

THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER."

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

It is almost exactly two years ago when we first called attention to Lord Hewart's public protest against the system of Departmental government (*THE NEW AGE*, October 13, 1927). On subsequent occasions we have alluded to the book which he was writing, the publication of which appeared on each occasion to be imminent. After a succession of delays the book is published,* and will be available on November 1. We have no hesitation at all in declaring it to be the most vital work that has been issued since the Social-Credit analysis of financial government was revealed in Major Douglas's *Economic Democracy*. Every reader of this journal must study it. If he cannot buy it, let him immediately make application to his Library for the loan of it. Where there are groups of readers in touch with each other they should buy it preferably to borrowing, because it is a work of reference whose data and reasoning will afford continuous inspiration to everyone who studies and speaks on the fundamentals of public affairs. During the approaching period of political controversy we will prophesy that there will not be a day when the instructed supporter of our own indictment of the lawlessness of the banking hierarchy will not find his interpretation of events paralleled with exactitude by that of the Lord Chief Justice. As concerns the spirit of his attitude it is *our* spirit. There is not parallelism but identity. That Lord Hewart is (probably) not conversant with our technical reasons why his juridical ideals and common economic ideals are demonstrably referable to a principle, is of no immediate moment. He and we are advancing convergently towards the re-establishment of the principle of *individual freedom*: therefore our respective bands of supporters must inevitably come into contact, and eventually coalesce.

*"The New Despotism." By the Rt. Hon. Lord Hewart of Bury. Ernest Benn. 21s. net. Can be purchased from the Credit Research Library, 70, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Some casual eyebrow may be lifted at the idea of an obscure journal such as *THE NEW AGE*, and a powerless group of citizens such as constitute the Social Credit Movement, assuming to identify themselves with the kind of leadership assumed by such an eminent and learned authority as Lord Hewart. But the moral of Aesop's fable about the lion and the mouse is not irrelevant. Certainly the Lion or the Law has not been inspired to open the jaws of the Libel Acts against us yet; and therefore we owe it no mouselike gratitude for our life. Nevertheless, we have the strongest humanitarian and philosophic incentives to gnaw through the ropes that bind this lion. If the truth were known, our work for the last few years has frayed more strands than may appear credible to the onlooker. Nor is it impossible, since the Law is (at last) realising the fact that it is bound by Departmental Orders, and has begun to gather its limbs under it for a struggle, that a sudden snapping of the ropes will not reveal the cumulative effectiveness of our patient, silent, nibbling.

As we pointed out last week, it is of the utmost importance technically for advocates of financial reform to speak and teach conformably with authoritative opinion insofar as they can do so compatibly with the maintenance of their basic principles. We suggested, in view of the transactions of the projected Snowden Inquiry into finance, that our supporters might at least temporarily ally themselves to the school of critics describable as the "McKenna" or "Midland-Bank" school. That is to say, to form an *ad hoc* association of thought for a provisional purpose. But, as concerns the case of Lord Hewart, they can confidently form a permanent association for an ultimate purpose. This is because Lord Hewart's objective is essentially humanistic, whereas Mr. McKenna's is technical. Naturally his Lordship's disclosures of the evil are accompanied by a technique for its suppression. He would not be a Judge if he neglected to give a decision on the evidence and to direct what should be done as a result of the decision. And whatever

hesitation we may feel about the adequacy of his suggested remedy taken by itself, there is no mistaking its direct relationship with the humanistic objective he seeks to achieve. There is no such direct relationship in the case of the Midland Bank's criticism of the policy of the Bank of England, or in the case of any other popular school of criticism. These all amount, on their constructive side, to the demand that financial easements shall be applied to the technique of production. This demand is based, as our readers are so well aware, on the assumption that if checks on collective production are removed, checks on individual consumption will disappear automatically. The assumption is not simply unwarranted, but Major Douglas has demonstrated it to be false. He has shown that these checks operate, not from economic necessity, but because they are imposed by the bankers in pursuance of their own policy.

Checks on an individual's consumption are restrictions on his economic freedom. Without economic freedom there can be no civic freedom. What is the use of the Law saying of the individual that (with generally approved reservations) he is free to buy what, and where, he likes; to go where he likes; or to say what he likes; if the state of his purse and the conditions of his "job" deny him the opportunity of enjoying those freedoms? Political power depends upon economic power. Economic power is in these days held on lease from financial power: the leases being in the form of loans of bank-credit, and their respective terms measured by the terms of the loans—that is to say, determinable by the banker without notice. The ultimate power of effective government resides in the ultimate control of credit. It follows that whatever group of citizens is entrusted with the exclusive control of credit must become superior to Parliament directly Parliament neglects to exercise its right to define its policy. Not only do Cabinet Ministers neglect this right, but they repudiate it by formally adopting the universal banking axiom that *credit-policy must be free from political control*. In view of one statement by Lord Hewart such a doctrine might well come within the original definition of "sedition." For he says (p. 30):

"A seditious intention is defined by statute (60 Geo. III. and 1 Geo. IV., c. 8, s. 1) as an intention to bring into hatred or contempt the person of His Majesty or the Government and constitution of the United Kingdom as by law established, or either House of Parliament. It is now extremely seldom that any attack on the Government or on either House of Parliament is treated as seditious, and the constitution is frequently abused with impunity. In the absence of a tendency to cause riot or rebellion, or to disturb the peace of the Kingdom, the greatest latitude is permitted in the discussion of political affairs." (Our italics.)

If any word spoken can have a tendency to cause disturbance, and so be a legal offence, how much more an act performed. The General Strike was unnecessarily precipitated by the decision of the Bank of England to determine the coal-subsidy. The decision was, of course, communicated in the form of "advice" to the Cabinet—either directly and privately, or indirectly and officially through Treasury Officials—and was adopted as a matter of routine because no Minister had the knowledge or courage to investigate the possibility of rendering subsidies innocuous. Again, while perhaps it may be straining language to speak of the Bank's act in removing the King's head from the new currency notes as intending to bring him into contempt, it certainly constituted an affront against His Majesty, and has quite properly been keenly resented by more than a few of his influential subjects. Lastly, and above all, for the Bank of England (with its cosmopolitan directorate) or any

other Central Bank, to declare that the things it chooses to do are not the business of the Government responsible for securing the subject's orderly acquiescence in the things done, is equivalent to the repudiation of the Constitution.

At this point we think that we have said sufficient to establish the presumption that the anomalies and abuses which Lord Hewart exposes so ably mark the point where Financial Law clashes with Civil Law. These two systems appear to be complementary, at a superficial inspection, insofar as they may be intelligibly formulated in Acts of Parliament, but they are mutually destructive in the region of practical administration. We can now proceed to note one or two of the points in his book which have led us to speak of it so eulogistically. First of all, let us set down side by side two tables of words which in our judgment embody the differentiation in emphasis between the two systems of law that we have contrasted.

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|----------------------|--------------------|
| Civic Law | Financial Law. |
| Decentralised power. | Centralised power. |
| Representation. | Nomination. |
| Individualism. | Collectivism. |
| Inducement. | Coercion. |
| Rights. | Duties. |
| Organism. | Mechanism. |
| Responsibility. | Servility. |
| Consumption. | Abstinence. |
| Distribution. | Production. |
| Democracy. | Autocracy. |
| Spending. | Saving. |

These antitheses need not be explained. The applicability of some of them will appear later; that of the rest can then be readily inferred. Now Lord Hewart's contrast is between what he calls "The Rule of Law" and "Administrative Lawlessness." In an admirable chapter bearing on the British Constitution (embodying the Rule of Law) he says that the characteristic feature of it which we express by the adjective "unwritten" is really the product of the multitudinous writings. From the throne to the hearthstone in the realm of jurisprudence specific problems are decided by specific decisions; and the product of these decisions is the Constitution at any given time. The process of creation is, as he says, "inductive." That is to say, the rights of any individual are decided, not by deductions from a multiplicity of rules antecedently conceived in an atmosphere of theory, but by inductions from a multiplicity of judicial decisions given in respect of practical problems by reference to a few basic principles. Thus our Constitution is an organism, not a mechanism. It is incessantly emergent. Every one of the innumerable judgments pronounced in our history has, as it were, functioned in its degree as a catalyst to all that followed it.* As a striking illustration of the inductive process, take the doctrine of the "right of public meeting." There is no such right known, as such, to the Constitution. This right is, in Lord Hewart's words, "the aggregate of the right of each

*There was an inspiring incident reported in the papers last Saturday. Some workman who had met with an accident which had permanently incapacitated him was brought along to the court by the employing firm (really, of course, by the legal representative of the insurance interests) in order that Judge Crawford should sanction the terms to which this workman had agreed, as a "full and final settlement of his claim under the Workmen's Compensation Act. When Judge Crawford looked at the documents he saw that the sum was £45! That did it. Snatching the papers up he hurled them out into the court among the dodging and ducking lawyers and officials, exclaiming that he had "had enough" of that sort of thing; let the parties go away and come back with a proper settlement. (The financiers "law" of economy is unknown to the Law.)

of the members of the assembly to go where he pleases so long as he does not break the law." The right is derived from the first of the three following governing principles comprehended in the Rule of Law:

"1. No one can lawfully be restrained or punished, or condemned in damages, except for a violation of the law established to the satisfaction of a judge or jury or magistrate in proceedings regularly instituted in one of the ordinary Courts of Justice. The rights of personal liberty and of freedom of speech, the liberty of the Press, and the right of public meeting, are all a result of the application of this fundamental principle.

"2. Everyone, whatever his position, Minister of State or Government official, soldier or policeman, is governed by the ordinary law of the land and personally liable for anything done by him contrary to that law, and is subject to the jurisdiction of the ordinary Courts of Justice, civil and criminal. The plea 'act of State' is not permissible as a defence to an action in respect of anything done within the realm, or to any action by a British subject. . . .

"3. No one who is charged with a violation of the law can effectively plead, either in a civil or in a criminal Court, that his act was done in obedience to the command of a superior, even the command of the King himself. The maxim 'The King can do no wrong' imports not only that the King cannot be proceeded against for any alleged wrong, but also that he cannot authorise any wrongful act so as to justify the wrongdoer."

The second and third of these principles are those most directly applicable to the abuses of Departmental Government or "Administrative Lawlessness." The bureaucrats, to give them that designation, evade the law by the simple device of securing powers in an Act of Parliament to override the Act. If, in the exercise of these powers they aggrieve any subject of the King, he has no right to apply to any Court of Justice to review the cause of his grievance and pronounce upon its legality. Obviously not, for has not Parliament itself made it a lawful act for the bureaucrats to break the law?

Lord Hewart gives as one example the Rating and Valuation Act, 1925. "Section 67 . . . provides that if any difficulty arises in connection with the application of the Act to any exceptional area, or the preparation of the first valuation list for any area, or otherwise in bringing into operation any of the provisions of this Act, the Minister 'may by order remove the difficulty.' More than that, the Minister may 'constitute any assessment committee, or declare any assessment committee to be duly constituted, or make any appointment, or do any other thing, which appears to him necessary or expedient for securing the due preparation of the list or for bringing the said provisions into operation.' Finally it is provided that 'any such order may modify the provisions of this Act so far as may appear to the Minister necessary or expedient for carrying the order into effect.' As a Judge commented at a hearing of a case to which this section 67 was applicable, if the Court had found that the Minister had made the order (then before the Court) *ultra vires* and decided to quash it, all he need have done would be to make another order the next day for the purpose of "removing the difficulty."

Lord Hewart in his commentary points to the fact that for some years past a "persistent influence" has been at work which has had the effect of placing a large and increasing field of departmental authority and activity "beyond the reach of the

ordinary law." We will add our own commentary that this "persistent influence" is exercised in accordance with, and to instrument, the financial principle that "credit-policy must be free from political interference." In support thereof we can say that without exception the list of instances given by Lord Hewart to illustrate this usurpation of power relate to finance. It may be objected that there is no special significance in this fact because there is no legislation conceivable which does not at some point involve financial considerations. If so we must refer the objector to the examples adduced in the book, and ask him to form his judgment on their cumulative evidence. They all occur in Acts of Parliament which are economic in character. We have mentioned the Rating Act; others are the Unemployment Insurance Act, the Roads Act, the London Traffic Act, the Town Planning Act, the Poor Law Act, the Electricity Supply Act, the Gas Regulation Act, and the Small Holdings Act. Some of these Acts are purely financial, and all the others affect the transfer of money in various degrees. Our case becomes stronger if we bring into review another method of getting round Parliament, namely, the initiation of "legislation by reference" by the bureaucrats ostensibly brought in to "simplify" the law. This process of simplification is almost exclusively applied to financial legislation. And Lord Hewart says of it: "To make a statute unintelligible is not the same thing as to make a departmental decision final; but either course may defeat the taxpayer." He states that it is not many months ago since a Revenue Judge protested his bewilderment in face of such complicated legislation, in spite of the fact that he was an expert in the subject of the legislation. "The answer given by the Law Officer who appeared for the Crown was illuminating. He said that it would not be possible to get the Bills through the House of Commons in any other form." (Our italics.) Lord Hewart comments:

"In other words the meaning appears to be that, if Bills which impose or regulate taxes are to be got through the House of Commons within reasonable time, care must be taken that they shall not expose too large a surface for possible attack. Or, to put the matter more shortly, to be intelligible is to be found out, and to be found out is to be defeated."

Lord Hewart is the more convincing because he knows the arguments for this trickery as well as his own against. He is able to blunt their apparent cumulative force by admitting most of them, pointing out that they are all links in a chain, and that the strength of the chain is no greater than that of its weakest link. This link is *secrecy*. Granted, he says, that Parliament has neither the time nor the knowledge to foresee all possible administrative problems, and codify an elaborate technique to meet such contingencies; granted, therefore, that administration must be left largely to experts who must attain efficiency by the method of "trial and error"; these considerations do not constitute a justification of the existing practical denial of the right of a citizen aggrieved by the "error" to challenge the "trial" in a Court of Justice. Under the Rule of Law any person called upon to defend an action has to state his reasons for it in the hearing of the Court and of the challenger: the evidence adduced on each side may be subjected to cross-examination; and the judgment must come from a source external to the dispute though informed of its merits. The contrast between this procedure and that which is being attacked can best be shown by reference to one fact given by Lord Hewart, namely, that at present a medical practitioner can be heavily fined or struck off the panel by the Ministry of Health if he commits the offence of what is called "excessive prescription." The penalty may ruin him; but he has no right to appeal to a Court for a legal adjudication on

it. Excessive prescription consists in prescribing medicine of too great a price or in too generous a quantity for panel-patients. As Lord Hewart rightly observes: "One might think that, for a person who is bound by law to insure and pay contributions under the Acts, the best medicine ought to be prescribed in illness. One might wonder whether, in this instance, the interests of the patients are adequately taken into consideration." "Excessive prescribing," he remarks, "is an offence wholly unknown to the law."

Our readers will see in this example the clash between civic and financial law to which we pointed just now. And the book is full of data in which the nature of the clash is clearly manifest. Financial considerations are the common denominator of all the items in Lord Hewart's indictment. There is no other. His charge against Parliament that it passes these pieces of legislation negligently or absent-mindedly is true enough; but these sins of omission are the logical result of Parliament's original sin, namely, that it has renounced the right to control financial policy. It is therefore obliged to legislate conformably to the requirements of financial policy. Parliamentary law is subservient to Bank law. Now, the first principle of Bank law is that the political government must "balance its Budget." Therefore the political government must sanction the exercise of any "restraints," etc. (though "unknown to the Law") which are necessary to achieve that end. It must not spend more money than it raises in taxes. So though Lord Hewart quite truly says that if Parliament realised the nature and the inevitable consequences of the powers which it delegates to Departments it would never sanction their delegation; it is equally true that Parliament could, in that case, be placed in an awkward dilemma by the bureaucrats, who would at once say: "You object to our method of securing for you your balanced Budget. Very good. Now tell us a better method!" You can't have white veal on your table unless you allow calves to be bled to death while conscious. Of course, it would be a most healthy situation if Parliament were brought up with a jolt like this; and that is the reason why we base high hopes on the appearance of the Lord Chief Justice's present book. The further that he probes the problem of removing the abuses, the nearer he will come to the realisation that they are one abuse. Departmental lawlessnesses are the product of Bank lawlessness. Every one of the anonymous, autocratic officials who make these extra-legal orders is virtually an agent of the Bank of England. His agency is held through several removes (the Bank—the Treasury—the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the Cabinet of Departmental Ministers—the Permanent Heads of the Departments—and lastly the so-called autocratic officials) from the point of view of the Law he is lawless and irresponsible. But in committing his acts of lawlessness he is fulfilling a law, and is responsible to a lawgiver. The ultimate issue is therefore this: Is bank-policy to be above the Law? Is "sound finance" to condition civil liberties? If Lord Hewart says "Yes," he concedes his whole case, and his indictment becomes a mere enumeration of "regrettable necessities." At the moment, however, he could not bring himself to say "No," for it seems indeed a serious thing to contemplate Parliament's taking over the responsibility of reviewing and modifying general credit-policy, when it has during all its history done nothing with money except to collect taxes and spend them. But to those who have realised the nature of credit and the new principles on which it can be dispensed, the danger is non-existent. For they know that the

same sagacity which has created our Political Constitution is more than equal to the task of creating a new and lawful financial Constitution. The two are essentially one. It remains to make them manifestly one in the name of the people.

About Things.

The odds were practically certain against the success of the petition to unseat Mr. Moses at Plymouth. The Courts in such cases insist on proofs of a most *specific form* of bribery. If every word and deed of which it could be reasonably argued that it was likely to confer an illicit benefit on a candidate were to be admitted as evidence of corruption, there would soon be no elections at all. Mr. Justice Swift interposed a question early in the proceedings: "Is it bribery if a Tory goes to his gardener and says, 'If So-and-So, a rank Socialist, is elected, I will reduce my staff?'" The Counsel to whom the question was put replied that such action would be "getting near the danger line." Mr. Justice Swift's commentary was: "There are many things which are dangerous, but are not bribery." Inducements and threats which are morally illicit are not necessarily illicit in law. To show what a ticklish problem is involved, one needs only to reflect that the mere fact of a candidate's being a rich, or otherwise influential, man, will turn him, willy-nilly, into a vote-magnet irrespective of his political programme. There are thousands of people who will say to themselves: "It will pay me to earn the gratitude of this gentleman," and will accordingly boost his candidature as conspicuously as possible without necessarily consulting him beforehand. They bribe themselves with hope.

In the case of Mr. Ballard we have a gentleman who is himself rich, and therefore did not need to hitch his wagon to any political star. Judging by the evidence, he had, for honest reasons of his own, made up his mind which group of stars should exceed the others in glory, and believed in his power to improve the appearance of the firmament accordingly. And as we now know one star was shaken to earth and another wobbled in its orbit. Sir Arthur Shirley Benn lost convincingly, while Lady Astor scraped home by the tip of her nose—which shows the advantage of being a busybody. Mr. Ballard had publicly hoped, and declared, that "Lord Astor's horse will not win the race," and he was so nearly right that somebody had to do something about it before another election. It somebody is said to be the Conservative Party. What may be so, but I find it hard to accept the idea that the Party accepted the financial risks of the case. (The costs are stated to be £20,000.) What could the Conservatives gain by winning? Experience of electoral psychology in past cases teaches that the Party whose candidate is unseated is practically certain to win the subsequent by-election with its substituted candidate. But even if not, why should the Conservative Party incur the odium of bringing the Petition for the sake of a mere turnover of two votes in the House?

HERBERT RIVERS.

"A new board of directors has been appointed to the Glasgow firm of William Beardmore and Co., Ltd. A control committee representing the Bank of England, the Joint Stock banks and the Government has also been formed. The Government's representatives on the committee are Mr. Frank Hodges and Sir James Cooper. Mr. Frank Hodges was recently nominated by the Bank of England to be a director of the Lancashire Cotton Corporation. He also holds other directorships. He is a member of the Central Electricity Board and of the Industrial Court."—*Evening Standard*, October 11.

Implications of the Gold Ratio.

Since the assumed vital necessity for conserving gold is likely to be accepted by the public as a justification for a policy of restricted credit in this country, it will be useful for us to review the grounds on which the assumption rests. We can see in principle the inter-relation of gold and credit as taught by the orthodox school, by means of the following illustration.

"Mr. Box" shall represent one community, and "Mr. Cox" another. Grandpa Box shall represent the banker, Father Box with his wife and children being the rest of the community. Similarly with the Cox family. Consider both families as self-contained, having access to basic materials in their gardens, as being able to convert them into serviceable articles for consumption in their houses, and as being able to make sufficient of them to support life.

Now, take the Box family and consider how the gold-standard theorem works out in their economic life. We will suppose that Grandpa Box has got one ounce of gold. This quantity of gold has a money value arbitrarily fixed at about £4. So long as he keeps possession of it he is entitled to print four £1 notes to be used by the family. Further, so long as he has the four £1 notes in hand, he is entitled to let the family use cheque books and pay each other cheques amounting to about £40. Expressed in financial terms Grandpa's gold-holding permits him to sanction the circulation of £40 in the form of financial credit within the family.

Conversely, should Grandpa Box lose possession of any part of his gold, he would be obliged under the theory to withdraw credit from circulation to ten times the value of the metal so lost.

Now if a sum of £40 is constantly circulating within the Box family, this means that that sum is being repeatedly issued and withdrawn. When issued it creates costs and prices. Afterwards it returns as revenue from sales, and defrays the costs. Then it is withdrawn. That is the cycle, according to orthodox theory. And whatever is the volume of production and consumption in the family, it is dependent on the repeated circulation of this £40.

Theoretically, Grandpa Box can lose gold in two ways: (1) he may pay it out to members of his family, who hoard it; or (2) he may transfer it to Grandpa Cox. In practice the first-named method can be ruled out, because people do not want gold from the banks to hoard, and because even if they did they would not get it. There remains the other method of transferring it to Grandpa Cox.

In what circumstances can Grandpa Cox get gold from Grandpa Box? Chiefly when the members of the Box family have bought more of the Coxes' production than the Coxes have bought of theirs. In that case the Box family will have sustained an "adverse balance of trade," or a balance of "imports over exports," requiring a transfer of gold to defray the resultant debt.

And now we are coming close to the reason for the nervousness about the loss of gold. It is not alone the loss itself that is disturbing, nor is it alone the consequential withdrawal of credit, but it is the fact that the transfer of the metal involves a *transfer of economic power to the recipient country.*

Let us illustrate it by reference to the Box and Cox families. Suppose that both families make 40 articles to the price-value of £40 during a given period. Suppose that the Boxes buy four articles from the Coxes at £1 each. This purchase represents only 10 per cent. of the production of either standard, yet according to the logic of the gold-standard theorem it would be sufficient to extinguish the Box family. For Grandpa Box would have to send his ounce of gold to Grandpa Cox, and

would then have to withdraw the whole sum of credit circulating in his family. On the other hand, Grandpa Cox would be in a position to double the amount of credit circulating in his family. Even an adverse balance of only one article would involve a withdrawal of £10 of credit from the Boxes, and make valid the issue of £10 extra credit among the Coxes, with the result that the Coxes would now be entitled to use £50 of credit against the Boxes £30—a £20 superiority in financial power—and all by reason of a transfer on balance of a mere £1 worth of goods.

The point of this argument is that a strict application of the original gold-standard law would impose a grotesquely disproportionate penalty on any community which imported goods to a higher value than that of its exports, and would confer a similarly disproportionate reward on any community which reversed the process. In fact, it would be sufficient to paralyse completely the economic activities of debtor nations.

So this law is not strictly applied. Nations can obtain relief from the penalty or a mitigation of the penalty. The method of doing this is comprised in the word "investment."

In the above illustration, Grandpa Box, who became liable to deliver £1 worth of gold to Grandpa Cox, could avoid delivery if Grandpa Cox agreed that the Cox family should lend the £1 to the Box family. The agreement would naturally depend on whether the Box family could offer an inducement to the Cox family to lend the £1. That inducement would have to take the form of *interest*, and would be supported by the pledging of some sort of security. In this illustration we can suppose that the Box family borrow the £1 at say 5 per cent. on the security of their house. They mortgage their economic property, so to speak. That settled, everything can go on as before. Grandpa Box can continue to keep his credit-circulation up at £40 because Grandpa Cox has agreed to keep *his* down at £40, instead of taking power to raise it to £50 as he might have done.

The rationale of this arrangement should be clear to the non-expert mind. For since (by hypothesis) the total stock of gold held by both families is of the value of £8, and since, by rule, the ratio of credit to gold is 10:1, there can never be more than £80 in circulation among the two families. The amount may be more than £40 in one of them, but if so it must be that much less in the other. The total must not exceed £80.

Let us now suppose that this £80 of credit is not enough; that is to say, that even if each family maintains its circulation at £40 it finds that (a) its productive capacity is partly unused for lack of funds, or (b) its actual products are in part unsaleable within the family for the same reason, and (c) its average standard of life is so low as to cause continual quarrels, and on occasions, open violence between its members. Sooner or later questions like these would be asked: "Must Grandpa really have a store of gold in order to let us have money? If so, cannot he let us have £15, or £20, instead of £10 for every £1 worth of gold he has? If not, cannot he get more gold? If not, is there not some way in which we can make and consume more things without using any more money?"

These are the essential questions to which the Snowden Commission is expected to address itself.

The M.M. Club's next Meeting will take place, not at the Holborn Restaurant, but at Kingsway Hall (Room No. 22), a few yards down Kingsway on the same side of the road as the Restaurant. The date is Wednesday, November 6, at 6.15.

A New Dramatist.

In the London and North Eastern Railway sheds at Mexborough, Yorkshire, there is a young engine fitter named John Davison. He is thirty, and he has been working there since he left school, seventeen years ago. Married, with two children, he is now able to earn as much as three pounds a week. But he has not allowed himself to be enervated by these high wages. Many an evening, when wife and children have gone to bed, he sits writing. "It's quiet then. But though I burn the midnight oil, I have to be early at work just the same." I quote his own words, for I have met Mr. Davison. Those evenings with pen and paper have led to the writing of a play which, in my opinion, at once makes him a dramatist of importance. London managers have refused it on the plea that a drama about industrial strife and poor people, however good, will not pay. No one can blame the managers for thinking so; but sometimes they are presented with a play which overrides the rule, and they cannot see it is an exception. Thus they reject "The Farmer's Wife" because it is "rustic comedy," and "Journey's End" because it is "only another damned war play." They may have made a similar error in the case of John Davison's "Shadows of Strife"; we shall see, when and if Sir Barry Jackson brings it to London. For the moment we can only congratulate Sir Barry on accepting the play for his Repertory Theatre; Mr. H. K. Ayliff for producing it, and the stock company for acting it so finely; and Birmingham audiences on the excited applause with which they have greeted it.

The action begins on the eve of the Coal Strike in 1926, and the scene throughout is the kitchen of a miner's cottage in a small Yorkshire town. In this tiny world the author tries to record some domestic reverberations of the economic war, which goes on without cease, just as Mr. R. C. Sherrif, in the small dug-out which is the scene for "Journey's End," tried to reflect the individual English reaction to a military war, which ended in four years. As the curtain rises the shadows of approaching strife fall upon the household. The father and elder son, both hulking miners, are arrogantly sure of beating the bosses, and pleasantly anticipate the interval of whippet racing and beer-drinking which will elapse before victory sends them back to the pit. The mother can only see the debts that will accrue in a household which, in common with the majority of workers, lives on its wages from week to week. The younger son, who is studying to be an engineer, sees himself thrown out of employment by the strike, and the money he has saved for his examinations spent to buy bread. He gets no sympathy from the two elder men, who jeer at him for trying to be a "gaffer." The daughter, whose character is particularly well acted by Miss Daphne Heard, sees the strike only as the enemy which will prevent her marriage; she has waited for her sweetheart to save enough for a home, and she cries to see the hour of consummation recede as his savings dwindle to support an enforced idleness. A crippled grandfather, who forever quotes the Bible at his family, completes the household.

As the strike drags on its shadow in this miner's kitchen grows blacker. Although the men, in the mother's phrase, "always find their way home to meals," they are blandly unconscious of her efforts to feed them as well as ever on less and less money. Her household god, the gramophone she has just finished buying for £10, is sold to the dealer she bought it from. He offers her ten shillings. She tells him what he is, in set terms. He merely turns to go out, knowing her need. "Here," she says,

"coom back and giv us money while us can see it, and clear out before us kicks you out." The younger son stays at home, plods on with his books, helps his mother, and tells his brother and father what fools they are to go on strike. As his brother can't answer his book-learning, he knocks him down. This elder boy goes to the bad during the strike. He needs plenty of money for beer and dogs and "tarts," and when he is spent up, he joins a gang of local roughs, who live by terrorising the small shopkeepers into paying money to save their windows, and such-like hooliganism. He steals a car, and in escaping, runs over a man. His imprisonment for manslaughter is a heavy enough blow for his family; but it is a double tragedy, for it is his sister's sweetheart whom he has killed; and he has killed not only her sweetheart but the father of her coming child. The strike had stopped her marriage and had left her with hours of leisure with her lover. So, in O'Casey's phrase, "she had tired of her maidenhood." Sorrows and disgrace fall too swiftly upon her, and she kills herself. As she lies on the sofa in the kitchen, dead, her father comes home. The strike is over and he is full of free beer. He stumbles up to bed singing a maudlin song, having just missed falling upon the body of his daughter. He will know of her death at dawn, when he gets up to go to the pit. This scene seems to have been inspired by "The Plough and The Stars."

Does it sound too sordid and depressing? To me it did not seem so, for it is told with a tragic intensity of feeling that lifts depression from the heart. But that is because I cannot feel sad at a good tragedy, only at a bad play; I do not speak for those who must not see anything sad because it makes them cry. Let it be said at once, however, that this tragedy is not told without a generous addition of rich comedy. The dialogue has the homely directness of all peasant speech; compare it with the half-dead circumlocutions of the half-educated, and see which is nearer to true English! There are phrases in this play—I am unable to quote them without the script—which have the force of a pick striking into the coal. One scene has a touch of cynical comedy reminiscent of de Maupassant. The head of the gangsters comes to the house. The elder son, in going to jail for manslaughter, has not split on those who helped him steal the car. As a kindly return, the gangster brings with him the Jew dealer who has bought the gramophone, and makes him disgorge the ten pounds he had once been paid for it. The ten notes lie upon the table when the daughter is carried in by two strangers. The family gather round the sofa, absorbed in grief. One of the bearers stands by the table. He has been on strike like the rest and obviously has no money. Without a word said, you see the struggle between his shame and his need. At last he smuggles just one note into his pocket and slips out, with the sound of a mother's crying in his ears.

I hope I have made it evident that this is a play which does not try to teach; it dramatises human emotions, as all good drama does, and if there is a moral to it you must find it. I can praise the acting as being of a very high standard for a stock company. The direction by Mr. Ayliff is first rate. The author and his wife, I may add, had to hurry back to Yorkshire after seeing the dress rehearsal and the first night. "It's the first time we've left the kids for so long," he said.

The play runs until Saturday next.

J. S.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

"A war between us is unthinkable!
But the "Titanic" was unsinkable."
J. L. G.

Apple Dumplings.

By Old and Crusted.

COSTARD: Pray you, sir, how much carnation ribbon may a man buy for a remuneration?

BIRON: What is a remuneration?

COSTARD: Marry, sir, halfpenny farthing.

BIRON: Why, then, three-farthing worth of silk.

COSTARD: I thank your worship. God be wi' you!

BIRON: Stay, slave; I must employ thee: . . . There's thy guerdon; go.

(Giving him a shilling.)

COSTARD: Gardon, O sweet gardon, better than remuneration, a 'leven-pence farthing better: most sweet gardon! I will do it, sir, in print. Gardon! Remuneration!

("Love's Labour's Lost." Act III. Scene I.)

Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar.

(The Excursion.)

There is a period of the year known to Fleet Street as "the silly season." It generally culminates round about the feast of St. Pumpkin, when congregations of the faithful, reinforced by a sprinkling of the curious and casual, assemble in the parish church to listen to the special preacher and sing with fatuous unction, "All is safely gathered in," although they know full well that within an arrow's flight of the chancel, where the wheat-sheaves and salvias make a brave show, much good fruit is rotting on the ground and old arable land nearby yielding but a shameful crop of thistles and burdock—or, as it is generally described, with unconscious irony, "laid down to grass."

To the goodly company of the brethren of the "Greater Gumption," however, the silly season lasts from January 1 to December 31; but it is in the later months of mellow fruitfulness that the ripe rotteness of "high" finance becomes insistently offensive to the nostrils of the illuminate who live amidst beeves and barns. The dwellers in cities and suburbs, whose knowledge of the countryside is limited to the passing panorama revealed by the "Baby Bunting" or "Jorrocks Six," hurtling along a white ribbon at forty or more miles per hour, cannot realise a tithe of the crass folly rampant in the shires and counties; thanks to the creaking mechanism of an obsolete money system and the dour persistence of orthodox economics. To appreciate the full infamy of it all one must live, year in year out, through all the seasons, amidst derelict corn-fields, half-starved grass, and neglected orchards. Fortunately—or may be unfortunately—for the peace of the realm country folk are patient and long-suffering, perhaps a little slow in the up-take, otherwise the oaks of Sherwood and Savernake might bear other and weightier crops than acorns—but it would be well for the lords of the bank ledger to bear in mind that there is a limit even to the patience of "Hodge and his Masters."

Of course, it is always plums, when there are any; but this year it is apples, apples, apples! Not that every orchard is over-flowing or every "moss'd cottage-tree" bent with fruit; the glut is sporadic. Seen from the windows of the room where this plaint is written, the Bramley Seedlings show never a pippen, whilst, on the hill-crest a furlong away the ground is strewn with peck upon peck of the finest "desert apples," proffering a rosy cheek to the missing biter; and there they will lie and rot until all that is left of their wholesome beauty is dug in next muck-spreading—for it does not "pay" to gather fallen fruit, no matter how sound and juicy. As for the "Cookers," those hefty hard apples, weighing anything up to 16 ozs. apiece, that will keep until next May's blossom heralds another crop, the Sep-

tember gales caught the more exposed plantations just before gathering-time, and, as one neighbour bitterly lamented: "There lie eight or ten ton o' best Bramley an' not wuth the labour o' pickin' oop." Well, it all depends who does the "pickin'-oop." If it does not "pay" to employ adult labour at a shilling an hour (and ineffective at that) why not give the job to the children who will do it "for nowt." Let them eat their fill of the dessert apples and take home in mother's biggest basket as many of the large green "cookers" as they can stagger under. Doubtless there would be a certain amount of "Griping in the Guts" and eke some "Collick and Winde" as the "generall" Bill of Mortality for the year 1665 would describe the effects of a surfeit of apples; but they would have a good time, bless 'em, and think of the apple dumplings to come during the cold, dark winter months!

Now an apple dumpling is something more than a seasonable item on the family menu. If a haggis be the "great chieftain o' the puddin'-race"—and who that has northern blood in his veins will deny its overlordship—surely an apple-dumpling is the comely mother of good living and equally at home above and below the salt. Was it not Dr. Johnson's advice

"to have a good orchard. He knew," he said, "a clergyman of small income, who brought up a family very reputably which he chiefly fed with apple dumplings."

Which, incidentally, may throw some light on the old saying, "As sure as God made little apples."

Yes, an apple dumpling served piping hot, sprinkled with brown sugar and liberally soured with clotted cream is a brave introduction to a rustic meal, and if it be followed by a chunk of ripe cheddar, fresh butter, and the crust of a home-baked loaf made from stone-ground flour, flavoured with a stick of celery touched to crispness by an October frost, and the whole laid to rest with a quart of home-brewed—why, how can man dine better?—that is if he have retained the unspoiled palate and robust appetite which is about all the farmer or fruit grower gets out of his job nowadays.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the principal basic raw materials of the above-described blow-out are apples, wheat, milk and barley, all of which the ill-used acres of this banker-ridden island could produce in more than adequate quantity if the sturdy folk who still cling to the old homesteads and familiar fields were given a measure of economic security—if, instead of being fobbed off with a beggarly halfpenny farthing of remuneration (let alone being out of pocket) the intensive cultivation of the land were encouraged and rewarded by a generous guerdon, something not recoverable in prices, but a free gift, "a 'leven-pence farthing" worth of dividend on our goodly heritage, whereby we might reasonably hope that this same heritage would increase in value year by year and when we of this generation have eaten our last dumpling and quaffed our final quart our children might enter into the enjoyment of a property improved beyond all computation. To-day 'tis too often a case of Love's Labour's Lost, and "the little fields, made green by husbandry," grow shabby, wan and unproductive as the hoarded gold for whose protection they are sacrificed.

What shall it profit a land if it gain all the gold in the world and lose its soul?—for the soul of England dwells in her cornlands and meadows, not in her factories and workshops—not even in the vaults of the banks.

One is tempted at times to wish that the industrial revolution had broken out in Kamchatka or Tierra

del Fuego; that Adam Smith had been born in an igloo, and that the infant Cobden had succumbed to thrush or an overdose of dill-water. Perhaps we might then have been spared the wearisome flap-doodle ladled out by successive Chancellors of the Exchequer whenever they expound the orthodox economic faith in public. Maybe in private they have their doubts like other men. Let us hear the present panjandrum carrying on the tradition of his high office with an unctuous fatuity that would not have disgraced the people's William. Addressing the International Thrift Congress Mr. Snowden said:

"The total volume of savings is, if we take the changed value of money into calculation, less than it was in the years before the war, at a time, mark you, when the need for saving is greater than ever."

Saving! For what? For saving good arable land from going out of cultivation? Saving fruit from rotting on the ground and vegetables from the incinerator? Not a bit of it. What he means is saving out of income for the purpose of "re-equipping, re-conditioning and reorganising our factories and workshops."

"Mr. Snowden's speech was translated and read to the delegates in French, German and Italian."

Why not in Hebrew, Greek and Latin? Well, let us hope the delegates enjoyed it and went away duly edified—but they would have been better occupied making the acquaintance of an English apple-dumpling—with cream on it.

Drama.

The Three Sisters.

It is customary for members of the audience after seeing "The Three Sisters" to ask themselves why a play made up of such apparently commonplace lines should be so deeply moving. An attempt to answer the question fully here and now would lead too far afield, so that a suggestion or two only may be offered. Critical playgoers agree that many of Shakespeare's plots are not only borrowed, but weak and even incredible; and they attribute their Shakespeare worship to the sensuous joy aroused by his miraculously compact metaphors. As a result we possibly idolise mere word-pattern making too much. Yet Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Macbeth—the order means nothing—would surely be acknowledged to be as great if written in modern, unembellished, prose, as they are in any language. Behind their lines, as it were, there is a state of mind comprehensible to all men and women, acting in circumstances natural enough for others, but inevitably tragic for these. Thus it is with Tchegov. His characters are not inarticulate in the sense of unintelligible. He chose from all the words they would speak in actual life the essential few which preserve the form of the portrait while at the same time stimulating the audience to experience the emotional content behind the lines. For science and philosophy there may be no demonstrable noumenon to account for the phenomenon. In art it is different. It is the revelation of the noumenon which constitutes the art. One is moved in the same deep way by the inarticulate letters written by the poor, whose content is limited to births, courtships, marriages, and deaths, with asides on the plenty or scarcity of work and the fertility of pigs. These letters, as Tchegov's dramas do, reveal life in the nude.

The whole tragedy of the three sisters and a brother, educated for cultured life in Moscow, removed through the exigencies of the father's military duties to a dull provincial town and stranded there, is implicit in the given situation. It needs no festoonery of smart sayings. The dreams and hopes of this family are in Moscow; the fate of all is where they

are, simply because they formed part of their mobile father's kit. Quartered soldiers, as Bacon said of the busybody, stay not at home; the only interesting persons these women meet are for ever moving on. Life is alternative of welcome and farewell—to the breath of Moscow brought by those officers who may have been there. The longer the sisters remain where they are, the more obligations to remain grow about them, causing them pathetically to hold fast to the dream of Moscow knowing it to be a dream, or to blot the sun out of the sky by erasing the dream from mind and accepting the vegetable existence. The soldier lover of the youngest sister, whose heart is more in Moscow than in love, is killed in a jealous soldiers' duel; the soldier lover of another departs with his regiment, leaving her to her all-tolerant husband, who is the essence of self-satisfied provincial schoolmaster in every thought and action. Thus we leave them, and their brother as well, the tragic victims of culture beyond their means or opportunities for exercising it; chained where they are by all that has grown up about them.

Almost any one of several characters is appealing and human enough to serve as the central figure of a play. Tchegov, however, so sparing of epigram, is prodigal with character. Every superficial sentence reveals an interior; each word dropped lays bare a soul's private griefs. The characters say only what it is natural for them to say; but it conveys what only art can reveal. The movement of the play is as smooth as that of a river through a lake, and one sees, as when gazing at reflections in a lake, details and significances which in looking at the actual view one would not have observed.

The work of Mr. Komisarjevsky as producer adds further reason to the beauty of the play for seeing it. One may occasionally question details of Mr. Komisarjevsky's effects, as, for example, whether the quantity of light likely to come into the dining-room from any other room would exceed that of the occupied dining-room; but one cannot deny the effectiveness of his play with light, and one acknowledges gladly the originality of his mind as well as his sense of the theatre as a whole, not merely as a chamber for dialogue. The unity achieved in the second act between divers places of action, and juxtaposed incongruities of mood, recalled Mr. Komisarjevsky's expression of producer genius in the conspirators' scene of Merejkovsky's Paul I. I could have believed that he had this in mind, with a determination to do something as good. In his hands the whole piece is full of life—speech, action, situation, lighting, and setting together. His use of shadows in the third act bring a tense hush over the theatre, by doing something in a manner not unlike that of the film, but more real than it is possible to imagine the film becoming. The acting is good. Of the three sisters Miss Rosalinde Fuller again comes into a part worthy of her beautiful speech and deportment. Miss Fuller is not a naturalist, she is an actress, and the breadth and sweep of her gestures will surely stand her in good stead later. Miss Margaret Swallow was excellent also, as was Miss Prudence Vanbrugh, after an opening scene in which she was not fully audible. Mr. Ion Swinley, as Vershinin, used his voice to perfection, and gave a fine performance as a whole, as good as I have seen from him. Miss Margot Sieveking's Natasha and Mr. Guy Pelham-Boulton's Kuligin were excellent also; but the whole cast had obviously given serious attention to its business, and received serious attention from its producer.

Conscience: Little.

"Conscience," an American play by Mr. Don Mullally, is a good enough play to provoke a critic's conscience to severity. For two pieces of acting,

one by Mr. Malcolm Keen as a working-man with class-consciousness and a political conscience, and the other by Miss Lilian Foster as his individualist wife, caring only for home, appearances, and security, with the prospect of social pleasures, make the evening worth while. The truth inherent in the theme, the tragic incompatibility of these two, is enough to support a play. An idea so good is a sufficient rarity for it to be worth exploitation to the full. Mr. Mullally, however, was in the writing of the play unsure of himself. He was unable to content himself with working out the relationship of this couple, and letting that be his drama. He had to shift the centre of gravity from this to the husband's torture of human conscience after murdering his wife for going gay during his absence in search of a job, and his silence caused by imprisonment for vagrancy. Murder seemed as incompatible with the husband's character as his mind with his wife's; it came suddenly and unexpectedly; and it seemed to be committed only to create the acting opportunity of the prologue and epilogue. Without the prologue the first act is first-class drama, showing the conflict between different planes of consciousness in two lowly human beings brought together by loneliness and adolescent hunger, and bound together by law and public opinion. This act, indeed, made me wonder if I should have to place Mr. Mullally among the company of that handful of folk-dramatists who are the true moderns. The second act, up to the murder, is also quite good. But, strictly, Mr. Mullally holds to his true theme only for the length of the first act, and in parts of the prologue. All that happens—in order of historical, not dramatic time—before the murder occupies a loftier plane of dramatic significance than what happens afterwards. What happens before is the particular tragedy of the characters presented; whereas what happens after is anybody's tragedy. As a penalty for failing to stick to his theme Mr. Mullally has failed to make a first-class play in spite of having first-class matter.

The two performances mentioned, by Mr. Keen and Miss Foster, who occupy the stage most of the time, are so well studied and sustained that interest is kept up. The production of the conscience scenes, in which the husband lives round and round the conflict between his despair and natural fidelity which took place before the murder, is well done, the use of the spot-lights for creating the atmosphere of mental derangement being excellently thought out. These scenes are accordingly convincing, but apart from their difference in mood from the rest of the play, added together, they are too much of one sort. It is imaginable that the sentimentality of the last episode, the meeting of husband and wife in the peace of death, may have been a commercial asset in America, where, I understand, the play was very successful; but I cannot think it an asset here. Mr. George Bealby's study of "Doc" Saunders, a working-man socialist who delved into evolution and philosophy, was both sympathetic and true. In the play which I have as much as said Mr. Mullally ought to have written we should have seen more of "Doc" Saunders.

PAUL BANKS.

"A man must have aunts and cousins, must buy carrots and turnips, must have barn and woodshed, must go to market and to the blacksmith's shop, must saunter and sleep and be inferior and silly."—From Emerson's Journals.

"We were not made to breathe oxygen, or to talk poetry, or to be always wise."—From Emerson's Journals.

"Alas that I must hint to you that poverty is not an unmixed good; that labour may easily exceed. The sons of the rich have finer forms and in some respects a better organisation than the sons of the labourer. The Irish population in our towns is the most laborious, but neither the most moral nor the most intelligent."—From Emerson's Journals.

The Screen Play.

The Informer.

Elstree is rapidly developing an artistic consciousness, and when British International Pictures invited Dr. Arthur Robison, who made "Warning Shadows" and "Manon Lescaut," to direct a film based on Liam O'Flaherty's "The Informer," we were led to expect a considerably more distinguished picture than the majority of most English studio productions. That expectation has been more than realised; this film is not only far and away the best yet made for British International, but even shows an advance on the best of Dr. Robison's previous work. It is incomparably better than his last Ufa film, "Looping the Loop."

"The Informer" (Regal) is so admirable a film, that it is very nearly great. It is extraordinarily well acted, perfectly directed, informed by a smooth and sombre rhythm, and extremely well cast, especially in regard to its minor characters. Lars Hansen as Gypo Nolan has here achieved an impersonation worthy of being set alongside his performance in "Homecoming," and Warwick Ward, whose voice it was a pleasure to hear, has so identified himself with the character which he portrays that he is on this occasion not just Warwick Ward.

Lya de Putti is not too good. Her performance in "Vaudeville," which established her reputation, showed her to possess only a limited range, and although she is competent as Katie Fox, she fails to rise to the full opportunities of the part. Indeed, honours go rather to Patricia Hayes, whose voice doubling is masterly. The role of Katie thus becomes a composite performance, and if Miss Hayes' vocal inflexions can be accepted as a criterion, our producers will be well advised to star her, instead of merely allowing her to be heard off-screen. Why an English actress was not chosen for this part would be something of a mystery, if it were not for the fact that the decision to introduce dialogue into the film was not made until it had been partly finished, which accounts for the fact that speech is used only in the second half.

I have an open mind as to whether the introduction of speech is an improvement or the reverse. When it is first used it is decidedly an advantage, since the dialogue here is terse and rapier-like. In some of the other scenes, the spoken word could, however, have been eliminated with advantage; "Tessa" is an instance of the extraordinary dramatic effectiveness that may be achieved by the use of a very short talking sequence in an otherwise silent film. "The Informer" is, however, an admirable example of the skilful blending of sound and speech.

I have said that this film is very nearly to be described as a great picture. It has one serious blemish in the shape of anti-climax, represented by the unconscionable time that Gypo takes in dying. An extremely effective ending would have been to ring down the curtain when he leaves Katie's room to go to his death. Failing this, the film should end when he is actually shot. As it is, he is allowed to drag himself to a church and expire there in a fashion which reminded me irresistibly of Lewis Carroll's "fainting in coils."

The existence of a paying public for the best type of English screen play as well as for the worst American screamies is demonstrated by the fact that while "The Informer" was originally intended to run only seven days at the Regal, it is being continued during the current week. I cordially recommend my readers not to lose the opportunity of seeing it. They will have the pleasure of seeing the best screen play which is at the moment being shown in London.

DAVID OCKHAM.

Bolshevism and Art.

By F. Le Gros Clark.

In one part of his "Literature and Revolution" M. Trotsky inquires whether there can be such a thing as "Proletarian Art." He doubts it; so does the present writer. The Art of a Class expresses primarily the leisure, self-assurance and substantial values of that Class—not the conflict between one Class and another. In the full-fledged literature of a great epoch we often catch faint echoes of a past struggle or of a struggle to come. But the creative Class must have become eternalised into a "Civilisation" before it creates spontaneously and without self-consciousness; and the Proletariat as such can never flower into a Civilisation. It passes—by the Bolshevik theory—into the "Non-class Society"; and in so doing it ceases to exist. It is indeed merely the instrument used by History for the purpose of destroying Capitalism and ushering in Socialism. Its function is that of a midwife.

What art-forms the "Non-class Society" will evolve, no one can possibly foresee. Certainly the historians of five generations hence may discover in the theatre of modern Russia the germs of dramatic methods that shall have later developed. But the process cannot be reversed; the flower cannot be deduced from the hypothetical seed.

The literature of Social conflict, on the other hand, is bound to be little more than a commentary on the times. It may be a very suitable and stirring commentary—full of good yarns and human touches—but it does not penetrate to the deeper values. The art of the vanquished Class may be pregnant with the sadness of failure and loss; but then who cares at the moment what the unfit think about their own fitness to survive? An individual that has failed is often a tragic figure; a Class that has failed has—well—only itself to thank. It has carried maladaptation beyond the limits allowed by Nature.

The victorious Class is inspired by the thought of obstacles overcome, of energies set free and of all the titanic work of Social reconstruction. But this is only the adventure story turned upside down. At best it is the epic form applied at second-hand to a particular event; and particular events are not suitable to the epic form. In theory the siege of Troy could have been repeated a score of times by the Greek chieftains; besieging Troys was part of their civilisation. The Bolshevik revolution is a single act of history; and its literature, stimulating enough to those who participate in it, must theoretically cease to mean anything much to their descendants. They are ushering in a civilisation—not expressing its spiritual values.

But Bolshevism is itself inimical to art—more inimical even than was Puritanism. For Puritanism, having a religious content, could at least tap in its service the vast human heritage of religious mythology; and could thus raise the mind to the level of the permanent psychological values. "Paradise Lost" and "Pilgrim's Progress" are likely to remain, though there will be a revaluation of all their elements.

No critical reflection upon Bolshevism is intended. Perhaps it is best—at this period—that art should not be encouraged. Perhaps it ought to pass temporarily under the shadow and be buried. The writer holds no brief for it.

But he is concerned with facts as facts. And the point is that Bolshevism involves the most voracious scientific theory that has ever sprung from the mind of man. A scientific hypothesis has to account for all phenomena that come within its field of application; if it does not, it fails immediately. The Marxist theory embraces every aspect of social

life; it interprets the play of phenomena in terms of the underlying sequence of causes, the gradual shift of productive relationships.

Like every scientific hypothesis, it is welcome to try its luck. At present it is sweeping forward triumphantly. The writer has as yet come across no criticism of the "Materialist Conception" that is really valid; such criticisms are invariably due to misunderstanding of either the method or the precise field of application of the Marxist theory. That theory must be given a free run, in order that it may make its full contribution to the sum of knowledge before it is absorbed in a theory still more comprehensive.

But Art is concerned with forms that spring into consciousness heaven knows whence—and with human relationships that are still strange and incomprehensible to us. It deals with the vast shadowy fringe of things, not yet mapped out by science. There is nothing mysterious about this; it is only our intuitive method of formulating and facing the still unformulated part of existence. Wherever Bolshevism touches the impulse to artistic creation, it at once insists that this impulse and its results are quite definable by scientific laws. They are secondary outcomes of the fundamental productive relationships. The artist, so far as he is Bolshevik in thought or comes into contact with Bolshevik critics, is immediately explained to himself; he becomes the central point of conflicting social influences; he is indeed little more than the vortex created by their interplay.

This degree of self-consciousness is bad for the artist; it dissipates him. But it is true; for Bolshevism is essentially a theory of the transition period; the conflicts of the period express themselves through it—and an age of conflict is an age of socially distracted Minds. The Mind of the artist suffers as much as any; and art—whether "bourgeois" or revolutionary—is revealing all the consequent weakening of fibre.

Bolshevism, in a word, grimly warns the artist that he cannot expect in this epoch to be a great artist; he had better resign himself to being a melodious commentator on the times—or to experimenting with forms both novel and antique.

Reviews.

The Rosy Fingers: The Building Forms of Thought and Action in the New Era. By Colonel Arthur Lynch. (Cecil Palmer. 7s. 6d. net.)

This book has been read carefully, but it is an awful muddle. Through the jumble of facts, of anecdotes, of footnotes, asides, and many a touching human story drawn from real life, runs one theme. It is a general attack upon Royalty as an institution. "This book will not have accomplished its purpose if Royalty survives. But this book will accomplish its purpose, for it is devoted to the progress of the world, and though it may be obstructed, defamed, delayed, it will bear to other generations its message," writes Col. Arthur Lynch, and continues, "But to overthrow Royalty is a small affair. Let me pass on. The United States will be the arbiter of the world—(will be, you note!)—Therefore a discussion has been given on the essential thing in this regard; the soul of the United States. There is vast hope here; also reason for anxiety if not apprehension."

In his chapter on the U.S. the Colonel writes, "Here I am all respect, for I salute . . . the nation destined to be the world's arbiter." He says that, to go to America, the world must find "the crude and hard standards of Wall Street, the perpetual pre-occupation of the dollar, the imitative minds in all matters of thought and literature, or art, so amazingly in contrast with the keen energy, the daring, the bold decisions in the field of finance" is disconcerting. He sees all that is wrong (ethically, not economically) with the Dollar Order, but hopes that "it may be possible even to educate money magnates, to soften their hearts, widen their sympathies, erect their understanding." The book ends with a terrific tirade against the power of Monarchy. "For,

look you," writes the author, "the one great power of Monarchy is that of taboo." And again, "Royalty is profoundly immoral." In conclusion, we turn to the section called "Summary and Conclusions," and we find that "Royalty is immoral because . . ." and "Royalty is a bad system because . . ." (two pages of reasons given), but what we do not find is just exactly what to do about it, nor what to do about the ever-growing power of the Money Trust so clearly outlined in the chapter on the United States. The Rosy Fingers of a New Economic Dawn have not appeared in these pages. Nevertheless, and in spite of the muddle, Colonel Arthur Lynch comes, ever and again, very near to the economic truth proclaimed by THE NEW AGE.

The Intimate Journal of George Sand. Translated and Edited by Marie Jenney Howe. (Williams and Norgate. 12s. 6d.)

I am more than doubtful about this book; and the publishers will have to give better evidence of its authenticity before I change my mind. This Journal of George Sand is here printed for the first time. The translator and editor is an American woman—at least, I judge so from her spelling, for we are told nothing about her. From her notes, she seems to be just the sort of person who writes those awful biographies so popular just now in America, penned with purple ink and in the present tense, as though the writers were intimate friends of the subjects of the biographies, with the consequence that Cleopatra and Charles the Second and Shakespeare lose the privilege of being dead. Miss Howe's translation is of a French manuscript which is the copy of an original which she says does not exist. Some proof is given that there was an original, but there is only hearsay evidence that a copy of it was taken; and the mere fact that George Sand's granddaughter has given her consent to the publication of this book does not dispel my incredulity about it. I note that it has been printed in Germany; that it contains what purports to be an original journal by George Sand, written in the form of letters addressed, but never sent, to Alfred de Musset, although he is said to have seen them at some time or other. I will suggest that, even if it is authentic, this book is not, as the publishers state, of the deepest interest to students of literature and of abnormal psychology. It is of no more value than if it had been invented by Marie Jenney Howe, whoever she is. But I shall be interested to hear more about the matter. If my suspicions prove to be unfounded I will apologise. Until then, I have excuse for them.

J. S.

The Snowden Inquiry.

An extraordinary meeting of the Central Committee of the Economic Party was held on Friday, October 11, at the Party's Headquarters, when it was resolved that the following letter be sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by the Organising Secretary:—

"Sir,—The Central Committee of the Party has instructed me to write and ask you whether you would be willing to receive a deputation from the Party with regard to the forthcoming Financial Enquiry. It is proposed to ask you two questions concerning (1) the personnel of the Committee, which is to be appointed, and (2) its terms of reference.

"If you would grant us the honour of a five minutes' interview, there would be ample time for the questions and on your answers. The deputation would not seek to trespass on your valuable time if it did not feel that it represents a large and growing body of opinion which is anxiously awaiting a pronouncement from the Acting Head of the Government in these matters.

"The deputation is ready to wait on you at any hour which suits your convenience.

"Awaiting with confidence your favourable reply,

"I am your obedient Servant,
"C. J. HUNT,
"Organising Secretary.

The following reply was received:—

"Treasury Chambers,
"Whitehall, S.W.
"14th October, 1929.

"Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 12th October, I am desired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that he regrets that owing to the pressure of his existing engagements he is unable to receive a deputation from your Committee on the subject of the proposed Committee on Finance and Industry.

"Yours faithfully,
"P. J. GRIGG.

The Organising Secretary then wrote to Mr. Snowden as follows:—

"17th October, 1929.
"Sir,—I regret that pressure of public engagements prevents you from receiving a Deputation from my Committee with regard to the proposed Enquiry into Finance and Industry.

"In view of the importance of the issue and the growing impatience of public opinion, I venture to submit the two questions we proposed to ask you, with the request that you will instruct your Secretary to send us written answers.

"They are as follows:—
"Firstly: We ask for information as to the personnel of the proposed Financial Enquiry Committee: in particular, as to whether the most competent technician on Credit Reform, namely, Major C. H. Douglas, who, in 1923, was invited to lay his views before the Canadian Parliamentary Committee on Banking and Commerce in connection with the renewal of the Bank Charter Act, which was then under consideration, will be included as a member of the proposed Financial Enquiry Committee; and, if he is to be excluded, the reason for such exclusion, since what are known as 'The Douglas Analysis and Proposals,' reveal the mathematical flaw in our present financial system.

"Secondly: We ask for information as to whether the price aspect, in considering the problems of industrial cost-accountancy and the financial technique of the Banking system, will come within the terms of reference of, and be fully investigated by, the proposed Financial Enquiry Committee.

"Awaiting with interest your reply to these two questions, and thanking you in anticipation,
"I am, your obedient Servant,
"C. J. HUNT,
"Organising Secretary.

The Secretary replied as follows:—
"Treasury Chambers,
"Whitehall, S.W.
"21st October, 1929.

"Dear Sir,—I am desired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant.

"Yours faithfully,
"P. J. GRIGG."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

"PLEBS" AND THE DOUGLAS SCHEME.

Sir,—I notice that you describe the *Plebs* as the organ of the International Council of Labour Colleges. I am sorry to say there is no International Council. International should read "National."

I notice that you imply that Mr. Woodburn is "a disruptive communist." You must have secret sources of information, because Mr. Woodburn is a quite respectable Labour candidate.

Are we to take it that THE NEW AGE's information about both Mr. Woodburn and the N.C.L.C. justifies us in saying that THE NEW AGE is suffering from old age?—Yours cheerily,

J. P. M. MILLAR,
Joint Editor.

[We hope that it will not shock Mr. Millar to hear that we are not particularly interested whether the Council of Labour Colleges is "national" or "international," or whether any contributor to *Plebs* is red or pink. If THE NEW AGE set out to be a *Who's Who* of politics his criticism would be called for. At the same time we do not want to be misunderstood. We did not intend to convey the suggestion that Mr. Woodburn was a Communist, nor that the Communist Party was "disruptive" in a derogatory sense. If Mr. Millar will read again the passage which contains that adjective he will see that it was not used as *our* epithet, but was by implication attributed to the ordinary bourgeois-in-the-street, who lumps all the left-wing shades of thought together as "deep-reds." We feel no emotional repugnance against disruptivism—our great regret is that it is not practised by other classes as well as by the proletariat. We prefer reds to pinks, on every plane of economic society.—Ed.]

THE ECONOMIC PARTY.

Sir,—Does not a possible reason occur to P. T. K. for the lop-sidedness of the Economic Party v. M.M. Club correspondence? The members of the club may be too fully occupied in getting on with their individual Social Credit jobs to have time for idle criticism of other Social Credit supporters seem to be out of a job.

COUNTRY MEMBER.

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Supporters of the Social Credit Movement contend that under present conditions the purchasing power in the hands of the community is chronically insufficient to buy the whole product of industry. This is because the money required to finance capital production, and created by the banks for that purpose, is regarded as borrowed from them, and, therefore, in order that it may be repaid, is charged into the price of consumers' goods. It is a vital fallacy to treat new money thus created by the banks as a repayable loan, without crediting the community, on the strength of whose resources the money was created, with the value of the resulting new capital resources. This has given rise to a defective system of national loan accountancy, resulting in the reduction of the community to a condition of perpetual scarcity, and bringing them face to face with the alternatives of widespread unemployment of men and machines, as at present, or of international complications arising from the struggle for foreign markets.

The Douglas Social Credit Proposals would remedy this defect by increasing the purchasing power in the hands of the community to an amount sufficient to provide effective demand for the whole product of industry. This, of course, cannot be done by the orthodox method of creating new money, prevalent during the war, which necessarily gives rise to the "vicious spiral" of increased currency, higher prices, higher wages, higher costs, still higher prices, and so on. The essentials of the scheme are the simultaneous creation of new money and the regulation of the price of consumers' goods at their real cost of production (as distinct from their apparent financial cost under the present system). The technique for effecting this is fully described in Major Douglas's books.

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