply to different historical personages, Napoleon the Great being an especial favourite in the early nineteenth century.

I suppose Mr. Davidson would call himself a Historicist. I believe there are indications in some of his exegeses which tend to support the idea that America, Britain, and Israel are involved in a common destiny. As the title of his articles suggests, he bases his theory on the Pyramid, particularly on certain alleged mystic meanings attaching to its measurements; and he confirms it by reference to Biblical prophecies. It is not my business to discuss whether the Pyramid predicted anything at all. And if I were convinced that it did, and that the predictions had so far been fulfilled, I should be at a loss to know what to do with the knowledge. It could only serve to make me a hopeful or a despairing fatalist according to whether my own ideals seemed about to be fulfilled or frustrated by these forces beyond human control and even human comprehension. It is true that Mr. Davidson predicts a "revival" for the British race in 1936; but I want to know its nature before I shout for it.

I gather that the reason why the articles have been sent to me is because they deal with the gold-standard, and financial events that come within its orbit. One article has the title "The Battle of the Gold Standard." The main impression that I receive from looking through it is that Mr. Davidson is much too full of his subject to put across any-

thing that the layman can make head or tail of. In one place he suggests the idea that some vague "forces of evil" are working to destroy the "gold-standard." Later on he speaks of Britain's having adopted a gold-exchange standard, but does not make it clear whether by so doing Britain was on the side of "evil" or not. Elsewhere he seems to suggest that the angels are with England.

I am not competent to check back his calculations and meanings of the mystery-laden measurements which he uses for his interpretations, but I must confess to some prejudice against his conclusions when I find him supporting his affirmation of the rhythmic significance of one of these numbers, namely, "286," by the statement that "our [i.e., Britain's] excess of invisible exports is £286 millions." When is (or was) the date of "is"? How on earth can he tell the amount to the very million? And why denote the amount in terms of sterling; why not dollars? Why exports? Why excess of exports? Why impute invisibility to the excess? For if any country should export (quantitatively) 100 tangibles and 60 intangibles, and import 80 tangibles and 30 intangibles, you can arrive at the following figures: 160, 110, 50, 20, 30, 70, 20, i.e., total exports; total imports; excess of total exports; excess of tangible exports; excess of intangible exports; excess of tangible exports over intangible imports; excess of tangible imports over intangible exports. Having got these seven results, six of which are different, you can multiply each by 1 and express the products as Pounds sterling; or by 4.86 and call them Dollars; or by 20.25 and say Marks; or by 20.15 for Francs; or by anything else and arrive at anything else—including the rhythmic mystic number you want to find.

In addition to coincidences of numbers, the articles also make play with coincidences of terms, phrases, and ideas. Thus; regarding the prophetic passage in *Revelations*, where it says that "no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name," it is quite true that it can be interpreted as a vision of the world under the domination of gold-standard control of purchasing-power and prices; but at the same time it is far too indefinite in expression to exclude other interpretations. Again, Mr. Davidson has noted in recent political polemics the use of phrases such as "pyramidal form of control," and naturally enough connects them with the Great Pyramid. But, after all, a pyramid is a common geometrical figure, of which the Great Pyramid is simply one example. It happens to be a handy image for expressing the idea of centralisation. But so is a cone; and we could, if we liked, talk about a "conical form of control," or a "conical structure of society."

However, as I said at the outset, I am not concerned to affirm or deny the possibility of Mr. Davidson's theory being demonstrable. All I am saying is that he is an inefficient demonstrator. His evidence is a succession of exhibits presented so quickly that there is no time for examination of any one of them. Thus, he projects a film-strip of seven evidences of the mystic significance of the number 286. But all you see on the screen:—"286." I will enumerate the items of the strip:—"Current British election procedure (fixed by the Parliament Act of 1911) received the Royal Assent 286 days before May 29-30, 1912."
"The Labour Administration's tenure of office in 1924 was 286 days."
"The American troops evacuated the Ruhr in 1923 one year and 286 days (!) prior to the British Labour Administration's tenure of office ending" (My italics and lifted eyebrows.)

"The concurrent (1924) statutory number of the Turkish National Assembly was 286 members."
"The current displaced wealth, or 'invisible exports' of Great Britain is 286 million pounds sterling. (Author's italics.)"
"On April 27, 1928, the Church Assembly passed the Prayer Book Measure. . . ." "286 days later, on February 7, 1929, the Vatican announced that agreement had been reached between the Vatican and Fascist Italy."
"The United States House of Representatives passed the 1929 U.S. Tariff Bill with the total voting strength of 286 members."

The author heads one of his articles with a saying attributed to Pythagoras: "All things are numbers." Yes, but this philosopher might have said just as truly that each thing was all numbers.

HERBERT RIVERS.

Current Political Economy.

The case of a woman aged sixty-three, who appeared before Mr. Hay Halkett in connection with twelve pounds arrears of rent, provoked him to describe it as the hardest he had ever heard. To be the best or the worst of anything is equally valuable as news. So Lord Beaverbrook's woman representative at once rushed round to the old woman's three-and-sixpence a week room to find how she lived on her eight shillings a week totally earned income: "There was not a speck of dust anywhere, and the fireplace and small gas-stove shone . . . the top of a chest of drawers was crowded with glasses, every one of them polished to brilliance."

When the representative of Lord Beaverbrook arrived the old woman was washing and curling her hair. At all these evidences of cleanliness, which is now ahead of godliness, the representative of Lord Beaverbrook prevailed upon him to tell the world. For if the poor keep clean, respect the kindness of the rich, and never grumble, all the wealthy and comfortable of Mayfair and suburbia glow while acknowledging them as fellow-creatures. Provided the poor believe in soap and keeping the peace, we are tolerant enough of their poverty to have them always with us. We are ready to make news of them, ready to sob over them, ready, in fact, to do anything for them but put an end to their poverty. That would require a little reorganisation of the financial system, which God says must not be interfered with.

Lord Beaverbrook's woman representative—note the feminine touch—points no lesson, moral or political. She makes no reference to the relation between this old charwoman's economic position and the Widows' Pensions Bill, nor to the proposals of THE NEW AGE for a common dividend. Nobody is responsible for the old woman's plight, and it is nobody's job to deal with it. How the poor live just happens to be news, because the old woman happens to have been before a magistrate, and the most popular news about her is that she is very clean; which means, no doubt, that she does not put her betters to the risk of infection. No poor woman, whether for having many children in all, or merely several at once, or for reaching a hundred years of age, or for any other reason, ever has her photograph published in the Press without such patronising references to her cleanliness, which cannot, apparently, ever be taken for granted as existing among the poor. A Lancashire millionaire mill-owner aged seventy-four has just married his typist aged twenty. That makes his affairs news, and the most popular news that can apparently be obtained is that the bride's

"Father is a cotton operative, and their cottage home spotlessly kept."
This choice piece of news is also told to the world by Lord Beaverbrook. If only some of this cleanliness so admirable among the poor were applied to the mental equipment of politicians and the very rich, there would soon surely be more significant

things to say of the late poor than that they were clean. Poor but honest; poor but clean; and any day, during a strike against worse poverty, the same admirable persons might be greedy, grasping, and anti-social. English values are unclean.

Mr. J. H. Thomas has just addressed with hearty approval of its aims and purposes a thrift society. The Labour Government gives the impression of being ready to approve anything already sealed as respectable and orthodox. Belief in the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange used to imply also the belief that usury, whether as rent, interest, or profit, was robbery. Not even the Labour Party would preach thrift and investment if money did not by some process breed. We, who perceive no necessary evil in limited usury, if the service is worth something to the lender, see also no need for the particular kind of thrift which is the whole basis of the thrift orthodoxy socially. The cause of unemployment is not too few savers or too little savings; it is too few spenders and too little available to transfer the world's consumable goods into the hands and homes of consumers. The civilisation of which we are part is hopeless until the whole theory of thrift is rewritten, with corresponding effect on practice. Thrift is the individual's device for trying to protect himself against his neighbour. It is anti-social and anti-socialistic. By changes in the value of currency savings can be either rendered worth more or valueless. After the war Germany practically had to wipe out all the results of thrift in order to obtain a clean, fresh start. Capital expansion no longer springs from the savings of the people, but from the demand for the goods, or belief that the goods will be demanded if produced. Greater productive capacity, therefore, cannot come about by any man denying himself his present wants, but only by a social spur to invention, to the better organisation of labour and invention, and, last, but at the moment first in practical importance, to more widespread facilities for consuming what labour and invention can already produce. That social spur cannot come from thrift; it can come only from a reorganisation of the financial system to give it the social function due to it.

THE NEW AGE has more than once been accused of concentrating censure too severely on the Labour Party. One critic reminds us that the Labour Party is, after all, the only party from which any support can be reasonably expected for aims so socialistic as ours. In the first place it is difficult to see any signs of socialism in the Labour Party. Nevertheless it is precisely because Social Credit has a right to expect support from the Labour Party that the Labour Party has been argued with, reasoned with, and censured for its obliviousness to the only means of carrying out its own policies. There is still hope that practical experience of government may teach Labour some of the things which observation and reason have failed to teach it. With whom should we reason if not with those from whom sense is to be expected? To last week's *John Bull*—which contains a very significant exposure of the Bank of England's lack of contact with industry—"Jix," as he may still be called for identification purposes, contributed an article on the future of the Conservative Party. There are Conservatives from whom Social Credit expects much; but from the Party, as long as "Jix" is prominent in it, nothing sensible under the sun can expect anything. After his repetition of the same cant as he has been uttering for the last ten years, in almost the same words as he used on that memorable occasion when he and Thomas gave a show in the Albert Hall, we may as well go on reasoning with the Labour Party.

BEN WILSON.

A Curiosity of Literature.

Isaac Disraeli is still known to-day as the author of "Curiosities of Literature"; but his greatest work undoubtedly was his eldest son, Benjamin, who was a curiosity of the first water. As a young man, Benjamin was a curiosity of Society, suddenly famous as the author of a witty novel, and continuously notorious as a prince of dandies. As an old man he was a curiosity of politics, a Jew who had risen against strong social and religious prejudices to be the leader of the Tory Party and finally Prime Minister. And now, nearly fifty years after his death, we are presented with his letters* to Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield. They are letters which could certainly go into his father's book as curiosities of literature, for they are unique in every way. Being the frank expression of a strong personality, they are unique in style; and certainly they are unique in content. As coming from a man who was a level-headed, forceful, even Machiavellian statesman, old in years, frail in health, hard-worked and hard-working, this whole correspondence can be strictly described as astonishing. One is reduced to the old formula: What queer creatures we all are!

In the years covered by this correspondence (1873-1881) Dizzy, to the outside world, was the famous politician, the formidable rival of Gladstone, the favourite of the Queen and of the Prince of Wales, the witty conversationalist, the idol of London Society. What a different picture of him we are shown in these two volumes! Here is the man, Disraeli; here is the puzzled, harassed, power-loving politician; the anxious statesman; the invalid continuously fighting attacks of gout, asthma, and influenza; the lover scribbling notes to Lady Bradford while he sat in the House of Commons, using his top hat as a table. Here he is talking, as it were, to himself—for to these two sisters, particularly to the younger one, Lady Bradford, he told all his triumphs and confessed his woes. He shows himself here as a romantic, young-hearted septuagenarian, penning long epistles which are often fervently emotional in tone to two ladies who are both grandmothers. In the midst of work which often kept him at his desk from eight in the morning to six at night, he would make time to write to one or the other of them; sometimes he would steal away from the conversation of important people, excusing himself for a few minutes, just in order to send a note to Lady Bradford to ask when he was going to see her again. "I am overwhelmed with affairs, but shall not be able to manage or control them if I do not see you. . . . If I only see you, as yesterday, it is something." "I will come at one o'clock and lunch with you if you will let me, or do anything to see you." This is a continual refrain in these letters. He is always making and unmaking plans in order to spend a few days with one or both of the sisters, refusing invitations even from royalty when they interfere with some longed-for chance of seeing the younger lady. "I can hardly believe that by this time to-morrow I shall have your blessed and beloved society!" It is like Romeo writing to Juliet. Who would believe it is an elderly widower, lonely after many years of completely happy marriage, craving for the hearthstone sympathies of domestic companionship? Who would believe it is a Victorian Prime Minister writing to a lady who is sixty, and a grandmother?

One could fill pages with interesting extracts to illustrate this queer, tense devotion of Disraeli for Lady Bradford, its youthful chivalrous tone, which breaks at moments into paroxysms of craving for

sympathy and understanding. A partial explanation is that Disraeli was more *alone* than are most men. Apart from the fact that he preferred the society of women, he was always something of a stranger to the men with whom he worked. "At school among English boys," writes the editor of these letters, "the youth of foreign extraction and foreign appearance and the foreign name had never been fully accepted as one of themselves." And when he grew up and became famous, something of this shyness between Englishmen and himself still remained. With women it was different; they liked him, and he them.

It was for this reason that, as he acknowledged, he was highly fortunate in having a Royal Mistress instead of a Royal Master when he became Prime Minister. The Queen soon became enchanted with her chief adviser, and he was equally charmed with her. In his letters to Lady Bradford he always refers to the Queen as "the Faery"—the reference being to Spenser's "Faery Queen." After a while, the most awful rules of Court etiquette were broken in his favour. He was asked to sit in the presence chamber when discussing affairs with the Queen. When this unprecedented event first took place, Disraeli wrote to tell Lady Bradford. "When I took my leave at the audience, I put my golden chair back in its place that the breach of etiquette should be kept a secret." The Queen smiled delightedly when he did this: with such little gracious actions no wonder that he endeared himself to her.

Running through these letters, of course, like a thread of scarlet, is first-hand gossip of party politics and State affairs. Disraeli told Lady Bradford, if not everything, yet a good deal. She is the first to hear when he triumphs or despairs. And his style conveys with complete clarity the emotions of the moment. One feels his excitement when he relates his grand victory in securing the Suez Canal shares for the State. He writes at once to Lady Bradford: "After a fortnight of the most unceasing labour and anxiety, I (for, between ourselves, and ourselves only, I may be egotistical in this matter) I have purchased for England the Khedive of Egypt's interest in the Suez Canal. We have had all the gamblers, capitalists, financiers of the world, organised and platooned in bands of plunderers, arrayed against us, and secret emissaries in every corner, and [I] have baffled them all, and have never been suspected."

Bismarck, after the Congress of Berlin, at which Disraeli triumphed in his negotiations, said that Lord Salisbury was "wood painted to look like iron." But Disraeli was another matter. "Ah, the old Jew—he's the rascal." In these days, when the money-power is stronger than in Victorian days, and "the financiers, organised and platooned in bands of plunderers, are arrayed against us" with the greater skill of another half-century of experience, we could do with another Disraeli. Ah, the old rascal, he understood finance. Even the Rothschilds admired him. When financier meets financier, then comes the tug of war.

JOHN SHAND.

" . . . They tell of a Lacedaemonian, who, being on a day at Athens, where the law was pleaded, did understand that a citizen there was condemned for idleness, and how he went home to his house very sorrowfully; the Lacedaemonian then prayed those which were about him to show him the man condemned for living nobly, and like a gentleman."—*Plutarch*.

"Porus being taken, Alexander asked him how he should handle him. 'Princely,' answered Porus. Alexander asked him again if he would say anything else. 'I comprehend all,' said he, 'in this word princely.'"—*Plutarch*.

"George Francis Train said in a public speech in New York, 'Slavery is a divine institution.' 'So is Hell,' exclaimed an old man in the crowd."—*From Emerson's Journals*.

* "The Letters of Disraeli to Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield." Edited by the Most Hon. the Marquis of Zetland. Benn, 42s.

Drama.

The Silver Tassie: Apollo.

Once again Mr. C. B. Cochran has stepped into the breach, rescued the Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from disgrace, and put the directors of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, under eclipse. O'Casey's mixture of dramatic technique, the strongest count for rejection by Mr. Yeats and his fellow directors, has revealed itself as the surest herald of genius in this time. Through the Irish dialect of O'Casey the English-speaking world makes a contribution to drama which recalls the ancient days when the British Isles were the world's growing point. On every censure which the Abbey directors laid against "The Silver Tassie," Mr. Cochran's production of the play has proved them wrong. It is true that O'Casey was no more in the war than Shakespeare was on the plains of Philippi; but O'Casey, like Shakespeare, has proved that knowledge of men and women is surer for drama than the absorbed witness's experience. Art is the disciplined expression of passion. But greater passion and less discipline create more than greater discipline and less passion. If, then, you are told that O'Casey's work is technically faulty, which is to say, under-disciplined, reply that so are "Lear" and "Hamlet," as well as most other works of genius. If the supporters of the Abbey say that people in real life do not talk as the characters of "The Silver Tassie" do in the last act, reply that people never did talk as Romeo and Juliet do in the bedroom scene; and that creative passion carries the audience far above questions of likeness to actuality.

If you wished to be cheered up after a harassing day of appointments, interruptions, and wrong numbers, reserve "The Silver Tassie" for another day; but be sure to go through it, and soon, at a time, for preference, when you are willing to be dazzled by spiritual lightning that illuminates all folk-suffering. The only other war play to be compared with "The Silver Tassie" in force is "The Unknown Warrior," which differs from it as French polish, logic, and wit differ from Irish roughness, lawless passion, and humour. O'Casey's method is related to that of "Look on this picture and on that," but he requires one to look on several pictures at once. He smashes down all the partitions between the separate compartments of the human mind, to cast through it white beams of hot light. His observation of the folk is first-hand and accurate. The poor are shown as squirrels in cages, easily made gay or sad, irresponsible, narrow, but capable of awful, unquestioning sacrifice; recounting over and over again throughout their lives their few significant experiences. The story of young Heegan knocking out the policeman would have been told hundreds of times more by Sylvester Heegan and Simon Norton but for the war; and if the poor remain always with us, new but similar episodes will take its place. These narratives are the folk's drama, every performance being at the same time a rehearsal, with cutting and embellishment always going on; and production certain whenever an audience offers itself. On these people the war descended as a fate; and the mother, thankful before if her son was a domestic animal provided he had a wage, was relieved when she saw the son who had overstayed his leave on the way "safely back to France."

O'Casey's second act is genius, emotionally and technically. It celebrates the reunion of drama and religion. It throws more light on the war than anything produced before it, and renders conscious what everybody has felt but could not say. The gradual flowing of the soldiers into a shapeless mass of humanity, which responds automatically in the litany to the gun with "For we believe in God and we believe in thee," enforces no less an epithet than awful, in the religious sense. Looking back on it,

it is as though present civilisation had never been indicted before, and would never need to be again. This second act has been censured on the ground that O'Casey is cruel to the officers. With his vision he would have been cruel had he tried to be kind. His officers are as much the marionettes of an invisible fate as are the common soldiers; they are the puppets of an agent which can spend the lives of the folk with less discomfort to itself than it could apply already attained intelligence. Officers, seen in perspective, were merely more pretentious and sprightly marionettes than the privates. They knew no more of the purpose of their airs, pomps, and graces than did the Old Bills, though they pretended to know, and may even have lectured on the subject. The truth about their status is bound to be as hateful and hurtful to officers with romantic notions of rank in modern war as the "Plough and the Stars" was to those who harboured romantic notions of Ireland's fight for freedom. There may be a sense in which O'Casey is a romantic; in that he obviously loves mankind, though he curses it to save himself from impotently weeping over it. But O'Casey realises that in modern war it is clothes not clay by which officers are distinguished from men; and that in both cases their life-rudders are torn out of their hands, for themselves to be swept about from motives and for aims as unknown to them as those of the demons in the wind to their ancestors. O'Casey's dramatic commentary on the folk in war is not a soldier's view; no soldier could hold it and go on being a soldier. It is that of a clear-sighted, hyper-conscious, human artist stretched on a rack between Heaven and Hell.

In the third and fourth acts the tragedy and irony of war's futility fulfil themselves. Those whom war has spared are still splitting hairs. The blind angel of the world uses its strength to pull its own temples down on top of it, and yet is strong enough to go on renewing life and forgetting death. While the blind man weeps about his useless strength and the cripple weeps over his useless right and desires, the world jazes round and round in a cage that it cannot see is a cage for the fancy costumes and coloured balloons; and the blind and crippled and one does not weep forgive, understand, and die. One does not weep to see this play. At the end of the first act one dries one's eyes; but one need not have done so, for one is hypnotised; and at the same time both crushed and exalted; torn wherever one had begun to heal falsely, so that one may begin again with clean wounds.

The production is not good, though do not let that keep anyone away. The drama is there, and probably a week or so of playing will have inspired some of the actors to give themselves up to its atmosphere. Criticism of the production is a thankless but necessary duty. In the preamble of the document which started the Abbey Theatre the purpose was stated to be to prevent the beauty of Irish oratory from perishing. O'Casey, like Shaw, depends on music for effect—that is, on oratory. Some of the actors have no conception of oratory, as, for example, Mr. Charles Laughton. This actor's Yorkshire dialect in the middle of the Irish provoked comparison of his style rather to oratorio than oratory, which is as if to say that effort to make music. Some of the precedence over effort to make music. Some of the actors played as if alone rather than in a community of folk—Eithne Magee as Mrs. Heegan, for instance. For once Una O'Connor, consistently good as she is, seemed to act only when she had something to say, and when not speaking, instead of taking the pose appropriate to the scene, she appeared merely to be waiting for her turn to come round again. Such relaxation dissipates the atmosphere. As nurse

Beatrix Lehmann was first-class, but as the religious fanatic of the first act she lacked the inflation of the fanatic. She showed not suppressed love but incapacity for love. In the parts of Sylvester and Simon Mr. Barry Fitzgerald and Mr. Sidney Morgan were magnificent, the former being so good that Sinclair was not missed. Mr. Morgan demonstrated again what a great, versatile actor he is. When he played the recruiting sergeant in "Quality Street" some months ago, I wanted to cry that he should have to take such a part, and to shout for joy when I saw the manner in which he performed it. Mr. Ian Hunter's Teddy Foran, beautiful in the third and last acts, has the makings of greatness all round, but is as yet a trifle solo in the first act. Miss Audrey O'Flynn spoke the speech of the Sister of the Ward very well.

Heat Wave: St. James's.

Heat wave is apparently what comes over white women who live in the tropics without much to do. When it happens they set no higher price on themselves in wooing or fidelity than black women are said to do; they hurl themselves at the man who is most certain, after possessing them, to throw them away. But Mr. Roland Pertwee's play reveals more about men and women in London than about men and women in the tropics. It is the sort of play, one may say without derogatory intention, that takes people's minds off things without putting ideas into their heads. It is a draught of medicine for monotony-ridden metropolitans whose dreams of life, adventure, and freedom have almost dried up. Its setting is a reminiscence of summer holidays, only more so, recalling those dreams of beautiful country and leisure which come so commonly to tired people in the hour of dozing before getting up to work. Khota, where the action takes place, is an Oriental city with seas of coloured glass, skies of dark purple, and exuberant vegetation, as far from smoke, tramcars, time-tables, washing up, and the other unspeakable ugliness of civilisation as is conceivably possible.

Hugh Dawltry is a drunkard with a past figured by the meanest form of immorality, since he has been co-respondent in the divorce of a couple only three months married; and his set conspire to drive him from the neighbourhood. Beneath his toper and Don Juan surface, however, beats a virtuous heart. His co-respondents, we learn later, was one of chivalrous accommodation only, and left him as virgin and the lady as chaste as they had been before their "misconduct." Hugh Dawltry, in short, is an ugly duckling. At one time he is scapegoat too. Although Irene, young, palpitating, and warm, had gone to his bungalow alone, and had been firmly refused her demands to be seduced, he could hardly say so when she was caught there. But love and fate are allies in faery; and it was Dawltry's beloved Philippa, between himself and whom had hitherto lain the sword of silence and chastity, who had surprised Irene, and who, when reputations had been cleansed and blackened in accordance with truth, acknowledged that she loved Dawltry as he loved her. Her husband arriving later on business found her there, and behaved as badly and untrusting as possible, a perfectly natural thing to do in view of Dawltry's reputation, but unnatural to us who were in the know. In the end, however, Dawltry, who had dodged the bullet we were led to suppose that Philippa's husband had put into him, followed Philippa to the boat-train laden only with the good wishes of the audience; and Beauty and the Beast, now a handsome prince, are living happily ever after.

The play is perfectly constructed, produced, and acted. It is entertainment of the first quality, and bound to run on its merits for a long time. Although

the characters and setting are what experience has taught us to fear in such plays of the South or Eastern Seas, good dialogue, acting, and management of plot succeed in individualising the persons and keeping them alive. Mr. Herbert Marshall as Dawltry and Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry are not the only actors who give performances of the highest possible quality. There can be no complaint with any performance, and for that of Ann Todd as Irene, with which part most young actresses would have nauseated one, there can be only the highest praise. The actress who is produced by Mr. Walter Hackett is in luck.

PAUL BANKS.

Music.

One of the most interesting orchestral events for a long while was the recent broadcasting of the remarkable Sibelius 5th Symphony. Those who know only the Sibelius of the "Valse Triste," and his most hackneyed song "The Tryst," have no more knowledge of him than those who know Elgar only by "Salut d'Amour" and "Land of Hope and Glory." In this strange, reticent and reserved music of the greater Sibelius—i.e., of the fourth and fifth symphonies—without so moving, and so compact of poignant restrained passion, is one of the most profoundly original and individual musical minds of our time; in fact I do not shrink from saying that since the Mahler symphonies no greater works in this form have been written. An expression at once so direct and uncompromising, yet so wholly aloof from the fashionable "modern" trickery of Berlin, Paris, and Vienna, such intensely personal thought, couched in terms of no startlingly superficial "newness," but profoundly disconcerting to such as who only "modernity" know when it is "original" according to the canons laid down by the latest vogue—but the force of whose intense essential originality has an amazing effect on comparatively "usual" methods, transforming them to a degree of newness and strangeness that has to be heard to be realised. And over all, the deep grey impersonal sadness of dark, long-wintered lands when life is locked as it were in a trance for many months of the year at a stretch. A sum total to such as have ears to hear, most profoundly and deeply moving, and of a most penetrating poignancy—in fact a spiritual experience without precedent in modern music. It was conducted with deep understanding and insight by Schneevoigt.

D'Alvarez. Aeolian, Oct. 9.

There is nothing additional to be said about this singer, who was on this occasion neither better nor worse than she has been latterly, except that she now finds it necessary to transpose down a whole tone things she once sang in their original keys, e.g., "De Fleurs" of Debussy, also his "Le Balcon," in which her singing was conspicuously inferior to what it was in the same thing—I allude to "De Fleurs"—a few years ago. In fact, in many places the singer got near Schönberg's *Sprechstimme*. The charming "Du bist so jung" of Erich Wolff was rushed in a hectic *agitato* that wholly spoilt it—it is marked "gently flowing" by the way.

Egon Petri. Wigmore 11th.

Even those of us who knew of what this glorious artist is capable were overwhelmed by the stupendous greatness of his playing on this occasion in the *Hammerklavier* and the six Paganini Studies of Liszt. Starting off slightly below his usual level in the first of the four Chopin Ballades he rapidly got into his stride, giving us in the third and fourth the greatest Chopin playing it is possible to hear to-day—then on to the

Hammerklavier in which he displayed such prodigies of intellectual greatness, such unimaginable mastery of the whole terrific structure of that most intricate and complex work, which defeats all others even a Lamond, such clairvoyant insight, such marvels of gradation, nuances, and tone-colour that no performance short of Busoni's own is conceivable in comparison with it. But even this gigantic tour-de-force, sufficient for a whole lifetime's achievement of any dozen ordinarily eminent pianists rolled together, did not exhaust the powers of this marvellous man, for he went gaily on to an equally great performance of the Paganini Studies of Liszt which no one else dares to attempt *en suite*, concluding with the Etude in variation form on the same theme used by Brahms some forty years later for his Paganini Variations. For, incredible as it may seem, the Paganini Etudes of Liszt date from 1838, that is to say, these astonishing works are nearly a century old; and how freely Brahms helped himself to harmonic and figurative details from them in his greatly inferior work, a very cursory comparison of the two will show. The *Campanella* study was played in the very effective version of Busoni—it is, as will be remembered, one of the constituent studies of the set—the only one that is at all generally known. Over the magnificence of the playing it is vain to strain oneself in inexpressive superlatives—but one may here and now warn all that Petri's next recital takes place on November 9, when he is playing modern works, including some Busoni. It is its technical prodigiousness, its all-embracing perfection of musicianship apart—the spiritual grandeur and magnificence, the philosophic greatness and majesty of this playing that makes it so utterly incomparable and unique. Petri lifts the art of the keyboard into a fourth dimension far beyond the range and ken of the ordinarily eminent pianist who beside him is "but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal."

First Concert of Delius Festival. Queen's 12th.

I do not understand why or how the writer of the *Introduction to Delius* in the programme of the Festival sees in this occasion, due to the initiative of Sir Thomas Beecham, "the greatest gesture England has ever made in refutation of the charge that her composers go unhonoured and unsung in their own country." But for Sir Thomas such a festival neither would nor could have taken place, but perhaps, like Lot and Sodom the writer of the note thinks that if there be but one just man, the reputation of the land is saved. It is, as I see it, to Beecham, and to Beecham alone, that we are beholden for this all too tardy tribute to a great and glorious master, and England is entitled to no congratulatory self-pat-on-the-back in the matter. And as for the official "honour" paid to the master, there are some of us who think that, seeing the persons with whom he shared it, it becomes almost a veiled insult. Obviously, great care has been spent on rehearsal, and we heard the lovely "Brigg Fair," "Seadrift," and "In a Summer Garden" with a clarity and clearness that enabled us to gauge something more than usual of their lovely and delicately, yet warmly glowing, textures, for the full revelation of which, however, we shall naturally have to wait till we grow an orchestra. But surely a less inept choice of singers could have been made for the wonderful closing scene of "The Village Romeo and Juliet"—who were deficient in almost every respect necessary. Here are great, generous, opulent voices needed to pour out the golden streams of glorious melody the composer gives to the soloists. Mr. Dennis Noble has admirable ideas, and within his limits is a good singer, but he has not the power nor breadth to make his part tell satisfactorily against chorus and orchestra in "Seadrift."

The new work, "A Late Lark," has a poignant interest in that it was apparently the last work the Master was able to complete before the double cruel blow of blindness and paralysis struck him. It is not in his best vein, but is sufficiently good to make half a dozen lesser reputations. The customary delicate and rich Delius glow has faded into rather insipid tints, and the melodic writing has not the usual wonderful beauty, flexibility, and distinction.

Jeritza. Albert Hall, 13th.

The tremendous vogue of this singer is one of the most flagrant examples that I know of the artificial manufacture of a reputation by sensationalism and Press stunting—a reputation for which nothing in her voice, singing, nor acting in opera gives the least justification that I can discover. It is really more than a little shameful that people of this type can be foisted on an indiscriminating public to the extent that they can be hypnotised into packing the Albert Hall to hear her at enhanced prices when they can hear, one had almost said for the asking, in comparison, singers of their own country, such as Eva Turner, Austral, Stiles Allen, who attain a standard of excellence beyond Mme. Jeritza's remotest possibilities. Jeritza's voice is a fine one *qua* voice, though its deterioration through her misuse of it is very perceptible since I last heard her two years ago. Of line in singing she has little if any notion, and her style is crude to the point of the negation of style. I do not readily remember another such caricature as her singing of Schumann's *Widmung*, in which rhythm and phrase were alike consigned to Limbo, and in a more or less degree this was their fate in everything the performer sang. Little Wolf is a young violinist who assisted, and has the makings of a very distinguished artist; already he has a beautiful velvety attack, fine intonation, clean and clear technique, and a genuinely distinguished musical style, polished and elegant. He should be watched over jealously by parents or guardians, and not be allowed to wear or tire out that delicate fragile young physique with overmuch concert work.

A correspondent, Mr. Maurice Russell, asks me if I will solve for him the problem of hand technique versus pianola, and what is the objection on the part of musicians to avail themselves of the immensely expanded resources that the pianola affords as compared with the human hands. As this question is of considerable interest, I hope Mr. Russell will not mind if I try to answer his questions *coram populo*. Some years ago, as a matter of fact, I reviewed a pianola recital given at the Aeolian Hall by Mr. Reginald Reynolds, under the auspices of the Aeolian Company, at which the programme consisted entirely of works especially written for the pianola by a number of well-known contemporary composers. Why no further developments have taken place along this line, and why nothing further appears to have come of it, I frankly cannot tell him, unless it be that composers feel chary of writing works for this medium, which lends itself with such fatal ease to the most ghastly abuse at the hands of the ordinary "pianolista"—far more so than the writing of a difficult and complex work such as my own piano works for two human hands, where the technical, intellectual, and musical difficulties combine to warn off the rashly and presumptuously venturesome ones. It is obvious that a work written for pianola has no such safeguards against mis-handling, and a pianolista of the accomplishment of Mr. Reginald Reynolds would seem to be as rare as a pianist of the first order, for I vividly remember the marvellous flexibility of control and effects that Mr. Reynolds was able to achieve. This would seem to me the most reasonable explanation, if composers were a reasonable race of human beings—it would be a reason, as far as I am personally

concerned, I think. Although some years ago—directly as a result of the stimulus of Mr. Reynolds' recital—I began a work for pianola myself, the conservatism and stupid bigotry of musicians towards any new medium of propagating or disseminating music such as that against the gramophone, and radio later, might also be an explanation for, for one musician who saw the possibilities for music in those things, ten thousand failed completely to do so and could not see that things which at their initiation were horrible and fearfully defective contained, potentialities of vastly better things. It is up to a musician to refuse to have anything to do with either gramophone, pianola, or wireless, so long as they remain in their unlovely larval stage; he is not only entitled but, indeed, right to do so; but when the things emerge from their chrysalis he is being merely silly in refusing to countenance them, and is surrendering a vast new means to the tripe-merchants, who are not so short-sighted, but will seize on such new and immense facilities for their muck propaganda.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

The Screen Play.

The Bridge of San Luis Rey.

It would require genius to transfer the elusive charm of Thornton Wilder's novel to the screen, and Charles Brabin, although a competent director, is not a genius. This film (Empire) is a mosaic. It does succeed to a quite appreciable degree in capturing some of the atmosphere of the book, although I doubt whether the underlying idea would be quite intelligible to anyone who had not read it. The acting is very competent, notably that of Ernest Torrence as Uncle Pio, of Don Alvarado and Duncan Rinaldo as the twin brothers, Manuel and Esteban, and of Raquel Torres as Pepita. Her impersonation of a youthful novice is just perfectly right in its candid innocence. I was not so pleased with Lili Damita as Camile; she over-accentuated the part, and her excessive attacks of hysteria and vile temper made the role one of a drunken drab rather than of Wilder's creation. This reading of the character may possibly be due to direction, and it must be admitted that Miss Damita again proves herself to be in the front rank of vamps. The collapse of the bridge, which is shown both at the beginning and the end, is very badly contrived, and has such an air of unreality as to move the spectator to ridicule rather than to a sense of tragedy. This is not a talkie, but there are brief talking sequences, which could have been dispensed with, in which Father Juniper, played with dignity by Henry B. Walthall, enacts the role of Greek chorus.

The Hollywood Revue.

Although it is the most elaborate production of its kind yet attempted, and despite the presence in the cast of a larger number of stars than has ever cooperated in a single film, "The Hollywood Revue" (Empire) is disappointing, and suffers by comparison with previous spectacular singing and talking films. It fails, for instance, to come up to the standard of "The Broadway Melody," which was also from the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer stable. The major defects of "The Hollywood Revue" are that it is much too long; that it fails to grip; that it contains far too few "turns" appropriate to a revue, and too much mechanical chorus work; that its musical numbers, with the exception of "Singing in the Rain," are so undistinguished as to be unworthy of the elaboration of their setting; and that a large proportion of the excellent cast is unworthily employed. Thus the delightful Marion Davies is given no chance of displaying her great gifts of comedy, John Gilbert and Norma Shearer will enhance their reputation neither by their rendering of the balcony scene from

"Romeo and Juliet," nor from the unimaginative burlesque which follows it; Conrad Nagel is wasted as a compère, and whoever is responsible for allowing Joan Crawford to sing did that lady a grave disservice. The photography and the general slickness of the production are excellent, and had "The Hollywood Revue" been presented to the public a year ago it would have probably been accepted both as a remarkable production and good entertainment. To-day, it demonstrates again that Hollywood has allowed itself to become almost completely unimaginative since it was seduced by the talkies, and also indicates that American producers are beginning to emulate their English opposite numbers by failing to make the best of the material at their disposition. "The Hollywood Revue" is neither a good revue nor a good film.

The Movietone Follies.

According to the small bills decorating the tube lifts this week, "The Hollywood Revue" is a "miracle film," in addition to being "such an entertainment as comes but once in a lifetime," while "for the first time the talking screen unfolds its crowning achievement." These superlatives would be better justified if they were applied to the "Fox Movietone Follies of 1929," which has just undergone general release. This film has provided me with one of the most agreeable surprises of my life. It combines real revue, of the best type, with a real film, instead of a photo-play, and has the additional advantage of a somewhat out-of-the-common story, which gives unity to the whole production and contrives to add a touch of originality to the backstage theme. The whole is fused together with the most admirably syncopated music. Here at last is the new sound technique, and not merely hints of it, the first completely satisfying "talkie," and one worth nearly all the sound films put together which have as yet been made. The "Movietone Follies" is, in fact, not only a definite achievement, but one of the best films of the past two or three years. Among the many excellent numbers, I single out for special mention "Breakaway" the "Big City Blues," a charming ballet which creates a genuine under-sea impression, and "Walking With Susie." This last is pure film. I heartily congratulate David Butler, the director, on a production which should be a definite landmark in film history.

DAVID OCKHAM.

Reviews.

New Dostoevsky Letters. Translated by S. S. Kotliansky. (Mandrake Press. 3s. 6d.)

A fascinating series of letters, arranged chronologically in eight groups. The interest increases continually along with the growth of Dostoevsky's art and personality. The reader is taken into the mental workshop of one of the most enigmatic artists the world has seen, and amongst the rich debris he may find many treasures. Here is an embryo of an idea which has reached maturity in the novels, and there a rejected corpse, whose presence one had dimly suspected. That is why these letters should be read after the novels have become part of oneself. Also they fill in the gap left by Mme. Dostoevsky's diary, which says little about her husband's work. The novels mentioned in the letters are fortunately the greatest, viz., "Crime and Punishment," "The Devils" (more commonly known as "The Possessed"), and, oh joy! "The Brothers Karamazov." The style of the letters is clear, firm, and direct. I do not know how much of the praise for this is due to M. Kotliansky's translation, but the same character is to be found in Constance Garnett's translation of the novels, in which the sentences are always limpid, however tumid and formless may be the book as a whole.

N. M.

The Cambridge History of India. Vol. 5 (British India, 1497-1858). (Cambridge University Press. 30s.)

This volume can also be obtained as Volume IV. of the "Cambridge History of the British Empire," the first part of which was reviewed in these columns. A journalist can hardly do more than call attention to these imposing histories: it were impudence to pretend to have read them.

Inquiry Into Banking.

Mr. Snowden announced the appointment of a committee to inquire into banking, finance and credit, having regard to internal and international factors governing their operation, and to make recommendations calculated to enable these agents to promote the development of trade and commerce. The committee would consist of H. S. Macmillan, K.C. (formerly Lord Advocate of Scotland (chairman), Sir Thomas Allan, Mr. Ernest Bevin, Lord Bradbury, Mr. R. H. Brand, director of Lloyd's Bank; Professor Gregory, Mr. J. M. Keynes, Mr. Cecil Lubbock, director of the Bank of England; Mr. Reginald McKenna, Mr. Lennox B. Lee, Mr. J. T. Newbold (ex-Communist and now Labor research worker), Sir Walter Raine, Mr. J. F. Taylor and Mr. A. A. G. Tullock (6.11.29)