THE
NEW AGE
INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER"
A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

No. 1837] NEW SERIES Vol. XLII. No. 4. THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1927. [Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] SEVENPENCE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

A paragraph in the *Irish Times* states that the transfer of the Treasury note issue to the Bank of England is considered likely to take place at the end of the present financial year. It points out that of £300 millions of Treasury notes in circulation two-thirds have no gold backing, whereas on the other hand the Bank of England with a note circulation of £136 millions, has a gold backing of £150 millions. One presumes that this is intended to convey the impression that the Bank's credit is superior to the State's. The paragraph continues:—

> "The latter sum would give a gold backing to an issue of Treasury and Bank notes of nearly forty per cent., but in financial quarters it is claimed that this would not be sufficient, and that the Bank will demand much more cover before it agrees to take over the responsibility of Treasury notes."

This is the first hint we have seen that the Bank is supposed to be obliging the State by controlling its currency. We have always been given to understand that the transfer was necessary as an essential condition of "sound finance," new style. We should like to have a little more information about the "new cover." It may mean that the Bank demands more gold, or that it demands a restriction of note issue. But in all probability it means nothing at all, and is only published in order to diffuse the idea that whatever the Bank does it is doing us all a good turn.

* * *

Mr. A. V. Alexander, M.P., who was Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade in the Labour Government, is going to present a Bill in Parliament for the protection of the consumer. The method of protection is to make it an indictable offence for any person to be party to an association which exercises a monopoly—or substantial control over any trade—to the detriment of the public. That sounds nice. But critics of the credit monopoly need not get excited, for certain monopolies are exempted from the condemnation, namely those which are operating "in pursuance of special statutory powers." Now that has gone and spoiled it all. But for this limitation think what scope for prosecutions is provided for in Mr. Alexander's definition of an illegal "contract, arrangement, or combination," namely one which

> "has the effect of preventing, limiting or lessening production, enhancing the price, rental, or cost of articles, storage or transportation; or preventing or lessening competition."

The truth is that legislation of this sort is waste of time so long as the borrowing powers of business organisations are dependent upon the rate at which they recover profits, irrespective of what service they afford to the public during the process. The only efficient way to protect consumers is to provide industry with a financial premium related to *quantity* distribution of consumable products: in short, to reverse current high banking policy. It may be accepted as a general truth that the larger a trust is the more it is dependent on bank-credits for carrying on its business. In fact the increasing tendency to trustify industry has been adduced by financial writers as the chief reason why banking itself had to be consolidated in the form of the Big Five. It was said that only banks with huge assets would be able to handle the financing of these industrial trusts. All this means that their survival or otherwise is within the banks' power to decide. Therefore, if they persist they persist with the consent of the banks. So Mr. Alexander's first task is to get the banks to accept his view of the public's rights as consumers. Until he has done that it is useless for him to carry his agitation into the House of Commons: and if he were to succeed in persuading the banks it would be needless for him to legislate. The banks themselves would do what he wanted without waiting for any Parliamentary debates. There is also another important consideration. The fleecing of the public by monopolies is only one half of the picture. The other half is the fleecing of these monopolies in their turn under the conditions of trade imposed by bank policy. For instance, Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company, Ltd., had its capital written down from £4 millions

to £2,374,945 last week, the last of a series of reductions totalling nearly £6 millions. Mr. Justice Eve remarked that "there must be a number of persons who had suffered very severely in consequence." It would be interesting to know whether the public are not robbed of more money through their investments in trusts than through the price-exactions of trusts.

* * *

The *Evening Standard*, commenting on the disorder in the House of Commons during the debate on Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Vote of Censure concerning the coal crisis, is of the opinion that it was a mistake on the part of Mr. Baldwin to put up the President of the Board of Trade to answer the indictment. It points out that when there is a stoppage of work the Prime Minister is accustomed to sweep aside minor Ministers and to emerge as negotiator in chief. "Surely it is injudicious," it proceeds, "thus to show a sort of deference to Labour when it is in its 'direct action' mood, and to be less serious and less polite when Labour is proceeding on the lines of strict constitutional propriety." This is all very correct, but it comes to nothing. If Mr. Baldwin had replied there would have been a nice, orderly debate in which every speaker would have discussed the Government's culpability over the mess in the mining industry, but none would have shown the way out of the mess. Mr. Baldwin said all that was necessary on the subject long ago when he told the deputation of Bishops that whatever policy were pressed on the Government in regard to the mines it must contain no provision for a subsidy. On this point both Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Lloyd George are at one with him. That being the case, votes of censure are impertinent as well as futile. It is notorious that the mining industry cannot support the miners at a tolerable standard of comfort out of its earnings. Unless the industry is to secure financial revenue from some other source the miners must starve. To suggest an increase in its earnings when there are, for instance, a million tons of unsaleable coal in Belgium alone is to talk nonsense. It must get some non-earned revenue from somewhere; and the only question is, whence. The Government would insist that it did not come out of taxation, and it would be right. But that does not exhaust all the possibilities. There is a tacit agreement between all three Parties to behave as if it did; and while the state of affairs lasts it will not matter a bit whether Members of Parliament are disorderly or not. Even the disorders are a pretence; there are never any casualties.

* * *

The *Manchester Guardian* of November 5 contains a comment on Irish politics. It says that half the Fianna Fail Party, including all its leaders, except perhaps Mr. Lemass, want to "tempt" the country into an economic revolution, now that Ireland will not stand any more political revolutions.

"Thus Mr. De Valera wants to direct agricultural production to meet the needs of the home market. . . . Some of his followers want to restrict the import of foreign capital, others to tax the export of Irish capital; yet others *suggest that Fianna Fail policy is to cut Ireland off from the British currency and credit system and to bring into operation a new credit system borrowed, apparently, from Major Douglas and* THE NEW AGE. Official Labour is clearly very shy of all such revolutionary proposals, though its weekly organ has unexpectedly drawn attention to the *advantages which may be expected to flow from depreciating the Irish pound.* The one idea which Labour and Fianna Fail appear to have in common is the setting up of a Development Commission representative of all parties. Its function is to devise an economic policy for Ireland designed to check emigration and abolish unemployment. The idea appears at first sight childish, and no one has yet explained what are to be the relations between the Commission, the Ministries of Finance and Industries, and the Dail."

Why the idea of setting up a Development Commission of all parties should be referred to as "childish" by this writer is a puzzle to us, unless, of course, he means that there are interests in Ireland powerful enough to frustrate its object. There is, in our opinion, no basis more sensible than an all-Party investigation of Irish economics, and no more hopeful element than that these investigations may include the relation of the credit system to economic problems. The writer's reference to "depreciating the Irish pound" is misleading if it is intended to reflect on Major Douglas's proposals; for whatever credit expansion he envisages is made *absolutely conditional on an appreciation of the pound*. That is to say, if the retail price level is not reduced, no consumer credit can be issued. If he intends the subtle suggestion that the international money monopoly will mark down the Irish pound if Ireland revises her credit policy, that is another matter, and can be suitably met when it arises. It may be that Irish Labour has some ideas of expanding credit without reference to any accompanying price policy—in which case he would be justified in using the word "depreciating." As regards his reference to Fianna Fail's "cutting Ireland off" from the British credit and currency system, Major Douglas's scheme does not necessarily involve severance in international relationships. That it may initially provoke attacks from private credit monopolists is possible, but that is only to say that they, and not Fianna Fail, would attempt to sever Irish relations with Britain. This writer apparently misapprehends the nature of credit, and thinks that Ireland cannot carry on her internal economy by credit of her own creation. That is a mistake which, fortunately, can be remedied with very little trouble—if he will only take the trouble.

* * *

The young Earl of Feversham, who has just taken over the management of the family estates at Helmsley, North Yorkshire, recently met his tenant farmers at luncheon and announced that for a start he was going to reduce their rents by 15 per cent. His estate, the Duncombe Park Estate, comprises 39,000 acres. His recent coming-of-age celebrations were put off owing to the death of his seventeen-year-old brother in a motoring accident last September. "I have come to the conclusion," he told the tenants, "that in these difficult times it is more suitable that the sum that would have been spent on celebrations should be added to the reduction of your rent, and so aid each one of you individually." He pointed out that the fixed charges on the estate, largely in the form of taxation, actually exceed the receipts. Two death duties, eleven years ago, were only paid through the selling of part of the estate and the timber. He added:—

"I shall do my utmost to keep the estate together, but I think it only right to utter a word of warning that this may prove to be beyond my power unless taxation is substantially reduced."

Lord Feversham made a world tour when he left Eton, and then worked for nearly two years as Assistant Probation Officer at Johannesburg in order to gain experience of social work. He assumed the name of Mr. Duncombe, and none of the magistrates, prison officials, nor anybody else knew the secret.

* * *

Here is an illustration of the incidence of monetary policy on rural life. As R. R. remarked in a recent article in this journal on country life, there was a time when neither landlord nor tenantry troubled overmuch about money. To-day the rude hand of finance stretches everywhere, forcing people to use the bankers' commodity, even to the most trivial transaction. Once the tenantry could feed themselves and their landlord: to-day they have to starve themselves to gather money to meet

the landlord's liabilities for taxation, and very often his heavy insurance premiums against death duties. The duties are assessed, not on what revenue he derives from his estate, but on what the estate is "worth." He is not allowed to choose whether he will be content with a comparatively small net money income. He has to pay taxes relatively to what other, and more "enterprising," people would make of his estate if they owned it. To take a hypothetical case. If gold were to be found on Lord Feversham's estate, in a short time he would find himself compelled to turn out his tenants and break up their homes in order to get out the gold. One may scoff and say that this would be no compulsion in practice, for that he would be only too pleased to do it. But yet the truth remains that under the taxing system applicable to the case he could not choose to preserve the original integrity of his estate—unless he happened to have an independent income which could stand a "gold-land" rate of tax together with premium for death-duty risks. And there would be no end of "reformers" who would justify this pressure on him by saying that he was standing obstinately in "the path of progress." That he himself had other ideas of what constituted progress would count for nothing. There is no cure for this evil but a reversal of the bankers' policy of making money indispensable to life, and then making it scarce. We hope Lord Feversham will crown his study of sociology with a more intensive study of the credit question. By doing so he will have it in his power to play a prominent part in defending rural England from the speculator.

* * *

Before the Indian Section of the Society of Arts on November 11, Mr. M. M. S. Gubbay, general manager of the P. and O. Banking Corporation, read a paper on "Indigenous Indian Banking." He might have added a sub-title—"And How to Capture It." Now that India is to have a central Reserve Bank it is important, said Mr. Gubbay, to see how to give it "effective control over the credit operations of the bazaar" (elsewhere he says "broaden the channel between the bazaar and the banks") so as to make credit conditions throughout the whole system "respond to the policy of the central banking authority." It appears that there are difficulties. For instance, the shroff. This gentleman is a private native banker, working on his own account and outside the provisions of the Companies Act. So his affairs cannot be pried into, unfortunately. He is the only link "between the Indian banker and the banks" (presumably "the banks" are the joint stock banks in India). The shroff endorses trade bills, and his signature makes them acceptable to the local banks. The operations of the shroffs lie outside the influence of the organised banking system, and are very little affected by the credit policy of the banks—only a "fractional portion" of the demands which the shroffs supply being "derived from banking funds" The only control that has been exercised has been through the fact that the general transactions of the country have to be conducted with silver or note currency, and credit transactions have to some extent to follow the supply of currency available. Mr. Gubbay thought that if the central bank and the State encouraged financing by means of bills, this and the cheque system might gradually supersede the cash system. But even if this came quickly

"there would be lying beyond the influence and reach of the central authority a very considerable, perhaps a preponderating, amount of financial and commercial transactions which, in the hands of bazaar dealers in credit, would only be indirectly responsive to Bank rate policy."

If the central authority, said Mr. Gubbay, was to rely upon market operations in the bazaar to make its policy effective, it would be able to do so "only by assuming commitments which the experience of other institutions had taught them to avoid." To put the problem more bluntly than Mr. Gubbay, it is how the central bank can take all the control and leave other people to take all the risks. Sir Henry Strakosch, who presided at the meeting, thought the shroffs a most valuable nucleus for the establishment of a "real money market" in India. If they were certain that the joint-stock banks were always ready to lend on, or discount, true commercial bills, they would seek to acquire those bills wherever they could be obtained, because their profit, like that of the bill-broker in England, depended on turnover. With a little patience, he felt quite optimistic regarding the establishment of a "broad money market" in India, broad enough, at least, to "make its policy felt widely and rapidly." If we were the shroffs, we would think twice before—merely to make a little extra immediate profit—we became pushers of organised bank credit documents which would eventually render our independent private business superfluous. While we might rely justifiably on the banks being "always ready" to lend on our bills while our knowledge of traders and trade conditions was our own secret, we should certainly not trust them when once they had stolen that knowledge through repeated handling of our paper. It is, in fact, a contradiction in terms to speak of banks controlling policy and yet being "relied on" to do anything at all. The essence of their control is the power to alter terms and conditions and impose them when they will.

* * *

We turn now to Mr. Arthur W. Kiddy's address to the Institute of Bankers at Norwich on November 16. It was a great misapprehension, he asserted, to think that bankers were at liberty to use the funds placed with them by depositors in "just what manner they thought might best benefit the interests of the country." They were often "victims of conditions wholly beyond their control," as, for instance, directly after the war when the politicians made "Produce, Produce" their battlecry and bankers were adjured "by a leading Cabinet Minister" to pursue a policy of "more adventurous banking." Mr. Kiddy did not explain how, if the politicians could make the banks inflate, they could not stop them deflating afterwards. Or are we to understand that they got scared by the boom and asked the banks to help them out? Mr. Kiddy expressed the view that as there would soon be an amalgamation of the Treasury notes of the Bank of England issue, rendering necessary a refixing of fiduciary limits, the moment was inopportune for a further consideration of our currency system. He said that the limits of Treasury note issue were determined by a Treasury Committee, "in other words, by the Government of the day," and that we could not have a sound system "until legislation had been effected rendering it impossible for any Government to tamper with the currency." If for the Government to increase or decrease paper currency is to be called "tampering," what an awful verb Mr. Kiddy must hold in reserve to describe the prime issue of Treasury notes in August, 1914. Who were the political scoundrels who thus forced the reluctant bankers to substitute this worthless paper for the gold they had promised, and of course were ready, to pay out on demand? We suggest to Mr. Kiddy that if there is such danger attached to the currency note the most logical thing for him to do would be to advocate the abolition of paper currency, and the restoration of the sovereign. Speaking on the subject of credit in general he said that State control, "by Socialists or any other political party" would be "fraught with disaster" to the country. "Fortunately," he added, the country at large was "alive to the menace." Not yet, we suggest, or Mr.

Kiddy and dozens of his like would not be racing round on this bankers' propaganda campaign. There was one amusing episode during the ensuing discussion. A bank clerk expressed the opinion that "if industry was in the saddle" (meaning that if industry controlled finance) "bank clerks would be wage slaves working for 25s. a week." "Luckily finance was on top," and he "hoped it would keep there." Well, industry, through long discipline, has developed a shrewd measure for valuing personal services, and we are not disposed to say that this clerk's guess is far out; especially from the point of view of the enormous number of them which an efficient industrial organiser could comb out if he were given a free hand with the Big Five. At every street corner he would come with a shock up against a "Cuthbert"-warren. Like Cyrano de Bergerac in other circumstances, we congratulate our young friend on having contributed the only sensible remark made during the whole evening.

* * *

The monthly journal, *Reconciliation*, the organ of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, has an article by Mr. J. E. Tuke running in its October and November issues, entitled "Outside Eldorado." It is a lucid and cogent criticism of modern conditions from the Social Credit point of view, and we are glad to see that the Fellowship is allowing attention to be drawn to the bearing of finance on domestic and international discord. Mr. Tuke quotes (in the October instalment of his article) a Minute of Friends, War and Social Order Committee of the Society of Friends, dated April, 1922.

"The evils resulting from the transfer of production from the man to the machine are focussed in the fact that when a man loses his job through the introduction of machinery, he loses his purchasing power also—whereas it should have meant for him an increased standard of living. We think that some other method should be found of issuing purchasing power than that solely of a wage or salary for work done. We are of opinion that as credit is a social product, and as the control of it tends more and more to be concentrated in the hands of a comparative few, it is essential that it shall be democratically controlled in the interest of the community and of the individual."

This is an effective statement of a Social Credit principle and is well worth being revived.

The Midland Bank and the Bankers' Institute.

By C. H. Douglas.

On November 8, Mr. Frederick Hyde, Joint Managing Director of the Midland Bank, delivered a Presidential Address to the Institute of Bankers, which merits comment on the part of others than those to whom it was addressed.

It has been evident for some time, and it has been commented upon in these columns, that the Midland Bank is pursuing a policy which, while it is at variance with that which is, at any rate, voiced by the spokesmen of the other joint stock banks, does not in fact betray any evidence of a fundamental departure from orthodox banking principles. I think Mr. Hyde's able address enables the situation which is thus created to be rather more clearly understood, and I suggest that it is well worth the attention of those who are interested in these matters. The address has been reprinted in full in the monthly review issued by the Midland Bank, and is also, I believe, to be obtained in pamphlet form. In the following remarks I shall assume that it is available for reference.

Beginning first with the general impression conveyed by Mr. Hyde's address, there seems to be two things which must present themselves to the careful reader. The first of these is that Mr. Hyde seems to consider himself justified in presenting to the Institute of Bankers, which in the main is composed of superior banking officials, a paper on the most elementary principles of banking. On these principles it is an interesting, able, and lucid paper. It bears about the same relation to the larger problems which are involved in the banking situation that, let us say, the Montessori system does to the Cambridge Mathematical Tripos. Mr. Hyde knows his audience better than I do, and he is probably quite right in feeling that he should begin with the Infant Class. The fact that a distinguished member of one of the other joint stock banks disagreed with some of his remarks is some evidence of this. But it is a point to be noticed, because not only are bankers claiming that they, alone, understand banking problems, but what is much more important, they are in complete control of all banking problems and are taking full advantage of this situation in every country, with results which can only be described as being vulgar without being funny.

The second general observation concerns the point of view from which Mr. Hyde speaks. In almost any other technical matter with which I am acquainted, it is legitimate, and in fact desirable, that the point of view of the expert in one subject should be put forward as such. But the question of banking does not fall under the same general category. It is true enough that there is an aspect of it which is highly technical, and a still lower aspect which may be called mechanical. In this lower aspect bankers, and probably the British bankers in particular, seem thoroughly competent and efficient. A few of them are probably competent technicians. In regard to these two matters I should not regard myself as competent to judge, but the routine working of British banks always seems thoroughly competent if somewhat expensive in personnel.

What is increasingly clear, however, is that there is an aspect of the money question which is neither mechanical nor technical, but in the highest and truest sense of the word, political. It has to do with policy, and it radically affects the fortunes of every individual in the British Empire, and possibly outside it. There is some evidence in the paper that the position of the banker as arbiter of the world's destiny is regarded with complacency.

Mr. Hyde, after presenting some very interesting statistics on the deposits and advances of the clearing banks between 1924 and 1927, proceeds to examine a hypothetical balance-sheet of Messrs. Yarn and Cloth, Ltd.—a typical concern, presumably located somewhere in Lancashire, and having obviously experienced the general run of fortune which has pervaded Lancashire trade during the years in question. Mr. Hyde shows how this concern has gradually come into the hands of the banks (although he does not put it that way) and how, at the end of 1927, the position was such that, in his own words, "it would have been open to the bank at any time during the period to have called in its advance and have put the company into liquidation. The valuable mill and machinery (costing £200,000) would at any time be amply sufficient to realise enough to repay the bank advance £50,000) *and leave something over for the shareholders*" (my italics). Mr. Hyde goes on to point out, and his statistics and one's general knowledge of the situation confirm his contention that "the bank pursued the course of supporting its customer through the difficult years, *with the result that the liquid assets of the company have practically disappeared*, and the bank's alvance now represents so much capital invested in mill buildings and machinery" (my italics). In other words, by a more or less painful transition, the shareholders' £200,000 of plant and machinery has been transferred to the bank.

Now I am not quite sure whether Mr. Hyde is as ingenuous as he would appear. It is a little difficult to believe that he considers that the fairly wide publicity to the foregoing explanation which his position will assure him will, on balance, result in a feeling of complete and unalloyed gratitude to the banks, at any rate, on the part of the shareholders, who have noticed that the average bank dividend is 20 per cent., that banks own nearly every corner site and build on them regardless of cost, and are commonly credited with owning most of the National Debt. But for the moment we can only take Mr. Hyde at his face value, and the impression that he seems to create is epitomised in his comment, "You will conclude that this was a perfectly safe and desirable advance."

The point I am endeavouring to make, and I make it with every reservation that Mr. Hyde may be successfully playing the well-known British part of the village idiot, is that it is suggested by him that the whole of the foregoing transaction must be judged by its financial results. The fact that the shareholders, who initiated the business and presumably initiated it on a basis of the bankers' first virtue, thrift, have been alienated from their property as a result of causes over which they have no control, but over which, Mr. Hyde goes out of his way to point out, the banks have almost complete control, is nothing. The fact that the business of Messrs. Yarn and Cloth, Ltd., has been carried on is something, but not much. The political by-products of the process, the discouragement of initiative, the industrial unrest, the long drawn out mental and physical misery, the suicides, which have accompanied the process, much less the threat of international complications, all of which can be directly connected with the balance sheet of Messrs. Yarn and Cloth, Ltd., are not considered, or do not appear to be considered, at all.

(*To be continued.*)

A Note on Criticism.

By George Ryley Scott.

Art is expression: expression implies intuition. It implies intuition because without intuition the artist fails to express; in other words, he produces not art, but rubbish. On this foundation is built up the Crocean theory of criticism. Every writer or painter presumably has in his mind a definite object. The critic, says Croce in effect, must lay bare this object, and his judgment is concerned with the author's success or otherwise in its presentation. Necessarily the Crocean formula negates the older idea of a universal standard of criticism: it implies the creation of a separate standard for each work; in addition it implies, despite the statement of Croce's disciples, the creation in the mind of the critic of a definitely tolerant attitude. Says Croce in his "Æsthetic," to judge Dante we must raise ourselves to his level.

The fundamental error of Croce's æsthetic theory is that according to its canons the *litterati* who are responsible for the "blurbs" which decorate the jackets of popular fiction can justify their placings of the Edgar Wallaces, the William Le Queuxs, the Gilbert Frankaus, the Michael Arlens of the day as writers of genius; it provides no differentiation between, say, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Madame Bovary," "Three Weeks" and "Ulysses." Idealistically the Croce theory seems sound: its appeal to an intelligentsia intolerant of the criticism which judges all artistic work in relation to current morals, politics, and religion is understandable. So far it marks a definite advance. Its basic error lies in its assumption that the personal view of the writer and his skill in presenting that view are mutually justifiable. An analogous sociological view is the current one that success justifies its methods.

The fallacy of the Crocean philosophy lies in its individual limitations. By its very isolation of all criticism into a consideration of each individual work on its own merits and strictly in relation to its author's own expressed view-point, it rules out intellectual difference between Elinor Glyn and H. G. Wells; between THE NEW AGE and *John Bull*—between "Mantrap" and "Elmer Gantry," or between "Elmer Gantry" and "If Winter Comes."

Add to the formula of Croce the consideration that the critic must not only take into account the author's success in expressing his concept, but also the relation of this concept to existent reality, and you rule out James Oliver Curwood, Ethel M. Dell, A. S. M. Hutchinson, Robert Service, D'Annunzio, W. B. Maxwell, *et al.*, whose trashy works litter the bookstalls. The fact that such a requirement of criticism would mean the suicide of nine-tenths of contemporary critics matters little.

In its final analysis such a method would wallop lustily every nonsensical departure in creative art. There are a few books that step beyond existent reality: books which deal with theses that are developments or disassociations of reality. The thesis propounded may be demonstrably false, or it may present a logical extension of existent knowledge which only further research can prove true or false. The Crocean formula fails to distinguish between the two: for instance, it admits by implication no intellectual distinction between the ectoplasmic theory of the origin of species propounded by the late Professor Geley and the hypothesis based on symbiosis put forward by Dr. Wallin.

Between the criticism of the author as an artist and his work as an artistic effort is a vast gulf—a gulf which Croce and his disciples have failed to realise. Thus one judgment of Arnold Bennett, reached through the study of his "pocket" philosophies, and another, arrived at after consideration of the whole of his writings, would be so opposed as to be scarcely recognisable as coming from the same critic. Who would take the Lewis of "Mantrap" for the Lewis of "Babbitt"; the Mrs. Wharton of "Ethan Frome" for the Mrs. Wharton who writes sugary pish-posh for the popular magazines? Who would recognise the Wells of "Ann Veronica" for the Wells of "Christina Alberta's Father"?

No greater sin than monotony and dullness can be levelled at the artist. The one-book judgment is necessarily a curbed judgment—no artist can claim real distinction on the merits of a solitary work. The deadliness of jazz lies in its monotony. The limitations of the artist are disclosed by his insistent reproduction of the jazz record. Bernard Shaw has never transcended, nor yet approached, "Man and Superman"; Cabell, while avoiding the degenerative lapses which disfigure Wells, never excels the brilliance of "Jurgen"; Hardy and Meredith duplicated "Jude the Obscure" and "Richard Feverel" time after time.

The perfect artist exists only where each individual work represents a supreme artistic effort and is not a duplication of a triumph. Nietzsche was such an artist. Sinclair Lewis and Lewisohn, of modern fictioneers, come passably near the mark; Joyce stands out commandingly as the one supreme living artist. In "Dubliners" he presents the short story in a form than transcends the best work of Maupassant, of Gorky, of France, of Tchehov. "The Portrait of an Artist" marked a new artistic triumph, and before the apeing Stevensons of the age had mastered Joyce's knack, "Ulysses" came to transcend "The Portrait of an Artist." And while "Ulysses" is still a text-book for novelists, the new multi-linguistic works now appearing present a prose pattern that requires for its criticism the creation of a new form of critique.

Dancing Girls of the Desert.

By Richard Fisher, F.R.G.S.

Night comes, and the tired drovers of the caravan, animals watered and fed, gather around the camp fires. Soon above each fire a cauldron is bubbling and sizzling, and a savoury odour arising heralds that the evening meal is near at hand. The meal is prepared and eaten quickly, and the tired men, guards posted, allow themselves to relapse into drowsiness, pulling contentedly at their water pipes until the Persian tobacco has lulled them into a state of absolute peacefulness.

A cry from the watchman posted at the edge of the camp startles them back to life.

"Oud 'nailles," he cries, "here come the Oud 'nailles."

In a minute the caravan is changed from sleepiness to bustle and confusion. Excitedly the men talk together, for the visits of these vaudeville entertainers of the desert are few and far between, and from Kaid to veriest camel-boy a thrill of excitement passes at the thought of this welcome amusement.

By now the camels of the Oud 'nailles have halted on a neighbouring sandhill. Their huge balloon-like howdahs, silhouetted against the skyline, seem to cry out the very romance of the Arabian Nights.

For impresario these dancing girls have to rely upon a small boy, since the presence of an adult male would not comply with the etiquette of the Mohammedan world. This youth soon makes his way to the camp, and with the impudence of his years demands the caravan master.

The lad is led before that worthy by the excited Arabs, and the inevitable bargaining which precedes every monetary transaction in the East begins. After an exasperating argument an agreement is arrived at, a deposit paid, and the boy hurries off to summon the dancers, or, as he usually prefers to call them, his "sisters." Meanwhile, the expectant Arabs have arranged themselves into a ring, and the Oud 'nailles make an entrance heralded by an orchestra, usually consisting of a reed pipe and tambourine without bells.

The actual Oud 'nailles on their arrival look more like bundles of clothing than anything else, as it is their custom invariably to carry their entire wardrobe on their backs. The musicians take up their positions cross-legged in a corner of the ring and strike up a sort of overture, while the dancing girls divest themselves of their superfluous garments. Suddenly the pipes swell, and one of the girls steps out into the ring. The dance has begun, if dance it can be called, for all it consists of is a strongly pronounced walk in time with the music, varied by the sinuous raising of the hands above the head or placing them on the hips, as the dancer may desire. There is also a curious rhythmic swaying of the hips, and a jerking movement of the abdomen, which seems to revolve spasmodically. Meanwhile the audience beat time to the dancer's feet by clapping their hands until the noise is almost deafening. One of the greatest faults of which an Oud 'naille can be guilty is to smile or show any facial expression during her dance, although it is part of the audience's amusement to do everything in their power to make her laugh. At the end of each individual turn the spectators, if pleased, are invited to throw money into the ring. This money is collected and is the personal property of the last performer, quite apart from any share she may be entitled to from the agreed fee for the whole performance.

Between the dances the musicians break into a song, which usually takes the form of a "rigmarole" on the charms and prowess of the next performer, varied by allusions to the stock-in-trade of Arab poets, such as "a green field," "a running stream," "a shady tree," and lastly "a beautiful woman." For perhaps two hours the performance continues. Then the financial details are settled, and the party of dancers returns to its own camp. It is perhaps strange to realise, but in spite of the fact that these Oud 'nailles are the nearest approach to "demi-mondaines" that the Sahara possesses, they are practically never molested by the tribesmen.

The history of the debut of these women as dancing girls is curious. The country of Oud 'naille, from where they come, is situated on a barren plateau between the triangle made by the three Southern Algerian towns of Bou 'Saada, Djelfa, and Laghouat. The fable runs that the men of the tribe were extraordinarily lazy, so lazy that their women-folk found life a most precarious proposition. The Oud 'naille women at last refused to continue in poverty, and forming themselves into bands sallied forth to make their living as dancers, and to-day little bands of them can be found over the whole of the Sahara provinces.

The women have one strange departure from the Mohammedan code. They have the power on their return to their country to select a husband. This they do, reversing even the accepted Western procedure, and in addition they pay the dowry. Banking arrangements among them are very primitive. All gains are immediately turned into gold or silver, which these little ladies wear about their persons, often over a hundred gold coins.

In order to show in what esteem these women are held, it must be added that their caravans are never protected, and that they journey from tribe to tribe without the slightest fear of robbery, although a troop of Oud 'nailles may often possess hundreds of pounds in gold.

When the required dowry is collected, the Oud 'naille returns to her tribe, forsakes dancing, selects a husband, and enters the monotonous life of a Mohammedan woman, rarely if ever choosing a mate outside her tribe.

So ends the little history of an Oud 'naille dancer. Her afterlife is as much a mystery as that of the rest of her Mohammedan sisters. As she enters married life the veil falls, and the little actress, who has perhaps gladdened the hearts of many weary travellers, becomes a woman in "purdah." Perhaps she may dream of her triumphs! Who knows? The sanctity of the harem walls do not permit us to enquire, and another little romance of the desert closes like a book that is shut.

THE PIGEONS.

Black against sun, snow-white upon the cloud,
The pigeons dart and, circling, climb the sky,
Mix and dissolve and join again in crowd,
Yet single still unto the knowing eye

Of him who, leaning on the backyard wall,
Smiles at fleet prowess, lauds with breeder's pride
The youngsters' promise, then with whistling call
Brings them all gliding gently to his side

This one fled Rennes; this—Jersey; this white-flight
Last year did Bordeaux; so he boasts, then cries
Curses upon a preying cat that speeds in fright
To safety from the brickbat that he shies.

This backyard, this drab street, his whole world are;
Mountain and plain, seas tossing into foam,
His birds have seen;—Oh—pigeons! happier far
Than this fond boor—Why do you come back home?

Were it not wiser, 'neath some fairer sky,
To choose fresh haunts, when once the wing is free,
In woods that match your beauty, nesting high—
Or are you but such dull-browed boors as he?

W. R. GUTTERY.

Drama.

The Way of the World: Wyndham's.

No theatrical producer nowadays would read through a play so badly put together as Congreve's "The Way of the World." The first scene is so nakedly expository that not even the style of Congreve can hide its utilitarian poverty. From beginning to end the plot zig-zags along like a drunken man, and has to be helped to its feet at the close of every bit of dialogue. This intoxication must be excused since, no doubt, it came about through the influence of the brilliant commentary on social institutions, particularly marriage, which really constitutes the play. Some of Congreve's epigrams are the essence of whole bookfuls of philosophy. One can forgive much offence against monogamy to a writer who did so much for the purity of speech.

When critics assert, as they are right in doing, that "The Way of the World" is artificial in plot, line, and character, take no notice. All manners are artificial, and as indispensable to civilisation as artificial teeth. "The Way of the World" will be revived as long as Nature, with the unstinted help of art, can produce an Edith Evans to create such a Millament. Congreve allowed his characters to talk more about Millament than he allowed Millament to talk. With Edith Evans in the part, it looks as though this is a testimony to Congreve's art. Her appearance triumphs beyond all that has been said of her. She is the dessert of civilisation. What is there of the end of the seventeenth-century grand manner that she does not revivify, without the least suggestion of realism? Millament's aristocratic distance, her grace, languor, coyness, her acceptance of femininity as a magic by which worlds can be governed are portrayed in a fashion to make both understanding and senses dance with delight. Perhaps the character is artificial because it does not much tempt audiences to lose their hearts; but they lose their heads. Her epigrams come with entire spontaneity; the phrases which are not epigrams proceed from her as illuminating beams.

Many of the actors have played their parts before, in Mr. Playfair's last production of the play at the Lyric, Hammersmith, and among a good cast all round there are several fine performances, among which Dorothy Green's Mrs. Marwood, Norman V. Norman's Petulant, Scott Russell's Sir Wilful Witwoud, and Godfrey Tearle's Mirabell are outstanding.

Mr. Prohack: Court.

This comedy by Mr. Arnold Bennett and Mr. Edward Knoblock obviously originates in a novel, since the central character is worked out in minute detail at the centre of vision while the rest are left in the surrounding mists. The audience nevertheless were delighted by this careful and detailed drawing of Mr. Prohack. But why should a man such as he find any artist so strongly interested in him? It seemed at times as though Mr. Bennett intended a social satire, since Mr. Prohack is the kind of person anybody but Mr. Bennett would satirise—or ignore. But Mr. Prohack was handled lovingly; and the idea that Charles Laughton in the part should make up like a twin Mr. Bennett presumably came from the author.

The curtain rises on dinner in the Prohack family in Bayswater. Father Prohack professes to be a Treasury official who during the war saved the Government a vast amount of money, by strenuously fighting the wasteful War Office and Admiralty. In his home he made much humour, delivered in the idiom of his office. On the distinction, for example, between having promised his son five hundred pounds to start the youth as a financier, and having only practically promised it, he made great fun. His affairs made a sense of humour necessary. Even grocer's port, about a bottle of which there was more humour, was beyond his means. There was nothing to be done but keep a stiff upper lip and go to live in the suburbs.

From this it is evident that either Mr. Prohack was untrue to the character he was presented as revealing or that he had been deceiving his wife dangerously for twenty-five years—not by keeping another home, which is a comparative peccadillo given the means, but by pretending his Treasury rank higher than it was. Mr. Prohack's financial affairs, conversation, family, intelligence, humour, and wit, belonged unmistakably to a post-war junior-clerk with no prospects of promotion. A Treasury official can afford wine—good wine—and a taxi if he wants one, and it was incredible that Mr. Prohack could not be spared for his needed rest on any doctor's certificate. The late Mr. Conrad knew more than Mr. Bennett about Civil Servants.

Mr. Prohack was then left a fortune by a man to whom he once lent a hundred pounds, and as, before drawing any of his wealth, he wrote his son a cheque for the five hundred, and his daughter another for one hundred to set up a motor-driving school, he made more humour about the exact amount to which his bank-account would thus be overdrawn. In the second act he is provided with a wardrobe, the tailor actually fitting on a morning coat before the audience's eyes. It is true that audiences have been given a thrill by the sight of a lady changing her frills on the stage, but out of Mr. Prohack's braces only more humour was made. By comparison one is impelled to cry with Blake, damn braces and bless—lingerie.

By the end of the second act Mr. Prohack's fortune was in jeopardy. Family pride promised to cost a hundred thousand for digging the son out of tin, while an irresponsible Roumanian oil venture threatened to run away with a similar amount. But for what the English call sanity and the world sentimentalism, which prevents the naturally romantic Englishman from going too far, Mr. Prohack would have been further embroiled in a love affair with Lady Massulam. Everything, improbable as it sounds, came out right at last. Although the son's ship laden with rich tin failed to come home oil prospered to the extent of a hundred and fifty per cent. The curtain fell on Mr. Prohack twice rich.

Mr. Prohack, then, is a vulgar, lower-middle class, typical under the average Englishman with a wealth fantasy. He has no manners, no religion, no politics. He wants to get rich quick and seem to have been rich always. He pretends that money is not everything and acts as though it surely is. His sense of humour is a trick of overstating trivial things and understating serious ones, such as most schoolboys possess. Charles Laughton's performance as Mr. Prohack merits great praise. He came as near to converting me in the fellow's favour as was possible. By slightly accentuating all the philistineness of this undistinguished and henpecked Englishman, and denying himself the luxury of sobs and sighs when they could have been had—and under some producers would have been—Charles Laughton disarmed criticism; it was he who endeared Prohack to the audience to send it home happy. Elliott Seabrooke's oil-financier, Sir Paul Spinner, though his appearance was brief, was a piece of excellent acting. Lydia Sherwood did not succeed in making Sissie Prohack the sort of girl with a career before her among motor-cars, but played the part as that of any ballroom young lady. Dorothy Cheston did well to make Lady Massulam so interesting. Mr. Komisarjevsky's stage-settings, especially the drawing-room of the last act, once again draw attention; and if the establishment of the first act was not quite

appropriate to a Treasury official, it was at any rate appropriate to the real Prohack. Above all, however, Mr. Komisarjevsky earns gratitude for producing the play so intellectually, so free from vapour.

PAUL BANKS.

Views and Reviews.

BELIEF.

Now that the English feel themselves surpassed in the struggle for world-dominion, they are able no longer completely to believe in themselves. Under the need for consolation at defeat, as Adler would call it, they begin to search their souls for God. In the series "What I believe"* Messrs. Ernest Benn provide three volumes of data and confession for inquirers, who would doubtless be more confident that the search might have an end if Professor Huxley and Miss Royden expressed views as widely held as the Roman Catholicism of Father Knox. Actually, of course, Professor Huxley's point of view is by no means merely his, and Miss Royden also, while most personal of the three in her contribution, represents the attitude of many people.

* * *

Father Knox's volume is the smallest of the three. "The Belief of Catholics" is written directly, objectively, clearly, thoroughly, and with wit. When it comes to making a statement of one's religion, it is a great advantage to be a Roman Catholic. For one thing, there is no religious question. Second, a host of scholars and thinkers stand at one's elbow to prompt and help. Father Knox betrays considerable pleasure in announcing that at a time when the decay of church-going is lamented, and when religious organisations of almost every denomination are losing members, the Roman Catholic Church is adding to her flock. It would be of great interest to know what proportion of these gains is due to conviction at the time of entry on the truth of Roman Catholic dogma, and what proportion is due to utter weariness of doubt, with the resultant decision to take the apparently most comfortable shelter.

* * *

There have certainly been other reasons for joining the Roman Catholic Church than complete faith in her interpretation of Christianity. Some have joined as the visitor to London, tired of the sights and museums, spends the evening at the best show. That longing to take part in a decent pageant and willingness to sink differences which have led even atheists to support a Church—Hobbes, for example—have influenced more than one rationalist in *folie de doute* to get as far as the door of the Roman Catholic Church, while some, influenced by its aesthetic allurements, have found themselves inside. The sense of security and happiness to be gained from being one of a great body is so strong that just consideration of any other aspect is a matter of difficulty. So powerful is the feeling that attaches itself to the idea of all Christians being assembled in one Church of Christ that one should be surprised less at the Church's increase than at the existence of anyone outside.

* * *

Yet an instinctive distrust keeps people outside whose Christianity is at least as unquestionable as that of many inside. The mind of the Church has grown, insofar as it has grown at all, under secular compulsion. Forces spurred on by the Church have suppressed many things she did not understand, among them as heresies statements of the truth possibly more appropriate for certain mentalities—and the souls within them—than the particular forms favoured by the Church. The interpretation of the Church's claims and traditions in such a way as to render them exclusively acceptable demands a subtlety of reasoning that might better have been bestowed on growing than on preventing growth. One fact about the universe is patent to everyone, whether he believe in evolution or not; that it is an organic universe. From its living organisms it requires a willingness to grow, even at the cost of suffering, and not merely growth when discomfort or death threatens. In modern civilisation psycho-analysis—notwithstanding that a few confessors have made themselves expert in it and furthered its discovery—is an attempt to pick up empirically a lore which the Church ought to have possessed already, had she not despised part of her own revelation. That the Church has regarded herself not as the fountain of wisdom but as the warehouse of all wisdom, led her to condemn and suppress where she should have helped and even taught better. She was content to impose the immaturity of the child when she should have stood for the super-maturity of the Son.

* * *

The Church, in brief, has laboured for the preservation of a culture after that shape no longer served for the spirit of mankind. It is suspect of being an anachronism, and some of those who join it appear anxious to be rid of the problems of modern civilisation simply by abandoning modern civilisation. They would go back to the paradise of medieval Europe, and presumably expose any infant likely to develop an inventive sport in his character on the hillsides; or, as an alternative, arrive once more at the twentieth century, only to retire again to the thirteenth or fourteenth. For it is their particular whim that only one century of eternity is fit for a European Christian to live in, which is an example of bad provincialism in time.

* * *

It may be, for all absolute knowledge on the other side, that the human character is not perfectible on a large scale. As Father Knox says:—

> "The moderns believe, and the Church does not believe, in such perfectibility. . . .In the long run Adam's taint will be for ever breaking out in his posterity. . . . It is this settled mood of pessimism, almost of cynicism, in her that scandalises the ardent temperament of our world-reformers."

Father Knox clearly does not shrink from stating the Church's attitude plainly, nor from the words that describe it. Mankind can either be Roman Catholic or be damned, which is almost provocation enough for being damned, attractive as is the company of such frankness and candour. The perfectibility of the human character on a large scale is just such a guiding fiction for conduct as the belief in admission to unspecified and indescribable eternal bliss granted in return for approved penitence and faith. Neither is more demonstrably true than the other. If the Church's attitude is saintly the belief in perfectibility of character is heroic. It is a myth for the young, a myth that does no great harm to Christianity by rendering it a religion of optimism. It is a myth, in short, to live on, whether satisfactory to die on or not. If our culture were in its summer, strong and likely to endure, the wise old father, cynical and pessimist, would have a worth. At present mankind need myths capable of stimulating effort to renew culture

R. M.

* "What Catholics Believe," Ronald Knox, 7s. 6d. "I Believe in God," A. Maude Royden, 7s. 6d. "Religion Without Revelation," Julian Huxley, 8s. 6d. All Messrs. Ernest Benn.

Music.

The Second Levitzki Recital (Queen's 2nd).

This recital only served to confirm me in the opinion formed after the first, that he is an entirely undistinguished player. The playing of the pianist's own Waltz—a piece of trash—was an act of gratuitous impertinence. The Philharmonic was noteworthy for the presence of the incomparable Olczewska in an interesting group of Mahler songs. The "Lieder eines Fahrenden Gasellen"—this is not the Mahler of the exquisite and poignant seven last songs of the "Lied von der Erde," or the great symphonies. They are bad Mahler, that is to say they have sufficient merit to make the reputation of any "young" German composer of to-day—to such abject depths has that country sunk with its Hindemith, its Toch, its Krenek, depths only passed by the "young" Frenchmen. Altogether England, with an Ireland, a Vaughan Williams, a Walton, and a Berners, to its credit cuts an almost distinguished figure in comparison with these, and the strange scum that rises on to the surface of the Diaghilev stockpot. Incidentally, when will the society-snobby-arty clique that keeps this concern going realise the cynical way in which it is insulted by having any impudent charlantanry and incompetence—a shabbiness and shoddiness of production that would never be tolerated in Hoxton or at the Elephant—thrust upon it in the name of what was once, but ceased years ago to be, a great artistic organisation—the Russian Ballet—from which every element that made it great has long since departed, leaving nothing but a name and an astute impresario, who must be told that our own brilliant C. B. Cochran has forgotten more about producing than he could ever know.

M. Dinh Gilly (Grotrian 8th).

Monsieur Gilly's second lecture was even more absorbing than his first. It is a matter of immense gratification to find an artist of such eminence emphatically and vehemently stating with all the force of his great personality, accomplishment, and knowledge, from a public platform facts about singers and singing at which I have been hammering for years. His remarks on eighteenth-century vocal technique as compared with that of to-day, on the shoddiness of the average study and teaching methods, on the supreme importance of scales, fell on my ears with a delightful familiar sound, as of an echo. The denunciation of the barbarous custom of singing music in any other language than that in which it is written, all rejoiced my heart and filled it with exceeding great gladness. One would like the young women who fancy themselves as Bach specialists, and those dreadful young men who operate on modern songs with an intense and earnest air (I refuse to call it singing), like the appalling person, whom one of our best English composers was unfortunate enough to have as a performer of some new songs at a private recital recently, one would, I repeat, like to see these people dragged by main force to hear Monsieur Gilly's lectures and to be forced at revolver point to read aloud the equally devastatingly pertinent and trenchant observations of Sir Henry Wood in the first volume of his great book, "The Gentle Art of Singing."

Mr. Bradley and the Wilson Horn.

P.S.—I find I am in error in referring to the horn used by Mr. Bradley as the Wilson Panharmonic Horn. Mr. Bradley tells me that this is *not* the horn he is using in his new equipment, as to whose admirable results I remarked earlier.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

Letters of Gertrude Bell.*

Gertrude Bell has been dead for more than a year, but she is not forgotten even at home, where we forget all memorable people, such are our trifling pre-occupations of the moment. Still less is she forgotten in Iraq by the Princes and Sheikhs of the desert, who have managed to absorb so many critical visitors from the West, ever since Lady Hester Stanhope set the fashion of romantic wandering in the Near East more than a century ago.

There are now too many ladies bumping up and down on camels or donkeys, or possibly curvetting astride handsome Arab steeds, all through the sands and scrub of Araby, seeking distant horizons and the thrilling hospitality of dark and dignified strangers in flowing *burnous*, with lustrous but quite gentlemanly eyes, only mildly interested through usage in what was once unfamiliar, but far too polite even to hint at the boredom which we are sure they must feel at the repetition of the same kind of visit from the same kind of distant district visitor. But we are sure that Gertrude Bell never bored them; though there are, we fear, impatient official personages between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean who are not above suggesting that even T. E. Lawrence was a nuisance. This shocking heresy they have doubtless applied to Gertrude Bell. No doubt they said it in their haste. Still, there it is. The impatience of the professional who has to stick out his job, over the intrusion of the amateur who can give it up as soon as it ceases to be romantic, is always excusable.

However, we who did not know Miss Bell must assume that she was not ever a boring person. No woman who got on so well with her stepmother could have been less than remarkable. And there is a beautiful and dignified pride about the way Lady Bell has collected these self-revealing letters of her stepdaughter, which makes it clear that Gertrude had not only that golden, indefinable quality which we call genius, but the inborn modesty which makes us love every phase of it.

Gertrude Bell was fifty-four when she died in her sleep, on July 12, five days after she sent her last gay letter to her stepmother. She did not know she was going to die, for she was much too busy. The thought of death never troubled her; she was so happy in her work. And her achievement was at least sufficiently valuable to be commemorated by her friend King Faisal's memorial tablet in the Baghdad Museum, which she created.

Dr. Sam Johnson once said a biting thing about the unusual achievements of a bluestocking. Gertrude Bell was never a bluestocking, for she never learned to spell. She had no need to learn the art of writing, if indeed it can be learnt, for it was part of her creative nature. These letters are only a few out of the thousands she sent throughout her life to her friends, which term always included her relations, strange as it may appear. She was never too tired at any age to put into writing just what she thought of things and people, and it was undoubtedly a delight and a recreation, for it never interfered with her day's work. That work became very heavy towards the end of the war. And thereafter, when she had become recognised, both at home and in Arabia, as an essential factor in the upbuilding of our interests in the fascinating corner of the world where she always longed to be, she gradually worked herself to death.

It is early yet to estimate what Britain herself has achieved in the Near East; much less what Gertrude Bell contributed to that achievement. There is too much oil about the place for our hands to be quite clean. The great and subtle games we play may be regarded somewhere—who knows whether it be not in the desert itself?—as very little and obvious affairs. But that same desert has always drawn, by the force of its space, its simplicity, its nearness to the realities of life and death, the simplest and best of our adventurers, the bravest and perhaps the wisest. These men and women know nothing about oil finance. If they can serve their country by their work, they are content to believe that all service ranks alike with God. When there is no official call upon their energies, they are content to be nuisances; and very often the best work they do for Arabia and its people is done by their poking about and "wanting to know." But whether recognised or not, these pilgrims of the desert nearly always have some rare and fine quality in them. Otherwise it would not draw them so to face intolerable heat and discomfort and privation without reward or recognition. That they receive in exchange the peace that passeth understanding is a recompense upon which they cannot have calculated before it comes.

LEOPOLD SPERO.

* "Letters of Gertrude Bell," Vol. I. and II. Selected and Edited by Lady Bell, D.B.E. (Benn. £2 2s.)

Social Credit in Australia.

By Walter Plinge.

(Typical questions and answers following lectures on Social Credit to the Theosophical Society in Australasia.)

Q.—You are all for changing our money system. The chairman, at the conclusion of your lecture, said he believed a change of heart to be the only cure for our present troubles. I think I may safely say that is the general feeling amongst us. Why do you say nothing about that?

A.—Because there is no permanence in an emotion unless it is given a form. What would a change of heart accomplish in a country where chattel slavery was the system? A determination to be kinder to the slaves? How long would that last and how many would it affect? The only change of permanent value would be freeing the slaves, which would be changing the system. All but a small percentage of humanity are economic slaves, the only cure for that is economic security.

Q.—But you base this Douglas scheme on self-interest. It seems to me a terrible thing to put humanity on so low a foundation as that.

A.—I suggest to you that altruism is romantic and unpractical, and that self-interest is a reality from which all human activity proceeds. The great wonder of the Douglas scheme is that in its effects no one can help himself without helping others. You take the Brotherhood of Man as your great ideal. The operation of the Douglas scheme would make humanity brothers in effect, whether they liked it or not.

Q.—But it is so difficult to understand.

A.—Not difficult, only unfamiliar—so is brotherhood. It requires application, but it should be a study of vital interest because it enters into the lives of all in the matter of their well-being here on earth.

Q.—The world is full of groups and organisations advocating different remedies.

A.—What a proof of goodwill. Their hearts seem alright. What about their heads?

Q.—Ah, yes! Why is the Douglas scheme better than the others?

A.—Because it is the practical brotherhood of man. I think upon examination you will find all other schemes sectarian and confiscatory. You are told by your teachers to practise discrimination if you wish for spiritual advancement. Here is a chance to exercise that virtue.

Q.—You talked more about money and prices than anything else. I have studied the question of industrial unrest and international struggles for trade, and I agree with you that the production side is alright. It is the distribution side that is all wrong. How do you solve that?

A.—What is the great distributor? Money.

Q.—There you go again with your money.

A.—If you have money enough is there any material you cannot obtain? There exists plenty of raw material, means of production, and transport. Why are the poor not getting enough? Because they are poor. There is no other difficulty.

Q.—Then in the Douglas scheme there are to be no poor?

A.—As all will receive a National Dividend by virtue of belonging to a Douglased Nation there will be no penury or destitution.

Q.—That means lots won't work.

A.—Call it toil and keep work for your hobby. Who are the great toilers to-day? Those who have, and who are aiming at something better or bigger. If some like to lay off it won't matter, as there won't be enough productive toil to go round.

Q.—You realise there will be a lot of idlers.

A.—You say that, when you belong to a society the members of which are always lamenting they have not enough time for self-development. You for one could be free to persuade those idlers to help on your great movement.

Q.—But who is going to do the dirty work? Who will be scavengers and such?

A.—Plenty. It's a matter of inducement. Liberal pay and few hours. There would be no money problem.

Q.—I think that if everyone is going to be so well off there will be a riot of luxury and extravagance.

A.—If your income was quadrupled would you become dissipated.

Q.—No, but then I——

A.—Why think worse of your fellow man than you do of yourself?

Q.—There is too much luxury and pleasure-seeking about as it is.

A.—Then your objection has little to do with the Douglas scheme.

Q.—It increases their chances to be licentious. That is where a change of heart is so necessary. If everyone desires good for his fellow man and not for himself these evils would not exist.

A.—Desires what good? That which each thinks is good for the others, or that which the other one thinks is good for himself?

Q.—What I would like to know is what Krishna Murti thinks about the Douglas scheme.

A.—I am not sure that he knows anything about it.

Q.—Ah! Well, last time he was here he was telling us all to lead the simple life.

A.—The Douglas scheme would give you a chance to do so. One of your members was telling me that Krishna Murti always travels first class, wears the best-made clothes of the finest materials obtainable, and believes in living under the best conditions. I suppose that is true. He would not wish you less, surely?

Q.—He has a great work to do.

A.—And does not toil any more than does the lily. I hear from your lodge in Sydney that Oscar Kollerstom is very keen on Douglas.

Q.—Oh, well that is something.

A.—It appears he is a member of the "Kibbo-Kift Woodcraft Kindred"; a band of young men recruited from all over the Empire pledged to serve humanity, and whose leader is known as White Fox, who was once Sir Baden-Powell's lieutenant. They are very mobile as a body, for they carry all they need. Part of their equipment is a copy of Major Douglas's book, "Credit Power and Democracy."

Q.—This is the first I have ever heard of them.

Q.—I have been listening to you gentlemen; and ladies; and I have one great objection to the Douglas scheme. I feel it is too good. What I mean is there is such a lot of evil coming to people who have been wicked in their past lives. They simply must suffer for that. You know what "Karma" is?

A.—The law of cause and effect.

Q.—Yes. Well, my objection to Major Douglas is that his scheme will interfere with Karma.

Reviews.

Lectures on Dead Authors. By E. H. Lacon Watson. Benn. 7s. 6d.

This is a collection of essays which have obviously made their bow before in some weekly review. Which means that as a collection they are unconvincing. Indeed, they are a higgledy-piggledy mess, the few of them with any original significance making but a poor show against their background of commonplace. One question in particular we would ask, and that is why the author goes out of his way to insult Sir Hall Caine (who, after all, makes such a lot of money simply because he knows how to write an extremely good story in first-rate style) by lumping him with the dead ones? In matters of taste, *chacun à son goût*. By why be offensive about it?

Benn's 6d. Library. "Roman Britain," by Gordon Home, No. 4. "The Myths of Greece and Rome," by Jane Harrison, No. 59. "Sir Isaac Newton," a biographical sketch, by V. E. Pullin, No. 140. "Nelson," by Major-General Sir George Aston, No. 251.

All these are good in their way. But, of course, Jane Harrison is always an artist. Some day a feminist with a real sense of abiding values will record what Cambridge owes to its greatest woman scholar. How pleasant to have such nice people writing for sixpence.

Mr. Baldwin Explains. By Peter Ibbetson. (Hogarth Press. 4s. 6d.)

Here we have a political satire which would read well enough in amongst the overmatter of any of the more harmless weeklies. But to say that the author has succeeded in his plain intent of giving us a vivid, humanised sketch of the last five or six years of British politics, would be to say a hell of a mouthful. The curious thing, however, is that so much of this pedestrian comment on the march of affairs should read so freshly, as if we were learning something novel. Northcliffe had the right idea. He knew that after a fortnight it didn't matter what you said in your paper; nobody would remember that you had said precisely the opposite two weeks before. That is why this draught of mild-and-bitter is quite palatable in places. We can enjoy it because we have long since forgotten what it was all about.

Colour Block Print Making.

In Mr. Hubbard's book* on this subject there "is adopted a method akin to the cinematograph, showing illustrations even of processes that are quite obvious . . . to render it possible to make a colour block print simply by studying the illustrations of this book. What little letterpress there is is in the nature of foot or marginal notes, kept as concise as possible.

This quotation from the introduction describes this book adequately. Press, tools, and processes are illustrated by over a hundred photographs, and should prove a clear exposition of the subject to the most immature intelligence contemplating it.

Why photographic half-tone blocks were used in an attempt to illustrate the results obtained from the various lino-cuts which go to make the completed colour print illustrated it is difficult to understand. They do not give a true effect; for the screen shows over the entire surface of the print, throwing a faint tint over the cutaway portions of the block. A "line" block would have given a better result; but why was not an actual lino-cut used? Lino-cuts have been printed with letterpress on the power-driven "Miehlé" machine of ordinary commercial printing—and they will stand for very considerable runs.

Perhaps it is hypercritical—seeing that this book only sets out to illustrate methods, and neither deals with design nor the growth and development of technique—to question the advisability of suggesting the meticulous tracing down of an original drawing, as here demonstrated, without suggesting subsequent development work on the block whilst cutting, as it severely limits the effects to be inspired by tool and material, disallowing for an adequate growth of the design at each and every stage of the process.

The present reviewer's method, even when a tracing is used at first and the work is not designed direct in white on the dark linoleum, is not to ink in traced lines, but to use Chinese white only and to paint freely and in parts wetly in washes on the dark ground of the block, making a tone drawing of the subject; the varying tones being used to assist invention in the design during the actual making of the block by the methods employed in the cutting of such tones automatically suggested by the actual handling of the tools.

When a part of the block has been thus cut, a piece of tissue paper can be placed over it and some idea obtained of what has been done by rubbing a soft thick lead-pencil over it: a method similar to that employed in taking rubbings of ecclesiastical brasses. It is then that important suggestions can be obtained and modifications can be made. Parts which it was originally intended to cut or not cut away may prove effective in ideas not hitherto conceived, and such ideas can be washed out or painted in, as the case may be, on the block in progress. Thus and thus only can a *growing* technique, both of design and cutting, be acquired. This growth of idea and constant modification gives vitality to a work, and enhances and maintains the interest in the doing—for in the production of vital work, the original conscious effort—the first design—requires also the expression of the unconscious impulses, intuitions, at the back of the conscious effort, only to be obtained through some of the actual physical circumstances entailed in the production of the work. To produce Art, a technique and method must be developed by the artist which enables him, whilst fulfilling a conscious purpose, to lay bare ideas as unforeseen as a dream, expressing irrational intuitions, unconscious intelligence.

A sculptor develops his craft most by direct carving, not by merely "pointing" from a modelled study. So, in the cutting of blocks, both as regards the possibilities of design and the methods of actual cutting, it is possibly unwise, even for beginners, to be instructed to design in one material and produce the design in another, without emphasising the need of constant modification as the work proceeds and the material circumstances decide.

However, this book should prove of use to beginners, once they have overcome the first impression of an intricacy of tools and materials, conveyed by the large number of objects photographed—though no illustration or reference is made to that exceedingly useful tool, a "parting" tool, amongst the cutting tools. But as the author rightly says, "the list of tools required is less imposing than it at first appears, for many tools can be dispensed with." One might also feel disposed to quarrel with the statement: "The best results are obtainable with a press." So much depends on the block, the artist, and the type of print desired.

H. M.

* "Colour Block Print Making from Linoleum Blocks." By Hesketh Hubbard, R.O.I., R.B.A. (The Forest Press Publications No. 3. Price 12s. 6d.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

"RURAL LIFE AND LORE."

Sir,—"*A good breeder will destroy a bitch that has gone astray, no matter what she cost.*"—("Rural Life and Lore," THE NEW AGE, November 17, 1927.)

I have read with much pleasure the interesting notes on rural life, but I fear your contributor has overlooked the true causes of the breeding anomalies he mentions. It is through erroneous deductions altogether unjustified by the facts that he has been led to pen the remarkable sentence quoted above. There are, I know, hundreds of dog and poultry breeders who affirm that telegony is a fact, and bring forward instances which have convinced them of its truth; just as there are, too, hundreds who, like your contributor, subscribe to the theory of "maternal impressions" as firmly as did Jacob when he sought to induce Laban's cattle to breed spotted offspring by "sight influence."

As one who has bred many thousands of winning specimens of various breeds of poultry and with some experience in exhibition dog breeding, I have yet to find a case of apparent telegony or of "sight influence" which will survive scientific investigaton. Known to biologists and gynecologists is a reason (which cannot very well be gone into here) why even a virgin pure-bred female could give birth to mongrel stock after connection with her selected pure-bred mate: a reason which, through lack of physiological knowledge, will never occur to the average breeder. Unless the possibility of this cause, in addition to others which will be apparent to those with any scientific knowledge of the factors affecting reproduction, can be absolutely ruled out, not so much as a *prima facie* case for either telegony or "sight influence" can be presented.

GEORGE RYLEY SCOTT.

[R. R. replies: If the dog breeders that Mr. Scott knows do not destroy a pure-bred bitch that has gone to a mongrel, what do they do with her? Do they go on breeding from her? Or do they give her away? If they do either of these things they are not honest breeders, unless they are positive that the bitch or her descendants will never throw pups after that dog. But if that is true, there is no reason why breeders should take such a lot of care to protect their bitches from strange dogs as they do in the West Country. In all Mr. Scott's letter there is only one fact mentioned, that being where he says that a pure-bred dog and bitch can produce a mongrel. But that experience does not contradict what I said. One or both of those animals might have come down from a bitch that went astray and was not destroyed, as it ought to have been. The mongrel would be a throw-back.

With regard to leading dogs in front of bitches while they were being served, I have seen it tried with Clumber Spaniels, when a Bull Terrier was led across. One or more of the pups resembled the terrier. When I was working for a breeder in North Devon—a breeder of the best greyhounds you ever saw—we used sometimes to get a request by a poacher who wanted a Lurcher. So we mated two greyhounds, and while the dog was serving the bitch we led a Retriever across her at a distance of a foot or two in front. And we got the Lurcher pup.]

"THE TRUTH ABOUT SCOTLAND."

Sir,—In view of the spirit of Mr. C. M. Grieve's recent articles it is apparent that so long as Scottish thinkers confound themselves with the English revenge complex implied in their support of the vernacular movement and the Home Rule campaign under its present tawdry and sentimental outlook, there is no hope. I believe that the first thing for Scottish thinkers to do is to re-orient the position of Scotland, not in relation to England, but in relation to world politics. If Mr. Grieve or some other of his literary brethren would do so they would probably discover an idea that would change our conception of our relation to England, and at once reveal the cause why we have been selected for abnormal treatment, and that the Scots are in a position of exceptional interest in world politics. In my judgment, Scottish thinkers have made the mistake, not of thinking too highly of the destiny of the Scots, but in having too low an opinion of it. Douglas is an event of exceptional importance in cosmic destiny, and it did not happen by chance that he was born in Scotland. Scotland is astrologically under a feminine sign, and she is also, I understand, a site, a place of trial in the spiral of consciousness. Under such a conception the Home Rule movement could be lifted as a subject out of the foul sink of politics on to the plane of cosmic responsibility. Home Rule would then be worth fighting for.

JAMES MALCOLM.

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Published by the Proprietor (ARTHUR BRENTON), 70, High Holborn, London, W.C.1, and printed for him by THE ARGUS PRESS, LIMITED, Temple-avenue and Tudor-street, London, E.C.4