

THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER"

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

Mr. Bridgeman, First Lord of the Admiralty, announced on November 23 that two ships are to be dropped from the 1927 naval programme, one of them a 10,000-ton vessel and the other a smaller one. The *Daily News*, with its clerical hat pressed to its bosom, announced the Doxology on the next morning. The reason for its praise to God was that Mr. Bridgeman had repudiated any motive of economy in the Admiralty's decision. On this and other grounds it assumed that the Cabinet had overruled the Admiralty through nervousness at Lord Cecil's attack over the proceedings at the Geneva Naval Conference. That is unconvincing. Lord Cecil's opinions on the armaments question were the opinion of one man, and were overruled: hence his resignation. His chief claim to notoriety, in our recollection, was his public assurance, when on his visit to America, that "we will never let the Jews down." Whether that meant that he and his kinsman, Lord Balfour, who had set up the Jews in Palestine, were going to get the Gentile navies scaled down in a fair relation to the zero dimensions of the Jewish navy, probably no one but their two selves, with Calvin Coolidge and J. P. Morgan, know. Neither Lord Cecil's retirement nor his subsequent revelation of some of the secret history of the Geneva negotiations had any dynamic force in themselves. Their coercive effect, if any, was entirely due to the Americans' recent threat to out-build Britain. The *Daily News* has therefore been, in effect, returning thanks for Britain's political subservience to American policy.

Sir William Davison, the Conservative member for South Kensington, inquired in the House of Commons on November 23 whether the reduction in the programme would not imperil our trade routes, and whether the Government was bearing in mind that we had never any more than seven weeks' food supply in the country. In its setting,

this was a sensible question, especially when addressed to a Government whose policy it is to maintain Britain's dependence on overseas sources at the maximum rather than develop home agriculture. Before the First Lord could give him an answer, up jumped Lady Astor with the question, "May I ask if anybody is attacking the food supplies of the country?" According to Mr. Hugh Martin, from whose report in the *Daily News* we extract this incident, the Labour Party "cheered the question heartily." It is impossible to see any logical reason for the cheering. The question was equivalent to asking: "Why this fuss about locking the stable door; has the horse gone?" We had better interpret this outburst as an oblique returning of thanks for the Astor lunches and dinners on which Labour's elect were once fed when on the threshold of ministerial power, although there is no reason why the floor of the House should be the chosen sounding board for vicarious eructations.

But even had Lady Astor's question been relevant, the proper answer to her would have been to point out that her intervention in the discussion savoured of impropriety. However the law may define her *locus standi*, she is an American, "enjoying our hospitality" just as the Germans did before 1914; and what evidences are available tend to support the presumption that America is yet her spiritual home. We quoted from a United States journal the other day the declaration that naval fighting power is economic bargaining power. It is a perfectly true declaration, and its implications are important. On the distribution of cruisers depends the distribution of trade opportunities; and any external pressure brought to bear on Britain's naval policy is an attack on Britain's food supplies; for these depend, under the existing system, on our general trade opportunities. So the answer to Lady Astor is that she herself, however unwittingly, is an agency of attack on Britain's food supplies.

A country dependent, as Britain is, on imported food, wants to see food production expanded in exporting countries. Instead of that, there is a deliberate policy everywhere to restrict production. As an instance, the National City Bank of New York, in its October "Letter," deals with this subject apropos of the complaints of neglect urged by American agriculturists.

"The problem of the surplus is the burden of all arguments for farm relief, and the most troublesome surplus is that which has arisen from the persistent expansion of farming operations. A surplus which is due to favourable weather conditions and a crop above the average presents the simplest problem, because on the average it will be needed to cover subsequent deficits."

"The surplus due to seemingly temporary conditions affords the most plausible argument for governmental action, but if there were any certainty that the surplus were temporary, private enterprise and capital would readily do the carrying at low cost. The trouble is that there is no certainty, and the outcome would be still more uncertain if the producer were assured in advance that the Government would protect him against the consequences of over-production. In the event of an increasing surplus the Government would be compelled to either abandon the attempt to maintain prices or undertake to regulate production." (Our italics.)

Here is a frank statement that an attack on Britain's food supplies is in progress. American banking is not going to encourage agricultural development, with its dreaded "surpluses" which would break prices and enable Britain to feed herself "on the cheap," and reduce her labour costs. Of course, this policy is not one-sided; Britain is doing the same in the case, for instance, of rubber—the only difference being that whereas requirements of food are vital, requirements of rubber are not. The danger is general. The more fundamental the nature of supplies the more strictly their provision is restricted. It is useful to observe here that while the Malthusians are going about prophesying death because of the pressure of population on the means of subsistence, the bankers are prophesying financial ruin if that pressure be lightened. It must be clear to the most casual observer that the only consequence of the success of birth-control, while the present financial policy prevails, will be a corresponding contraction of subsistence.

As with wheat, so with sugar. A pact was signed a fortnight ago between Cuba, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland, in which the latter three countries agreed to support the Cuban policy tending to "normalise and stabilise relations between production and consumption of sugar throughout the world." Colonel Tarafa, the Cuban representative and chairman of the Sugar Conference, explained to Reuter's correspondent that the proposed limitation of production did not mean that there would be "under-production," nor "price-inflation"; it only meant the "avoidance of over-production," so as not to let the price down and cause a "crisis." Admirable. They are going to produce exactly as much sugar as consumers need? No, not so much as that. As consumers can buy at a price remunerative to the associated industries? That is more like it. And what will be the price? It must at least contain charges for the development and depreciation of the industries, the replacement of capital—charges which will be additional to all the money that may be paid out to potential consumers while the price is being built up. In a word, to avoid a "crisis," the Sugar Combine must collect more money for its sugar, whatever the quantity, than it will ever set free for individuals to spend on the consumption of sugar. The Combine may be successful, because its revenue will come from individual incomes derived from occupation in other business organisations. What will happen to these other industrialists when they, in turn, want to recover their costs and profit

is no concern of the Sugar Combine, of course. But it should be of vital concern to statesmen. Not only is the total flow of personal incomes to consumers proceeding at a fraction of the rate at which prices are accumulating, but people like Sir Alfred Mond are making matters worse by attracting part of those incomes back as investments under co-partnership schemes.

Sir Lennox Russell has been, as he says, "ventilating" the suggestion of a Shareholders' Association in *The Times*. The association would watch the interests of "large and small investors"—the lions and the lambs—so it will have to be pretty smart at its job. *The Daily News*, in a comment on the proposal, says that the breaking up of the land monopoly has enhanced the importance of the small investor. We should like to have seen the writer explain this statement, but he is content to make it and pass on. Not that we need his explanation, but we would have liked to see how he handled it. In an economy where the banks force industry to draw all its long-term finance from the earnings of private individuals (which is what ultimately happens, how-ever disguised in the form of company investments ever disguised in the form of company investments of reserves, and so on), it stands to reason that as one class of the community becomes impoverished the others have to take up its burden and supply the funds for expanding or maintaining fixed capital. This, as we have pointed out before, knocks the bottom out of the case for "dispossessing the Capitalist" as the means of increasing the reverse-standard of living. Whatever class gets the reversal of the capitalist's emoluments must use them as he has been obliged to do, unless, of course, it changes the whole scheme of credit finance at the same time. Whether industry shall be financed out of surplus profits or surplus wages is of no particular concern to the financial hierarchy. What is of concern is that the principle of private investment must be maintained at all costs. Now that the worker-investor is coming into fashion, it was to be expected that he would be "organised," and directed by a centralised authority. There are two reasons. The first is to prevent him from putting his money into the "wrong" sort of enterprise. This will probably include the process of protecting him against the bogus share-swindler, and to that extent will be of use to him. But the objective will not be so much to save him from losing money (that is a certainty, anyway) as to nurse him for placing it where the bankers consider it should go. The second reason is one of general policy. It is notorious that the fluence of small shareholders on the policy of their company directors is nil. That has been because this type has belonged to the middle class, which has shown no disposition to organise in respect of its desires or grievances. But if, in future, there is to be a wide and rapid extension of investing by the working classes, there is the danger that, already being organised in Trade Unions, these unions, in default of an alternative, may constitute themselves the guardians of their investor-members' interests. Considering that the victimisation of a single earner, as such, has often precipitated a strike, it is easily conceivable that the grievance of a packed trade-unionist investor might result in a packed shareholders' annual meeting—an entirely novel and disturbing phenomenon. Or, alternatively, every workman might make his Trade Union the repository of his proxy—where proxy voting were allowed. This would not do at all, especially now that the new Company laws are going to flood the board rooms of industry with bankers and their nominees. How much better, then, to mobilise all these investors in a "national" Association, whose Executive (manned by officials nominated by the City) would examine complaints "impartially," and certify whether they

were "reasonable" or not. The Association could depute its officials to interview the boards of the companies, and their decisions would be final. There would then be no need for shareholders' meetings at all; or, if such meetings were held (for form's sake) an obstinate shareholder who still persisted in making himself obnoxious could be prosecuted for "brawling." This is fanciful; but it is logic. Once allow that the banker knows best what is for the greatest benefit to the greatest number and you cannot resist the conclusion that he ought to represent the credit-financier, the proprietor, and the investor in his single person. Deny this trinity and you ought to be burnt at the stake.

We have to correct a mistake which occurred in the Press report of Mr. Kiddy's speech at Norwich. The report made him say that the present moment was "inopportune" for a "further and fuller consideration of our currency system." He writes to the *Eastern Daily Press* of November 19 saying that the word he used was "opportune." We publish the correction in fairness to Mr. Kiddy. It seemed to us inconsequential at the time for him to have suggested that the proposed transfer of currency notes to the Bank of England made an inquiry inopportune, but so much licence is taken with logic nowadays by bankers' spokesmen that we considered it more probable that he had really said it than that he had not. In any case, the correction leaves us unmoved. Our recollection is that the inquiry he referred to was, in his phrase, to be "conducted by experts." Experts! Dear, dear. Well, we'll try to keep awake. But they must include a colonel on the Commission—and in uniform. A real colonel, mind; or we shall snore.

Lord Beaverbrook is an expert, and has just issued a pamphlet entitled "The Only Way to Save the"—no, not Newspaper Industry—but "the Coal Industry." An expert is not without honour, save in his own business. Lord Beaverbrook's scheme has one great merit; it can be stated in a sentence, namely, "to amalgamate all existing collieries and their business off-shoots into one vast company—which I call the '100 per cent. Trust.'" He claims five advantages. The first is that the Trust would have one common selling organisation. This would enable it to sell coal at a price which would pay good profits and wages, but would be so low as to be (under present conditions) "ruinous to each separate competing colliery." There is no magic; it is all common-sense. "I will push this home to you," he says. Thus:

"The existing colliery reckons the profit or loss it makes on each ton it produces by the price of coal at the pit-head. The Trust, selling direct to the coal-user, the manufacturer, or the producer of electric power, would reckon its selling price as the price at which a ton was sold to the consumer. The distinction is vital."

The second advantage is that the Trust would have a common buying system. It could standardise the machinery and material it used, and could get it much more cheaply on that account. The third is "unification of the development of coal-seams," by which the Trust could calculate its development to "fit in" with its total labour supply. The fourth is the saving in transportation and the abolition of separate private ownership of trucks, giving place to a single pool of rolling stock. The fifth is the abolition of the redundant director.

The comprehensive answer to all this is that it amounts to a subsidy for the coal industry. Lord Beaverbrook does not quote aggregate figures of the coal industry's (a) present (b) prospective revenue and expenditure in the directions he surveys. If he did,

everyone would see that outside persons or industries would have to surrender an immense amount of revenue as a result of his scheme. They would hotly object; and that is one good reason why the coal owners have not carried out a similar scheme themselves. There is nothing novel in the idea of saving costs. Lord Beaverbrook says that the Trust could "only be effected by financiers, who, of course, must be paid for their services." Moreover, legislation would be necessary to coerce refractory parties into acquiescence. Given these things, the Trust could be formed, but only at the price of confiscation elsewhere in the country.

It is very easy to talk about the Trust's being able to reckon the price to the coal-user as measuring its revenue instead of its price at the pit-head. But let us see this price itemised. If the price to the user belongs wholly to the Trust then the Trust must be performing all the services represented in the price. These include, to eliminate all else, coal dealers' functions and railway freights. But when we turn to see what the Trust would acquire and pay for at its inauguration, only the mines themselves are enumerated in the pamphlet. So apparently the Trust is to collar the gross profits of the coal-dealers, and all of the railway freights on coal, without paying a penny to anybody for the right. We do not suppose for a moment that Lord Beaverbrook is visionary enough to intend this, but when he says that all the money a coal-user pays for coal is to be revenue for the Trust, he is implying it. It is strange to see him standing for a confiscation principle which has been discarded by the Independent Labour Party.

On a motion by Lord Gainford, who asked for a public enquiry by the Central Electricity Board into the proposed electricity scheme for the south-west area of England, the Government was defeated in the House of Lords on November 23. Lord Gainford stated that 95 out of the 102 municipal undertakings affected were protesting against the threatening action of the Board of Control in refusing the investigation which was provided for in the Act of last year. Lord Askwith supported Lord Gainford. Viscount Peel, replying for the Government, said that it was not able to guarantee that an enquiry would be held: that was a matter of the Electricity Board's discretion. Incidentally he denied that he had given any assurance when the Bill was debated that there would be a supply of cheaper electricity everywhere. What he had said was that in certain parts of the country cheaper electricity would be provided. Criticism from another angle appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* last week. It publishes a report of a speech by Mr. F. W. Purse, president of the Incorporated Municipal Electrical Association, the Eastbourne Rotary Club, in which he told his audience that all that was claimed for the electricity centralisation system was "balderdash." It would be far inferior to the present service.

"Eighty-foot standards would be a menace to aircraft in foggy weather or at night. In time of war it would be easy for enemy airplanes to bomb the central generating stations, put the whole country in darkness, and deprive it of all power."

This argument will recall Major Douglas's reference to the strategic dangers of this excessive zeal for centralisation in his articles entitled "Energy from Coal," which appeared in our issues of April 22 and 29, 1926. In the latter article he gave technical reasons showing that, besides the danger that Mr. Purse urges, these huge generating stations, by their very size—their appetite for both coal and water—would have to be built on or near our coasts, thus rendering them easily accessible to enemy attack, not to speak of the inevitably contiguous river, which would serve the aircraft as a signpost. These articles

would repay close attention by people who object to the scheme. It is a sinister reflection that its adoption would thus amount to an act of disarmament. It seems almost as if the unknown rulers of British policy are pursuing a peace-compelling objective by the process of driving us imperceptibly into a position where we shall one day wake up and find that we dare not risk war under any provocation. We suggest that this is a far more urgent matter for such bodies as the Navy League to agitate about than the question of a cruiser or two more or less under construction. This massing of electrical power is just as false as the Germans' massing of military power. Quick improvisation and initiative are nine points of the law of offence and defence: and centralisation of any sort is the negation of both.

The second part of Major Douglas's article is postponed until next week.

The M.M. Club will meet on Friday next, December 2. The formal part of the proceedings will commence at 6.15 p.m., and be over by eight o'clock. All members and guests are asked to do their best to be present by 6.15, so as to avoid interrupting the discussion. Light refreshments or meals will be available from five o'clock until 6.15 and after eight o'clock. Enquiries respecting membership should be addressed to the Secretary, the M.M. Club, c/o "The New Age," 70, High Holborn, London, W.C.1.

"The introduction in recent years of automatic-machine methods in bottle manufacture in the United States, which had replaced hand methods by the opening of the present business era, gives a striking picture of the American industrial revolution. By hand methods seven men could produce 540 four-ounce bottles per hour. To-day a single automatic machine produces over 10,000 bottles an hour. Average output in the hand shop was 77 bottles a man per hour, while with automatic machines the average is over 3,000 bottles a man per hour. With hand methods the labour cost was over \$1 per gross of bottles produced, but with machinery the labour cost per gross is but little over three cents. In pressed glassware it used to take nine men an hour to produce 279 tumblers, which averages thirty-one pieces per man per hour. An automatic machine now produces over 1,900 pieces per hour, a rate of 381 pieces per man per hour. Labour cost by hand was nearly two dollars per hundred, and with the automatic process it is only thirteen cents a hundred."—*Barron's Weekly*, July 25, 1927.

"Mr. Henry Ford has apologised again. This time the recipient of his regrets is Mr. Herman Bernstein, the well-known Jewish editor. The Ford magazine, the *Dearborn Independent*, had called Mr. Bernstein, in the latter's paraphrase of the accusation, 'a sort of spy in the service of a mythical combination of international Jewish bankers.' Mr. Bernstein sued Mr. Ford for £40,000 for libel. The suits were withdrawn, and Mr. Ford will contribute liberally to Mr. Bernstein's expenses, and will spend a large sum spreading his retraction as widely as possible."—*Manchester Guardian*, July 26, 1927.

"Most authorities are agreed that the inability of this country to lift itself out of the slough of trade depression is due directly to the monetary deflation attendant on the restoration of the gold standard. No doubt other factors may be cited, such as industrial strife, high taxation, excessive social expenditure, and international tariff barriers and trading restrictions. It remains, however, that deflation has been the chief blighting influence. . . . The question of the debts alone is important enough to make the prospect of deflation appear an unmixed calamity."—*The Statist*, September 3, 1927.

"An interesting event took place on the eve of Sir Basil Zaharoff's departure for Paris after his recent visit to London, when the chairman of Vickers, Ltd., on behalf of all the directors, presented him with a handsome cup on the completion of fifty years' connection with the company. The plinth on which the cup rests bears the following inscription: 'Presented to Sir Basil Zaharoff, G.C.B., G.B.E., by the Chairman and Directors of Vickers, Ltd., on the completion of fifty years' connection with the company and as a mark of their great appreciation of the valuable work which he has done for them and of their sincere gratitude and high esteem.'"—*Lloyds List and Shipping Gazette*, October 17, 1927.

Minutiæ.

By J. W. Gibbon.

Outside homoeopathic practice increasing numbers of medical men are gradually discarding drugs as therapeutic agents and resorting to other methods of healing. Such neglect of drug therapy destroys what should be a carefully maintained symmetry whereby each diseased condition is met by the precise form of treatment yielding not only immediate amelioration, but also permanent cure. Dr. Bier attributes the disfavour into which drug therapy has fallen to the influence of the pharmacologists; and their one-sided position he attributes to over-estimation of the value of the chemical experiment of applying massive doses to the human body, denial of the action of small doses, and failure to recognise "the tremendous difference between the action of many agents on the healthy and that on the sick, and among the latter between the acute and the chronic conditions.

Though the fundamental law of homoeopathy can be demonstrated apart from the question of the dosage, that question is important, because of the better results secured in certain circumstances by the higher potencies, i.e., the minutest doses, especially in chronic diseases. In all diseased conditions the whole body reacts to either large or small dose; but the character of the reaction differs enormously. In irritant therapy it became evident that administration of a large dose of the appropriate irritant caused a general reaction of the whole body, while the diseased area was not affected beyond the degree that the whole organism was affected. Following administration of a minute dose of the same irritant, however, the general bodily reaction could hardly be detected, but the particular reaction of the diseased area was much more powerful than that resulting from the large dose, due to the greater sensitiveness of the afflicted part. Stated in general terms, therefore, large doses act generally and non-specifically, while minute doses act particularly and specifically.

Dr. Bier comments on the seeming anomaly that materials, such as sulphur, which are absorbed in comparatively large quantities daily with our food, have an extraordinarily strong therapeutic effect when administered in minute quantities. The only conclusion possible is that the form in which the drug is given is the deciding factor. This will account for the success of the homoeopath with his carefully prepared and refined forms of substances used in much cruder form and stronger doses as herbal remedies. Dr. Bier retorts upon the criticism of the pharmacologists that because they cannot measure them, small doses can have no effect. Such small quantities of certain substances as elude chemical tests may be detected by sense-perception. Musk is given as one instance, and the statement of E. Fischer and Penzoldt is quoted "that a four hundred and sixty millionth of a milligram of Merkap-tan sufficed to produce olfactory perception." There is no marvel, therefore, in finding exceptionally small quantities of material causing distinct physiologic results.

Subjective symptoms convey little, if anything, to the orthodox practitioner. He remains satisfied with a ready diagnosis based on the broad physical symptoms either described by the patient, or discovered by examination. If physical symptoms are a signpost to the homoeopathic physician, however, subjective symptoms are a veritable flash of light illuminating a dark road and showing the way ahead. For this reason, while homoeopathic provings of drugs on animals have their sphere of usefulness, and have enabled a system of homoeopathic veterinary treatment to be formulated, they do not supplant provings on human beings, for in the former case subjective symptoms do not emerge at all. Lacking

the guidance of subjective symptoms the homoeopathic practitioner would often be at a great disadvantage in selecting the appropriate remedy.

In some instances one of the conditions of orthodox treatment is that the patient must radically alter his mode of life, or seek a different occupation, a condition often entailing loss of livelihood. That such a stipulation is less often imposed when the law of similars underlies the treatment is instanced by a chronic malady that affected Dr. Bier himself. After suffering from muscular rheumatism for over seven years, and being treated unsuccessfully by electricity, massage, baths, hot air, and selected exercises, a clinical assistant, A. Zimmer, undertook the case and cured it in a month, and any recurring symptoms were found to yield to the same medicine, although the main pre-disposing factor—long periods of standing during operations—continued to exist.

Despite the small compass of Dr. Bier's pamphlet, it builds up by many illustrations an overwhelming case for the law of similars. Dr. Bier's researches are characterised by remarkable versatility. Even the most homely sources of inspiration have yielded practical corroboration of the law of healing under investigation. The familiar plan of exposing a recently burnt part of the body to heat is obviously a case of treating like by like. Following the line of research thus suggested, Dr. Bier made tests using one application for a short time of a hot air shower at a temperature of about 100 degrees. He reports, "The pain disappears at once, vesicles dry and proliferation of epithelium takes place very rapidly."

Dr. Bier indicates three types of common maladies by which his professional colleagues can put homoeopathy to the test; iodine as a remedy for coryza, sulphur for the staphylo-mycoses of the skin, and ether for bronchitis. In the case of iodine and coryza Dr. Bier was again prompted to experiment by his own indisposition. Attacked by heavy colds for several decades, and finding the usual remedies ineffective, Dr. Bier reasoned that as iodine in large doses caused coryza and inflammations of the mucous membrane, minute doses ought to possess a curative effect. Putting the matter to the test, iodine in homoeopathic dilution was found to be effective both as cure and prophylactic, and an attack of influenza during an epidemic ran a mild and very short course when countered by the same remedy. Unacquainted at the time with the established homoeopathic use of iodine, but aware of the effect of large doses, and applying the law of similars, Dr. Bier was able purely by deductive reasoning to select the correct remedy.

Association of skin abscesses, eruptions, and furunculosis with chronic sulphur poisoning induced Dr. Bier to devote attention to the possible use of sulphur in homoeopathic form in treating staphylo-mycoses of the skin. He found such obdurate conditions as furunculosis, discrete acute furuncles (tumours or boils), incipient carbuncle, acne vulgaris, acne indurata, acne rosacea, sycosis non-parasitica, pyoderma, and impetigo simplex gave striking results when treated by sulphur, though naturally in such a variety of conditions the results were not uniformly successful. In the baffling and stubborn disease of furunculosis Dr. Bier attained a measure of success with the quartz "Finsen light," which for that malady excelled other forms of ray therapy; but on sulphur being tried subsequently it was found to be better, simpler, and cheaper. Of thirty-four cases of furunculosis in which the sulphur treatment was tested, all were cured without relapse, including several which for varying periods up to three years had constantly relapsed, despite treatment by quartz lamp, yeast, arsenic, and auto-hemic therapy.

The Films.

Secrets of Nature: British Instructional.

Mr. Bernard Shaw, who introduced "Secrets of Nature" at a trade show; was ever a valiant champion of hopeless causes. Mr. Shaw's remarks on the fatuity of vicarious "sex-appeal" and the pathological condition of most exhibitors were refreshing, but not new. His observation that such features as the "Pathé Gazette" are popular because they bring people back to earth was to the point. But when he tries to transfer this virtue to "Secrets of Nature" we must venture to disagree. Real life is interesting, and nowhere more so than on the screen. But life under the microscope is not, except to a limited audience. "The Nursery of the Cormorant," a picture of the birth and growth of cormorants on an island off the coast of Wales, was fascinating and beautiful. If there were more such films, we should feel there was still some hope for the land of glory. When we were shown "Plants of the Pantry," a study of the growth of mould on cheese, I felt first inclined to laugh and then to yawn. And when I saw the life-cycle of a caterpillar I wanted to be sick. "Days in the life of a woodlouse" (there is no such film yet, but there may be soon) are all right—for entomologists. But the British public is composed of men with wider interests. If we are to judge them by what they read, they have Pope's view of proper studies; and while those studies may be stretched to include the animal kingdom (as in "Chang," and Cherry Kearton's pictures of wild life across the world), they will not, I fear, be extended to worms.

Fire.

"Fire" has fortunately left London, but may still be inflicted on the provinces. The aim of this film—to pay tribute to the heroes of peace—is of the highest. The subject, offering opportunities for movement and melodrama, is such as any producer might have prayed for. The presentation, at the Tivoli, was calculated to induce the right frame of mind. There was a good noise of galloping off the stage, and the orchestra blew whistles and banged away with a will. There were magnificent scenes of horses racing along a street by night, and of the firemen at work. But the picture as a whole was disappointing. For no good reason at all the hero is made to fall in love with the daughter of the jerry-builder whose activities kept the firemen busy. As if that were not enough, a "gorgeous" colour scene is added and the heroine gives a party to show how nice she looks in fancy dress. There is a generous display of opulence, a pretty exhibition of snobbery, and the usual sticky love-making. All are no doubt excellent in their way, and, since they form part of almost every film, we must assume that people like them.

"The Arcadians."

"The Arcadians" has so far been shown only to the trade, who seemed to like it. The story is that of the musical comedy, "adapted" and "modernised," of course. The modernisation consists chiefly in the addition of caption "jokes" such as the reference to an aeroplane as a "Levine-ithian"; and in the introduction into the night-club scenes of Teddy Brown and his xylophone. The story again is one which might have been made into an excellent film. And again there were too many scraps from other arts mixed with it. There was no need, for instance, to bring in a popular artist—the point was stressed by the appearance of Teddy Brown and a jazz band on the stage before the film began. He added nothing to the film—his medium is sound—and his presence gave colour to the assertion that the film was incapable of standing by itself.

W. H. H.

Paul Valéry.*

By Hugh M'Diarmid.

"The intelligent man must finally reduce himself knowingly to an indefinite refusal to be anything whatsoever."—VALÉRY.

The whole point of the neo-classical tendency which is increasingly manifesting itself in all the arts is being ludicrously missed by those who are confusing it with a return to any "classical" formalism instead of to fundamental Form and are welcoming the apparent volte-face of most of our advanced composers—e.g., Stravinsky, Bartok, Casella—as a repudiation of their "wild oats" instead of a far more intensive cultivation of them.

The meaning of the effort to "depersonalise" music—to rid it of its literary, personal and humanistic element, and to hail the time when all instrumental music will be played by mechanical reproducing instruments as a means to this end—is akin to that of Mallarmé when he said, "Ce n'est pas avec des idées qu'on fait des vers, c'est avec des mots," or to Valéry's own call for a "language machine." All the arts must disencumber themselves completely of the moral and ethical clichés, the dreary literalism, the empty bombast, the democratic insistence on "more meaning," the Messianic illusion, by which they are presently confused and confounded. All kinds of eloquence are having their necks wrung with a thoroughness as unprecedented as it is vitally necessary. Let us regard all the arts altogether technically. Let us, in particular, disabuse ourselves of the idea that art becomes great in direct ratio to the number—and consequently relative ignorance—of those to whom it appeals. Let us get rid of all the solemn awe-struck nonsense about genius, all the high-falutation about "poets being born, not made," and the like, and all the brainless rhodomontade about "architecture being frozen music," music "volatilised architecture," and the rest of the fatuous journalese. Let us acquire some such sane and self-respecting attitude to ourselves and our readers as Valéry's. "M. Valéry would at once concede that neither in his choice of themes nor in his treatment of them is he concerned to stir the common heart of man."

Mr. Fisher's essay is an attempt, with the inevitable reservations and caveats, to explain such a position as Valéry takes up (which is even more antipathetic to the English spirit than any other in Europe) to a wider public than that small section of our intelligentsia who are constitutionally fitted to receive it. An amusing instance of the difficulties of Mr. Fisher (who shares most of the less obvious disabilities of the majority of those he is presumably addressing) may be cited. He complains of the effects of bathos experienced in connection with work of this kind by the ordinary reader who "cannot altogether succeed in divesting music from meaning," or live in that "light from a solitary wing" which permits the undiverted pursuit of a poet guided solely by considerations of euphony. And he instances the closing lines from "Le Sylphe." "Then comes the bathos. A rhyme must be found for promises. M. Valéry lights upon *chemises*, and so we have

Ni vu ni connu
le temps d'un sein nu
Entre deux chemises!

"Clearly the sylph has made a precipitate retreat. The *deux chemises* may be euphonious, but they are not inspired. . . ."

What amuses me (as a result of this fatal association of ideas) is that a little earlier Mr. Fisher trans-

* "Paul Valéry." By the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2s.)

lates from Valéry a passage in which the concluding sentence is rendered as follows: "This singular angle of vision prevents me from forming a reasonable judgment on . . . any kind of work which takes man as he appears to us, as a unit or element in its combination."

Instead of accusing Valéry of "having set himself an impossible task," whilst himself attempting in a public lecture the impossible task of explaining an author who is professedly inexplicable save, perhaps, to the few, Mr. Fisher would have done better to have used some such terms as Prince Mirsky's concerning Blok: "A large part of his work will seem to the uninitiated nothing better than verbal and phonic play; it must joyfully be accepted as such, and as such it is very exhilarating." Or he should have pointed out the bearing of Valéry's work to kindred work in all the arts throughout Europe to-day, e.g., his relationship to such a poet as Khlebnikov.

"Rather a conjuror playing with the language than what we understand by the word 'poet.' All things were only a material for him to build up a new world of words, a creation of genius but obviously not for the general. He is not, and probably never will be, read except by the poets and philologists. The poets have found him an inexhaustible mine of good example and useful doctrine, a granary whence they take the seeds for their harvests. His work is also of great interest to the philologists, for he was a lord of language. He knew its hidden possibilities and forced it to reveal them. His work is a microcosm reflecting on an enormously magnified scale the creative processes of the whole life-story of the language."

Infinitely rarer and more important phenomena, poets such as these, than what Mr. Fisher would have preferred Valéry to have been! In the face of all that has happened since Rimbaud, he exclaims: "Let it not, however, be imagined that the symbolist movement was wholly barren!"

This masterpiece of ineptitude—a howler raised to the nth—reminds me of the canny Scot who, when Professor Legouis made his shocking disclosures of Wordsworth's French *liaison*, took it upon himself to assure M. Legouis that "nevertheless they in Great Britain would continue to regard Wordsworth as a great poet!"

What Valéry says—and practises so marvellously—of his "comprehensive exclusions," of his object "being in a certain sense to eliminate life," and of his inability to give all sorts of phenomena, popularly believed to constitute it, any place in poetry at all, reminds me of Shestov, who abandoned his religious immoralism and irrationalism and fell back on the most ordinary common sense whenever he had to deal with anything so unimportant as the world of ordinary experiences, the conduct of men, and the facts of history;—or of Rozanov who wrote Conservative articles in the *Novoe Vremya*, and Radical articles in the *Russkoe Slovo*, but, when charged with anything outrageous. Politics were to him a very minor business that could not be brought *sub speciem aeternitatis*. What interested him in both parties were only the various individualities that went to form them, their 'taste,' their 'flavour,' their 'atmosphere.'"

As Valéry says: "Learned poetry is a profoundly sceptical art." No doubt Mr. Fisher is satisfied that he was competent—and has efficiently discharged the task he set himself. But the relation of that task to the subject "Paul Valéry" is different in degree, but not in kind to that relation between what Shelley meant by "Love," and that passion of the butcher-boy for the kitchen maid with which he was rightly afraid it might be confounded. M. Valéry will have no difficulty in refusing to be what Mr. Fisher has made him.

Drama.

"Creditors": Art Theatre Club.

Shaw in one breath describes "The Glimpse of Reality"—which preceded Strindberg's "Creditors"—as "a trifle" . . . "written in an idle moment," and in another as a tragedietta. Perhaps this diminutive is an apology, a Shavianism for the servants, "only a little one." It is almost a shock to learn that Shaw ever had an idle moment, but he is to be congratulated on using it for an effort to escape from the well-known personalities which people his plays, and to adventure into tragedy and character. Throughout this play of an Italian nobleman, a brigand-innkeeper, his daughter, and her fisherman lover, however, the characters are continually striving to be Shaw, and have to be repeatedly pulled back to their own spheres. The result is filled with incongruities. One cannot help being amazed at such obscurity of purpose in any Shaw play. Count Ferruccio is a cross between a nobleman and the Shaw caricature of a nobleman. Squarcio is a cross between an innkeeper of noble blood who murders for profit and the Shaw outlaw endowed with the Shaw philosophy. Giulia is about half-and-half the woman who gives uncompromising feudal loyalty to her family and an Ann Whitefield. After Ferruccio has had his glimpse of reality—which is not apparently the shadow of death so much as the contact with somebody who does not care a straw for his noble blood—Shaw does not make it clear whether he is to be killed by Squarcio and Sandro, to be escorted from the neighbourhood, or to marry Giulia. Which of these will happen can be guessed only by experience of Shaw, who, as is well known, bans marriage in his plays. Had he not to write an epilogue to "Pygmalion" to prevent Eliza from marrying Higgins?

The actors felt these difficulties. Harcourt Williams hesitated between being Count Ferruccio and a voice for the oration of Shaw's epigrammatic wisdom. On the only occasion that he had to deliver a long speech his elocution was a delight to hear. But how much caricature and clowning he was at liberty to put into his toothache and into such things as his exposition of the social functions of nobles he did not seem able to make up his mind.

Of Strindberg's "Creditors" one regrets again that so fine a play so well performed and produced in so intimate and beautiful a theatre should be presented for only four performances, and that at the third there should be only half an audience. The manager called on to answer the assertion that the public would flock to see good works has a right to point to the reception of this play and to go on with "Dudes and Dollars." Here is a living work that holds intelligence from start to finish. The curtain is up for nearly an hour and a half without a dull second. Every sentence contains a thought. Each of the three characters is both alive and revealed. In a note on the programme the producer, Mr. Maurice Browne, who played Adolph with such insight that he thrilled the audience with an intellectual study, recalls that Edwin Björkman—whose careful and conscientious translation is used—spoke of the three main characters as "pure cultures" of their own strongest characteristics (self-love, self-pity, and self-righteousness). This, while containing a basis of truth, is dangerous doctrine for English readers and playgoers who are liable to try "reducing a chord to one note." *Creditors* almost forms one of a trio which includes also "The Father" and "Miss Julie." In each, although the author gave certain qualities of character prominence in the hierarchy of total personality, he nevertheless attempted to construct whole men and women. His pure cultures implied grouping in one person and in true proportions all the characteristics that

accompany one another. While the husband in this play represents self-pity, he also represents the fate of a soul whose image has been attached to the man-woman, to the blood-sucker, and who himself takes a feminine rôle for self-preservation. She lives at his expense vitally and spiritually without recognising her debt. Similarly the divorced husband, on the lore of whose mind the wife made her literary reputation, is far more than self-righteousness, and the production would have been still better had this been more clearly brought out. This man Gustav was also one of her creditors, who had come to demand the fulfilment, one way or another, of his bond. His self-righteousness is in no mean degree the superiority of one emancipated from this race-hating, race-eating type of woman, who cannot be loyal to her own baby. Similarly with Tekla, it is far from evident that Strindberg, a most conscious artist, would have agreed to the quality of self-love as the keystone of her character. Granted that self-love is there, and that Mr. Browne is right to give it so brief and vernacular a name, Tekla was nevertheless the woman obsessed by the will-to-power—in a word, the "man-woman," a term which he actually used of Miss Julie. If the phrase "masculine protest" had been fashioned when Strindberg wrote, he would surely have adopted it. Tekla, having conquered one man, was under a compulsion to assail another. Wherever she went her pre-eminence had to be acknowledged or she would betray. Either her innings lasted all the time or she took her bat home. Of the division of mankind's labour between man and woman into fighting, hunting, and sitting about for one party, and the rest, including nursing, house-keeping, farming, and bearing, for the other, Tekla had no conception. She recognised only submission to her will: flatteries, compliments, reputation, limelight. She is a sort of woman who, in the past, according to Strindberg, was less plentiful than of recent years, and who generally became courtesan, or even changed her clothes for a man's, and carried off the deception as long as possible. Now she is a prevailing type, whether for good or for ill, whether to challenge man or to punish him. Those critics who profess that Strindberg represented men and misrepresented women are either still blind to social changes that he saw and felt, or are themselves in the position of the husband in the play. If news arrived that the married women's union of the United States had forbidden all American menfolk to see a Strindberg play, only those critics would need to show astonishment; and before they were covered, the British alliance of women workers of all classes and de-classes, including many wives, would have followed suit. Most characterisation in modern plays consists of repetition of patterns, especially patterns of superficialities. One character is breezy and swears; another is quiet and polite; another is contradictory and rebellious. In *Creditors* the characters are almost stripped of superficialities—or may one say that these are left to the intelligence of the actor to supply? The author's aim is to get together the inevitably associated qualities of spirit, the very essences of character. Out of these all else grows. While these three people are one individual woman and two individual men, they are, in addition, woman and man, of a certain breed, in two relationships. The play manifests a herculean effort to weld into one organic work of art eternal forces, temporary men and women, and sociological tendencies. That Strindberg had penetrated into the final secret of man's relationship to woman, a relationship bearable to men in general only because they do not see it, neither Strindberg nor his greatest admirers would pretend. But he did use his vision truthfully, and it is no use blinking in the hope that realities may change colour. The

worker-woman threatens the artist-man as the worker-bee at one time, before her conquest was complete, must have threatened the hive-developing drone; though the worker-woman is by no means so serious a threat as the *pseudo*-worker woman, who busybodies about the world in everybody's way under the illusion of service. Tekla went to a meeting and found it dull! Strindberg tried to teach that woman is liable to be cannibal just as she is fitted to be mother, and that she can choose the one, in the absence of a powerful governing discipline, as readily as the other.

As Gustav, Townsend Whiting did not give the intimate impression of thinking aloud which is needed in Strindberg. At times he appeared almost to fancy himself reciting—which is good for Shaw, but not in tune with Strindberg. Maurice Browne's studied Adolph, with its convincing soul-torture and thought-agonies, is referred to above. Ellen van Volkenburg's Tekla was also, while perhaps a little too restrained at times, played with sure understanding of her author and medium.

PAUL BANKS.

Rural Life and Lore.

VI.—ON CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

As a general rule, cruelty is felt more by animals in captivity than when in a state of nature. What I mean is the fear of the animal as well as the way it is hunted and killed. When animals have been accustomed to human beings, and then are turned out to be hunted, that is when they feel most terror. And even then it is more to do with the fact that they are put out on unfamiliar ground, and not near their natural runs, which makes them hesitate where to go when the dogs are after them.

You take an otter. I have often seen an otter, during a hunt, after diving and swimming away from the hounds, and leaving them trying to pick up his scent again, come up out of the stream and lie in the sun, basking and cleaning himself. Then when the dogs got near, down he would go into the water again. There does not seem to be much terror about that. The deaths, too, of these animals look cruel, especially when dogs tear them to pieces; but death is usually instantaneous.

One kind of cruelty is to shorten a dog's tail when he has got mature. It should always be done before he is fourteen days old. Then the tail should be bitten off, not chopped off. The reason is that the man who has to do this can feel with his teeth for one of the joints in the tail and bite through the soft part. He must not let his teeth meet, because there are two strings which must be pulled out of the stump left on the dog. These strings come out easily as they are attached most strongly to the end of the tail. If they are left in the stump, it is always stiff afterwards: if they are drawn out it is flexible and has a curve, and the dog looks much better. This operation does not hurt a pup.

When all is said, whatever cruelty is done to a hunted animal is done once, and done for ever. It is the cruelty done over and over again to tame animals that ought to be put down. Take an under proper control; for it goes on drawing at the cow after she has parted with all the milk she ought to. What is the consequence? Sometimes you see the milk streaked with blood. Nobody is going to tell me that that can happen without the cow feeling pain. As a matter of fact, you can tell she feels it's against nature, and may hurt her when they milk her that way, because she haunches herself up as though

to resist the suction. You must understand, too, that a cow needs some of her milk to feed her own body. It is a great evil, this doing away with hand-milking, and particularly women milkers. It is unnatural for rough hands to come in contact with a cow's teats. A woman's fingers are soft and sensitive. An experienced girl will coax the cow to yield up her milk, but, more important, she will know by instinct when to stop milking. She knows that cows differ, like human beings, and that it suits some to be milked "tighter" than others. It is as important not to take too little milk away as it is not to take too much. There is something in a woman which tells her exactly when the right point is reached: it is an instinct between her and the animal. Cows get to know who is milking them, just like horses know who is riding them. It was well known on farms where I worked that if they changed the milkmaid for one that the cow was less accustomed to, she would get less milk from her.

There is another thing that looks like very great cruelty, but it is not; that is the searing of a horse's leg with a red-hot iron—commonly called "firing." If you watched it you would say it must be torture. They burn a groove down the front of the leg, maybe an inch to an inch and a quarter deep in through the hide and flesh, so that you can see the bone laid bare. Yet, not only does the horse make no sound, but it is rare for him even to flinch. This is done as a cure for lameness which arises when the horse develops "side-bones" or "round-bones." This strange absence of pain proves that there must be a difference between a horse's nerves and a human being's; or perhaps it is that their nerves do not run so close as ours, but leave "blind" patches, so to speak. But whatever is the explanation, this is true. R.R.

The Concertina.

"He who bends to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunrise." —BLAKE.

There is the tiny blue butterfly, that in summer falters and wavers through the air, and, resting for a moment on knapweed or trefoil, resumes his journey of delightful calls. If a bee is in possession of a choice citadel he disputes not with his friend. There is the copper butterfly who visits heather, sorrel, and lady's fingers; he is timid, and a foot in the grass gives him a warning. There is the red-admiral, with a flash of rich blue, touching for a moment some late bramble blossoms or pink clover head. There is no finer art of touching things than that of the butterfly, emblem of the ephemera.

Christopher, whose family reached back to Cromwell on one side and canal barge owners on the other, was born with a streak of moonlight in his brain. At the age of forty he had, with considerable trouble, and also to the amazement of his household, acquired a concertina. This was after the remarkable scene he had caused at home by bringing along a former sweetheart, of some twenty years ago, and was surprised that his wife was not interested in her. In fact, indications of hostility were plainly visible. The instrument, Lachenal and Co. (forty-eight keys), was worn at the thumb-straps, and as he handled it tenderly a light came into his eyes that spoke of the pools of memory being stirred, ruffled, and, maybe, storm-swept. No one knew except him- and, slowly and painfully he wrested a few imperfect scales from the depths of this wonder. A few lovely and distracting chords could, with patience, be sent vibrating round his room.

many days he put it aside. It was not what he wanted; there was a disappointment, vague and undefined, and Christopher continued his sentimental education by taking up the study of Rosicrucianism with a scene-painter who drank beer in prodigious quantities, smoked a clay pipe, liked a naughty story, and pinned his faith on the motto "Love one another," although he said that Winston Churchill talked a lot of "tripe."

One day Christopher stopped reading his book of life and went back to the first page. There he began again. There was a little thatched cottage in a country lane; there was his grandfather, and climbing on his knee was difficult without help. He read of a ride on a horse called "Beauty" as she went with Boxer to drag the plough. There was also inscribed in these first pages the sensations of touching the velvet nose of Beauty. Also inscribed was the memory of a big leather collar worn by Beauty; Christopher could not lift it. On a yellow page, misty with the tears of memory, he read how he had gathered sticks to put in an oven when his aunt made bread. Also there was a record of sitting on a rough stone-wall watching the setting sun.

One by one he turned the leaves over; here was a record of attending an old country custom known as a well-dressing. The village well was adorned in true pagan fashion with flowers; dimly he could read "with pink, red, and white cushion daisies." Also he found a record of finding his first bird's nest; it might have been a thrush's in the honeysuckle bush. Then he found something about the herb "betany," which he had plucked for some mysterious purpose only known to his grandmother. Also on the invisible pages he found that he had danced round a may-pole. There were gypsies with curved noses, flashing eyes, and ear-rings. And then there was the immense and thrilling discovery of his first marsh marigolds or meadow-boots. Also there was luscious delight, fat, red, juicy gooseberries on a little tree at the western end of the cottage.

At the foot of the road where he lived was the village green, where the gypsies encamped. And then there was a little cottage in a hollow where an old man lived. His name was Brindley. When Christopher was tired of trying to draw birds on pink tea-paper and his tiny hands tired of turning over the leaves of the *Chatterbox*, he went to bed on summer evenings with twilight stealing over a coloured German picture of stiff mountains and crude pine trees.

Across the green, when dusk began to gather and Christopher had lived a day of gorgeous romance—for every day to a child under happy circumstances is such—he would gently fall asleep to the sound of Brindley's concertina. Over the small meadow, over the fruit trees and sweet-scented hawthorn hedges, chords and sweet notes lulled Christopher to slumber.

Now, what are you getting at, Christopher. I think, when looking at you, that you are stocktaking, and when you became possessor of a concertina you began to run your mind's eye over the things that matter. Those virgin days will never come again; but, says the spirit of argument, give me the privilege of recalling them. Very well, you shall have it—and in the meantime other little Christophers should have the same happy days as yourself. You have emerged from your cocoon of delight; others are emerging. You have touched, like the butterflies, some glorious city of dreams that was once real, and that hexagonal, stretch-belly box of sounds goes rioting up alleys that Freud, Adler, and Jung are trying to name and make. Though the world rend and crash to-morrow, still those halcyon days have been lived, symbolised to you by a concertina, the four-ale bar of music.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Mr. Robert Hull.

Mr. Robert Hull's small book* on music is almost as astonishing for what it leaves out as what it puts in. To begin with, we have the misuse of the term "texture," which is made to apply equally to polyphonic and harmonic methods of writing. If the word means anything at all the latter is just the very thing to which it is *not* applicable. The antithesis is texture versus block—horizontal or polyphonic versus vertical or harmonic. Next we are told that Schönberg is normally vertical; which is sheer nonsense. I will take five typical Schönberg works. (i.) The second String Quartet Op. 10: out of 700 bars there are 40 that can be strictly called vertical. (ii.) Op. 24, the Serenade: out of 1,000 bars, about 77 are strictly vertical. (iii.) Op. 26, the Quintet: over 1,000 bars, of which 32 are partially vertical. (iv.) Op. 30, the new String Quartet: out of nearly 1,000 bars, 54 "vertical" bars, many of which are not, strictly speaking, vertical at all. Lastly, "Pierrot Lunaire" with 570 odd bars: a hundred can be considered at a pinch not strictly polyphonic, although it is unduly straining so to consider the greater part of them. So much for the "vertical" Schönberg. We are next told that for Beethoven "horizontal values appeared to hold no precise meaning." . . . Beethoven, who wrote some of the most powerful and original fugues in existence. In Wagner, Mr. Hull sees a return to the "best classical tradition," and declares that he "employed the horizontal writing so much favoured by Bach," whereas actually his style is just as much a blend of vertical and horizontal as Beethoven's, with naturally greater freedom of chromatic movement. One wonders what on earth Mr. Hull means when he declares that "Mozart might be apt to forget his counterpoint, but Beethoven scarcely gave it a thought." There might be some excuse for saying the converse, when one thinks of Mozart's desolating and devastating miles of Alberti Basses. Next comes up the old cliché about the "disappearance of tonality," attended by a "corresponding vagueness of melodic outline"—corresponding to what?—to Mr. Hull's *idées fixes* on the association of tonality and melody, for instance?

Mr. Hull bewails the vertical nature of modern music, and yearns for a return to polyphonic methods, ignorant of the fact that the return has long since been made; indeed, with the exception of purveyors of chunks, such as Cyril Scott, Holst, Stravinsky, and the international offspring of that composer, who, like the sailor, has, if not a wife, certainly musical children in every port, resembling the boneless *fœtera*, of which Ellis tells in his story of the Indians of North America—de Falla, Malipiero, Bliss, Milhaud, Poulenc, and the rest of them, polyphonic methods have never been left—and typically enough, Mr. Hull makes no mention of two of the greatest masters of polyphony in modern times, Bernard van Dieren and Max Reger. Even the new Germans, although imbecile, the Kreneks, the Hindemiths, and Tochs, are preoccupied as much as ever he or anyone can wish with counterpoint of a sort—at least they are not "vertical" by any means.

Mr. Hull goes on to give Arthur Honegger, of all people, a unique credit for fusing vertical and horizontal writing—a fusion already existing in all the great music of every period; a commonplace so obvious that it takes a Mr. Hull not to see it: a fusion existing in perfect completeness in Delius. After this sort of thing one is not surprised that Mr. Hull is taken in by Stravinsky, and talks about his "inventive genius" in rhythm—the transparent and childish trick of shifting accents about within a perfectly commonplace metrical scheme forsooth!—the device of repeating one feeble metric pattern for dozens of bars on end—banging and drumming on a chord until hypnosis is induced in suitable subjects.

Returning to Schönberg, Mr. Hull repeats the "safe" accepted opinion as to the Wagnerianism of "*Verklärte Nacht*," being thus on all fours with those who used to pipe "Debussy!" when they heard a couple of consecutive seventh or ninth chords. Actually nothing could be less Wagnerian in style or feeling than this intensely introspective brooding twilight work, the spiritual father of which is Gustav Mahler, whose name as that of Busoni is not even mentioned, notwithstanding which it is one of the most remarkable and original works of modern times.

I have devoted this much space to a refutation of the major absurdities of this pamphlet, because it is published under the auspices of the Hogarth Press which, rightly or wrongly, has a certain reputation for the intellectual quality of its publications, a fact which might tend to give a fictitious importance to an almost negligible production.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

* "Contemporary Music." By Robert Hull. (Hogarth Press.)

Reviews.

"Boadicea." By Laurence Binyon. (Ernest Benn. 3s. 6d. or 5s.)

"Boadicea," a history in eight scenes in the modern manner, was produced at Oxford in January, 1926, by John Masefield, but has not, so far as we are aware, been produced in London. Performance should certainly be given by somebody. What English dramatists of the literary order can do is not ascertainable without production. No lessons, either of encouragement or of discouragement, can be learned from a drama which does not reach the stage. Mr. Binyon has written some scenes in blank verse and others in prose, while he has also mixed the two modes in one scene—as even Shakespeare did. His play must provoke the question as to whether blank-verse is not inappropriate to this age. Although there are so many Shakespeare companies, and although the amateur societies turn so often to a Shakespeare comedy to practise on, there is little welcome in the theatre for plays in this medium. It is even questionable whether this medium is included in the craft taught to the modern actor. In places Mr. Binyon's blank-verse would speak well, though now and then it falls very badly, as in the lines:—

"Forgive me if I have wronged you; it is much
To know there is one Roman who is our friend."

With the exception of the fourth scene by the druid altar in the forest clearing, which should play magnificently, and a small part of the last scene, most of the events on which the play is founded happen off—between the scenes. All the drama on the stage depends on the tension of debate between the Britons and the Romans on behalf of their respective cases. The conflict, that is to say, is not between characters in action, but is in the mind of the reader between the point of view of the little Britainer and that of the instrument of order-making Rome. Interesting though this is, in it Mr. Binyon is too sophisticated. He is too clearly conscious of putting words into the mouths of his characters which cause them to embrace the whole issue of self-determination versus world-order, including Chesterton versus Ford. It is just that Boadicea should be oracle, but an oracle who tells too much is suspect of having other sources of information than the gift of prophecy. In consequence it is Mr. Binyon, not Boadicea and Suetonius, that we hear speak.

"Lord Northcliffe." By R. MacNair Wilson. (Benn. 15s.)

Psycho-analysis and Lytton Strachey have put hero-worship out of fashion. Which perhaps explains why this life of Northcliffe is such good reading, in spite of its fustian heroics. To Mr. Wilson, Northcliffe was a man complete, admirable in public as in private life: a devoted son, a generous employer, a poor boy who became a millionaire. One can only wish that the late Dean Farrar had lived to write his biography. So many rumours have been circulated about Northcliffe's dishonesty that it was worth while to emphasise his demand for scrupulous exactitude from his own employees. He sometimes pursued a private vendetta to the detriment of public policy; he habitually ignored one side of a question. But, amazing though it may seem, he was never bought and sold, and, although he was the first to raise the circulation of newspapers to such enormous figures, he several times risked losing his readers by supporting an unpopular policy. Mr. Wilson might also have added that his hero could claim half the credit for the intense interest in credit. The other side of the medal Mr. Wilson, in the best Northcliffe manner, blandly ignores. The common denominator in all criticisms of Northcliffe is that by creating the modern newspaper he debased, or, at any rate misled, the public mind. The criticism is a half-truth. Had Alfred Harmsworth never existed, we should still have had the popular Press of to-day, though not perhaps in so virulent a form. That Press is indeed the answer of Demos to an indifferent intelligentsia. The Education Act of 1870 created a new reading public, outnumbering the old by at least thirty to one. But the older writers and journalists belonged to a caste, culturally as well as socially and politically, exclusive. They either could not, or would not, adapt themselves to this new public. Northcliffe saw his chance and seized it. Had he not done so, another would have risen in his stead. Newnes, in fact, had already begun, with "Tit-Bits," the kind of journalism which turned poor men into millionaires. The secret of Northcliffe's success lay partly, as Mr. Wilson says, in giving the public what it wanted. The principle is that of commerce, at first sight praiseworthy, and not necessarily inconsistent with the publication of truth. But the appetite grows by what it feeds on. A public which has read of German atrocities wants more German atrocities. Sensation outdoes sensation until

at last we have a situation in which an intelligent foreigner, judging us by our newspapers, would imagine that robbery, murder, and rape were favourite pastimes of the English. (As, in a vicarious way, they probably are after half a century of newspaper rule.) He would also imagine that the winner of the Derby, and what Lady Fitznoodle wore at Goodwood, were subjects of more importance than the living conditions of English miners. The newspaper might publish news of both. But it is possible, as every journalist knows, to publish two articles on different subjects, of the same length and on the same page, in such a way that both are seen and only one noticed. The modern editor is a master of psychology. So is Mr. Wilson. The great British public will glow with pride as it reads this story of one of its own members; just as it glowed with self-righteousness on reading of German atrocities. After which it might do worse than turn to Mr. Norman Angell's "The Public Mind" for an intelligent account of Northcliffe's work.

"Baboons, Banks, and Branches." By "A Descendant Man." (Clifton Publishing House. 1s. 6d.)

If anyone has a suggestion to make for improving banking services he should make it and have done with it. In this book there are eighty-nine pages, the bulk of which are clogged with cheap schoolboy puns, mostly on technical, financial, and biological terms. "Does the word 'Caesar' help us? What does it mean? Is it not built up of two English words, 'Seize her'?" How any man of normal intelligence can expect serious attention to be paid to banking-reform arguments placed in such a setting is incomprehensible.

"Conquistador. American Fantasia." By Philip Guedalla. (Benn. 10s. 6d.)

When the young Kipling wrote "From Sea to Sea," he set those who followed in his footsteps a mighty hard task, as Mr. Guedalla seems to admit, murmuring disconsolately to himself in one of the later chapters of this rather thin and formless patchwork from a lecture-tour. Just here and there he has captured reality in the net of his verbal ingenuity. But all the time he is trying in vain to comprehend a subject far more important and interesting than he can hope to express in little sketches and snapshots of this sort of thing. Mr. Guedalla is not as good at this sort of broader canvases. He should not have been tempted to squeeze as hundreds of writers who could never paint his broader royalties out of the Republic. His art is to bovrilise in neat and cultured phrases, shot with his own clever historical results of painstaking and well-documented historical search. He is not a journalist, and cannot excuse his efforts to look like one by making a half-guinea library volume out of a sixpenny notebook.

"The Confessions of a Rum Runner," by James Barbican, and "The Elusive Trail," by Cyril W. Davson. (Both 7s. 6d., from William Blackwood and Sons, Ltd.)

The Blackwood quality, which has stood the test of a hundred years, comes from letting the amateur, who is not one of these writing chaps, but has seen life and plenty of it, have his head. There are conscious and careful artists who write Blackwood books, but that just happens in the statistics. The typical Blackwoodsman is your fresh enthusiast who knows he will not be pestered to work for this or that market, with this or that technical pre-occupation, but may just please himself, so long as he sticks to the soup-meat of his tale. And there is nourishment enough here, in these two diverting volumes, the one of bootleggers, high-jackers, and all the incorruptible idealism which followed upon the Eighteenth Amendment, the other a plainer and less slickly polished record of an oil prospector's wanderings in Salvador and Honduras and Guatemala, and other paradises of mahogany and entomology and variegated philately. Very few novels can equal in solid interest the most unpretentious of travel-books, so that only the scene is set in strange surroundings, whose romance one may enjoy from an armchair without any of its connected miseries. And so long as there are adventurous souls aplenty, prepared to do the dirty work, so long will we pay our good silver to hear all about it, especially from two such admirable *chansonniers de gestes* as these.

SOCIAL CREDIT IN THE PRESS.

The *Crusader* for October 28, November 4 and 11, contains a serial article by Mr. J. M. Ewing, entitled "The Economic Disease of Great Britain." In this article the author, who is a keen supporter of Major Douglas's proposals, has brought out with proper emphasis the two essential conditions of the remedy. He insists on the principle that credit belongs to the community and should be used to enable the community to consume its production. The *Crusader* costs 2d., and is published at 1, Mitre Court, Fleet Street, E.C.4.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

"KARMA" AND FREEDOM.

Sir,—I submit that Mr. W. Plinge's Theosophical questioner has indicated the real danger that besets the Social Credit Scheme propaganda. Most people do not want to interfere with "Karma." They labour under the complex that the Universe is hostile to mankind, and must be propitiated with an adequate tale of sacrificial victims. They object to the S.C.S. as "too good," i.e., as proposing to do away with economic victimisation altogether. This objection is seldom expressed so openly as it was by the Australian Theosophist. Usually people disguise their opposition to the establishment of economic security. They discuss ardently whether some proposed measure will be effective for that purpose or not. Thus they give the impression that they are prepared to accept the scheme if it is adequate. Really they are subconsciously engaged in shelving and procrastinating the abolition of economic terrorism by concentrating attention on the question whether or not a given plan is effective.

Socialism was once supposed inevitably to involve the abolition of destitution. It was then unacceptable not only to priests and scribes of Baal like the Dean of St. Paul's or Mr. G. K. Chesterton, but also to Dick, Tom and Harry, not to mention Bessie, Polly and Harriet. They attacked it on the ground that it could not succeed. Really they feared it might succeed. But the Marxians and the Fabians have made it quite clear that Socialism is perfectly compatible with destitutionism, and thus Collectivism has become practical politics.

There is a danger that when it is noticed that the National Dividend may be separated from the other parts of the S.C.S. and perhaps postponed indefinitely, the S.C.S. may meet with the fate that has befallen Socialism. Both opponents and advocates will argue about the "A + B theorem," or the "justice" of depriving bankers of the fruits of their "enterprise," or some other such matter. These disputes will serve as a means of diverting attention from the question of eliminating destitution and economic insecurity.

Query: Has this process already begun?
S. C. SOPOTE.

CROCE.

Sir,—Mr. George Ryley Scott, in his article entitled "A Note on Criticism," defines Croce's theory and then ignores what that definition implies. He says, "The fundamental error of Croce's aesthetic 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 Edgar Wallace, William le Queux, etc., as writers of genius," that is to say, that the fundamental error of Croce's criticism is that it is no criticism at all, for, if "the litterati who are responsible for the 'blurbs'" can justify popular fiction, so can anyone justify any scribbles. Actually popular fiction is condemned by Croceans because Edgar Wallace and company fail to express themselves adequately. Read one of their effusions and say if you knew anything more of the character of the man whatever you have learnt of his intellectual capacity.

Having enlarged on the "fundamental error," Mr. Scott now defines the "basic error" as "the assumption that the personal view of the writer, and his skill in representing this view are mutually justifiable." Now Croce ignores both point of view and personal skill. Enough that the artist expresses. The Londonderry air is the intuitive expression of a great artist, who, we may safely suppose, could write not a note of music, so he sang. Suppose by some miracle his birth had been delayed a century or two and he lived to-day. Unpremeditated song to-day is dead, so that his expression would not be conveyed to the world through this medium; in fact, as he lives in the wilds of Co. Derry it would probably not be conveyed at all. But what of the mere accident of this man's birth. Surely its existence depends not on what the world hears but on the artist's own private expression? Under these circumstances his "skill" has become nil, while, living where he does, his point of view is probably much the same as before.

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter."

We are told that we must "add to the formula of Croce the consideration that the critic must take into account not only the success of the artist in expressing his concept, but also the relation of this concept to existing reality." Now the concept, as such, is reality; but "existing reality," I suppose, means "life as it is lived." If Mr. Scott was a little more frank he would have cut out Croce altogether from this statement and boiled it down to "the critic must take into account only the relation to existing reality." In this light

Art becomes a purely intellectual achievement. Admittedly a large part of literature is no better, and many of our great literary artists seemed to have been inspired by intellectual fervour, but if we look to the other arts we cannot but admit that the great masters of music and visual art were not intellectually developed in proportion to their artistic achievements.

C. J. CARRUTHERS.

THE PHOENIX REVIVAL.

Sir,—Old readers of THE NEW AGE will be glad that efforts are being made to revive the Phoenix Society, whose productions of Restoration and Elizabethan plays, up to the Society's collapse eighteen months ago, were one of the dramatic features of London. To provide funds Miss Athene Seyler and Miss Isabel Jeans are recognising the debt of their reputation to the Phoenix by an all-star matinee at the Chelsea Palace on December 12, when "Happy Families," by Aldous Huxley, and "The Admirable Bashville," will be produced. In "The Admirable Bashville" Bernard Shaw delivers his philosophy and economics of prize-fighting while demonstrating his superiority over Shakespeare in blank-verse.

The Incorporated Stage Society's current season will consist of "L'Amé en Peine," by Jean Jacques Bernard, "Le Dictateur," by Jules Romains, both in English, of course; "Paul Among the Jews," by Franz Werfel; John van Druten's banned "Young Woodley." The Society is issuing free a pamphlet on these plays by Messrs. Arnold Bennett, C. K. Munro, and Graham Rawson. The Secretary of the Stage Society, 36, Southampton Street, Strand, will accept orders for copies. The same address will find the Phoenix.

PAUL BANKS.

Pastiche.

Scene. A bank counter.
TELLER (in an irritated voice to yokel who has stood there for some time after cashing a cheque into currency notes): "Well, what's the matter—it's right, isn't it?"

YOKEL: "Yes, young man . . . it's all right, but (nodding slowly with dark suspicion): I'll have to remember that I had to count it fewer times before it come right!"—Quoted (from memory) from *The Passing Show*.
J. G.

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