THE

NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER"

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CONTENTS.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

Professor McDougall is the latest authority to tell us how to preserve peace.* He dismisses all such remedies for war as pacts, agreements, treaties, public enlightenment, abolition of nationalism, and so on. The root cause of war, he asserts, is the fear of aggression. Therefore every nation must be under the protection of the International Court of Justice, which, for that purpose, must be able to enforce its judgments by means of an international air-fleet, composed of aircraft of twice the speed of any "national" aircraft. Far from "force" being "no remedy," it is the only remedy. The one condition of its beneficent exercise is to put it into the right hands. Professor McDougall discusses every consideration, moral and practical, except just that on which the efficiency of his plan will turn, namely the personnel of the International Court of Justice. He seems to picture the Court as a sort of New Jerusalem descending out of Heaven; and therefore has no difficulty in persuading himself that "the most natural use of its functions" will be to "redress the grievances of small and weak nations against strong." On the contrary, this would be the most unnatural use of its functions; for can anybody conceive of such a Court whose judges would not be nominees of the strong nations? Moreover, the risk of war simply between a strong and a weak nation is non-existent; the weak nation would not go to war with a strong one *unless it had reason to expect the assistance of another strong nation.* It requires short reflection to see that the only real risk is of war between strong nations; and the risk would arise out of the competition of the strong to exploit the weak. One has only to imagine China appealing to the International Court against the policy of the Western Powers to see that any impartial judgment is impossible.

* "Janus: The Conquest of War." By William McDougall, F.R.S. (Kegan Paul. 2s. 6d.)

Then again, imagine this international air-fleet *manned by nationals from every rival strong nation* (p. 134) being ordered by the Court to carry out "the destruction" of the "capital city" (p. 135) of one of them. Anybody with only a casual knowledge of *real politics* can foresee the result—the international air force would split up into national units or alliances of them, and destroy each other. A comparatively innocuous outcome—if it settled the original quarrel. But it is certain that the Powers would proceed to slaughter each other to settle whose fault it all was. The International Court of Justice would have proved to be an additional *casus belli.*

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The Southern Railway has been taking a leaf out of America's book. In its recent issue of £4,000,000 Five per Cent. Redeemable Guaranteed Preference stock, it has incorporated an instalment-purchase scheme for the benefit of its employees. They will be able to buy £10 of stock (or multiples thereof), and pay for it by seventeen monthly, or seventy-eight weekly instalments—the payments to be effected by deductions from salaries or wages, as the case may be. *The Times* approves of this move to catch up with American industries in giving employees "a financial as well as a wage interest" in the business in which they are employed. But it says nothing about the other aspect of American business policy, namely the simultaneous advancing of new credits for purposes of consumption. Yet, in the absence of such compensatory relief to the investing wage-earner, it is not difficult to see that the Southern Railway's idea, if adopted generally, would end in stabilising industrial stagnancy. Financial credit cannot perform two functions at the same time. If earned incomes are to be used for buying industrial shares they cannot be used for buying industrial products. Or, to put it another way, to the extent to which industry borrows money from its employees it cannot sell its goods to them. Industrialists would

recognise the implications of this at once, were it not that they are too engrossed in trying to consolidate their individual organisations to have time to survey the combined results of what they are doing separately. It may seem all right from the Southern Railway's standpoint to deduct half-a-crown a week from a signalman's wages for eighteen months, and make him a proprietor of a yard or two of railway track; but there is another side to the picture—namely, when this man's wife cuts down her orders for tea, ironmongery, bedsteads, blankets, etc., to make up the half-crowns. Every penny added to the capital of the Southern Railway by this method is a penny subtracted from the sales revenue of other industries. In fact, the Southern Railway is blacklegging on its compeers. It is saying to them in effect: "We are going to limit the ability of our employees to buy your goods." The success of this scheme obviously depends upon other employers not adopting it. For example, if the woollen industry similarly sought investments from its employees, who consequently gave up their holidays to buy shares in blanket factories, the Southern Railway would soon be scratching its head over its traffic returns. Carrying on this employee-investment idea to its logical end, and imagining the wage-earning population suddenly able to live on air and to invest all their wages, the home market would disappear, and the production system smash up. Of course, there are people who will say that there would remain export markets. Quite so—provided we were ready to go to war to get a foreign dumping ground for our total production.

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We have frequently said that the force operating towards a change in the present financial system resides in the instinctive revolt of individual interests against its practical consequences. For every person whom the propagandist might persuade to study the system, there are hundreds who will have a kick at it without studying it. This does not, as is often thought, deny all value to propaganda. It is precisely because those of us who know the fundamental defect of the existing regime are able to predict its *automatic downfall* (by which we mean its dissolution through the impulsive irreconcilable antagonisms of individuals and groups who have *no knowledge of what they are doing*, nor why they are doing it) that we proclaim the truth to all who are capable of receiving it. If we ceased writing to-day—if every reformer in the country were stricken dumb—the Old Economy would come to a standstill just the same, and at its destined time. The reason why we continue to write, and why we encourage all efforts of our readers to disseminate knowledge of the Social Credit Theorem, wherever and whenever they get an opportunity, is because the revolting agencies which are going to precipitate the crisis will have no idea what to do next. They will not be able to see beyond the crash. It is necessary that there should be some others who can—and the more the better, for out of this group must emerge the Statesmen of the New Economic order. At the peak of the crisis general confusion will reach its apotheosis. Some one then must know his mind, and be instant in action to take the wheel of the ship of State while the crew are sorting themselves out from the mutiny. To awaken that man—whoever he may be—to his pre-destined purpose is the object of all Social Credit propaganda.

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These reflections arise from what will appear to be a very trivial matter. In the *Motor* of May 3 there is a letter headed "Getting Back at the Revenue." The writer, a Mr. Hamilton Lister, discusses two grievances of motorists; one has to do with the "injustice" dealt out to motorists by "little demi-gods of magistrates"; the other with Mr Churchill's raid on the Road Fund. He suggests that motorists should form themselves into an organisation "in the nature of a trade union," comprising every motor owner and motor vehicle user in the British Isles. To illustrate its method of action he envisages the case of another attack on the Road Fund by Mr. Churchill, whereupon he imagines the Motorists' Union issuing the following ultimatum:—

> "The Motorists' Union informs Mr. Churchill that if he touches one penny of the Road Fund no motor vehicle of any description will be used in the British Isles until that penny has been restored to its rightful owners."

As a practical proposition this idea can be dismissed. The point about it is that it advocates the principle of militant action against acts of the Treasury, and that the editor of the *Motor* thinks it worth while publishing it to the extent of a column and a half. It is a portent in that it is evidential of an extension of the direct-action idea into a new area. Not so long ago direct-action connoted simply strikes of employees against their masters. Labour, perhaps, connected it with lock-outs, but that was all. Recently we have witnessed the phenomenon of the "ratepayers' strike"; and more recently still what were virtually strikes on the part of Boards of Guardians. Then in Ireland there have been defaults of farm mortgagees, whose sympathetic neighbours have been going on strike by boycotting the subsequent public auctions of the properties, thus creating the problem of "abortive sales" which the Irish Banking Commission took so much to heart. Without exaggerating the dimensions of these events, one may see in them clear evidence of growing distrust in the protective power of the vote, and a corresponding resort to the principle "The Constitution takes care of those who take care of themselves." (The raid on Arcos is an instance of the same sort of thing on the international plane.) Now, hitherto, these manifestations of discontent have occurred at sufficiently long intervals to allow of each being dealt with in turn before the next appeared. But the same conditions which are causing their extension into new fields are operating to shorten the intervals between them. Sooner or later society will be subjected to the impact of several of them simultaneously, whereupon the danger of the general situation getting out of control will be imminent. And if at that time there is no real Statesman at hand with the Social Credit chart and compass, our escape from economic shipwreck will have become a slaughtered hope.

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Every new law creates its own group of lawdodgers. Under the Peace Treaty Germany was forbidden to build cruisers of more than 6,000 tons—contemporary Powers being allowed a limit of 10,000 tons. The result is only to bring into existence the new German cruiser the *Konigsberg*. It is not over 6,000 tons; but what with its special steel, its electrically welded structure, geared turbines, 65,000 shaft horse-power, 32-knots speed, 5,500 miles cruising radius, 9 6-inch 101-pounder guns, triple turrets, and so on, it can hold its own with anything of a similar nature afloat. The *Daily News*, indeed, speaks of its "extraordinary degree of fighting power." It is a curious fact that the Allies, in visiting on Germany a political inhibition of this sort, were solving a technical problem for her naval architects and designers. Had it not been for this 6,000-ton limit, there would doubtless have been much expert wrangling in Berlin on what was the best tonnage for cruisers. As it was, the decision of the Allies obviated this difficulty and left the way free for German designers and engineers to get on amicably with the job of concentrating on efficiency without wasting any time in argument. There are times when the Admiralties of the other Powers must sigh for some external arbitrator to settle the issues between their unruly schools of experts.

It has been stated that the recent Mississippi floods will cut in half the next cotton crop. This result is looked upon as a disaster. Some months ago the American banks told the cotton-growers to plant one-third less area than last season. The reason they gave was that this was the only way in which the growers could recover from the disaster of their previous huge crop. The Government might do worse than appoint a Congressional Committee to investigate the meaning of the word "disaster." A profound theological issue depends upon it. The floods are an Act of God within the meaning of Acts of Congress. If they are assumed to be a disaster, look how this will stimulate atheism in the United States. On the other hand, if restriction of production is sound and healthy economics, then God has done well, and the fact can be blazoned forth in "Go-to-Church" advertising campaigns. As for the people who run the banking system, they may feel complimented by this divine endorsement of their policy, but we suspect that they are suppressing a temptation to complain that He did not realise that the adjustment of the right amount of cotton is a ticklish matter and should be left to experts.

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According to Fianna Fail's organ, *The Nation*, of May 14, Mr. de Valera had a great welcome in Chicago. His arrival coincided with the inauguration of the new Mayor, Mr. William Hale Thompson, whose electoral campaign threw that City into convulsions a week or two ago. The Mayor publicly afforded a cordial reception to the Irish leader, and sent a representative to his mass meeting. Mr. de Valera's address dealt with Ireland's strategic position.

> "What if England were to find herself at war with the United States? Don't think that is altogether an impossibility: so far as a mere outsider can judge, looking back upon the history of the British Empire, one sees that England always concentrated against her chief commercial rival. . . . What would be the position we in Ireland would find ourselves in according to this so-called treaty? The English would demand the use of our railways to transport their troops from the coast near England to the points nearest to you. They would . . . say they had a right to get whatever facilities in our harbours they wanted; that they should get in the neighbourhood of these harbours whatever air bases they wanted. . . .
>
> "If it suited England to turn Ireland into one huge base for an attack against the United States, and to commandeer even the food of the country, according to this treaty they could do it, and they could involve us in a war against you: just as they divided the Irish people at home, they would divide also, in the case of a war with the United States, the Irish people at home and the Irish people here, or divide those who are of Irish blood in this country, and they would succeed by having a final division, involving us in a war against people who are far nearer to us, and a nation that is far dearer to us, than ever Mother England can be."

Elaborating this thesis he answered the argument that Ireland had equal status with Empire Dominions:—

> "What part of Canada is cut off from the rest of the Dominion . . . with representatives from it going over there to England and acknowledging the English Parliament as the supreme Parliament? What ports of Canada are held, and what forts in these ports are held by English troops? You can't show them."

A good deal of what Mr. de Valera says here in his outspoken way is in essence the same as what Sir Esmé Howard has been diplomatically hinting at in his recent speeches in America. The latter warns Americans that economic difficulties may cause an Anglo-American rupture; while Mr. de Valera points out that in the event of hostilities Ireland's position would be something like Belgium's in the last war, but worse, because Ireland might suffer from a civil war between North and South, in addition to the direct concomitants of her position as a combatant nation. It will be to the point to mention here that the American Court has declined to direct the return of the unspent balance of Mr. de Valera's American Loan on behalf of the Irish Republic to the Free State Government, but has ordered it to be returned to the original subscribers—most of them Irish-American citizens, not a few of whom were probably at the meeting just described.

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In the same issue of *The Nation*, there is an account of Countess Markievicz's speech as a Fianna Fail candidate at the opening of the Election Campaign in South Dublin. Her general indictment of the Free State Government has to do with its attitude on the question of Irish sovereignty. Coming to particular aspects of it, she puts first that of finance.

> "They [i.e., the Government] have surrendered our financial independence to England—first, by making Irish banking entirely subservient to English banking. They have even allowed the Bank of Ireland to take over the Land Bank, which, if it had been held as a Government bank, could have been used to control the credit of the country, and promote prosperity. The Bank of Ireland is controlled by the English banks, and how can a country achieve prosperity when its banking system is controlled by a jealous neighbour?"

In the leading notes of the same journal it is asserted, in reply to Mr. Blythe, who says that "No Government could make a country prosperous," that the Fianna Fail party puts forward a very definite cure—"a policy of Credit and Tariff Reform which will make Ireland very rapidly independent of the economic domination of London." Another writer, reviewing the findings of the Irish Banking Commission, begins the fifth article of his series with the opinion:—

> "Financial reform of such a scope and nature as will enable consumption to keep pace with production provides the only escape from the stagnation we are enduring and the disaster towards which we are hastening."

Lastly, there is a long letter from Mr. T. Kennedy, of Dublin, discussing Section 12 of the Agricultural Credit Bill. He describes at length how the banks, by their inflation and subsequent deflation policy, have made it impossible for farmers to earn sufficient to repay their borrowings from these banks. They can only repay if they can first borrow. Obviously the banks cannot lend them the money; nor can they foreclose with any success, for they can neither sell nor administer the farms. But there is a way out: they can lend the money to other people to lend to the farmers to repay *them*. It sounds silly; but it is really very astute, as Mr. Kennedy explains: for it means that the debt can be transferred from the farmers to the Irish taxpayer. The Section referred to sets up a Corporation (the Government being at the back of it) which is empowered to advance credit to such debtors, with the consequence that, in Mr. Kennedy's words:

> ". . . the banks will be enabled to transfer their bad debts (which to-day are not worth 60 per cent. of their face value) to the people of Ireland at their full value; and the nation as a whole, and the farmers, between them, may divide the losses. . . ."

The Credit question looks like receiving widespread attention during the Irish Election campaign. It will serve no useful purpose to scrutinise too closely the phrasing of speeches addressed to the electorate. On the point of policy we will just make one comment, namely, that the conjunction of Tariff Reform with Credit Reform will not be necessary if credit policy is to be linked up with both ends of the economic system—the industrial-loans end and *also* the retail-price end. In the meantime these Tariff Reform proposals are not entirely irrelevant, because, as a matter of hard practical fact a Government which determines to get and exercise complete fiscal freedom must first win its financial freedom. Private control of credit means private control of Tariffs.

It will be recalled that Mr. Maxton's Bill proposing to nationalise the Bank of England was vetoed by a special committee on some over-riding technical ground that it would "interfere with private interests." In view of the impending transfer of currency creation and control to the Bank, the House of Commons ought to get a clearer idea of what this obstacle is. Any such mysterious super-Parliamentary insulation of private concerns from the current of public policy ought to be thoroughly explored by all Members, irrespective of their Party views. So far as we can see, if the above transfer of control takes place, even a Cabinet would be prevented, under the same ruling, from introducing a Bill to reverse it. While society functions within the framework of the existing financial system the control of currency is virtually the control of governing power. The idea of even leasing such power for the shortest periods should be startling enough to a Democracy, but to grant a freehold of it irrevocably sounds almost like sedition. This would hold true even if the Bank of England were known to be independent of American control—an assumption that none but the most credulous would accept.

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The Government's announcement of the result of the Arcos raid has not been made in time for comment this week. But this delay has not hindered the *Daily Mail* from opening a campaign against "Soviet Petrol." In the space of one day it has supplied posters to 13,000 dealers who are willing to boycott it—"No Soviet Petrol Sold Here." It appears that no less than 37 million gallons were imported here in 1926 from territory governed from Moscow—a nice little reversion for the interests who are modestly working to protect Britain from red revolution. It's an ill wind that fills nobody's sales.

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It is confidently anticipated that the Government will announce a definite break with Russia. If so there will be a curious situation. While Britain is explaining that she is at loggerheads with China only because there is no authoritative Chinese Government with whom to do a square deal, she will have broken with another Government which is undoubtedly authoritative in the sense demanded. It is evidently not enough that a Government should be able to speak in the name of the whole people; it is also necessary that it should "talk practical business." The demand is not that a Government be authoritative but that it shall be reasonable. The judges of the "reason" are the controllers of money markets. So it comes about that Governments have to qualify for authority by sitting at the feet of the money monopolists. Let them seek first to obey the bankers' laws of credit; and authority shall be added unto them. Mr. Premier Theodore, of Queensland, found that out in the City.

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With regard to the case of Russia, observe that the further she has moved from crude communist idealism towards finished capitalist practices the more intense the fear of her that has been manifested in capitalist countries. It used to be said: "Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar." To-day, what rattles the British Cabinet is the suspicion that the scratching will reveal an American—that to break into the strong-room of Arcos, Ltd., will be to find itself in the counting-house of Harriman Brothers. After all, the *cui bono* argument is horse-sense. So far as "Russian money" prolonged the strike in England it prolonged prosperity among England's capitalistic friends. The Cabinet knows something about it now—or one hopes it does, if only for the sake of its nerves. We must wait to hear what it does not say when it tells its story.

The Chinese Population Problem.

Not even the expert, working upon many years of experience among the Chinese has been able to make his mind up about their destiny. He has been moved by the facts to doubt whether the sleeping giant would awake and conquer the world, or whether he was dying from a slow but sure sleepy sickness, from which he could be saved, if at all, only by the philanthropers, missioners, and development syndicates of Europe and America. For the expert who knew China a quarter of a century ago, who was distracted by the futility of its young leaders in the years following the revolution, and who felt the hopelessness of ever rousing its tremendous population of "acquiescers to fate," present events in China are matters to arouse scepticism as to any positive outcome.

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J. O. P. Bland's "Recent Events and Present Policies in China" may even derive present merit from being fifteen years old. It is a piece of realist advice to the Chinese, flavoured more by sympathy than by faith, and free from the partisanship that current work of necessity exhibits. He is particularly emphatic about the Chinese population question, which he accounts, along with the temperamental passive resistance of the Chinese, the chief cause of their troubles. The Chinese birth-rate has long been one of the wonders and bogeys of the world, whether due to improvidence or to ancestor-worship, or to some other reason that enquirers have not looked for. Mr. Bland almost regards the high fertility of the Chinese as due to the deliberate pursuit of fertility. This nation, he says,

> "implicitly believes and unanimously acts on the belief that a man's first duty is to provide as many male heirs as possible for the comfort of himself and his ancestors . . . which condemns vast numbers of its people to the lowest depths of poverty."

If the Chinese have the degree of control over fertility implied by this outline of their attitude in relation to their birth-rate they are unique in their science.

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No one would dispute that the Chinese birth-rate is too high; no Chinese would dispute it, since Chinese "infant mortality at present reaches incredible proportions. In Hong Kong"—where Britain rendered counting possible—"in 1909 87 per cent. of all children born died before reaching one year of age." In spite of the Chinese anxiety to produce as many male heirs as possible some of these children who died were male children—if not most of them—so that the Chinese give themselves away by knowing less about keeping than getting. There is probably no question in biology about which unfounded hypotheses are accepted so unanimously as in the rate of fertility and its causes.

> "Even supposing that by good government," says Mr. Bland, "life were alleviated for the masses, and by economic reforms and applied science the resources of the country might be increased, it is clear that for a people which rears four generations while Europe rears three, relief would be temporary. . . . The immediate result would be a decrease in infant mortality."

which presumably would render the state of affairs worse than ever. China is not a good field for an inquiry demanding statistical data. Even a census depends on what the Government's object may be, to collect taxes or distribute relief. Yet I would defy Mr. Bland to reduce infant mortality without entailing a reduction in the birth-rate, since high death-rates and high birth-rates proceed from the same causes.

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The constant of orthodox scientific inquiry into population is "natural rate of increase." Actually, there is no such thing as natural rate of increase. The

average age of spinster brides in Britain over the last sixty years has been about twenty-five. The reason why it is not fifteen is not economic necessity, but economic and cultural standards. People want certain comforts and educational powers and privileges more than they want to cohabit. Nevertheless, if women at the commencement of married life began to bear children, and continued until age prevented them, there is no known reason why they should not have three every year for twenty years, or sixty in all. That they do not is by no means entirely due to the genius of Dr. Marie Stopes. In England some women who want children are childless, and some who do not want children have many. Most of those who have many live in slums, or have to fight hard to live. China, as described by Mr. Bland in 1912, was a gigantic slum, the East End of the world, with both slum mortality and slum birthrate.

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Arithmetic is not an aid to scientific prophecy. There is an economy in nature which corrects proportions. To prophesy that because a girl's hair had grown an inch in the last fortnight, it would grow, if uncut, 104 inches in the next four years, would probably lead to error. The Jews, a widely scattered people, sufficiently pure of race to conserve a natural rate of fertility if such existed, have a fair amount of pride in male ancestry and progeny. In Whitechapel from 1886-1890, their birth-rate rose from 35.7 to 38.2; in Bulgaria the Jews have reached 39; but in Bavaria in 1913, their birth-rate was only 16.2, which is lower than the French. According to Dr. Woodruff, the least fertile race in America is the Irish. The tale could be carried on, indefinitely, and it indicates that "natural rate of fertility" plus arithmetic, teaches nothing.

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If statistics were available of the birth-rates of Chinese in various countries and of various social classes—and, therefore, of varying degrees of cerebral development—there is no doubt that, whether their ancestor-worship and anxiety for offspring remained constant or not, their birth-rates would vary accordingly. To bring down the birth-rate in China it is necessary to adopt a policy alleged to be too expensive for an impoverished country to try in the East End of London: in a word, to civilise it. As long as Mr. Bland emphasised the need for the Chinese to pull themselves together, he was giving them splendid advice, which is in no way worse for not sounding learned or scientific. He was right in drawing their attention to their non-human vital statistics as an argument. But I believe he was not on true lines in suggesting that pride in male multiplication caused their offensive birth-rate. Much thought, however, has been given to this question since his book was written.

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As long as the Chinese accept their fate of being wiped out periodically to the extent of a hundred millions by flood, plague, or war, and have *no stimulus* to develop their individual brains, their high fertility will continue. Excessive fertility among human beings is very closely analogous to a plant going to seed instead of to flower and foliage. The Chinese will inevitably reduce their birth-rate if they create a civilisation, but a civilisation need not necessarily follow a reduction of their population. In the period since Mr. Bland's work was written world events of major importance have deeply moved Chinese students, and, through them, many other Chinese.

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Chinese students of my acquaintance who were in favour of civilising China according to European ideas in 1914 had changed their opinions when they returned to China in 1921 or thereabouts. Some of them were keen students of very unorthodox economics, anxious to discover an alternative to financial capitalism for the development of their country. Some of them were acquainted with biological enquiries into fertility that depend on real observation and not mere graph-projecting. Another major event from the point of view of China has been the admission that the market and raw-material opportunities of that country are necessary to Europe and America for these to continue their peculiar way of obtaining work. "Take away your guns, opium, and missionaries, and leave us in peace" may have been merely the growl of the Chinese dog in a manger rightly Europe's. Whether or not, Europe did not obey, and China, although the world may not yet so regard it, is acting under a compulsion to decide whether the west shall pursue its economic falsehoods a little longer by pulling China entirely into the swim, or whether the Chinese shall build a civilisation with a character of its own. It is possible that on questions of this sort races unconsciously receive what Mr. Bland calls a "mandate from Heaven."

A. N.

SCOTTISH BANKING CONTROVERSY.

The *Glasgow Herald* has recently published a mass of correspondence by Scottish traders protesting against the handicaps and heavier charges "Scottish" banks are imposing on Scottish trade compared with those imposed by English banks. That paper invited the banks to reply to the first letters that appeared. The banks did so only to evoke a second much bigger and more indignant volume of correspondence. Again the banks replied, "unofficially," one of their representatives claiming that "all in all" Scottish terms were more favourable than English terms. Moreover, he added, the English borrower had been "better trained to give security." Some Scottish borrowers would "only give security at the point of the bayonet." The secretary of one of the banks suggested that the public had not "the necessary information to come to a proper conclusion" on the subject of banking rates. The correspondence shows that there is a widespread anti-bank feeling in Scottish commercial and industrial circles—a diathesis which it should be the business of men like Mr. Wheatley to develop without delay for all they are worth. "Not only have advances and overdrafts been stringently cut down, but now the business man in Scotland has to compete on an unequal footing with those in England." Again, "A definite distinction is drawn between Scottish and English banks, and the rates fixed by both. But the Scottish banks of to-day are, as a result of amalgamations and absorptions, really English banks, whose policy and rates are dictated in London. The Scottish directors may take a certain supervision over advances and other matters of administration, but there their powers begin and end. The Scottish railways are controlled in London. Independent shipowners whose head offices used to be in Glasgow have had their businesses absorbed by English combines, again centred in London, probably in search of cheaper banking accommodation than they can get at home." "Can you wonder that the feeling is growing stronger every day that Scotland is fast becoming the catspaw of England?" The Duke of Montrose has recently suggested that under a re-established Scottish Parliament Scottish people might be able to get 4 per cent. for their money at home instead of being compelled to send it to London for 3½. Mr. Alexander Batchelor, ex-President of the Scottish National Farmers' Union, has just said, with reference to this controversy, "One saw reported how the banks, by the reduction of the bank rate, were to help all industries. Before the bank rate was reduced, overdraft rates on perfectly secured accounts was 5½ per cent., and on ordinary overdrafts 6 per cent. Since the bank rate was reduced there had been no reduction whatever on these rates. The result was that the banks were charging exactly the same as before the 'reduction.'" All the Scottish daily papers, except the *Glasgow Herald*, have refused to publish any correspondence on this matter. A writer in *The Sunday Post* ridiculed the discussions on finance at the Leicester Conference of the I.L.P. under the caption of "Half-way to Bedlam." But the preposition reflects the observer's position. "From" would have been better.

C. M. G.

The Physics / The Religion } of { Religion. / Physics.

By M. B. Oxon.

II.

Whitehead has lately shown that everything can be reduced mathematically to a compound of a few elementary realities. But in looking for an example in words of such a reality as the mathematical analysis requires, he comes to grief owing to the restrictions of our present language, and can find no more suitable word than "colour," which is clearly no more elementarily real than any other of our concepts. What the mathematics is really demanding are the "four dimensions of cosmos," out of which our concepts—including space—are manufactured, which we have quite forgotten in these days. The Alchemists called them the Elements, Fire, Earth, Air, and Water, the Sanskrit calls them the four That-nesses. They are the realities out of which are compounded the proximate realities, from the contact of which with "our" sense organs "we" construct the concepts to which we give names, and thus make "things."

Each of our "bodies," which together make our "Cross," is specially connected with one of these elements. Many names can be given them, for they turn up in fresh disguise all through the worlds. At their first appearance in thought, when we have got tired of going behind, and behind, appearances, and admit an Absolute which is "not any *thing*,"—ab-solutum, cut off, quite by itself—they may, I think, be best named for modern use, Naught, All, One, Many. And when we change our frame of mind we, so to speak, turn it so that it takes in more of one of them and less of another; and the object of man, supposing him to have an object, is to be able to turn all ways; and the purpose of all religions is to foster a new frame of mind—including, of course, the requisite adjustments of body, emotions, actions, senses, on which the frame of mind depends —*Cultus deorum*.

As we have been driven back to an Absolute, "without shadow of turning," all changes must be complementary, at bottom, which, insofar as it holds true in the world of observation, is what we name the Conservation of Energy. So by thought, word, and deed, true to each other and to the moment, Man may adjust the forces in all the worlds, for this is both his end and cause. And herein lies the secret of what we call Free-will; there can be no free will for the man who is not free of all the worlds, so that he can right the balances through his own exchange (which is the critical point, in the corner, at the top of his pyramid). For each of his bodies is following a different life-history, in response to the changes in the world from which he originally bit it off; and it is the stress and strain between his bodies which makes his life—if not his very Ego.

The religion of such an Ego, or "lower self" is a crude and ethical one, a gymnastic by which it learns to balance on the firm ground of Right and Wrong, Law and Order, Logic and Experience, and to take its place as One among Many—the Self and the Not-Self. Then comes the day when the Man recognises that he is not this Self. And the whole story is reset on a different stage.

It has been said by old philosophers that when the pairs of opposites meet, such as past and present, cause and effect, "they neutralise each other in the Event, and in the void which remains we may perceive the All." Here again physics gives us a picture on which to think, the happening as it actually takes place in the world of forces, which we can observe experimentally. If we rub a stick of sealing wax on our coat sleeve it will pick up scraps of paper; or if we hang a small pith ball by a silken thread it will be drawn to the wax. But if once these actually touch the wax they are no longer attracted, but repelled. The same thing happens if we take a stick of glass. But if, when the ball has touched the glass, and is repelled, we bring to it the stick of wax it is not repelled, but attracted, so that our fathers said that there were two kinds of electricity, vitreous and resinous, which were always mixed in equal quantities in everything, and were separated by the rubbing. Now, we can easily prove this if we take a small tin and stand it on a very dry sheet of paper and arrange the pith ball near one side of it. If we then bring the rubbed wax towards the opposite side of the tin the ball will be attracted by the tin just as if the wax had been presented to it. We can find that on the half of the tin remote from the wax there is resinous electricity, while on the side towards the wax there is vitreous electricity, and between the two there is a part where no electricity can be found, for there the two are still mixed. The wax has drawn the vitreous electricity to the near side of the tin, and, if we approach the two a moment will come when the two electricities jump across the gap and disappear in a spark. And that Spark is the Event, the Present, the Ratio, the Logos, the Christ, always "in the midst" when "two or three are gathered together," through Whom alone we come to the Father, the No-thing.

There is such a Spark as this at each of the four corners of the pyramid, whether it is representing cosmos, or man, or his body, or anything else. One we call the Spark of Life, and it is the cause, or result, of the unifying of all the myriad lives of his cells into an organism. Another is the Spark of Mind which is the cause, or result, of linking together all the varied sides of this organism—which we recognise as his different life energies and senses, digestion, sight, etc.—into a unity—the Self—Animal-man.

This brilliant Self of intellect, finding himself among a crowd of Not-selfs, does not recognise his resemblance to them, but only the difference of their brilliancy, and preys on them much as the beasts do. But the day comes when he discovers that he is not this Ego, the brilliance of whose Intellect blots out all Beauty, Art, and Religion from the world and it is then that the scene changes.

He finds he is not the Ego, he now calls it **Me**, and between Me and It, "I" comes to birth. The Man is no longer the result of the play between his bodies as the Self was, and in opposition to the Not-Self, for Self and Not-Self have become his two halves—the man and his fate combined become the cause of the Man.

He takes his rightful place as part of a complete Scheme of Things, and, instead of assuming a quite mistaken superiority and separateness, discovers wherein his real value lies, in righting the balance of the worlds according to the Great Plan.

His religion, too, changes. It is now the New Dispensation; not the Old. Good and Evil, Law and Order, Logic and Experience, still hold good in the world where his Self lives; but for him, the real Man, there is no time but the present, no evil except discord between his Self and Not-Self, and no Law except to love his Neighbour as his Self, for they are both parts of the Many. There is a third birth to come when the Great Spark passes between the One and this Many with which Man has come to identify himself, and the Christ is born in Man. But here our knowledge of things becomes rather vague.

Views and Reviews.

CURRENT IDEAS.—III.

Liberty to develop this theme at some length ensues to me from closely related discussions which I carried on in THE NEW AGE some years ago, when I pictured all spirits as threatened with death from two sides. In religion, philosophy, or art, the mind is growing or dying, and death is not the consequence of decay alone. The mind which becomes too adaptable takes only the form of its environment. It can attain no shape of its own, no character, no independence. Protestantism, which began as a living protest against the opposite threat of fixity, has gradually degenerated into something like mental and spiritual fluidity, an anarchy that has failed to result in spontaneously produced order. From Walter Bagehot's apotheosis of adaptability to Dean Inge's spiritual, political, and ethical chaos the development is consistently towards death; it is a progress in which the European war takes its place naturally. An excess of Protestantism has come near to destroying the civilisation that an excess of Roman Catholicism nearly prevented from being born.

* * *

It is well, I maintained, that dogma should be opposed when it threatens to put the mind in a straitjacket. Undoubtedly the history of the Roman Catholic attitude—both Church and State are involved—to scientific discovery showed that the Roman Catholic standards could not be retained by a growing civilisation. Those standards were so fixed even when they proved false that nothing could grow in their presence. What has permitted the ideal of Protestantism to be followed unto chaos was the inability of the Father Church to exercise anything but a tyranny. The Church's decision regarding papal infallibility coincided in historical time with the birth of the "flux" philosophy. It is a correspondence on the plane of the spirit rather than a coincidence that the destruction of the world by "flux" is so nearly like the destruction of the world by flood. But the ark has yet to be built.

* * *

From the analogy of these conceptions of fluidity and rigidity with those of flux and form it is clear that a particular worship of either at the entire expense of the other entails disaster. The analogy is not an identity for precisely this reason. There is a limit to the social and individual value even of form. A work of art may be fixed—or relatively so—in form, but the mind of the artist may not, or he will do the same thing again and again. The eternal recurrence was the opposite horn of the dilemma on which Nietzsche found himself when he accepted eternal becoming. It was the compensating fixity that forced itself on him when he yielded to flux or fluidity, and the Superman was his own Herculean effort to bring the opposites together in an organic rhythm.

* * *

Form may not be worshipped as an absolute until society with all it implies has attained perfection, when the gods, we may be intuitively certain, will destroy it—unless the planet also is moribund. Possibly the final argument against determinism—which is invariably the compensatory fixity accepted by the anarchist as a condition of his anarchist philosophy—is that God resembles Michael Angelo at least in that he would be unlikely to finish any work of which he could already see the end. As more than a protest against the existing condition of flux the worship of form as such must be in as great error as the present worship of flux. Everything that lives is a rhythm between the two; every cell is breaking down and rebuilding throughout the continuity of its existence. What is undoubtedly essential to this proportion, however, is that the *down-beat* should be on form, for that is the condition of creation. A "flux" philosopher is one who fails to recognise and live on the truth that the *down-beat* must be on form.

* * *

If the Western World cannot produce a shape, expressed in religion, politics, and art, not a fixed but an organic shape, it will be destroyed, precisely as Louis and his court were destroyed; as Egypt, Greece, Persia, and Rome were destroyed. Futility and perfection, the extremes of fluidity and rigidity, have the same end so far as destruction goes; it is the reward which differs, their influence or push, that is, on the creature or civilisation that follows. Without pretending to the task here of setting forth details, I nevertheless affirm that the universe must have an economy as the household and the State have an economy. It is unnecessary to subscribe to the primitive man's reasoning of like breeds like that on which the follies of eugenics are founded, to agree with Emerson that the pull of the bow in the man affects the distance and aim of the arrow in the child, whether a man or a civilisation or a constellation be in question. What the time attitude can add to the space attitude—here credit is due to Spengler—is far more than the negative fact that the world is a ceaseless becoming; it is that the world is a succession of shapes. Either we create with the "means" set free to the Western World that planetary pageant which they make possible, or we fail in futility. We must choose between making one magnificent scene of the world drama or retire from the stage for somebody else to try.

* * *

When the youth famous in the village tries his fortune in town he has to learn the lesson of humility. Galileo forced mankind to learn the lesson of humility in space; Spengler has clinched the lesson of humility in time hinted at by Laplace, Lamarck, Dr. McEnery, and Lyell. Even Britons may some day be slaves! The machinery of Europe may find itself in a museum for tourists from distant parts to witness the quaint false steps once made by a civilisation, with re-incarnations of Mr. Wells and Mr. Ford as curators. By mapping out the *major frames* of civilisations *in time* Spengler has made space more important. More than ever mankind must be held responsible for occupying space or for using a fraction of the sun. Even the shape of the British Empire is in question.

* * *

The dissolution of Europe from 1914 to 1920 was the penalty of partial crystallisation which failed to get any farther. When the nations were released from the binding force of Rome it was necessary to express a new binding force. Instead Europe lost all idea of *continental* values, and each nation regarded the whole world as its rightful field of exploitation, Britain being the chief and most envied offender. The state of affairs described in Hobbes's "Leviathan" is true only of Protestantism, of which he was the true prophet. On Hobbes far more than on any other philosopher, Nietzsche or Treitschke, should responsibility for the war fall if it were a fit responsibility for an individual. Nietzsche crying for "Europeans" was a true prophet crying in a wilderness of shapeless and disorderly grains.

R. M.

"Do you know the story of the astronomer Kepler and his wife? She was putting the soup on the table. 'Do you think,' said Kepler, like one in a dream, 'do you think it possible that Chance, having at its disposal for its atomic permutations and combinations, infinite time and infinite space, will some day bring together cabbages, carrots, turnips, and make them into a soup like this of yours?' 'Not so good, that's a certainty,' answered the worthy dame, 'nor so well-seasoned as this.' I hold with Madame Kepler. When I see good soup I praise the housewife; when I see a fine battle I ask for the general."—*Captains and Kings*.

Post-War.

AN UNSCIENTIFIC ATTEMPT TO ACCOUNT FOR CERTAIN ASPECTS OF CONTEMPORARY DOMESTIC LIFE.

By Alice Stalker.

When England declared war in 1914, the population young and old embarked on a four-and-a-half years' experience of incongruities which, in spite of the attendant distress and the orthodox attitude towards a calamity, will be remembered by any truthful person who was over fourteen years of age at its outset as a period above all of more intense feeling and wilder excitement than he or she had ever hoped to enjoy. Prodigals of long standing came home in khaki to the fatted calf; needy spinsters suddenly found themselves getting a comfortable living from rag-picking; mediocre young men and women, without mutual tastes, married on no surer foundation than a separation allowance and a passing sex attraction born of proximity and idleness, and fanned by hot winds from the seat of war into what they believed to be an undying flame. Some, no doubt, did win their way through sudden changes to self-respect, happiness, and economic freedom; but these were exceptions, and the psychic stability of the mass is determined by the morale of the average man or woman. Since childhood, they had all read and dreamed of the song of marching feet, the song of Alexander, of Cæsar, of Napoleon; but that song is for the ears of men who fight for their own, and are kept sane by danger and necessity, while their houses burn. It is too potent a melody for those to hear who walk unscathed in orderly streets, and whose very security is their worst defence against the music's menace. Thousands never heard it at all except through the medium of a jazz band or a lion-taming politician's speech; and strung up to one heroic tension after another, manœuvred by men whose interest it was to tickle their emotions, they swayed in a saturnalia of wild expenditure and heart-breaking waste of material and endeavour. It was sublime—from the stalls; but few went behind the scenes and saw the grease-paint and the box-office accounts. Excitement is a powerful stimulant to the man who must battle in the open for life; but, swallowed wholesale in the heart of cities, it becomes a dangerous drug, and under its influence for many months lived not only the relatives of combatants and the pleasure-seekers, but countless placid people of hitherto tranquil, disciplined lives. In the West-end of London, at 6.30 a.m. on the morning after the peace celebrations of July, 1919, the sunlight poured down on a vast sleeping horde; in all the parks and squares, on every doorstep and stairway, they were strewn like leaves, in utter weariness, fast asleep in the dawn. The pseudo-classical façades of the picture-houses, with inanimate women round every pillar-base, suggested a dream of the Iliad. Victoria Station might have been the scene of a bloodless massacre; and surely, to those who were presently to drag their tired bodies into an early train, that home-coming in Sussex or Kent on a mid-summer morning must have been a greater marvel than anything they had left. The emotional tension of five years was relaxing.

Man, when pushed by necessity to build in haste, uses the materials at hand; at the outset of war, many prophesied a re-welding of national character, but the crisis passed, and with the pulling-down of emergency buildings, came the gradual disintegration of the social impulse which had cemented incongruous elements in the service of a common cause. Reaction set in with no sign of the increased moral stability looked for by the idealist; to-day, preoccupation with amusements, impatience of authority, refusal to be responsible, extravagance and a curious mixture of heartlessness and bonhomie are rapidly increasing traits of the younger generation. Over-population and advertisement bring them into contact with much that in simpler times only reached them as an echo from the world of adults; war-time perturbations that sorely tried the fibre of their elders, produced in the immature a forced growth of emotion, and now, like victims of a drug, they continually seek fresh substitutes for the excitement that lit their adolescence. Children, whether or not they love their parents, cannot see them mortally hit, without feeling the universe crumble: the authority of English parents had for long depended in the last resort on that supreme tribunal, British respectability, founded on the uninterrupted functioning through several generations of well-defined social and ethical creeds, creeds of decency and solvency, the dislodgment of which under a disabling blow was witnessed by the young men and women of 1914. Religion, more deeply interwoven with economic stability than the devotee cares to recognise, has little hold on a society bred to chronic overdrafts and the hire purchase system, both of which are everyday features of the household scheme in circles where debt was once the super-bogey. The scientific complication of life for commercial purposes has so effectively drowned the voice of Nature that only her most insistent notes can pierce the babel of traffic, invention, and upholstery; youth hears these trumpet-calls—brazen and unmelodious without their attendant harmonies—as a cruel monotone underlying life, and readily turns to doctrines of safety, suppression of instincts, contraception, and a tolerance that becomes indifference, all resulting in an appallingly decreased vitality. According to reformers, legislation and modern methods of town equipment have robbed youthful independence of much attendant risk; but the safety which is largely due to unlimited insurance, and a low power of initiative, is a subsidised safety and contemptible to a vigorous mind.

The parent-and-child theme, rescued by Mr. Shaw from the austere sincerities of "The Way of All Flesh," and declared by him through a happier medium to more people than would have tolerated Butler's introspection, has gained no additional weight from other people's lugubrious variations, and has been worked to a standstill. Too much of to-day's independence is expressed in terms of petty issues, and the freedom that debauches itself with another's money and wearily given sanction is only the freedom of the unruly puppy on a long lead. It is time both generations realised that an age of combines, whether of labour or capital, jeopardises the individual free-will in all classes, and that the parents who are loth to recognise the adult claims of their children in face of over-stocked professions and expensive standards of living, are as much in the grip of contemporary conditions as the son whose tailor smilingly accords him credit, or the daughter who cannot feed her baby without a clock. If the eugenists expressed themselves in the unblushing idiom of the poultry-breeder, it would be interesting to hear them foretell the merits either on the show-benches, or as a utility bird, of the prevailing admixture of blue-stocking and fille-de-joie.

To those involved in the sicknesses of society, arguments like these are little more than a list of pathological symptoms; the valid remedies, both medical and social, are few, and the doctor knows that in the worst distortions of disease strength is maintained by innumerable microscopic functions of the body, invisible to the onlooker. The countless channels and cross-currents of interest and attraction that bind men together in a similar network are kept open by reason and desire, operating through a host of tiny organisms, in obedience to a distant rhythm as inexorable as that of the human heart. Superimposed, artificial rhythms of cities and commerce challenge the ears of the understanding, but Nature, incessantly obeying the primal pulse, sometimes points by means of wide-spread wreckage to a periodicity even in disorder. The real part of family life is rooted in these deeper vibrations and its beauty is continually re-discovered by the builders and sowers of each generation, in their attempts to clear away the persistent undergrowth of false economics and dead transitional ideals.

Music.

Covent Garden: Der Ring des Nibelungen.

The first of the two "Ring" cycles was as a whole considerably below the standard of last year and the year before. This was particularly noticeable in the orchestral playing, which is steadily deteriorating year by year. There were lapses of intonation and entry, raggednesses and roughnesses quite unpardonable, and on many occasions Herr Walter, whose mastery is generally so consummate and incontestable, seemed unable to discipline and control his players. The horn playing in the places where it is indicated on the stage, was almost uniformly disgraceful, and in the orchestra, too, it was inaccurate and grossly slovenly. The conduct of the stage, in lighting, settings, scene-changes, and the handling of the smaller parts, was as deplorable as ever—almost indecently unimaginative and crude—absurd patches and blobs of light splotched here and there without reason or design, "spot" lights that did not spot, but went on rigidly staring down at the one place when the artist had moved out of range, and devices such as the lighting up of the gold in Rhinegold, the glow of the fire on the hilt of the sword in Walküre, when at scarcely one moment did this synchronise with the momentary springing up of the fire in the hearth, the childishly feeble magic lantern business meant to represent the burning of Walhall, the cheapness and ineptitude of all these things were more than usually apparent by contrast with the superb singing and acting of the leading singers, and the floods of incomparable music pouring from the orchestra-pit like lava from a volcano.

Das Rheingold. From the muddy, ragged, uncertain playing of the horns in the Prelude, the entire performance took its key. Even such magnificent artists as Schorr (*Wotan*) and Olczewska (*Fricka*) seemed unable to make headway against the general flatness and deadness of the whole. Eduard Habich (*Alberich*) and Albert Reiss (*Mime*) were both admirable, as they always are, and Norman Allin (*Fafner*) again showed his right to be considered a fine Wagnerian artist. It is difficult to excuse the choice of such a Freia, Erda, or such Rhine-maidens apart from Miss Gladys Palmer, who could make no headway against her deplorable partners. The lovely opening Rhine-maiden music was irretrievably ruined by the execrable singing of the soprano and mezzo. The small but very impressive and significant part of Erda was rendered null and void by Clara Serena, who instead of delivering her warning with the menacing and boding weight it demands . . . "Alles was ist. . . . endet" sounded as though she were merely warning *Wotan* against a dangerous crossing or eating too much meat. Karl Erb (*Loge*) was one of the best one has ever seen—the false flickering fire-god was in every tone of his voice and bearing.

Die Walküre. Melchior (*Siegmund*) gave a very satisfying performance with moments that can be called superb, although his acting is not up to his singing. Norman Allin (*Hunding*) completely realised the dour surly character of his part, and deserves praise—as an Englishman—for his admirable German diction. Lotte Lehmann (*Sieglinde*) was easily the most moving and impressive of the women—she is the first Sieglinde one remembers. Frida Lieder (*Brünnhilde*), fine as she is, and superbly as she often sang, has not the weight and breadth of Kappel, which are necessary for a supreme Brünnhilde. The opening Valkyrie cry was magnificent however—and not often is it done with such an overwhelming effort. Sigrid Onegin (*Fricka*), otherwise an admirable artist, was not and never will be Fricka. Not for one moment was it an outraged goddess demanding expiation for the flouting of her laws, but a rather nice woman whose feelings had been hurt. Schorr admirable as *Wotan*, but not quite up to his earlier performances. One could have wished that the Valkyries had been actually covered with the decent and becoming silence and darkness with which one proposes to cover their names here, with the exception of Gladys Palmer and Enid Cruikshank (an excellent artist), who could make no stand against such dreadful odds. The conductor (very properly) seemed trying to drown them as much as possible.

Siegfried. Melchior (*Siegfried*) was not at his best. There was a sense of struggle and oppression, and his voice did not tell in its usually splendid way. Once again, beautiful as was Leider's *Brünnhilde*—one felt its lack of largeness and sweep in the marvellous awakening scene. The first two acts were almost completely dominated by the prodigious *Mime* of the perennial Reiss, who is singing this year better than ever. Habich (*Alberich*) also was admirable, and the quarrel between the two was a dazzling piece of virtuosity. Schorr was superbly impressive in the magnificent and stately part of *Der Wanderer*. Olczewska (*Erda*) as ever was most impressive, and sang superbly in spite of what must have been the almost intolerable discomfort of an irritating spot of light immediately on her face. The remark was made to me by my neighbour that it was said Miss Arkandy was very good as the *Waldvogel*, as she had a bird-like voice. A bird-like voice has no place or *vraisemblance*—as little indeed as Miss Arkandy's which, whatever it be, is quite unlike any bird one has ever heard—in a Wagner music drama; Wagner's *Waldvogel* is required to sing, and to sing with beautiful and true tone.

Götterdämmerung. The change from Melchior to Rudolf Laubenthal (*Siegfried*) was surely to be deplored. The latter looks as if he had stepped out of the male beauty chorus of a musical comedy, sings and behaves as if he had, and his singing is not essentially different or better. Herbert Janssen and Otto Helgers (*Gunther* and *Hagen* respectively) were both wholly praiseworthy, thoughtful and interesting conceptions well carried out and finely sung. The gloomy, sombre, misanthropic character of Hagen was finely realised by Herr Helgers, and his voice was skilfully coloured with the necessary heavy dark quality the part demands. For the first time in years, one heard a really good Gutrune in Göla Ljungberg, who raised the part from the whining scrannel-pipe obscurity in which it is usually made to languish into taking its proper place—an interesting and significant one—in the scheme of things. Leider was again a fine and very interesting *Brünnhilde*, but the lack of sweep told rather severely against what ought to be the overwhelming effect of the superhuman closing scene. Olczewska (*Waltraute*) was magnificent as always—making a scene usually dull intensely alive and dramatic—and the story of the Gods, with Wotan holding his broken spear, sitting together awaiting the end with dread and apprehension, was awe-inspiring and harrowing from the sense of cataclysmic tragedy with which she invested it. The Rhine-maidens were dreadful, an offence alike to eye and ear—their stereotyped mechanical chocolate-box "graceful" movements and their completely unmusical singing combining to ruin an enchanting scene.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

Drama.

The Playroom Six.

After seeing the plays now running at the Playroom Six, I feel entitled to display a certain amount of vanity at having spotted their possibilities when they first cried in their cradle. Their theatre is still run on enthusiasm, but it is now the enthusiasm of a good house. In the actual quality of production something has happened beyond explanation to anyone who disbelieves in miracles. The degree of intimacy necessary in a theatre where one may lean out from the stalls and look whether the leading lady's ring is real, has been attained. Work on the stage and stage-settings is gradually being done with that care for detail one expects in examining miniatures. With the aid of small means and big imaginations the workers have charged their scenery for these two plays with the right atmosphere.

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In *The First and the Last*, Mr. John Galsworthy has been more generous with his material than is his custom; so generous that a suspicion which is also a hope is aroused that the play is a three-act affair cut down to one act. I can see no other excuse for a partition into three scenes of a play that occupies less than an hour altogether. At whirling the audience from one place to another, months as well as miles apart, the kinema cannot have a competitor. Mr. Galsworthy's theme appears to be that the smug, bourgeois, lawyer with prospects of a judgeship, thinks only of himself when his rapscallion brother commits a murder. To make that lawyer hateful Mr. Galsworthy bestows all his ration of humanity and tenderness on the fool who committed the murder, and romanticises the suffering of the prostitute at the hands of the bully of a husband who was murdered beyond common-sense and experience; she exists nowhere outside the books written by neurotic searchers after the perfect negation of society, who look for the innocent prostitute as Buddhists for Nirvana.

The vagabond who robbed the corpse was found guilty of the murder, once more demonstrating the stupidity of justice. To show how much more conscience and feeling murderers have than judges, the boy then wrote his confession, and murdered both the girl and himself by suicide-compact. What in face of this the lawyer expected to gain by destroying the confession when he found their bodies is difficult to see, since the suicides would surely be identified. The play is distinguished by production and acting beyond its deserts, the Wanda of Hilda Maude being particularly well performed. She realised the incredible.

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The only play by Conrad with which I was previously acquainted was *The Secret Agent*, a thoroughly unsatisfactory dramatisation of the most unsatisfying of his novels. *One Day More*, a one-act play—both scenes occur in the same place—much more truly represents both the spirit and craftsmanship of Conrad. The Playroom Six are rightly proud of the honour of producing it, and they act in full consciousness of their right. In a small seaport Captain Hagberd, retired coasting skipper, and Josiah Carvil, formerly ship-builder, now widower and blind beggar, live next door to one another. The captain despises the blind man for his extravagance and tyranny over his daughter, while the blind Carvil hates the captain for a madman who cannot realise that the son who ran away to sea sixteen years before is drowned. Between the two of them Bessie Carvil, the blind man's daughter, has not much to make life worth while. Bessie Carvil is the figure about which the whole play—in the manner that all Conrad's misty universes turn round central figures—moves. She is the inarticulate soul tossed on the sea of life, and gradually beaten to death on the rocks. She is the mute creature who can be revealed only in terms of her environment. Without even having had a friend of her own age, boy or girl, she submits to her fate of serving the blind tyrant like a slave, and humouring the mad captain in his pathetic faith, since he is equally a tyrant before every opinion but his. She wastes her youth listening obediently to their follies.

The one hope that holds life together for her is the hope she has grown to share with the mad captain—that Harry Carvil will come back and turn out the dream prodigal his father believes in, that the youth will marry her as his father plans, and make a woman of her. Harry Carvil does come back, but not to marry; to love for an hour, perhaps, certainly to beg, borrow or steal five pounds from the old man, and afterwards to take to his wanderer's way again. He offers fidelity neither to women nor even ships, but only to the sea. The sea has won him, and society cannot reclaim him. When his father, failing to recognise him, drives him away as a lout from the town come to taunt and torment him, Harry Hagberd decides to impose on the woman's heart in Bessie. She gives him his fare back to London, and yields to his kiss, seeing, but incapable of saying, that here, for her, hope dies. She goes back to her tyrant to obey, and to her lunatic to humour him in his unshaken faith that his boy's home-coming will be "tomorrow." Here are characters to make the actor's heart leap. The producer and cast of the play have tackled them in earnest. The blind old Josiah Carvil of Percy Goodyer made one shudder with understanding of the whole existence which Bessie Carvil suffered under his tyranny. One felt the whole tragedy of age ruling youth by the rod of its own infirmity. Charles Bennett performed Harry Hagberd in a manner that reflected hard work and study, and justified them. Bessie Carvil was undertaken by an actress who had studied her part from the soles of her feet to her crown. Had her feet been differently shod the rendering would have suffered. To what extent it was unconscious or planned I do not know, but there were moments in Peggy Ashcroft's performance that appealed to the refined sense for acting. When she kissed Harry Carvil, for example, there was just a second's thrill that the mute soul might awake and fight for her man, fight the sea in the sailor's heart where it is strongest. It was a veritable Conrad moonbeam darkening the night by lighting it for one instant.

On these two productions I congratulate the producer, Mr. Ralph Neale, heartily, and if he arranged the subtleness such as I have just mentioned I congratulate him again. They are what the very small stage for a theatre in which the audience come armed, not with binoculars, but with microscopes, must have. The address of the Playroom Six is 6, New Compton Street, Cambridge Circus, W.C.

PAUL BANKS.

"He reminded me of . . . my own father, drowsing to-day on his own veranda, too old now for a sale visit. A terse dictum of his was in my mind, 'I made the sheep I wanted for my poor hills; made it and then found other men wanted the same.' I remembered, too, a trick I had played upon him a year ago. It was the night after the sale, and I had come home with a pocketful of samples. I laid the samples before him. One by one he fingered them intently, for he goes now more by touch than sight in these matters. At last I gave him his own: 'That is an even sample,' he said, 'a very even sample.' He paused suddenly, then he pushed the wool away from him with a little gesture, half-disgust, half-weariness. 'I have handled that wool,' he said, 'too often and too long.' And he fell into one of the silences habitual to him."—*The Countryman*, "Folk at a New Zealand Wool Sale." By F. Hutchinson, Junior.

Fidelio*.

A story that might easily be banal. Stock figures of the stage. All so true to type that they may safely be assumed to dwell in the general consciousness as common fantasies of mankind. And for this reason, perceived by genius to be capable of expressing depths of the human heart; as in other hands they would express cloying sentiment, cynical burlesque, sportive playfulness. Such is *Fidelio*.

In brief: Florestan, imprisoned by an unscrupulous and powerful enemy; his wife, Leonora, refusing to believe the rumours of his death, abandoning seclusion in single-minded devotion to his discovery and release. The tyrant, Don Pizarro, with appetite whetted by success, proposing to murder his prisoner in cold blood, sooner than allow his release by Don Fernando, the Minister of State, who has heard of strange doings at the castle. The faithful wife, disguised in male attire as Fidelio, and appointed assistant gaoler, intervening at risk of her life, and presenting a pistol at Pizarro's head. The arrival at that moment of Don Fernando, announced by trumpet from the castle walls. Discomfiture of the villain. Discovery of long-past boyhood friendship between the Minister of State and the released prisoner. Rapturous reunion of husband and wife, amid public rejoicing; and the liberation of other victims of Pizarro's tyranny.

All is set in a gentle atmosphere, with a humane gaoler—though involved in his master's crimes; and his charming daughter, diverted from her wooer by the attraction of the male-impersonating wife. The new assistant pleads that the prisoners be granted a sight of the sun and the good earth; whereupon the poor dazzled creatures are brought out blinking and huddling together, their feelings mounting from terrified whisperings and cowerings to subdued ecstasy, as their lungs inhale freshness and their vision is ravished by the sun's radiance in the garden.

The genius of Beethoven, restrained to a charming simplicity in all that serves as background to the dual theme of freedom's passion and of constancy, moves warm and intimate in the human contacts, flexible to every heightening of emotion—never removing the hero and heroine from common humanity. Always the great human sea is breaking upon the individual shore.

When the prisoners emerge from their cells, the central figures of the story are submerged in a musical expression of the poor creatures' emotional transition from terror to rapture, so beautiful and plain, so modified to the broken strength of those long cut off from the stream of common life, that all the passion of the human soul for freedom from every kind of darkness and unnatural restraint, sings in the ears of the listener as the voice of his own heart, with a quality of trees rustling in a sun-filled wind, when a new Spring has clothed them afresh in shining glory.

The Opera has not quite the same perfection after that point. The bolt has been shot; and a certain confinement to the theatrical conventions marks the last Act. But the theme of constancy is rendered magnificent homage in the famous overture, Leonora No. 2, intervening between the two scenes of the last Act.

In "Fidelio," Beethoven's only opera, he displays the same quality that distinguishes the symphonies from all other great music: he does not idealise; he is never other-worldly. Humanity is the cosmos for him; he descends through all veils of human frailty to profound depths of the heart, and finds the miracle of the world there. Human experience is for him unendingly significant. In the human heart are all gods and devils, all storms and all ecstasy. We had guessed it was so from the symphonies: it is explicit in "Fidelio"; where, without loss of simplicity, a poignant undertone—the eternal stream of human experience—flows with insistent rhythm, in unfailing awareness of abysmal past and abysmal future in the slight incident of the moment.

W. T. S.

* In celebration of Beethoven's Centenary, "Fidelio" was performed at Covent Garden on Thursday, May 19, conducted by Bruno Walter.

Reviews.

China and the Nations. By Wong Ching-wai. (Martin Hopkinson. 7s. 6d.)

As an official statement of Nationalist policy, this book has an authority which its more comical assertions—such as that England robbed China of Burma—might tempt us to deny. It recapitulates China's diplomatic history since the Opium War, and shows how the foreigner has used his power to secure "rights" which further his economic penetration of the country. To the acquisition of these rights "the Chinese people never has consented." Neither has it refused its assent. For up to the time of the Republic "the Chinese people" had little say in the matter. At first the Republic was welcomed as a sign of progress by the Treaty Powers. But as soon as it showed signs of real independence it was scotched by a militarist, Yuan Shih-Kai, who was suspected of receiving something more than counsel from the foreigner. Hence the present animosity of the Nationalists towards foreigners. Hence, too, their sympathy towards Bolshevist Russia, which, alone among the Western nations, has renounced its rights in China.

Christianity in China: An Exposure of Foreign Missions. By Walter Mann. (Pioneer Press. 64 pp. 6d.)

This is a concise, lucid, and well documented summary of the case against foreign missions. Beginning with a chapter on the Jesuits in China, Mr. Mann describes the Tai-Ping and Boxer Rebellions, discusses the problem of Extraterritoriality, ancestor worship, and the "broadcasting of the Bible," from the point of view of the Secular Society, which has issued this pamphlet. The expenditure of the chief western countries on foreign missions before the War is estimated to have been not far short of £10,000,000 a year. American and British Bible societies are reported to have circulated 504 million copies of the Bible in whole or part since 1861, and this is omitting account of the number distributed by the thirty or more missionary societies. There is an interesting side-light on the ultimate destination of these books. Mr. Teichman, one of our Consular officials in China, is quoted as follows:

> "One often hears of statistics of the large number of copies disposed of, not given away, but sold; but it is not stated in explanation that the books are disposed of so cheaply that they are sometimes bought for the paper they contain, and used in the manufacture of the soles of Chinese shoes."

A curious reaction to Christian teaching is quoted from the Rev. E. J. Hardy's "John Chinaman at Home": "To a missionary who had described the death of our Saviour, a Chinese remarked, 'That Jesus Christ plenty big fool.'" The same writer quotes the following sentiment of the people as well:

> "We have no objection to Jesus; doubtless he was good. Make an image of Him and put it by the side of our Gods', and we will knock our heads before Him as well as before them. Some advantage may come from so doing."

Sir Henry Norman is quoted as asserting that conversion to Christianity is looked upon as a means of

an easier livelihood. One Chinese servant, being asked by his late master what new job he was working at, received the answer, "My have got that Jesus pidgin." ("Peoples and Politics of the Far East.") Sir Henry comments:

> "He was no more intentionally irreverent in saying this than I am in quoting it; he merely meant that the profession of Christianity, with its comfortable concomitants, was his new occupation."

Most missionaries nowadays have medical knowledge, and large numbers of Chinese attend the missions in order to get advice and medicine. Major H. Knollys ("English Life in China") describes a service. When the sermon had proceeded for a certain time the congregation gave way to "undisguised sighings and naive yawnings," holding up empty medicine bottles and cups to the light, saying as plainly as spoken words, "About time to finish your harangue; let us get on to the salves, the potions and the boluses." Mr. Mann is, of course, speaking to his own brief, but it is temperately done, and he is to be congratulated on an informing and entertaining piece of work.

Solitaria. By V. V. Rozanov. Translated by S. S. Koteliansky. (Wishart. 12s. 6d.)

Even from these little scraps and fragments, for that is all they are, it is plain that Rozanov had a mind crystal clear, eager to express itself, to share the realities of its experience with the dullards who are the rest of us. Jean Cocteau writes in the same confident way, though without the note of weariness and tragedy. But why have a friendly reader, asks Rozanov?

> Do I write for the reader? No, I write for myself.
> "Why then do you publish?"
> They pay for it.
> The subjective has coincided with an external circumstance.
> Thus occurs literature. And only thus.

Written down at all odd times, in the oddest places, on bits of paper wonderfully saved from massacre, these thoughts of his hit us in the face with their actuality, and make us ashamed for spending so much of our time in a mimicry or custom of life. "What do you love, then, queer fellows?" "My dreams." That was Rozanov. And not even leader-writing on the *Novoe Vremya* could rob him of that kingdom.

The Paris Embassy. By Beckles Willson. (Benn. 25s.)

Major Beckles Willson is in the pleasant succession of modern historians who realise that they have no business to add to the tiresomeness of the world, whose accumulation of past incident grows ever more oppressive. He gives us here the inside view of the Hotel Borghese from 1814, when Sir Charles Stuart took it over from Napoleon's naughty little sister, Pauline, to 1920, when so much of the new Europe was already beginning to wear somewhat shinily at the elbows. There is plenty to write about, and Major Willson has lived in France long enough to paint us an English picture of all kinds of days, fair and foul, within these confidential walls without challenging ironic criticism from Frenchmen who know their own shortcomings but can still breathe in thankful relief at the sight of ours. The illustrations might have been livelier, but it can't be helped now.

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