THE

NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER"

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

Opponents of the Social Credit proposals have the choice between two methods of defeating them. One is to disprove the analysis on which they are based. The other is, while accepting the analysis, to advocate a partial application of the remedy. Now the essential feature of the remedy is its duality. Credit-control must be linked up with price-control in a single policy—that policy being to raise and maintain the rate of actual consumption to that of possible production. To adopt credit-control without price-control, or price-control without credit-control is virtually to discard the remedy altogether. Further, to adopt either *before* the other is to stultify both. To use an illustration: if an imminent air-raid necessitates the construction of bomb-proof buildings, and an engineering expert urges that nothing but reinforced concrete will afford adequate protection, you can say he is wrong, but you cannot accept his arguments and then propose to use plain concrete first and to leave the reinforcement to be introduced later "if necessary." Nor can you erect a complete steel framework first and hold over the pouring of concrete until afterwards. The concrete must set round the steel rods as the work proceeds.

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We have received from South Africa a pamphlet by Robert C. Willson entitled *Human Vultures; or Hoggenheimer—The Master Thief** A sub-heading states that it is a "study of private banking and an exposure of high finance." By a curious coincidence we had received a week previously a letter from a reader in the Transvaal in which—quite allusively and without any mention of this new publication—he referred to the Willson Scheme as having "destroyed the Social Credit Movement in South Africa." That is good hearing; for the Willson Scheme is a futility; and if the Social Credit Movement could only preserve its existence by backing Willson it is better dead. Willson is a "plain concrete" man and has no use for the "ferro-concrete" idea. His remedy for South Africa's problems stops short at the supersession of private banking by State banking. The "reinforcement" of price-regulation is left out of his calculations. So the Social Credit Movement does well to stand aside and let him get on with the job.

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We have no criticism to offer in regard to the information he gives about money-manipulation in general: he is very painstaking in his teaching. Nevertheless his emphases are wrong. The banking system is held up as a thieving system, and his pamphlet is plentifully strewn with provocative anti-Semitic epithets. So the average reader will end up with the idea that State banking will put an end to Jewish influence over monetary policy and remove the impositions from which the community suffers under private banking. He will not notice that Mr. Willson omits to show how, when the State controls banking, "Hoggenheimer" is to be prevented from controlling the State. And he will remain entirely unaware that the interest "thieving" on which Mr. Willson concentrates is the least obnoxious of the practices of modern banking. If interest slays its tens, sinking funds slay their tens of thousands. The charging of interest has been a convenient means whereby banks have been able to discriminate between borrowers and to control the directions in which credit may be employed; but it is not the only possible means. In fact, if the charging of interest were abrogated entirely, the necessity of rationing and directing loan credit would persist in an intensified form. "Ah, but the Cabinet would devise a method." Precisely. And "Hoggenheimer" would tell them how to do it.

* * *

We did not comment last week on the verdict in the Gladstone libel action because we had dealt with

* "Human Vultures." Author and publisher, Robert C. Willson, Box 1008 Johannesburg. 57 pp. Price 2s. 6d. Postage 2d.

the underlying issues at some length in our issues of August 6, 1925, and July 22, 1926. In *G. K.'s Weekly*, of February 12, it is pointed out that the jury had to answer three separate questions in one verdict, namely: Was Gladstone proved a profligate? Was Captain Wright proved to be a foul fellow because he thought Gladstone was a profligate and said so? Was Lord Gladstone under the circumstances culpable for calling Captain Wright a foul fellow? To all three questions *G. K.'s Weekly* says the answer is No, and shows that the unsatisfactory nature of the verdict was bound up with the present Court procedure by which cases like this have to be settled. In the same issue of that journal Mr. Titterton advocates the arbitrament of the duel as an alternative to that of the Libel Acts. Traducers of public men would then, he says, have to proceed carefully for their skin's sake. While not accepting this suggestion as serious, we do recognise that it would at least give the "informer" a sporting chance, which, at present, he does not enjoy.

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We quoted Mr. Justice Eve the other day as saying that he must interpret specific enactments by reference to the general attitude of the Legislature. On that principle he declined to penalise the Shop Assistants' Union for having applied some of its general funds to political objects. There is little doubt, in our opinion, that the same principle was followed (however unwittingly) in the Gladstone affair. If there is one thing upon which the general attitude of the Legislature may be taken as absolute, it is the preservation of its own prestige. Its prestige obviously depends upon that of the statesmen whom it chooses to honour. Therefore it must discourage attacks on those statesmen quite irrespective of whether true or false. And just at this time when the electorate is beginning to discover the futility of the Parliamentary institution, it is doubly important, from the point of view of the Legislature, that people like Captain Wright shall be suppressed. So we conclude that even if Gladstone had been a profligate Captain Wright would have been deprived of facilities for proving it. High Finance, of whose autocratic acts of government the Legislature is a useful democratic camouflage, would have seen to that. Consider: it was eighteen months between the publication of Captain Wright's charge and its eventual investigation. And what can not be done in eighteen months by interests with unlimited wealth at their command?

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Mr. Titterton charges Mr. Justice Avory with partizanship, and regards his summing up as affording good grounds for another trial. That may be: but the Courts can only pronounce judgment on such evidence as is submitted to them. If all the potential evidence is not actualised—if all of what we may call the *Real* evidence is not made visible as *Legal* evidence—the very impartiality of judges and juries inevitably becomes the vehicle of injustice. And we hold that the same power which can monetize and demonetize Real Credit can materialise and dematerialise evidence for its own purposes. For instance; on February 12, 1886, Sir Charles Dilke, who was a thorn in the flesh of Authority, was involved as co-respondent in a divorce action which ruined his career. Now, if he had been a *persona grata* with the "right people," and if Party wire-pullers and purse-holders had approached the aggrieved husband, Mr. Donald Crawford, saying that it was not "public policy" (i.e., the wish of the Legislature) to allow the case to proceed, and if certain honours had been conferred on him to withdraw his plea, and if newspapers which had published hints about the impending divorce action had been reprimanded for disseminating idle gossip, and if thereafter Sir Charles Dilke had attained to high office, and if under his patronage some of the aforesaid wire-pullers got into position and power on their own account; and then if after forty-one years had elapsed somebody charged the dead Dilke with adultery, it stands to reason that the charge would be made to appear to the public as a libel, and the person who made it a foul fellow, whereas in truth he would be the only principal in this string of episodes who was innocent. This reasoning is purely hypothetical and has reference to old gossip from which Gladstone's name is entirely dissociated, and, for that matter, the name of any other dead Statesman. We should have no interest in the private misdeeds of any public man if we knew that private knowledge of his lapses was not being used by unscrupulous interests to coerce him to serve a reactionary policy against his own judgment. With that reservation, we agree with a remark of Mr. Titterton's that even truthful revelations of a politician's private sins need not necessarily serve the public interest. We have said before that Government by a group of persons free from common human frailties would be an inhuman Government. At present the public are in a dilemma of having to live under the leadership of imperfect men, who are forced to repress them, or of perfect men who would choose to do so.

* * *

Speaking about the Chinese trouble, Mr. Garvin, in last Sunday week's *Observer*, complains that England has been left single-handed in the Far East through having broken her alliance with Japan out of deference to America's wishes. He has another complaint. While British and French financiers are blockading Moscow, M. Kalinin is boldly declaring that the Soviet Government is confident of obtaining a big loan from the United States through the powerful offices of the Harriman group, which is said to be extending the concessions it has already gained. Lastly, he refers to suggestions made both in Europe and America that "another capital war might be waged in this or that part of the world without the United States becoming involved." Mr. Garvin refuses to believe a word of this. But it is quite credible. We advise our readers to keep their eyes fixed on the Chinese Maritime Customs. Sir F. Aglen has been dismissed from the Inspector-Generalship, and is now demanding an explanation. If America proposes a peace zone for Shanghai. If she brings this about, we expect to see a sort of neutralisation of the Customs Organisation. Wall Street wants to get a knife into this melon as well as Lombard Street. A dollar-subsidised Bolshevism, inspiring China, would forward such a plan.

* * *

Mr. J. O. P. Bland speaks some "Plain Truths about China" in this month's *English Review*. He charges China with obeying the "money-lust," and the Soviet Government with directing this obedience to its own ends. His definition of this money-lust is implied in the following passage:—

> "Not one of them [Chinese politicians] has ever consistently placed the welfare and *needs of his country before* the gratification of that deep-rooted instinct which impels every Chinese to place *himself and his family beyond the reach of want.*" [Our italics.]

From this one gathers that Mr. Bland is an advocate of the doctrine that a "country" is something different from the aggregation of families which constitute it. If only everybody will live in want the "country" will be prosperous. One wonders which country. He discerns the true issue of the present conflict, the control of Chinese revenues, especially the customs revenues, to which he alludes several times. He snorts at the doctrine of non-interference in Chinese affairs recorded in the Washington agreements, and complains of "the subservience of our Far Eastern policy to that of the United States," ending up with the plea for a "working arrangement with Japan" directed to the expulsion of Bolshevism from China.

> "We must insist on the Chinese respecting the usages and obligations common to the civilised countries with which they claim equality."

Put into blunt language, this means that not until the Western Powers can rely upon China's handling her revenues in exactly the same way as they are now being manipulated by European Customs Inspectors will it be practical politics to grant her sovereign rights. It is like saying to China, "Here, I will stop collecting customs dues and handing you what I do not want out of them if I can trust you to collect them and to give me all I do want out of them." The reluctance of the Chinese to accept this equitable basis of transfer is viewed by Mr. Bland as a symptom of China's incapacity for self-government. He notes that the doctrine of non-interference has been diligently implanted in the minds of the younger generation of Chinese by "numerous religious and educational societies," among which the "American societies have been the most active of recent years," and points to the mischievous results that have occurred. His plan is to cure this mania for non-interference by extending the area of interference. He would have the creation of "zones of communication" adjacent to the principal railway lines and navigable rivers, to be occupied by Chinese police under European officers.

> "The Bolshevik menace once removed, these zones could be administered for a period of years, pending the reorganisation of the country's administration and *finances*, in the *same way as the Maritime Customs*, under the control and for the benefit of the Chinese Government, without violation of Chinese sovereignty and with incalculable benefit to the Chinese people." [Our italics.]

In this way, of course, inland freights and railroad charges would be added to the revenues already intercepted at the ports, with the consequence that while China might pass laws, Europe and America would collect practically all the taxes. Mr. Bland certainly justifies his name when he regards this outcome as compatible with Chinese sovereignty.

* * *

The grotesque character of his proposals will become more and more manifest when two considerations are brought into conjunction—namely (1) that his case for European interference rests on the fact that China is a debtor for European loans, the service of which he assumes must be rigorously maintained at all costs; and (2) that the European countries concerned, while heavily in debt to America, not only would resist American administration of their customs organisations to guarantee the service of the debts, but are agitating for a cancellation of the debts themselves. The Chinese are not fools at the game of logic, and they will want to know how, if America can afford to forgive Europe without harm, Europe cannot afford to forgive China. In the meantime, and quite apart from this general consideration, we suspect that the resistance Britain is offering to Chinese administration of customs is due at least as much to the fear of what would be revealed if independent auditors were to investigate what had become of the money retained in the past as to the fear of how China might use future revenues. We have grounds for suspecting that secret reserves have been accumulated to an enormous sum to provide against the "risk" of our having to hand the privilege of tax collection back to China. If so, the private financiers have covered themselves twice over; once in money extracted from the Chinese population, and once in troops sent out to remove the risk which the money was supposed to provide for. And the British taxpayer foots the second bill.

Under existing conditions we cannot criticise Mr. Bland. On the premisses of world fianance-economy his conclusions are mostly unassailable. But directly practical effect is given to them there will be trouble which may lead quickly on to a conflict between the Powers themselves. No amount of force will enable the stronger countries to maintain their populations at the expense of other populations for any length of time. People in sight of starvation will always risk extinction, no matter what the odds against them. The cure for Chinese troubles lies not in what can be done in China, but what is waiting to be done in the countries who are invading her shores.

* * *

The *New Republic* of January 26, opportunely enough, publishes a long article by William R. Shepherd, of Columbia University, indicting the imperialist penetration of the Caribbean area by the United States. His opening paragraph is well worth noting.

> "In about thirty years we [i.e., America] have created two new republics—Cuba and Panama; converted both of them and three other Latin-American countries—the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Haiti—into virtual protectorates; intervened by force at least thirty times in the internal affairs of nine supposedly sovereign and independent nations; made the period of intervention last anywhere from a few days to a dozen years; enlarged our investments from a paltry two or three hundred millions of dollars to the tidy sum of three billions, and *installed in four States our own collectors of customs* to insure payment. Incidentally, we have annexed Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands, built a canal, secured an option to construct another, and gathered in several naval stations." [Our italics.]

The Caribbean area is another China—the only difference being that in the first the aggressor is one nation while in the second it is several. Professor Shepherd asks very pertinently: "Is there a possible ratio between the extent of American Governmental control and the manner of its exercise on the one side, and the increase of American investments on the other?" Is there any connection between the growth of American financial interests and the extension of diplomatic and military intervention? In his article he answers these questions by surveying the history of American negotiations and coercions in each of the several Caribbean States. He appends to his examination a most valuable table showing against each of twelve enumerated countries (1) its political relation to the United States; (2) dates and approximate duration of military interventions therein; (3) dates and amounts of American loans (figures taken chiefly from Robert W. Dunn's statistics of American foreign investments); and (4) forms of American control to insure payment. He ends his remarks by hinting at the danger of war arising from the fear and resentment of those Latin-American countries who are as yet not within the sphere of this southward trend of expansion, but fears that it will go on all the same.

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Naturally a publicist in Professor Shepherd's position could not take up this challenging attitude without knowing that it was supported by influential authorities in the United States. That there are divided counsels about this foreign policy is suggested by the fact that Secretary Kellog has performed (according to the *New Republic's* leading notes) a "right-about-face" on Nicaragua and Mexico. It puts this down to "public opinion." Let that be: we know how public opinion is made. In fact, the writer says, a little later, that its success does not mean that it can afford to relax its efforts. "The effort to insure our continued dominance in Nicaragua will be resumed just as soon as it seems safe to do so." And we can add to this that the safety point will have arrived as soon as the high

financial trustees of American bond-holders have privately squared the private opposition which has mobilised the above "public opinion." The mobilisation took place chiefly through the *New York World* and the *New York Times.* Senator Borah also helped—"after a fortnight of inexplicable silence." Senators Wheeler and La Follette and others joined in, as did President William Green, of the American Federation of Labour. William Randolph Hearst and his frequent mouthpiece, Arthur Brisbane,* who enthusiastically backed Mr. Kellog in the first instance, seem, in the view of the *New Republic*, to have failed to produce the effect they desired. It all depends what effect they did desire. These battles-royal on high policy between great newspapers rarely mean anything more than that two rival groups of financiers are haggling over the division of the spoils. Only too soon the plenipotentiaries meet to "talk business," and the next day Charlie Chaplin dismisses the problem from the front pages of the Press with a wave of his little cane.

* * *

The Publicity Department of Fianna Fail issues a "Weekly News Bulletin" from 35, Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin. The issue of January 31 reports a speech by Mr. De Valera at Drogheda, in which he defined the economic policy of Fianna Fail as one of "making Ireland as self-contained and self-sufficing as possible."

> "Properly organised, the resources of Ireland are adequate to supply all the primary needs of the people—food, clothing, and shelter. Our agriculture can be developed and organised to supply all the home needs in food. The needs as regards clothing and shelter can be met by establishing the appropriate industries. These industries would be complementary to the agricultural industry. Each would supply the needs of the other, and each would supply a market for the produce of the other. The importance of the home market should be recognised. . . . A truly national policy would aim at making Ireland a comfortable home for as many Irish families as possible."

Referring to monetary policy he said:—

> "If we want economic independence we must make sure that we shall determine our monetary policy ourselves, and not have it imposed on us from outside."

and demanded a Central Bank for Ireland, independent of the Bank of England. He rejected the findings of the Banking Commission as a Commission "of, by and for bankers."

> "The Commission that is needed is a Commission of representatives of the public and of the chief industries in the country which will examine into the whole question of national credit, and find out whether or not the credit of the community which belongs of right to the community, is being operated in the interests of the community, or merely in the interests of a comparatively small number of private individuals."

He concluded with a reference to the forthcoming Election, reminding his hearers that "the people are masters only on the day of the poll." Those they selected on that day would have control for five years over the resources of Ireland. They should, above all, "choose representatives whose integrity can be depended upon."

* * *

Mr. De Valera's general policy is on sound lines. In an electoral campaign among a people to whom England has been for so long the "oppressor," it would be too much to expect him to renounce the advantage of associating England and English policy with the economic problem that will have to be faced. Irish monetary policy should not, as he says, be imposed on Ireland from outside; but "outside" is not necessarily England; policy can be imposed just as rigorously from inside, unless the Irish political Government is sure of what its independence requires, and is intent on getting it. This bears on Mr. De Valera's idea of the Commission of non-banking representatives to examine the credit question. Such a Commission will be futile unless its members, or at least the most influential of them, know what sort of questions to ask the banker-witnesses—which, of course, implies antecedent knowledge of the kind of things these witnesses will be anxious to gloss over. The danger lies in the fact that knowledge of banking theory and procedure is very scanty in non-banking circles, and that each member appointed to the Commission may feel it his duty to cram up the subject under the tuition of the nearest banker he can find. To ask a witness to teach you what questions you ought to ask him is a certain way of missing every bit of information he does not want you to have. Happily it is not at all difficult for intelligent business and professional men to acquire in a few hours, and elsewhere than at the feet of bankers, a sufficient grasp of the main principles and implications of existing financial policy and of the principles and implications of the alternative policy to know roughly the lines on which the examination of the bankers should proceed.

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It will be noticed that Mr. De Valera's idea of a complementary association of food, clothes, and shelter production would challenge the bankers' principle of the vertical trust as opposed to the horizontal. This antithesis was worked out in these columns at the time when the Stinnes combination was smashed up by the banks on the avowed ground that because it was spreading horizontally it would get top-heavy (!). Their real objection, as we pointed out, was that the nearer any combination of economic activities under one policy came to being self-sufficing in the matter of exchanging and consuming their products the more independent of external professional finance it would become. Any concern which could produce things and live by consuming them could improvise its own money. The vertical trust cannot consume what it produces, for it is limited to one category only of production, whereas *life* requires a variety.

* Mr. Brisbane wrote: "The London *Times* thinks we are modifying the Monroe Doctrine, claiming special rights of intervention, etc. Quite correct, we are. . . . Dollars without cannon behind them are feeble things like flabby jellyfish. It is the cannon that transforms flabby dollars into vertebrate dollars."

Major Douglas's Address at "The New Age" Dinner.

I.

In considering the subject matter of anything I may have to say at this annual dinner, I find that I am always in a position of advantage over the ordinary after-dinner speaker, in that my subject matter is ready-made for me by the march of events.

The general lines of what I should have to say were already clear before I knew the date of this dinner, and after being informed of it I found that it involved a curious coincidence. Exactly six years ago to-day, on February 12, 1921, I happened to be crossing from Marseilles to Algiers, and on the same boat was Mr. Rudyard Kipling. So far as I remember, my conversation with him was confined to a discussion, and finally an agreement on the point that all North African food was bad, but the beef was even worse than the mutton! Nevertheless, although I did not realise it at the time, nor indeed for some time afterwards, the presence of Mr. Kipling, at any rate, was quite probably a matter of some importance. In Algiers at that time was concentrated a body of American bankers and other people of financial weight, and whether by accident or design the American fleet was anchored in the bay, to add a semi-official note. Amongst such a gathering Mr. Kipling was a person of considerable interest, for reasons which will appear, although I have no serious grounds for stating that his presence there had any other basis than my own, which was that of relaxation.

I can imagine that you are wondering exactly what bearing the situation I have been referring to can have on anything which would interest you here tonight. Well, it has this bearing. I have heard it stated quite seriously by persons who are not given to rash statements on matters of this kind, that one of the real forces in British politics for the last few years has been Mr. Rudyard Kipling who, as you may know, is a near relation of the present Prime Minister—a Prime Minister whose access to power is, quite clearly, not unconnected with the so-called American debt settlement, and whose worst enemies, I imagine, would not suspect of being the originator of any kind of policy whatever.

But whether this is true or not, it easily might be true, because there is a definite connection between the main thread of the policy, which is running through our collective national action at the present time, and not ours alone, but that of other Imperialist nations, and the philosophy which is apparent to anyone who will examine the work of Mr. Rudyard Kipling which, I think, is undoubtedly the prototype of a particular school of thought.

Now, let me see if I can present to you the nexus between this statement and the question of the re-organisation of the financial system, in which many of you take a close interest.

The difficulty in presenting a clear-cut picture of the needs and capabilities of the credit system lies, to a considerable extent, in the confusion which persists as to what is wanted of it, combined also, of course, with ignorance of what the industrial machine is capable of providing. Ask the average business man why he is in business. He will say, "To make money"; ask him to expand this statement; he will probably reply, "Well; a man must live. If I didn't take in more pounds at the end of the year than I give out during the year, how do you expect me to live next year?" Go to the captain of industry; ask him the same question. He may put you off with the same answer, but drive him harder, and he will admit quite truthfully that he likes work, and that it is the artistry of his job that gives him zest in life.

Now go to the out-of-work, and more particularly, the chronic out-of-work, and ask him what he wants. He will say, "Work; a job." Intimate to him that a little job of snow-shovelling lies around the corner and observe his enthusiasm. If a straight answer could be obtained from him, it would be that what he wanted at the moment was bed, board, and clothes, and that the thought of work gave him a pain. Now the aspirations of these men are not the same, and they are not the same for the simplest of reasons—that they are steps of an ascending ladder and a man ascending a ladder does not waste time aspiring to something he has already. A six-course dinner is a good average prescription for pre-occupation with food problems, and fifty thousand pounds will relieve many worries in regard to next year's happenings.

These three types we have just considered may be thought of as being on three steps of the ladder of opportunity which, counting from the bottom, might be regarded as being the rungs representing the struggle for *existence*, the struggle for *security*, and the struggle for *creative activity*.

But there is still more to be said. It is the common fashion, for interested purposes in many cases, to say that ability makes opportunity. While this may be unconscious cant, it is cant. Fundamentally, it is opportunity that makes ability.

If you will consider the idea that runs through Mr. Kipling's books, and which is typified in such stories as "The Bridge Builders," "With the Night Mail," "As Easy as A B C," to take representative instances, you will recognise at once that you are considering the glorification of creative activity, and its energiser, the will to power, and, moreover, you are considering, by implication, the glorification of creative activity at the expense both of existence and security, and as a direct result, at the expense of freedom and individual development.

I have purposely put the matter in what, I think, is perhaps the most favourable light because, even in that light, it is easy to demonstrate that, as a policy, it is fatally defective. It bears about the same relationship to competent statesmanship as would the proceedings of an architect who devoted the whole of his attention to the decoration of a drawing room, and omitted any proper consideration of either the drainage or the hot water supply.

It is that perversion of the industrial system from its first, if not its final use, which has produced the confusion that the industrial system exists to provide employment rather than to deliver goods. It is a very short step from such an erroneous conception to the conception of the industrial system as a form of government rather than a machinery of supply. As a form of government it affords free play to the will-to-power, which develops when the struggle for mere existence and the desire for economic security have been met, and which finds a perverted outlet in an unbridled industrial system.

PRESS EXTRACTS.

"*The Committee for Economic Reconstruction* of the International Chamber of Commerce has brought forward a proposal for the revision and extension of the Dawes plan which would provide for the payment of reparations payments in 'producer' goods rather than in 'Consumer' goods. . . . Provision is made for the transfer of a large part of the reparations payments in goods as well as in cash, *as the latter alone is manifestly impossible.* Under the proposal of the Chamber, the 'assisted schemes' would provide for the transfer to be made in producers' goods, such as locomotives, engines, and machinery, rather than in articles of luxury. . . . *Just as the Dawes plan was protested against at first, but accepted as a working proposal, so will this plan be accepted. The public will not be consulted in the matter of putting the plan into operation.*

"Bankers and investment houses are watching with deep interest for developments from Europe. Many feel that something of particular significance is likely to come from the presence abroad at this time of so many men prominent in the financial world. The fact that J. P. Morgan, Governor Strong, of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Secretary Mellon, and George F. Baker, are in Europe at one and the same time is regarded as more than just a coincidence. . . . One of the widely accepted explanations for the presence of several Morgan partners in Europe is that plans may be afoot for transference of the French telephone system, which is operated by the Government, to private interests. . . . Gossip in the Street has it that visiting American bankers have hinted at such a development to members of the Morgan entourage in Paris only to have them close up like clams."—*Wall Street Journal*, August 30.

"Very much in line with the view expressed recently by the *Manufacturers' Record*, to the effect that it seemed out of place for the American bankers and others who signed the free trade pronouncement for Europe, to have taken that action, is a statement in the *New York Times* which says if that advocacy of free trade was intended for Europe only and not for America, then 'the signatures of Mr. Morgan and the other Americans are an impertinence to it.' With that position we fully agree."

The Manufacturers' Record, Nov. 18, 1926.

"One other speaker emphasised the fact that within the last fifteen years farm debt had trebled or quadrupled, while farm land values had declined one-fifth. Industrial and urban values have increased, in the last five years, by more than $20,000 million, while farm investments have decreased by fully that sum. The development of the American protective system keeps farm costs high; this inequality is crucifying agriculture."

From the New York correspondent in *The Statist,* Dec. 4, 1926.

A Vagabond in Denmark.

By Leopold Spero.

XXVI.

IN EIGHTY MINUTES.

" I did not relish it very much."

From Hill's Dano-Norwegian Vest Pocket Dictionary, p. 13—Idioms and Common Expressions.

It is unlikely that the inhabitants of the curious island of Lange Land really know what they look like. That is to say, what their island looks like. So far from being sensitive about it, they call it the Isle of Roses, and in the summer time employ a stall-fed artist to draw a picture of a slanting geographical incredibility with little moss roses dotted all about. This they placard up in the main street of Rudkjobing, so that no stranger shall have any excuse for not knowing the truth, particularly the impudent and venturesome stranger who thinks to express his own superiority by walking across Lange Land in an hour and a half.

But after all, it is not shapes on the map that matter, but statistics in Mincing Lane. And here Lange Land contributes her share. She has not many distractions to tear her from the calm and sober paths of dairy-farming. Far away to the north, they have turned the little fishing village of Lohals into a kind of marine Bloomsbury, from which it is fortunately still possible to absent oneself and hide away in the woods which provide material to build the summer boarding-house, but never welcome a boarding-house guest save on their own terms of peace and oblivion and serene understanding. In the main, Lange Land is content to be herself, with low, quaint shores and spreading inland pastures, close-hedged, warm fields and cherry-ripe villages; and from the summit of such hills as there be, the sight of tiny steamers hurrying to tumble their human and inanimate freight out on to the perky high road that girdles her slim middle, so that those who are not of Lange Land may be across and away from her attenuated borders with all convenient speed.

It is absurd to do as this young shipping clerk does. He has passed by in a cloud of dust, and in ten minutes he will be at the farther shore, shot like a bullet from Rudkjobing over the ribbon of white road into Spodsbjerg. Here is a trick which has its fascination once or twice, but soon declines into mere futility. While you are walking the distance, he can be threading forth and back like the yarn in a weaver's shuttle. But what good will it do him? One day he, or somebody like him, will put too much explosive in the cartridge, and shoot himself right into the middle of the Lolland Sea.

It is better to walk, purposefully and energetically, through this peering, straggling, indolent high street to the fork of the road where the Portugal laurels flame from the little front gardens, and the way swings off to Humble. With a stretch of the neck you can see Humble. But there is nothing specially humble about it, and precious little of interest beyond its name, which may mean hops or bumble bee, or most probably nothing at all. Your business is with this road, a vital thoroughfare to these long islanders, for they mark every stretch of it both sides with little white stones, the tombstones of each conquered kilometre.

And now it would seem as if the entire scattered population of the island is determined to mar the candour of your pedestrian vow. A little fat man and a little round woman in a little square pony-and-trap rattle past at a smart pace, and pull up and wave at you, inviting you inside for a lift. You smile your dusty thanks, and decline the kindness. They shake their heads doubtfully, and are off with a flick of the whip, and the confirmation in their minds that it is really too bad, with these foreigners running to and fro across the island and making it look narrower than it was born—foreigners who ought to know that there is a railway somewhere, though where it is the stranger may well wonder until he finds himself crossing the line at a sudden dip in the roadway. There is a stealthy train somewhere about; you can hear the quiet whistle as it stalks you. And you hurry off before the engine-driver catches you up and slips you away into a third class compartment, to have done with your presumptuousness. It is true that a train of any reasonable size would have to exercise some care in travelling at all across Lange Land, seeing that it stretches half way across the island as soon as it clears the station. But no doubt they arrange matters with a bout or two of skilful shunting. And if there was no railway, little fat Taasinge would laugh till his sides split. Taasinge has no railway, that is true. But then Taasinge is content to be a little broken piece of Fyn, a condition which by no means suits the temperament of the proud Lange Landers.

Ah, but this is a jolly sport, killing kilometres dead, stone dead, breasting this gentle rise to look far and wide on either hand, where the stretches of rich pasture soothe the eye in the distance, but the fields on either hand are small and comfortably hedged and kind and inviting, as they are in the south of England. And there are cropped watch-men of evergreen standing before prim gardens, and square little rubble-built houses for the bank-clerks and the schoolmaster, and red brick villas for the superior persons and other familiar things. And the sun is a middle-class, Surrey sun, respectably hot, and suggestive of light lager in the bottle. But you have set yourself a true man's task and sworn mightily that there shall be no beer or other interruption until this pilgrimage is accomplished. For if a shipping junior can shoot across Lange Land in ten minutes, a rhymeless poet should walk it inside an hour and a half. Indeed, if you fail to do so you may well bewail your fate, for the little toy ship waiting in the harbour on the other side will have other business than to pleasure a mad pedestrian.

But here is a white church with a red roof to cheer your eyes, an old church as churches go in Denmark, with the seventeenth century date writ upon its forehead for a birth certificate, the good church of Longelse, to which you nod cheerily as you pass by and clear the tiny upland through the little wood at the top of the hill, where the *Skovsridderhus* stands bold and unashamed even though all the s's and n's be written the wrong way up. What should be Rangers of the Wood care for the alphabet? They speak of better things in their comfortable ingle-nooks under that warm, thatched roof, at which you give a regretful glance as you turn through the trees to the top of the hill. And there, at last, like Xenophon and his men, you come unwarned upon the sight of the rich sea, the deep blue sea of merchants and fine sailors, the royal purple sea that cools the eyes and sets the heart dancing, the sea which presently sends out to you, as you make your way into the straight, taut, well-tended main street of Spodsbjerg, a tiny smudge of black on the wide horizon, the boat that will take you farther on your journey.

And with a roar and a creaking grunt, the shipping clerk on his mad motor-cycle is at you and by your side, at the end of the anxious vigil in which he thought, poor, incomprehending fellow, that you had no legs stout enough to take you right the way across a Danish island in eighty minutes, in time not to be left marooned on the crust of a French roll.

The Quest of Values.

By Janko Lavrin.

V.—THE SEEKERS.

I.

Nineteenth-century literature is a reliable mirror of that inner crisis through which the consciousness of modern mankind is passing. Its true essence is well expressed already in the spiritual father of romanticism, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and it reaches its highest pitch in the most uprooted modern genius—Friedrich Nietzsche. The gradual loss of all former norms and values; scepticism towards everything—even towards one's own scepticism at times; inner and outer isolation; fear of one's self and of life; morbid subjectivity and introspection; a growing awareness of individual and social disintegration; a helpless despair under the mask of cold indifference, or of cynicism—these are some of the typical features of contemporary European literature, even at its best. The voice of affirmation is conspicuously absent. It emerges only occasionally, and even then it is unconvincing; it is the result either of a naively sentimental, or of a deliberate, " simplification " of both human nature and life.

The " sub-conscious " influence of such a literature can be imagined. Though it may develop taste and understanding it does so at the expense of vitality—in so far as it is devoid of any creative visions of life, of man and mankind. Continuous variations upon the theme that " life is not worth while " may ultimately sap the last remnants of our will to make life worth while. On the other hand, clinical dissections of the disintegrating modern consciousness increase our awareness of disintegration. And so it is hardly surprising that the only intensity of life still accessible to contemporary man is the intensity of his own despair.

While the majority of writers do not go beyond their resignation, in which they often manage to settle down quite comfortably, a few of them are doomed to remain eternal seekers, and to make their very art an expression of their quest. This refers particularly to the four great modern spirits: Dostoevsky, Ibsen, Nietzsche, and Tolstoy. The literary creation of these men was above all the result of their fight against inner chaos in the name of a higher conception of life.

II.

Tolstoy and Ibsen belong in a way together, because their principal dilemma is somewhat similar. Both are struggling for the moral perfection of man and life on earth, being unable to accept life apart from its " meaning." At the same time, their innate scepticism is so strong that it threatens to undermine any such meaning unless this be imposed upon themselves by their moral will, their " Categorical Imperative," which in both of them becomes at times a ruthless dictator trying to suppress all the instincts and passions of the Old Adam. Chaining the Old Adam does not mean overcoming him. And as long as we remain only on the ground of self-sufficing morality, our morality itself may degenerate into militant spiritual pride, or flatten down into respectable utilitarianism of the worst kind. One can be even extremely " moral " for the sake of entirely immoral impulses, as we see in those pious souls who are virtuous either in order to make profitable investments beyond, or in order to revel in their own righteousness. Anyhow, unless our moral imperatives receive their ultimate sanction from over-moral (that is, transcendental and religious sources) morality reaches a dead end; it turns either against itself or against life.

This is particularly likely to happen to those people who have very strong moral instincts and are at the same time devoid of religious temperament and religious convictions. Ibsen, for example, shows an extremely moral nature almost without any religious consciousness. In Tolstoy, on the other hand, the moral and the religious planes are hopelessly severed; his religious temperament has remained (atavistically) on the pre-moral " Pagan " plane, while his moral instincts are those of a stern Christian Puritan who is all the time in conflict with both his Pagan and his sceptical doubles.* The search for a " meaning of life " thus became for him a question of salvation from his own inner split; a split the more painful because all his Puritanical valuations *had* to come into conflict with that very Pagan " flesh " (spontaneous and pre-moral joy of life) in which was rooted all his unconscious religiosity, that is, his innate sympathy with all creation, as well as his incredible artistic vitality. As no reconciliation was possible, Tolstoy could only *mix* these planes. Hence the curious duality in his works: Tolstoy the moralist always interfering with Tolstoy the artist, and *vice versa*. At last he repressed his irrational " flesh " for the sake of a self-imposed and extremely rational morality compiled from the Sermon on the Mount. The turning point of this inner process was that conversion of his after which the great " Pagan " artist *forced* himself to become only a great moral preacher and a " saint," even at the cost of his genius.

Yet to the end he never succeeded in this effort. As his suppressed joy of life was trying all the time to assert itself against his emaciated " Christianity," Tolstoy instinctively wished to escape the pain of his self-division not by overcoming it in a higher synthetic harmony, but by forcing himself and mankind to go back to that primitive *uniformity* in which the individual self as such is not awakened, but slumbers in the collective group-soul of the compact patriarchal masses. Therefore he opened a passionate crusade against all that divides (i.e. individualises) and disturbs the compactness of these masses. He rejected the autonomous human self, the whole of history, the whole of culture and civilisation. His ideal became the illiterate patriarchal toiler of the land who knows no inner problem simply because his separate individual self has not been sufficiently awakened.

Mistaking the pre-individual vegetative uniformity of the past for the higher harmony which can be obtained only through a " sublimination " of our division and self-division, Tolstoy combined this impulse with his " Categorical Imperative," and the one-sidedly interpreted commandments of the Sermon on the Mount. For the sake of morality he thus wanted to cripple the whole of existence, and to stop not only the growth of history, but the growth of all life. The highest morality—if practised upon a wrong plane—may thus become immoral from the standpoint of living.

III.

While Tolstoy embodies the tragedy of a man whose innate " Pagan " religiosity and narrow Puritan morality exclude each other, Ibsen's work shows the blind-alley of a moral consciousness which cannot find its ultimate sanction owing to the absence of any religious or " transcendental " vein in the man himself. His nature, also, was exceedingly Puritanical; but his scepticism undermined every chance of an over-moral justification of his own Categorical Imperative, until at last it turned even against this Imperative itself.

In his early " Brand," that drama of moral self-realisation, the joyless Categorical Imperative is still the only judge of life. However, the dismaying note of doubt is rather strong already in the " Wild

* A detailed investigation of the inner drama of Tolstoy and Ibsen can be found in my two books, " Ibsen and His Creation " and " Tolstoy." (Collins.)

"Duck," and in "When We Dead Awaken." Life alone becomes the judge of any imperatives which do not foster joy and intensity of our earthly existence.

Had the power of "phantasy" (in Jung's sense) been stronger in Ibsen the artist, he would perhaps have sublimated this conflict by projecting his striving moral will outside himself in great creative symbols. As it was he chiefly rationalised this will and so, no sooner had he tried to go beyond realism than he produced not synthetic symbols, but, for the most part, rather cold, intellectual allegories. As a thinker he was of course able to conceive of a plane (the Third Kingdom in his "Emperor and Galilean") on which the conflict could be overcome, yet he could not go beyond mere statement of this possibility. As the affirmation of the Categorical Imperative, on the one hand, and the affirmation of life, on the other, could not be reconciled in his consciousness, Ibsen remained freezing in the void between the two. Brand, Rosmer, Solness, Alfred Almers, Rubek—these are the stages of his futile quest.

"In front, beside a fountain, sits a man weighed down with guilt, who cannot free himself from the earth-crust. I call him remorse for a forfeited life. He sits there and dips his fingers in the purling stream—to wash them clean—and is gnawed and tortured by the thought that never, never will he succeed! Never in all eternity will he attain to freedom and new life."

This is what we read in his gloomy "Epilogue."

IV.

Modern man has lost his pre-individual "Paradise," that is, the vegetative uniformity of the primitive child-like savage, and at the same time he is unable to reach the harmonious inner balance of the man to come. Complete self-conquest is the condition of harmony; while complete negation of one's self is the condition of that simplified uniformity to which Tolstoy calls us.

If Tolstoy did his best to sacrifice the individual human self as such for the sake of pre-individual humanity, Ibsen remained a champion of the free human self to the very end. Yet he remained stuck in his utter self-affirmation, because—unmetaphysical as he was—he looked upon this freedom as its own end, instead of considering it only a means. So his very inner freedom became at last a burden to him, almost as painful and destructive a burden as the inner servitude.

"Art thou *entitled* to escape from a yoke? Many a one hath cast away his final worth when he hath cast away his servitude.

"Free from what? What does that matter to Zarathustra! Clearly, however, shall thine eye show unto me: free *for what?*"

These words of the wise Zarathustra confront us with the other and more important half of the problem: "Free for What?" Such was the question set themselves by two other great seekers—Nietzsche and Dostoevsky.

RUPERT BROOKE.

(D. Scyros, April 23, 1915.)

Hidden among the little olive trees
Where grow the flowered sage and scented thyme
Nodding their heads and dancing to the rhyme
That's set them by the gentle sea-kiss'd breeze,
There is the deathless grave wherein he lies,
Poet, whose answer leapt to meet the call
Which rang from London slum to princely hall;
Soldier, who sang of English fields and skies.

His voice is silent, and yet this we know,
That through the years, however drear or long,
Will ever come the echo of his song,
Because he loved belovéd England so.
O Paphko, Komaro, and Khokilas,*
Guard well that grave below the stubbled grass.

A. R. U.

[* The three mountains that overlook the grave on the Island of Scyros.]

Drama.

Man and Superman: Kingsway.

There is hope for this generation in the fact that in so far as Shaw has functioned as liberator, his views have been accepted. Shaw the artist, the great comedian of morals, has won the day, while Shaw the theorist, the compiler of tracts and pamphlets, is already forgotten. If all the references to the Life Force, together with such passages as could not stand without such references, were cut out of "Man and Superman," and the ending brought about as efficiently as the beginning, the effect would be one of the best comedies in English. All the propaganda except the Life Force stunt could be well left alone; the logic of it is so clear, so absolutely in accord with instinct and spirit, that its slaughter of conventional morality is true art.

When "Man and Superman" was first produced, the intellectualised morals of that raving expositor who ramps through the play in the guise of martyr-cum-hero were truly shocking. They are now only Chinese crackers let off behind our grandfathers for little boys to laugh at. Shaw composed the play in response to the late A. B. Walkley's suggestion that Shaw could do a Don Juan play. There is not a fibre of Don Juan's flesh in it. Jack Tanner, although nicknamed Don Juan, is one of those queer inverted Puritans who always take the bridle off their instincts where there is no possible chance of satisfying them; and who, while sure to run amok in a drawing room, would be perfectly safe, unless the woman tempted them very hard, in a bedroom. Shaw had a longer job for Jack Tanner than consummating the adventures of a real Don Juan; Tanner had to be kept in training to write Shaw's future prefaces. The surest way to stop a man talking about a thing is to let him have his fling at it. Hence the long and tiresome business of reaching the sacrifices of Jack Tanner's oratory in the arms of Ann Whitefield.

Esmé Percy has a flair for Shaw, as by this time he ought to have. He takes for granted the earliest judgment of stolid English business-folk that Shaw was simply making a paying proposition out of democratising the court-fool; and he throws himself body and soul to give the final flourish to Shaw's magnificent rhetorical prose, that somebody will discover one ot these days. But Esmé Percy looked uncomfortable about the Life Force and the Universe, and the other little irrelevancies in the play. These were not worked into the pattern like that terrific logic about the relative biological unimportance of marriage compared with childbirth, or about the actual struggle between the potential mother and the potential artist for the possession of a man's soul. These and allied passages are neither speculation nor Shavian doctrine; they are descriptions whose truthfulness and insight are manifest to everybody, whether he laugh them away or recognise them as genuine drama of ideas. In drama the Life Force ought to be like Victorian children—seen but not heard.

Certainly Ann Whitefield, as rendered by Gwen Frangcon-Davies, did convey the impression that the life-force moves in a mysterious way. If she continues to play in repertoire she will become a first-class actress. She justified the magnetic-pull of Ann Whitefield for Jack Tanner, and deserved to have her way with him. I have not before seen her so much at ease, so charming, or so sure of herself. George Merritt's Roebuck Ramsden, for as long as Roebuck Ramsden counts for anything in the play, was the excellent acting I have learned to expect from him. After the first act, of course, his office is mainly to swell the audience for Jack Tanner's

speeches. The Malones are a supernumerary afterthought introduced late in the day to boil the pot a little longer by giving the author a chance to work off his repertoire of international jokes about American buyers and English heiresses; both of them were competently performed, the father Malone, by Oliver Crombie, being one of the hits of the show.

This play, along with most of Shaw's plays, has been censured for its lack of action, for being merely dialogue among puppets. One cannot dismiss all this wit and intellectual enjoyment so casually. In all Shaw there is staged the conflict between social classes, and between morality and the real rights and duties of the social classes. Frankly, I prefer these battles of wits behind which the action of society is implied to much so-called action. The exposition of the life-force in this play is incongruous, because it is only the author explaining himself; because the stage is actually on the social plane, and not on the universal plane, as Shaw tried to pretend. "Man and Superman" threatens to become as full of quotations expressing social and domestic problems as Shakespeare's plays are full of quotations expressing problems of the soul. Behind all that mass of quotable material action and reaction are implied.

Artistically, Shaw has found a device for avoiding the task of re-melting his superfluous personalities; all his responses, not his selected responses only, are preserved and re-incarnated in the same characters hereditarily in play after play, from before "Man and Superman" to "Saint Joan." A repertoire company has little casting to do; the personalities settle themselves like returning swallows in their old nest. Through each play the expository Shaw speaks, betraying the age of the author. In "Man and Superman" Shaw believes in the right of the young to guillotine the aged, like Barrie's McConnachie. This is not, by the way, the only resemblance between Shaw and Barrie, for Barrie is the sentimental reverse of Shaw's logical obverse. Both of them have used their talents—and symbolised the abuse in their plays—to avoid the pain and risk of death involved in creation. When Shaw grows old, he believes in the old man. In "Heartbreak House" it is a moderately old man who speaks *ex cathedra*, and in "Back to Methuselah" old men who ought to be dead wear their shoes for as far ahead as thought can reach, their shadows preventing youth ever being young, and preventing revolution being anything but the further application of logic on existing premises; forbidding, in a word, re-creation.

Shaw rendered the "Man and Superman" idea academic. Realising from the beginning the universe's disapproval of man remaining what he is, Shaw has nevertheless been unwilling to shoulder the burden of becoming superman. Nietzsche showed how narrow was the way and strait the gate to Superman. Consequently, Shaw's characters live like reformers and die like stray dogs—on the rare occasions when they are allowed to die. In addition, the responsibility for breeding superman is thrown on woman, and, beyond her, on the life-force. Man is merely the tool who, since he cannot resist the woman's destiny to breed superman, is absolved from helping her. "Man and Superman" is a contemptuous challenge to the feminists to get on with it. The first act of the play contains more solid nourishment than many a half-dozen comedies with all their eighteen acts; in the second act, again, the moral firework display shames Crystal Palace. The brigand and the Hell scenes serve to postpone the end, as does most of what occurs in the last act. After being worked up to feverish intellectual agitation, into readiness for an ecstatic and godly climax, one is driven empty away, in "Man and Superman," as in so many Shaw plays, because the author dare not will the predestined end.

PAUL BANKS.

Dare to be Imperfect.

By Sophie Lazarsfeld (Vienna).

(From the International Zeitschrift fur Individual-psychologie.)

II.

The second case was that of an extremely dejected woman of fifty, who looked sixty-five although she had never been ill or had serious trouble. Against the wishes of her parents she had married a man whom, as she thought, she passionately loved. Later it appeared that the pair were erotically unsuited to each other; the woman was insensitive to the man, and this cast a deep gloom over their marriage. The man indemnified himself outside the house; but the woman, to whom this way was closed, fell into deep melancholia; she believed herself outside the pale of normal womanhood, and sought the most fantastic causes. In no way could her self-respect reconcile itself with this failure, and, as she lacked the courage to dissolve this connection and to try another, she racked her brains until she hit upon the idea of enjoying the appearance of erotic power instead of the power itself. She who had been grave and calm, became provocative, cynical, shameless in all her talk. The course of her education had been such that her being had been subordinated, and attained its full value only through the possession of a husband; and in this life-task, which she considered crucial, she had suffered disaster. She had not the courage to confess this, and to act accordingly; so she arranged all the external circumstances of her life with endless trouble and care, to hide this failure. She has aged prematurely, as has been stated; when she came for treatment, nothing more could be done for her than to explain the facts to her and take from her the odium of feeling that the fault was all her own. Even this slight success she describes as a resurrection.

But apart from extreme cases, we find in social and in everyday life, in business as in the family, that many and often critical things are left undone rather than done imperfectly, simply because our striving for power causes this dread of "giving ourselves away." How much lying and hypocrisy do we expend to hide an oversight, because we cannot bring ourselves to confess an error, and cannot bear to be told of it by another? How many bad habits of every day, aggravating the difficulties of living together, come from this fear of falling short of perfection? The over-impressive, exaggerating, over-loud mode of speech, the repetition again and again of what has just been said, the trick of always speaking in a jocular or jeering tone, are simply masks for the fact that what we are saying does not seem to ourselves sufficiently important, and that we think we must by these practices give it more weight and importance. Similarly, the garrulity of women is due to the fact that their talking has never been heeded. Adler has shown us that over-intense performances have their origin in distrust of one's own capabilities, but impulsive talking and boasting of one's own doings also arise from the same source; so, too, the honourable distress when one afterwards becomes conscious of this procedure which is seen by oneself to be unseemly. It all comes from a marked over-estimate (originating by way of re-action) of the value of one's own personality; and all self-sacrifice, especially of women and mothers, may be traced to this error. We must constantly emphasise this and cannot do so too much, for the cost of such a standard of life is incredibly high. And yet it is so simple to act up to the best of one's knowledge, regardless whether this means the very highest achievement, and to estimate the performances of those about us according to the same standard. In Kleist's "Prinzen von Homburg" we find this stated in the words: "It is the bungler, not you, who must always be longing to win life's *highest* crown."

Here one must anticipate a very obvious objection. If this is so, it may be said, people would be seduced into a very convenient *laisser aller*, and no one need give himself any more trouble. But there begins the regulative action of the community-consciousness. It may be that, to-day, when we have no historical experience, no tradition, where not a single generation has grown up under individual psychological training, we may be influenced in the sense indicated. But not this; indeed, just the contrary occurs in the case of every one who steadily thinks and acts according to individual psychology. For him it becomes easy to confess error or incapacity in any sphere, without thereby being plunged into distress.

He will not try to hide defeats with disguises and fictions (and, where that does not suffice often with severe illness). He will make similar confession easy for those whose life is linked with his, and so protect them, too, from hypocrisy and illness. He will not lose through any failure his faith in his divine nature, but strong in his human nature will take courage anew, begin anew, though he may have to begin other things and in another way; and that we call daring to be imperfect.

Modern Verse.

HUMBERT WOLFE.

English verse has for a long time threatened to stultify itself in a cul-de-sac. *Vers libre* failed to stimulate the freedom of thought its sincere exponents prayed for; its freedom of expression led often only to a freedom of association whose result was not poetry but the reflection of anarchic disruption in the soul of the speaker. So poor has verse in English become that both the prose writers and prosaic thinkers have advanced theories that we are too old a race again to feel verse; that we must practise the deliberation of the senile, and dance, if at all, only to the old tunes. Among writers who still cast their utterances within the established formal moulds originality rarely blazes.

Beyond the occasional good lyric much present-day poetry appears directed to justifying the author's conscience by being, as Shaw said, "conscience always is anxiously explanatory." No effort—such as that of Miss Edith Sitwell, for example, to break away from the tradition of sunsets and sunrises which recall only precious metals, from April and October, whose colours are all drab from repetition, from hand-me-down metaphors registered at Stationers' Hall—has been unmistakably successful. The authors wanted to break away strongly enough, but they found themselves when free with nowhere to go, like schoolboy truants.

A possible avenue of development for expression in verse was suggested by Browning. In Browning there was vitality, and, as in "Bishop Blongram's Apology" an attempt to create a synthesis of art and propaganda by holding the scales divinely level, and allowing the characters artistically to damn themselves out of their own mouths. It is possible that satire is the last rather than the first use of a medium; but in Blongram's Apology there was far more than satire. We understood the fellow; we began to enjoy his company. In spite of his special pleading, he knew what he was doing. We felt that Browning was giving us a God's ear impression of Blongram, and that Blongram himself was listening with pleasure and understanding. Browning expressed the peculiar tolerance which is God's. There was drama in such verse, and although it was as free in a sense as prose, it flowed with a rhythm which when caught gave the speaking of such verse the charm of a conversational essay. One might call it verse without cant.

Mr. Humbert Wolfe in "News of the Devil"* appears to be looking for light along the Browning path, though he adopts rhyme and strives to achieve prose directness along with verse metre. He takes not a bishop, since bishops are no longer of any account, but a newspaper proprietor, to give him a God's ear impression of himself. Paul Arthur owned

> "Sunday papers whose most striking feature was the blunt sermon of a fearless preacher who demonstrated how the Lord could be improved by adequate publicity."

When Mr. Wolfe uses a cliché he does so deliberately, of malice aforethought, ironically to betray the mind of the character. The whole poem moves forward with the ease of vernacular, and reaches passion at times without forfeiting the grace of narrative common-speech.

The satire is cruel and fearless, demoniacally clever while it lasts. Paul Arthur approaches the church

> ". . . . . to urge her to contemplate on generous terms a merger,"

and promises to bring about the millennium as a sound publicity proposition.

> ". . . . and there would be no danger of a new Gethsemane where the hidden hand of Satan dashed the cup from lips that would no doubt have drunk it up if the Drinker had been properly supported by the public, and the incident reported."

Unfortunately Mr. Wolfe breaks down. Paul Arthur, for all his devotion to the omnipotent if not omniscient craft, suffers the same conflicts within his heart as lesser mortals. Mr. Wolfe pities him, and distributes God's mercy as well as His judgment. He almost strokes his victim consolingly over his loss of the æsthetic life in which the weak are blessed. Mr. Wolfe does not give his newspaper-owner the last word, which is contrary to good taste and reality.

A megalomaniac of the phantom world of the Press does not at first blush present a fine figure for a poem. That Mr. Wolfe has seized him ought to have a good influence towards bringing verse-expression back to life. Blindness to the world is a pose adopted by only modern poets. Not even poetry can live longer than society, and the writer who wraps himself in his own phantoms of "pure poetry" is serving the immortality of none.

"News of the Devil" is not new as thought, but it gives a vigorous expression to a nausea common to poetic mankind; the contempt of beauty for power. Its imagery is often delicate, and economically rendered, while several groups of lines are mellow and originally descriptive. But Mr. Wolfe has not completely succeeded. His failure to hold the scales fairly inclines the reader to become counsel for the defence if only to extenuate the prisoner's fault. Paul Arthur becomes the sufferer of aggression, and even the author seems moved by conscience to make amends.

A good case could be put forward for developing a subject of this character in novel form. Yet novels, by the most discriminating readers, tend to be read more and more quickly for light entertainment; as relief against the boredom of thought. Novels are a form of quantitative production in which half-truths pass for fiction and misunderstanding for art. While praying that Paul Arthur may not be so permanent a type as to warrant the verse-medium for his parade, perhaps the more sincere, the more memorable, mirror of verse will accelerate his restoration to the ranks of men. As a qualitative medium that imposes on the reader the author's measure, rhythm, and speed, I regard Mr. Wolfe as justified in the adoption of the verse form.

A. N.

* News of the Devil. Humbert Wolfe. (Ernest Benn, Ltd. 3s. 6d.)

The Miners' Leisure.

By Fred Tait.

As one result of the settlement forced on miners in the North-East coalfield, the social life of the mining villages has been crippled. Nothing since the three-shift system was introduced before the war has aroused such bitterness among the men. Under the three-shift system the "fore shift" men went down the pits in the early hours of the morning, about three o'clock, and came up about half-past nine. The "back-shift" men then went down and came up about half-past three in the afternoon. At that time the "night-shift" men descended and came up about eleven o'clock. Thus each coal-hewer had his evenings free for two weeks out of three, as they worked these three shifts in weekly rotation, and generally managed their sleeping time to leave as many free evenings as possible. There were other shifts, not of coal hewers, which were not so convenient, and as a rule did not alter from week to week. The stonemen who went down at night to clear away falls and to keep the ways and working places clear, and the old men, the "wastemen" who have the dangerous, badly-paid job of maintaining and repairing the return air passages, to keep the system of ventilation from being interfered with, generally went down about ten or eleven o'clock at night.

The miners are badly beaten, and many owners, or their managerial staffs, seem decided to make the lot of the miner as difficult and dreary as possible. The "fore shift" now goes down or "rides" at one large group of collieries at half-past two in the morning, to ascend at half-past ten. Then the "back shift" descends, and it is half-past six before the men get to "bank" again. The "night shift" then descends and does not ride till half-past two in the morning. At other collieries the times are: "Fore shift," 5.30 a.m. to 2 p.m.; "Back shift," 11 a.m. to 7.30 p.m.; "Night shift," 5.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Since many of the miners live considerable distances away from the mines owing to lack of housing accommodation, they do not get home till an hour after they "ride." Before they get their bath, in a tin on the mat in front of the kitchen fire, have their dinner, and get into ordinary clothes, another hour or hour and a half has elapsed. Thus, on the "back shift" the night is well spent before they can get out to attend any evening class, religious or political meeting, or get to the "pub" or the club. In connection with meals it should be remembered that there is no opportunity underground for eating, unless one likes food flavoured with coal dust. Each miner generally carries a can of water for drinking.

At present over the greater part of County Durham the miners are unable to take part in any amusement, recreation, or educational activities for two weeks out of three. This, not because of economic necessity, but simply because somebody dressed in a little authority has arranged the most inconvenient times for the men. Malice aforethought is suspected, it may be added; for what else can explain the adoption of these times throughout the county? The aim of the owners seems to be to cripple political and educational activities (one cannot imagine their wishing to prevent miners attending prayer meetings and chapel guilds, although that is another result). Whether or not, trade union, Labour Party, and I.L.P. meetings have now to be held on Sundays, and the multiplicity of meetings is likely to prove irksome. As for the Communist Party, it is holding more meetings and securing more adherents than ever before.

Educational work suffers most. In the last few years a strong Workers' Educational Movement has sprung up on the coalfield. More than one hundred courses of lectures on all kinds of subjects are held during the winter months, arranged by the W.E.A., but financed in Durham by the County Education Committee. In addition there are Labour College classes, which are not aided by public funds, while general and commercial classes are attended by the younger people.

Altogether, 9,000 students attend evening schools in Durham County area, and of these about 2,500 are—or were—employed at local collieries. Nearly a thousand are adversely affected by the new times of working. Several classes have already closed down. In some cases men attend in their pit clothes and go straight to work from the lecture room. But a course of lectures where the student has to miss two out of every three is bound to result in lack of interest. The only concession yet made by the owners is to allow the men to change shifts by private arrangement with a "marrow." But this means some other person losing a night, besides which this changing is not a new thing. The new thing is where managers are adopting the attitude that any change in the shift times is impossible. "You will work the same shifts under Nationalisation," said one to a deputation recently. No reason has been advanced for the necessity of the times. In fact, one of the causes of the general shortage of trucks and dislocation of the coal transport ought to be looked for here. One need only talk to a miner or a miner's wife to understand that this "spite" of the owners is causing disaffection, as much, if not more than the longer hours and the lower wages.

A Theatrical Portent.

By "Cockaigne."

The financial exploitation of the stage is bringing its own nemesis as surely as did the personal exploitation of the theatre by the *acien régime*, the actor-managerial system. On all sides may be observed revolts against the "commercial theatre." Not the least important—perhaps, indeed, the most important—is the revolt of the audiences, who are expressing their growing dislike of the trite and conventional and taking greedily to more original and vital work. Never, for all the diatribes of the Jeremiahs, since the brief heyday of Elizabethan drama, did "straight" plays and vivid comedies find so ready an acceptance. Even constructionally and intellectually advanced plays no longer need to hide themselves under the bushel of "special" performance.

True, London lags behind the foreign stage, chiefly because of the very strength of the hold which commercial interests have established, and also because the tradition and tenure of the actor-manager dies hard. At the same time, clearly discernible through the apparent chaos of the theatre industry, there looms a new theatrical dispensation. The skilled man-of-the-theatre, as opposed to the star performer and the syndicate, is coming into his own. In Russia, Germany, Scandinavia, and Austria, before the war, the *regisseur* had made his influence felt in a pronounced European dramatic revival. Our own repertory theatres, the Gaiety, Manchester, the Dublin Abbey, Sir Barry V. Jackson's Birmingham theatre, and others, in their small way, showed this influence and operated to some extent under the system obtaining in the manner of the newer Continental houses. Like their foreign prototypes, these set the play before everything and sought by *ensemble*-acting, regard for atmosphere, and consistent decoration and production to express the essential unity of a work. Thanks to Craig, Poel, and other Englishmen, not to mention numerous authorities abroad, the art of the theatre came to be recognised as an art differing from, while composed of, the various contributory arts of design, histrionics, music, mime, and so forth. The contributory arts found their synthetist in the producer who focussed and combined them into the requisite theatre-art.

An immediate effect of the re-emergence of the producer (for it is arguable that our Elizabethan and eighteenth-century stages were to a great extent similarly manipulated)

is to free the dramatist. For the commercial manager tends to stereotype drama and to select for presentation plays which most closely resemble previous proven successes. The actor-manager, on the other hand, looks for parts rather than for plays. The producer looks only for vehicles for his own, the theatrical art. Theatres dominated by this conception, whether actually owned or managed by *regisseurs* or not, are those which, broadly speaking, are most successful aesthetically and, in the long run, economically. It is to the theatre of the producer that intelligent playgoers are gravitating increasingly. Mr. Basil Dean, although not the happiest, is one example of this. Miss Sybil Thorndike, who we must gratefully remember has a producer-husband, Mr. Lewis T. Casson, is a product of this school of theatrical thought to which her notable successes are tributes. Mr. Playfair has demonstrated the same practice most entertainingly at the Lyric, Hammersmith. New York, which bids fair to become, if it has not (owing to the disordered economics of post-war Germany) already become, the capital of the theatrical world, is giving increasing play to the producer's unifying craft with the most satisfactory results, and it is to the New York Theatre Guild that we must look for the precept and example which have led to the formation of a new type of theatrical management here—the Forum Theatre Guild.

This organisation has at its head Mr. Robert Atkins, whose productions of the majority of Shakespeare's plays and a number of other classical and modern works, at the Old Vic, earned him a foremost place among English stage-directors. In a fortnight the Forum Theatre Guild begins operations at the Royalty Theatre with the production of a new piece by an English author, and with a formidable list of works, some already highly established in the esteem of theatre-goers abroad, some of which are from the pens of eminent British playwrights and which have not been previously performed.

The Guild policy includes several other interesting innovations. Up to two-thirds of the accommodation in all parts of the theatre will be reserved for subscribers, for an attempt is being made to establish the *abonnement* system which enables the American sister organisation to risk the production of plays of merit without undue reliance upon a spontaneous and immediate box-office return. Subscription seats will be at a lower price than those obtainable through the ordinary channels.

Moreover the Guild, recognising doubtless the disadvantages of the long-run system ordinarily operative on the London stage, will put up all plays for a maximum period of eight weeks. Whatever the success of any individual piece, this will be withdrawn after that time—possibly to be revived at another house, this ensuring the continuity of the Guild's productional policy.

Mr. Atkins looks forwards to the co-operation of eminent producers, British and foreign, in carrying out the Guild's ambitious play programme. Leading actors and actresses, decorators and musicians, will bring their talents to the service of this organisation, which promises to provide what London has long needed—a theatre of ideas in the West End where first-class plays will be performed by first-class artists under the direction of a thoroughly expert and sensitive producer. To judge from the lists of plays, the cast of the first ("Cocks and Hens," by Mr. C. K. Munro), and the names of the committee, headed by that of the Chairman, Mr. Charles B. Cochran, it is safe to say that, given the anticipated support of sincere playgoers as subscribers, the Forum Theatre Guild will materially assist in the elevation of the English drama and the British stage.

The New Age is on sale at Henderson's, 66, Charing Cross Road (close to Leicester Square Tube Station) and at the news stand on the corner of Holborn and Chancery Lane (opposite Chancery Lane Tube Station).

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