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

No. 1875] NEW SERIES Vol. XLIII. No. 16. THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 1928. [Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] SEVENPENCE

CONTENTS.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

In the *New Leader* of August 10 Mr. F. W. Jowett writes an article under the head of "No Truce in Politics," which contains one very important statement. He looks into the minds of the leaders of organised labour as to why they responded to the Mond rationalisation proposals affirmatively, and concludes generously that their object was to place employers under any obligation rather than none in the process of reorganising industry. Realising that the Trades Union Congress is likely to support the leaders, Mr. Jowett writes:—

> "For good or ill that affirmative answer will mean that organised labour has decided to abandon industrial action in the fight against capitalism . . . . and to depend on political action for the . . . . establishment of Socialism."

Mr. Jowett obviously regards political action as a strong enough staff, and his policy for using it, proposed to the Independent Labour Party, is to

> "Kindle in the minds and hearts of the disinherited resentment and hope of redress"

and

> "to win and hold power, to attack and seize the key-positions of Capitalism, control of the banks, raw materials, power, and transport. . . ."

This insistence on control of the banks which is daily lumped in with Labour's rhetorical dream of omnipotence is based on very little understanding of credit. It merely signifies that the Labour Parties have followed public opinion in giving the banks, as part of the general institution of capitalism, special mention. The Labour cock, having crowed for years on the Stock Exchange, has heard of the Bank of England, and decided to crow there, too.

* * *

The only reason why the trade unions have for the time being forsaken industrial action is the one for which Germany forsook military action at the end of the war. Labour, in spite of the pleadings of its political careerist leaders, favoured industrial action as long as it could win anything or hold its own that way. The trade unions have nothing to hope from political action, as all the realist thinkers in and out of the Labour movement have demonstrated; and the Labour Party, in anticipation of office, has nothing to contribute that its opponents are not able more easily to effect when politic. At present it is unnecessary for them to do anything for Labour but provide out-of-work relief. Belief that Utopia can be ushered in by trade unionists going to the polls next election day, and making crosses opposite the names of the Labour candidates, is simply pathetic Messianism. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the arguments for this at the present moment. It will suffice to state the fundamental one. There is no sign in the official Labour Party or the I.L.P.—except in the case of isolated individuals—of even the faintest perception of where power nowadays lies. Labour cannot seize power since it believes that it still rests with the employers of labour, whereas actually it rests in the conventions of orthodox finance and the persons who benefit from them. Unconsciously this sovereignty is endorsed by all who accept orthodoxy in finance—and, to put the matter simply, the Labour Parties accept it. They are waiting at the wrong door.

* * *

"Rationalisation," as the I.L.P. is aware without realising its implications, means that Labour, defeated in the attempt to enforce a humaner order, is trying the feminine way of obtaining favours by submission. Labour hopes to ease its lot by co-operating in the reduction of costs. Technically, and from the costs aspect, rationalisation means getting equal or greater product for less labour. On common-sense grounds there can be no objection to such a course. Every man follows it in his own affairs if he is capable of intelligent adaptation. In any suggestion that more labour should be employed on any job than is necessary for doing it efficiently Labour would find nobody to give it even lip-service agreement except Mr. Baldwin, who will write 10,000 letters urging it on other people. The total sum of his efforts is that he thus

provides a little work for postmen and sorters. The tendency of modern industry is to require fewer men. There are three ways of dealing with this tendency. One is to keep adding to the unemployed, sharing their maintenance among the employed and the tax-payers. The second is to fight until the existing income of the nation is more equitably shared out, finding logs to roll for all who cannot be found useful work. The third is to bring about a novel attitude to the question of production and distribution, and to put into practice means for encouraging voluntary producers by expanding their markets.

* * *

Needless to say, this last, such obvious commonsense, appeals less to the Labour Party than to the employers. Mr. Jowett writes:—

> "More money is needed in the homes, as well as social services, and there is only one way of getting more money into the homes. That is to tax the surplus wealth of the rich."

It has not yet dawned on Mr. Jowett, as it has not dawned on more than a handful of his colleagues, that the ease of the rich in obtaining money can be destroyed at any moment by a secret decision in Throgmorton Street. When the Bank decides no longer to monetise credit in the same quantity, or no longer to lend it at the same rate, every money vessel, rich or poor, feels the drought. What prevents Labour from opposing fanatically the whole plan of rationalisation is, simply, its own improved education. Nationalisation, instead of making more jobs, would make fewer. It would embrace rationalisation. Under the present method of distributing income, that is, as wages, salaries, and profits alone, reduction of costs is inevitably followed by reduction of income, if not for all individuals, certainly for the mass. Since the whole of costs cannot be recovered in prices as long as the equivalent of credits already cancelled remains included in prices, every reduction of immediate cost makes the case worse. It increases the proportion of uncollectable to collectable costs. In claiming to produce with as little cost as possible, the employers are right; in agreeing with this the employees are right, if doubtful, and only right if doubtful. In failing to see what other major reform is necessary outside the productive system to render the reform inside socially beneficial both sides are so blind that they are certain to be tripped up. No matter how perfect their economies, the financial system will defeat their object.

* * *

As recently as the previous week Mr. Brailsford contributed an article to the same review on "Labour and the Bankers," in which he appeared aware that any advice to Labour to study credit would have to be insinuated very gingerly.

> "Most of us realise by now that it was the act of the bankers which brought upon us the trade slump in 1921"

he writes in a careful beginning, and appeals to the brains of the Labour Party in the following terms to repeat this and a few other similar facts:—

> "All this has been said by clear-headed people like Mr. Keynes, Mr. McKenna, and Sir Josiah Stamp. It is time for us to say it."

Mr. Brailsford, we are certain, is much more advanced in credit-analysis and its constructive consequences than this passage indicates at first thought. What it exposes is his opinion of the minds he is addressing. He assumes that they are likely to smell that a new idea is worth probing only if they are told that it is so safe, so conservative, that Mr. Keynes, Mr. McKenna, and Sir Josiah Stamp have already publicly accepted it. With these gentlemen in the van, with the advance guard of the Labour Party following after them, it now seems time for us to say, God save the I.L.P.

* * *

Strong measures for the repression of Communism are being taken by the authorities in Japan

> "About 1,000 suspected persons

(we quote *The Times* Tokyo correspondent)

> were arrested, and it is believed that between 300 and 400 will be sent for trial. They will be tried under the Peace Preservation Law of 1925, the first and principal clause of which provides that anyone who has organised (or joined) a society for altering the national constitution, or for repudiating private property, shall be liable to not more than ten years' imprisonment."

That a number of penniless men were able to find £200 security for their candidature in the recent General Election aroused the suspicion of "Soviet Gold." In view of all the incomes conditional upon support of the existing system of society in its entirety, we have long suspected that Soviet Gold must flow more freely and be far more potent than other gold. But the interest in why somebody's gold is invariably thought to be at the bottom of any alternative view of social administration is psychological rather than political. What is of political importance, and it is of the highest importance, is the world-wide movement of powerful but unprogressive forces to fix the earth at its present stage of evolution, and to confine all but a favoured group of directors within a state more servile than Mr. Belloc prophesied. The type of mind that sees safety only in the domination of the individual by the State is as common in one political camp as in another. It is as strong in Mr. Snowden as in Sir William Joynson-Hicks. It is the same type of mind as has made itself up that the ends of costs and prices shall be made arithmetically to meet though all mankind be strangled in the process. For Communism, in simple terms, is the cry of those already being strangled.

* * *

The major fact has been learned by intelligent men all over the world. It is so obvious that every day sees another one point it out to the rest. Professor F. G. Hearnshaw in his "A Survey of Socialism" approvingly repeats Professor Scott:—

> "The weak spot of competitive capitalism, as we now know it, is its apparent impotence to distribute purchasing-power. It cannot distribute purchasing-power among its people in sufficient quantity to enable them to claim products and take them away as fast as the great industrial machine would normally produce them."

The next point to get home is that the machine for producing goods is at present limited in its opportunities by the machine which produces purchasing-power; that the machine for producing purchasing-power, itself arbitrary, governs the machine for producing goods; and, finally, that the goods cannot be taken away without distribution of purchasing power in addition to labour costs. Invert the present order of dependence, limiting the goods to be produced only by the world's need for them, and the problem is solved. Upon its solution a measure of liberty could be granted to the individual greater than he has ever been trusted with before. His realisation of the worth of the system would entail his support of it.

* * *

In face of the fact that the problem of satisfying the economic needs of all mankind is one of which the starting point is financial rationalisation, the whole attitude of Parliament, including the Government and both branches of the opposition, to unemployment, might be designed to create Communists. Just before posting his 10,000 letters to employers on the eve of departing for a holiday, Mr. Baldwin "dealt with unemployment." Neither on his side nor on the other was there any idea except that work must be found if it had to be made. Mr. Baldwin, who has no superior minister to rebuke him, unfortunately, committed what ought to be a lapse, but, in view of the mentality of the age, probably was not.

> "The difficult problem of the boys," he said, "will help to solve itself in the next few years because of the fall in the birth-rate."

We realise that Mr. Baldwin is the Prime Minister of the financial party which has absorbed the landowners' party. We used to hope that the slight admixture of blue-blood in his party would preserve him from anything so near to gratitude for national suicide on the ground that it would solve his political problems. His other idea, his idea of doing something rather than waiting for something to turn up, was to transfer families from neighbourhoods where the unemployment rate was very high (nearly one in four) to others where it was not so high. Mr. Tom Shaw criticised this on the ground that it would not make a single new job. It is not to be supposed that Mr. Baldwin thought it would. If it had occurred to him that a few passengers would be added to the railway traffic returns during the process of transfer he would have mentioned it. He is, however, so much the bankers' politician, indeed, so much the Bank of England's politician, that his idea in wanting to spread unemployment more evenly over the country can be traced logically to Bank of England advice. Many localities have such burdens of rates, largely through relief to the unemployed, that they are near to bankruptcy. The only way to keep them loyal to the existing financial system is to take away their rate-consumers and leave a bigger proportion of ratepayers. Mr. Baldwin's plan is a cunning way, if practicable, of ensuring that the cost of maintaining the unemployed shall be recoverable from municipalities in debt; at the expense of reducing the purchasing-power of their citizens to the end of time. As an alternative to the entry in a National Credit Account which would relieve all municipalities of debts incurred for maintaining unemployed persons, and balance the bankers' books at the same time, Mr. Baldwin prefers to share out, not so much the unemployed as their upkeep, among all the ratepayers of the country. They also must run into debt, not to the point of bankruptcy, but to the limit of their repaying power. Consequently, in the future still more credit will flow back to the sea without having turned the wheel of consumption. This policy is almost a retort, along with the rating-exemption scheme, to municipalities for daring to want their own banks.

* * *

Considered as a question of real credit, the unemployment problem is a disgrace to civilisation. It is a question of incomes alone, not of work. It is probable that the number of persons employed is greater than in 1914. During the war, in consequence of the absence of menfolk, women entered all sorts of occupations which had hitherto, in the industrial system, been the preserve of men. Many of these occupations have been retained by women. A number of the large "accounting" businesses, including the Civil Service, have vastly extended the use of women. If only the pre-war occupations of women were now open to them, it is certain that as many jobs would be vacated as there are unemployed. This is not an argument for excluding women from anything they want to do. It merely shows that the real problem is that of finding places at which each person can obtain an income. A large percentage of the women employed would be totally unnecessary if all industry were "rationalised" to productive ends, and accounting simplified. If

productive capacity were the standard in individuals, as it ought to be both in individuals and in the system as a whole, and incomes were not conditional upon finding a niche in labour costs, it would matter little economically whether the jobs were given finally to women or to men. In the accounting system women have a special talent for routine work which men find irksome. Human considerations apart, they might well be allowed to do it. Even under present conditions, unemployment benefit paid to young men, plus poor law relief, plus old age pension, would release the older workers for bowls and conversation. Under a system of production for enjoyment, ushered in by an intelligent distribution of purchasing-power and by price-fixing, the present productive capacity of Europe would be enough for the establishment of economic Utopia. At present the economic system of Europe—including England—is wasteful in energy to the degree of lunacy.

* * *

Books like Dr. Singer's "From Magic to Religion" would be vastly different in content if they took into account the fact that there still remains a branch of thought where superstitions reign supreme. So far as astronomy, physics, or chemistry is concerned, the mediæval mind may be as obsolete as witch-burning, but in economics a form of mediævalism continues to dominate the academic no less than the statesman mind. Scientific method means confirming or disproving guesses by objective test called experiment. It implies also a code of honour according to which, first, everything should be submitted to open test, and, second, every guess that fails under test should be given up. The fundamentals of what is called economic law are not observed law; they are merely pronounced law. They depend rather on a particular view of human nature than on experiment. In spite of all the evidence to the contrary—for example, that the total amount of purchasing power distributed to consumers is insufficient to purchase the total product of industry—the doctrine of the conservation of purchasing-power is still blindly accepted by economists calling themselves scientists.

* * *

When a shortage of gold was experienced in England her people were compelled to impoverish themselves in a struggle to bring about the "free movement of gold." Now that gold flows back to Europe because a surfeit of it embarrassed the Federal Reserve Board by spilling over into the country and rendering member-banks independent of the Central Bank, credit in England is not expanded accordingly. The "surplus" gold is "depotentised." Yesterday gold in the vaults of the Bank of England was the philosopher's stone that endowed paper slips with purchasing-power. It was the potentiser. On the quantity of it depended the amount of paper which could be "potentised." It was alleged, indeed, to be the independent variable. Now that it has varied, however, the independent variable is something else. What is independent, of course, if not very variable at the present time, is the will that promulgates the policy—for it is a common policy the world over—of the international Central Banking System. The volume of credit is not regulated by the quantity of available gold, no matter what reputed economists say that it is; it is not regulated by the capacity of producers to deliver goods; and it is not regulated by the needs of consumers for goods within the limits of that capacity. The volume of credit is controlled by the Central Banking Systems, and the quantity of currency, the facilities of producers, and the opportunities of consumers, are rigorously limited by the Banks' desire to conduct their affairs in the way taught by their fathers.

Current Political Economy.

The *English Review* for August introduces an attack on the Labour Party Programme by reference to the credulity of the age. This is followed by a condemnation of the philosophy of progress:—

> "The philosophy of progress is peculiarly attractive to the half-educated because it . . . . imagines that a long word provides a short cut. Reconstruction, evolution, co-ordination, rationalisation, *latent potentialities*, internationalism, relativity—to mention at random a few . . . . is to evoke an almost endless procession of fallacies."

True, there is a major fallacy in the philosophy of progress as commonly held fifteen years ago. The fallacy was that progress was certain, a belief contradicted by the previous history of the world. The gospel of progress, however, has emigrated to America, where it has found a more congenial home than present-day Europe. It is true, also, that all the terms offered as examples may evoke fallacies, though all of them also contain a partial truth, and most of them are more popular with the over-educated than with the half-educated. Even rationalisation is not devoid of truth, though Mr. Keynes, after preaching it to Lancashire, has concluded that the first move in that direction should be with the Bank of England. Granting, however, that the English people are unduly credulous on some things—it believes Mr. Baldwin both when he boasts of being plain, and when he equally boasts of being subtle—it lacks either credulity or faith on some things which are true. After so disillusioned a beginning the *English Review* continues:—

> "Life is a problem to which there is no new solution. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou earn bread.'"

The *English Review* has a great tradition in English thought and letters. It has shown a fine radical patriotism and a genuine concern for European unity and culture. But a statement such as the above is not an example of the thought it pleads for. It is an echo of the voice of economic priests. In the course of reading the passage the meaning of the first word is changed by the implications of the second sentence, with a result that makes the statement false. Before the end of the passage, to explain, the reader has unconsciously—as has the writer—altered the problem of "life" to mean the problem of feeding, clothing, warming, and housing mankind. Thus the unqualified reiteration of the text renders the statement, in view of the changes wrought by invention and transport, evidence not of thought, but of superstition.

* * *

The *English Review's* negative criticism of Mr. MacDonald and the Labour Party Programme is just:—

> "In the gravest economic crisis . . . . (Mr. MacDonald) is found deliberately encouraging the belief that there is a link between a high yield on capital and a low money wage for the worker."

As the writer says, this is not true. But there are, in July, 1928, registered as willing to work over a million and a quarter persons for whom there is no work, that is to say, a quarter of a million more than there were a year ago. Among that million and a quarter there is a sufficient variety of skill and labour to produce from raw material to finished commodity what they and their families need, and enough plant lying idle to provide all the necessary equipment. One thing only is missing, namely, the power that would facilitate the exchange of their products and let them start work; in other words, somebody would have to start the buying. The economic discovery of the age is that business requires a market.

What this is leading up to was hinted when the words "latent potentialities" were italicised in the quotation above. In its attack on Mr. MacDonald the *English Review* refers to him as MacWells on science, MacPecksniff on morality, etc., and, on economics, MacDouglas. No doubt Mr. MacDonald would repudiate any connection with Social Credit, though he has picked up a few of the terms of credit-analysis for addition to his political baggage. The question here is whether the *English Review* aims at discrediting Mr. MacDonald—and the Labour Party—by accusing him of Social Credit ideas or at discrediting Social Credit ideas by suggesting that they are part of the mentality, philosophy, or programme of Mr. MacDonald. In either event the references to Social Credit are so scrappy and so full of implied misunderstandings that nothing is in so much danger of discredit as the *English Review* itself.

> "The thesis that market demands can be stimulated by the maintenance and increase of purchasing power sounds intelligent. When it is translated from jargon into English, it does not. Goods can only be paid for by goods, and an increase of money wages without a corresponding increase in production will merely increase the prices of the goods we already have. Being human, we all have unlimited purchasing-power. It is paying power we lack—paying power, which is won by the sweat of men's brows, and in no other way."

When we contemplate the science of economics and the souls of economists, we wonder if what we lack is not, after all, praying power. That million and a quarter unemployed persons already referred to represents two hundred million pounds' worth per annum of *discarded* paying power, and the plant which would keep them employed at an even greater rate of productivity is being largely sold by auctioneers and valuers at a fifth to a tenth its worth—expressed either in terms of its cost or in terms of its potential output—for the sole purpose of balancing a banker's books.

* * *

Technical terms are not jargon when used with full responsibility for their meanings and inadequacies. They become jargon when used by irresponsible persons for the sake of displaying the pretence of understanding. It is true that increased consumer-incomes would, without price-control, be followed by an increase in prices, but that is equivalent to saying that the increase in incomes would not then effect a corresponding increase in purchasing-power. This is not hair-splitting; it is a demonstration of the carelessness in the use of terms displayed by critics of Social Credit who have not taken the trouble to study it. They make the ideas nonsensical by attaching nonsensical meanings to the vocabulary. Increased incomes would certainly bring about increased turnover and increased production to a considerable extent, with or without price-control, as every student of credit knows. That "goods can only be paid for by goods" is an abridgement of a process so complicated since barter gave way to money-exchange and since bankers' credit furnished the vastly greater portion of the exchange-medium, as to have become merely a conventional simplification. It is no longer, as it stands, a statement of useful truth. Let the *English Review* writer either offer to pay America in goods, or comment on an offer by Germany to pay reparations in goods and he will, as any betting man would prophesy, qualify his statements.

* * *

At the present time the productive system reminds one of the country proverb that there is most thrusting where there is least room. The proportion of productive to non-productive labour has steadily declined with the advance of invention. Vast numbers of salaried and wage-paid workers are no more

productive than Diogenes rolling his tub to appear busy while the citizens were preparing for war. How many wives and daughters are ignorant as to where they can buy the best dresses they can afford? For which fastidious woman are all the daily advertisements of a page in area which display underwear and the information that those with money in their purses can get it at this or that shop? Who is the smoker for whom it is necessary to see and compare all the pictures of contentment on hoardings or in newspapers? The saving grace of the whole colossal scheme of advertisement, shopkeeping, shop-walking, manne-quin-parading, commercial travelling, and a hundred other "jobs," is that on account of them more people get incomes than are necessary to produce the goods. For many years quite orthodox economists have been appalled at the problem of *over-production*. The only way they could see of getting clothes on bare backs was to manufacture less of them. There has not been an *under-production* problem for generations. That there is an *under-consumption* problem is now recognised by every independent mind from the United States to Germany. To force every man and woman whom productive labour cannot absorb to scheme for an income which will be added to "selling costs" is merely perpetuating Adam's curse. It is continuing to sweat as the penalty for refusing to think. It is, in short, Sisyphus sneering at a crane.

N.

The Passing of the Assessor.

In 1921 the Board of Inland Revenue conceived the idea of abolishing local assessors of income tax, but it came to nothing because of opposition both in and out of Parliament. The idea is now being revived. In the Finance Act of last year the Chancellor obtained powers to transfer the routine work of issuing and in-gathering income-tax returns from the assessors to the Inspectors of Taxes. Everybody will see that the usurpation of this routine function is a long step towards the capture of all the duties of the assessor. According to Mr. Stanley Brown, past president of the Association of Assessors and Collectors, the Board of Inland Revenue

> "have sought to deprive the assessors of functions that arise out of the examination of the returns, and have made it difficult for them to have access to the returns or to make the assessments under Schedule E that is part of the legal duty of the assessors."

He goes on to says that

> "A new centralised system of collection is being started in a number of large towns—about nine of them—in October, and the collector who used to be responsible for a certain area will become a mere cog in a machine operating to squeeze out the money as quickly as possible."

Here is the familiar old trick once more. The bureaucrat cheats the House into letting him do something that appears to be only a small change in administrative technique, and then, after a lapse of time, the House discovers that what it has sanctioned has amounted to a vital change of policy. When that occurs (very often nobody makes the discovery) the House completes its own dereliction of duty by legalising the new policy. Whether through laziness or timidity makes no difference. A large volume of recent Parliamentary "legislation" is composed of nothing but *post facto* indemnifications for constitutional illegalities of this character. When the Commons gravely sanctioned the Dawes Pact, the Pact had been actually under administrative exercise for months. And, as for the recent Currency and Bank Notes Act, readers of this journal will remember that some of the note-printing machines were delivered to the Bank of England nearly two years ago—and nobody would have known it but for the accident of a squabble between the de la Rue and Waterlow concerns over patent rights connected with this transaction.

This new scheme is parallel to the act of the Ministry of Health when it superseded Boards of Guardians by its own paid officials, thereby negating the democratic principle underlying local government. For, according to Mr. Stanley Brown, all the assessors and most of the collectors are at present appointed by local commissioners, who are "a democratic unpaid body." It is this power of Appointment which the Board of Inland Revenue wishes to do away with. The Board has the power of appointing Inspectors of Taxes, and it is through these officials exclusively that it proposes to assess and collect taxes.

The consequences are clearly indicated by Mr. Stanley Brown. Speaking on behalf of the Association, he says:—

> "In the past the public has certainly attached value to the personal contact that taxpayers have had with their local collectors. A collector who knows his people, who is aware that a taxpayer may have had misfortunes or bereavements or special expenses through illness of members of the family, naturally makes allowances and tries to meet the convenience of the taxpayers as far as he can. . . . If the local assessors were abolished the personal touch in the in-gathering of the taxes would be lost, and a more machine-like method of extracting the money would be substituted. The taxpayer would be deprived of access to men who know the district and know the local domestic circumstances of large numbers of small taxpayers."

Since the taxing-system exists to sponge up the credit issued by the banking system, it was inevitable that its dehumanisation would be attempted. Just as the local bank manager has had his discretion taken away and vested in City headquarters, so the local assessor is going to lose his discretion. The financial system abhors sympathy as nature abhors a vacuum. It is obliged to, for if its functionaries give way in the slightest degree to human feelings of any kind the system is endangered. This is a shattering indictment of the basic principles of financial government. It is a government based not only on the dissent of the governed, but on the dissent of its own subordinate administrators. It is exposed to the risk of revolt from outside and of indiscipline from inside. That is the fundamental reason why it is going to collapse. It is also the reason why everyone who supports the Social Credit alternative may take comfort as he watches the Treasury and the banks working out the logic of their vicious concept of economic stability. They have nearly reached the point where their wrong-headedness must prove itself and render external criticism unnecessary.

* * *

On one occasion we said that whenever a government set its subjects an impossible task to accomplish it would find itself compelled to do the routine work of administering its policy itself. The attitude which every reader of THE NEW AGE should take when he sees the high financiers reducing the fortress of democracy is one of optimism. They are doing it under compulsion and not for choice, for they know that the more complete their victory over voluntary co-operation in the administration of policy the less diffused will be the criticism of the people when the results cheat expectations. So far as we are concerned as Social Credit strategists, this usurpation on their part simply saves us the trouble of inciting democracy to hand over the responsibility of government to them voluntarily. They are insisting on undertaking responsibilities which it might have taken us years to persuade sincere voluntary publicists to relinquish to them. The fools are saving us the trouble. All we have to do is to sit tight and watch them get on with it.

Views and Reviews.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

By V. A. Demant.

During the general strike a number of bishops and other Church leaders pleaded with the Government to keep open the door of negotiation, in the hope that a way might still be found for an agreed peace between owners and miners. It was clear that, whatever their innocence of the economic issues, they felt in the actual ultimatum of the Government an official defeat of principles to which the Church had committed herself in the report of the Archbishops' Fifth Committee of Inquiry upon "Christianity and Industrial Problems." One of the judgments of that report was that a living wage must be the first charge upon industry. With an acute suspicion that this was at the back of the ecclesiastical mind, the spokesmen of the Government, as well as some Erastian clerics, administered a rebuke to the would-be mediators which may well become historical in the relations between Church and State. The Church was told to mind her own business and that economics were outside her sphere. By speeches and articles on "Christianity and Economics" a campaign was launched to make it quite clear that the trustees of economic institutions would brook no interference from any who ventured to over-ride "economic laws" by religious or social demands. The Church failed by default to answer this charge, for once the magic word "science" was breathed in connection with economics the religious leaders retired with drooping tails. Not that we expected them at the moment to question whether the alleged national poverty were a physical and scientific fact, but, the moral gesture having been made, its persistence might have led to a clarification of the whole issue between social ethics and economics. While religion must respect the autonomy of science, it should claim the right to judge whether alleged scientific laws which are brought forward to explain social evils are truly scientific, and not merely rationalisations of political impotence.

As it is, the prophetic function of the Church in social matters is left to a few courageous souls like Bishop Gore, who proclaims, with the indignant roar of an Isaiah, that

> "the present condition of our society, our industry and international relations . . . must inspire in our minds a deep sense of dissatisfaction and alarm, and a demand for so thorough a reformation as to amount to a revolution." *

For Dr. Gore there is most certainly a Christian Sociology; and he unhesitatingly demands that all other human activities must subserve it. He squarely anticipates the charge of impossibilism:

> "The evils which we deplore in our present society are not the inevitable results of any unalterable laws of nature or any kind of inexorable necessity, but are the fruits of human blindness (largely voluntary blindness), wilfulness, avarice and selfishness on the widest scale and in the long course of history."

Doubtless many readers of THE NEW AGE take account only of the first of these human causes—and that without the qualifying "voluntary"—and will be disposed to dismiss as mere "change-of-heart" doctrine the announcement that the situation

> "demands something more than legislative and external changes—necessary as these must be; it demands a fundamental change in the spirit in which we think about and live our common life, and conduct our industry, and maintain our international and inter-racial dealings."

We must look again at this question of the priority of "a change of spirit" or "a change of system." It must be confessed that "the change of spirit" urged by religious or social idealism has too often meant little more than a sympathetic claim to understand the other fellow's disappointments as his "area of moral manœuvre" contracts under the inexorable forces of the system. Exhortations of this kind of spiritual outlook deserve most of the scorn which our super-realists heap upon it. For Dr. Gore, as a true theologian, the Spirit is no mere inducer of benevolent acquiescence, but the positive dynamic force which ensures that "mankind and individual men are in a real, though restricted, measure masters of their own destiny." There is a Christian configuration of society; and a spirit which insists that all the resources of knowledge, will, and enthusiasm shall be used in its re-creation in every age, is something very different from the vapid faith that it is only the human bearings of industrial society that need oiling with a plentiful supply of goodwill.

The impact of this definite Christian social configuration is traced in these lectures by the Bishop, from its origin in the conception of the Kingdom of God as taught and brought by Christ, in the three great periods of its influence and re-action: the Early Church, the Middle Ages, and the modern period which covers the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Industrial Revolution. What finally silenced the old sociology of the church was the fact that it had lost the authority and the grasp necessary for its application to new conditions, and eventually, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, acquiesced in a flatly anti-Christian philosophy and sociology. In face of this situation Bishop Gore, apparently agreeing with the late Dr. Figgis that the Church must give up playing at being a majority, insists that any thorough change will not arise from the conversion of men in masses, but from the influence in our society of groups of men, inspired probably by prophetic leaders, who have attained to a true vision both of the source of our evils and of the nature of their remedies. A faithful churchman, but also a political realist, he sees that where the Church is (as it now is, in spite of "establishment") a missionary body in a hostile or indifferent society, it "must be content to exhibit *within its own society* the true principles of human life."

The answer often given in these pages has assumed that the net of the economic system has become so tightly woven with the strands of finance that no force of will in individuals or groups can break through. But however restricted may be "the area of moral manœuvre" within the system, it now seems that the facts of economic falsity will never be faced by any group sufficiently coherent to be effective, unless some concerted community binds itself to carry out a definite line of conduct in its social and economic relationships, and then proclaims what are the forces it comes up against. As things are, the groping sense that the system is utterly defective and inhuman, far from stimulating the will, serves but to paralyse it and to throw the responsibility upon external events. Nor, of course, will pure enlightenment as to the roots of social deadlock create an effective will to revolution, political or technical. The only dynamic of social change is faith in a particular kind of society, and if Bishop Gore, the truest and most fearless prophet of the Church in this country, were less of an exception among his co-religionists, we might see even in the frayed and baffled institution which is still called the Church of England a society within the State which will live its Christian standards as far as it is able, and in so far as it is prevented by secular forces, will blazon its discovery of economic falsehood with a relentless roar of righteous indignation.

* "Christ and Society." By Charles Gore, D.D. (Halley Stewart Lectures, 1927. Allen and Unwin. 4s. 6d. net.)

Standard English.

In the absence of an academy every now and again some writer or professor is certain to bring up the question of standard English pronunciation. Sometimes it is a practical problem, a clear line between right and wrong pronunciation being required as the consequence of some other standardisation. In its early days the British Broadcasting Company, for example, had a good deal of trouble with its listeners about the pronunciations adopted by its announcers. Although these had all acquired the Oxford accent, they could not satisfy their fastidious public either by their distribution of emphases over their syllables or by their allocation of length and shortness. The B.B.C. attacked the problem pragmatically by appointing a tribunal of Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen, to deliver an unanimous verdict as to which of various pronunciations in use should be standardised, if not for English speech, at least for Announcers' English.

Professor Daniel Jones no doubt feels the need of a standard inasmuch as he has to teach language. As he says, the Oxford English Dictionary cannot be set up as a standard for the reason that its pronunciations are rather those of Sir James Murray and Scotsmen than of English people. Millions of Southern English people accept the letter *r* after a vowel as simply a modifier of the vowel sound. The difference between the sounds of *mad* and *made*, to exemplify modification, are conveyed in print by the final *e*, which, with practically no quantity of its own after the *d* in *made*, has nevertheless both quantity and value in the *a*. Similarly between the words *hat* and *hart*, the *r* in the speech of the southern counties has a lengthening and modifying value rendered in the *a*, whereas in Scottish and North Country speech it has a consonantal value of its own, and may exercise next to no modifying or lengthening influence on the *a*. Between *hart* and *heart* there is again a very slight difference; the *a* is again modified, softened, in fact, by the preceding *e*, although the difference is so subtle as not to be recognised in dictionaries. In southern speech *barm* and *balm* are very nearly alike, the difference again resulting from the difference between the power of the *r* to flatten the preceding vowel, and the *l* to round it, while both, of course, lengthen it. Who is to say whether the South is right in regarding both liquids, *l* and *r*, as modifiers purely and simply when they follow a vowel in such cases, or the North in the practice of treating the *l* as modifying influence while endowing the *r* with consonant value?

The student of dialects can tell the origin of a speaker more by his vowels than by his consonants. In the less metropolitanised localities where dialect remains strong it is possible to observe the very gradual change from village to village until an entirely different county pronunciation is reached. So different is the speech of an educated Lowland Scot or Yorkshireman from that of a Londoner or Oxford man, that where the latter would write *a* the former would phonetically write *e*, and for what the northerner pronounces when he visualises *a* the southerner seems to have no sign whatever. The North Countryman's *a* in *and* is a barbarian vulgarity not included in the southern English tongue. The pronunciation of the word year as the dictionaries give it—yer, i.e. yeer—is never heard anywhere, fortunately; *ye*:*ar* is heard among unaffected Scots or Northumbrians; elsewhere it varies from *yer* (rhyming with *her*) to *yah* (almost identical with the Cockney exclamation of defiance). Standard English is as difficult to attain as phonetic English. Our language is not spoken in exactly the same way in any two places; and each of the many ways of speaking it is so much richer in variation than written forms provide for, that it would be impossible either completely to standardise it, or even to write down the resultant forms. Speech has still to be learned by ear, and it goes on changing from father to son, in defiance of all the efforts by schools and dictionary-makers to bind it in a final bible.

This natural growth of language in the minds and mouths of the people who are really trying to express themselves with it is healthy, as it was healthy for Shakespeare to invent new words when the old were too worn or too roundabout. What is lacking, however, is the willingness of the cultured to bear their fair share of the burden of continual creation which a growing speech necessitates. Instead of developing our speech from the point attained by the major poets, the members of our first University have contorted it into a sign of their own pure-bredness. The Oxford accent is merely the Oxford man's monomark. It does not demonstrate his superior birth, breeding, education, or ability, but it does demonstrate his aloofness from mankind. It represents a claim to be regarded as of different clay. The Oxford accent is no good to the Oxford man, to Oxford, or to England. It is a barren affectation, which London men can imitate perfectly. Another institution with a duty to live for purification and clarification of speech is the stage. Yet so strong has "naturalism" become that the stage nowadays imitates the affectations of the snobs of real life. Mr. St. John Ervine, in spite of his own claims to set up standards being decidedly provincial, is right in condemning the West Kensington pronunciation (filigree-Oxford-accent) adopted by so many young actresses and actors. Nobody needs to go to a school of dramatic art to be *quate et heaoume* in West Kensington.

There is a place, however, in which those fortunate or unfortunate enough to appear may listen—with pleasure if they are not too deeply involved—to an English speech which is well articulated, clear, free from all affectations in either vowels or consonants, and which can scarcely be diagnosed as either belonging to a province or betraying any metropolitan corruption. The English referred to is spoken by the judges in court. The last defence of English liberties is the last defence of strong English speech. The topic on which the judge has to speak is rarely an enthralling one, though the logic and simplicity of his method may make it interesting. With his manner as with his matter, he has to make himself perfectly understood without undue pause, repetition, or emphasis. Whether the judge be by birth Northerner, Scot, or Southerner, he has to address himself with the same unmistakability to all persons who themselves speak English natively, whether they be countryfolk speaking broad dialects or townsfolk speaking narrow ones. He must be as intelligible to the Frenchman who has learned English as to the American who cannot learn English—though there are American actors and actresses to be envied in this matter by our own.

The final test of quality in the enunciation of judges in court may be made by observing an actor on the stage playing the part of a judge. Some of the best speaking heard in lecture-hall, court, and theatre could be enjoyed by getting almost any trained actor over thirty years of age to deliver the Inquisitor's speech in Saint Joan. But it applies generally that an actor performing a judge approaches the nearest—not to a final standard, to be sure—but to giving complete æsthetic satisfaction. There is pleasure in hearing a Scots accent, since Scots normally articulate well, as though they hated

wasting their breath; there is pleasure in the warmth and roundness of many Irish accents; indeed, there is pleasure in any variation of English pronunciation so long as it is unaffected and unmistakable. A more standardised speech would be a duller speech. Nevertheless, in a country without standards, there is something to be said for adding still another load of care to the shoulders of our judges. They are the custodians, in the default of the Universities, of English speech.

R. M.

Drama.

Loyalties: Wyndham's.

Mr. Galsworthy's "Loyalties" is often spoken of as an attack on class-prejudice. Such a view can be reached only by the process of speculating what an author of democratic reputation might be expected to write. It does not come spontaneously from direct contemplation of the play detached from the author. It is true, of course, that loyalty to any order is in a sense one of the foundation stones of aristocracy, as evident to thinkers from Plato to one recently mentioned in these columns, the Spanish S. de Maeztu; and in a remote way Mr. Galsworthy does censure all such loyalties. He labours to show that the best of us is not much better than the worst of us; that we are all unable to give a disinterested judgment on anything because our loyalty to some fixed idea determines what judgment we shall give, without our being even willing to hear the evidence. "Loyalties," indeed, seems to be the outcome of a war-time meditation, on the way in which loyalty to one's wife, mother, or friends, came into opposition with group-conscience—to avoid such doubtful terms as patriotism and loyalty to the State.

It can, then, be confidently asserted that anybody who derives pleasure from seeing the code of a particular "set," together with the body of convention which forms its masonic ritual, get a showing up, is blind to the moral lesson of the play. These officers of the army, members of Pall Mall clubs, and Right Honourable twigs of Debrett, are only behaving, Mr. Galsworthy seems to want to prove, as do wives who cleave to their husbands for better or worse, or solicitors who let down their clients out of loyalty to their professional code. So prodigious is the author's effort to be just to everybody, and to state the case for the other side so fairly that he cannot be accused of taking advantage of his privilege to do all the speaking, that the play comes very near to a vindication of class-prejudice. The play ends on the remark that we have all had faith, which is not enough. The end of a tract is the point at which the moral may reasonably be expected, though it is very late for the discovery quoted, since there is no time for Mr. Galsworthy to do what we have long hoped, with growing exasperation, he would do; namely, say what would be enough. Apart from that remark the whole play seems to confirm that the author's motto will remain to the end that to understand everything is to be able to put up with anything. *Tout pardonner, c'est tout tolérer.*

When the Jew's money is stolen at the country-house party—more admissible here as a get-together device than such a party usually is, since the author worked it into the scheme—the host is loyal to the code of hospitality. None of his guests can possibly be a thief. All but General Canynge had to be stupid to let the play go on, and General Canynge was loyal to the idea of honour among generals, which requires that truth must be perceived and dealt with, though not necessarily divulged to outsiders, whether it be their affair or not. So far as the characters of the play indicate, however, it was a superior code to that of majors, which again was superior to that of captains, a strange gradation for an attack on class-prejudice! The one person who was not loyal to something was the thief, Captain Dancy, unless Mr. Galsworthy suggests that his spending the proceeds of the theft in meeting a blackmail claim by a woman shows loyalty to his wife. This is probably the author's intention, inasmuch as he whitewashes Dancy on other occasions, for example, when he makes others refer to his impulsive, risk-taking nature, and when Major Colford gives his suicide the aristocratic description of hari-kari. Thus the humanitarianism of the author pleads that even Dancy should not be "misunderstood." When our attachments cut across one another things become difficult for us. Whether we belong to the upper ten thousand or the lowest ten million, whether we are scrupulously proper or sinners and wrongdoers, we are to be pitied, though we only pity ourselves. The only thing Mr. Galsworthy has against the smart set and not against grocers or solicitors is the allegation on which the play is based; that it would lie, conspire, and suppress to shield a thief because one of the set in the dock would besmudge the whole. That seems to be stretching class-consciousness beyond our experience of breaking-point.

One character in the play is really developed. De Levis, loyal to his race, which was old and civilised when Captain Dancy's was barbarian, is the only person in the play who commands the spirit of true drama by making the audience think, feel, and suffer with him. This outcast Jew, insisting on his rights as did a more famous predecessor, has a mind. Blackballed by the club he had set his heart on joining, aware that he was admitted to such society as invited him on account of his money alone, resenting the implied inferiority of his breed, and unquestionably right by both Jewish and Gentile morality, he lights a divine fire when he protests his racial superiority under unbearable provocation. Mr. Leon M. Lion's coolness, except at the right moments, conveyed a memorable impression of this man's efforts to adopt English aristocratic conventions while unable to pass the scales in which a scandal weighed heavier than a thousand pounds.

The character of Margaret Orme arouses respect for the way in which, up to the last moment, Mr. Galsworthy covers his tracks. Actually she is chorus, providing the commentary which enables the audience to penetrate the dramatist's aims. She has no other function. Yet she appears as, perhaps, the second most interesting character, the one most nearly liberated in the sense of being consciously aware of loyalty-determination. Even this is to be felt rather than seen, as she appears as the woman who knows exactly how far the private opinion of her set will let one of its number go before becoming public opinion, which, in the highest reaches of society, is synonymous with scandal. Along with Captain Dancy she is an excellent example of the original feature of the author's craftsmanship. Molly Kerr played Margaret Orme well, though on two points she must be warned. First, she had at times the fault of inaudibility, though it was not nearly so great or so frequent in her as in the other two actresses, Mary Grew and Nancy Parsons. Second, when she sat on the couch in the Dancys' sitting-room she did not carry off the nonchalant ease she strove for, because the rigid posture of one knee conveyed an impression of barrack-yard discomfort. As Captain Dancy, Eric Maturin was very fine indeed. This is not an easy part, since Dancy has little chance in the opening scenes to speak for himself. Throughout he has to live up to what others say of him, and most of what they say takes the form of scrappy hints. The actor found the right manner and expression to keep the thief a consistent character throughout.

"Loyalties" is generally thought an "actable" play. It is rather a mixed play, containing some parts that offer scope and invite work, and others that require only make-up and one manner. Lord St. Erth, for example, well as Henry West played it, invites little but make-up and a tone of voice. General Canynge is just military dignity and gentlemanly rectitude, not good enough for Austin Trevor's talents. What can be done with these figures—they are illustrations of a text rather than creatures of free-will—can be seen in Alfred Clark's contributions as the Inspector of Police and Gilman, the honest grocer. This actor has that capacity of gilding with live humour everything he touches that is rare among English actors nowadays. He really does win forgiveness for fools by making them lovable. D. J. Williams fully deserved the applause he received for his Ricardos, which was perfect as Lawrence Hanray's solicitor was perfect. The eccentricities of Edward Borring were a great help to Maurice Evans in performing the part, but Edward Graviter, the solicitor's clerk, was under the disability of being there merely to provide leading questions so that other characters could give information, thus providing an example of Mr. Galsworthy's technique over-running itself. Nancy Parsons and Mary Grew both had parts for hard thinking, which is, as said before, nowadays almost confined to the older men, and is indispensable to success. Mary Grew made one feel that she was absolutely dependent on her instructions. Both actresses carried naturalism at times to the extreme limit of appearing to speak for nobody's benefit but the person spoken to. For the sake of the theatre it is an obligation on every person on the stage that, however natural the effect is to seem, the lightest whisper should be articulated so that the last row of pit and gallery can hear if it gives attention—which must, of course, be commanded by the personality of the actor.

PAUL BANKS.

The Screen-Play.

The British film revival has reached a stage at which its interests will best be served by frank criticism. Among the characteristic defects of our producers are inappropriate casting; the apparent assumption that the number of "stars" available is limited to a very small number, who are consequently exploited ad nauseam; an almost complete failure to realise the essential difference between stage and screen technique, with the result that theatrical success is regarded as a passport to the studio; and the retention of the now-discarded American doctrine that the merits of a film are in direct proportion to the money spent on its making.

All these defects, plus bad photography, are combined in "The King's Highway" (Marble Arch Pavilion), an amateurish production, based on that dreary Lytton novel, "Paul Clifford." It is badly cast, badly acted, and badly directed. Matheson Lang is stagey throughout, a bad enough fault on the stage and a fatal defect on the screen. Joan Lockton is a piece of chocolate-box prettiness, who alternates between complete woodenness and the expression of emotion by means of convulsive jerks. There are acres of sub-titles, so that for the first quarter of an hour the spectator is kept wondering when he will see any pictures. When he does see them, he will perhaps wish that the sub-titles were back again. The only redeeming feature of this deplorable production is represented by the delightful photographs of rural England. But you can no more make a film out of a background of thatched cottages than by borrowing a battleship, the usual trump card of the British producer.

The majority of outstanding films lack the peculiar dramatic quality of the stage play, their nature being essentially episodic and atmospheric, as in the case of "Sunrise" and "Waxworks." Where the dramatic element is strongly marked, the result is too often melodramatic banality, as in the second half of "The Man Who Laughs." I have just come across a notable exception in "Three Sinners" (Plaza), which is easily the most striking film play, in terms of drama, that I have yet seen. The story is unfolded with logic and inevitability; both the ending and a penultimate incident have a sufficient quality of surprise to deceive the experienced film-goer if he thinks he knows what is coming next; and although it is easy to pick holes in the story and to label the whole as melodrama, "Three Sinners" has an arresting vitality which shows that Roland Lee, the American director, stands out above most of his Hollywood confrères. Pola Negri has in this film made a remarkable "come-back," the more notable when one remembers her performance in that puerility "Hotel Imperial." Olga Baclanova, who is currently spoken of as Negri's successor, is here swamped by the elder woman, and I much preferred her performance in "The Man Who Laughs," but her present rôle is too unbalanced and unsympathetic to be a criterion. I recommend "Three Sinners"; my readers need not be prejudiced against it in advance because it is billed in Wardour Street English as "The strongest sex drama of the year," whatever that may mean.

Maurice Elvey, who in "Hindle Wakes" produced one of the best English films yet made, has another excellent production to his credit in "Palais de Danse," which was trade-shown at the Hippodrome at the end of last month. As in "Hindle Wakes," he has again created a really British film. I will go further and say that it is a really English film, and one that should please all types of kinema-goer. The dancing-hall scenes are excellently done, and the professional partners are so exactly right that their portraiture appears almost cruel. John Longden, as a conventional villain, is just the type of actor needed on the British screen, which is not suffering from a surfeit of talented performers, and Chili Boucher gives a clever character-study. Mabel Poulton, the young actress who achieved fame in the kinema version of "The Constant Nymph," is very sweet and kittenish. I wish Mr. Elvey would have the strength of mind to break away from the American film tradition that female members of the British aristocracy are invariably caddish and quite unable to conceal their emotions when confronted with women of a lower social status. And does anyone outside the more uncouth suburbs still say "It seems to me you have forgotten your place"?

I have a great liking for Chester Conklin, an absurd little man with an absurd pair of mustachios and an absurd pair of spectacles, whose methods and screen personality are in the Charlie Chaplin tradition. He is at the moment being "released" in large quantities in England. In "Tell It To Sweeney" (Marble Arch Pavilion), he appears in an excellent piece of fooling mostly staged, and very well staged, with an American railroad as background. I doubt whether the screen has ever seen a more ludicrous engine-driver, and whoever conceived the idea of making Chester decorate his locomotive with a photograph of his daughter and a couple of window-boxes complete with flowering plants is a genius in his way.

DAVID OCKHAM.

Words and Poetry.*

Fascinating though metaphysical enquiry is, the results of it endure for so little time—except the oldest of it—that we became impatient of this whole branch of thought. To all questions demanding what is the nature of things, there seem to be three possible attitudes for action. We may take refuge in ignorance and plead the non-necessity for human life of answers; second, we may take refuge in one of the ancient answers that tradition has handed down. The other course is to waste our whole lives in unsatisfying search, doubting at the very end how much of our own personality we have read into the object of enquiry. A metaphysical enquiry into the nature of beauty, for example, gives no satisfying answer for the reason that it gives none which does not partake of the nature of the inquiring man. Though the argument that a noumenon must accompany every phenomenon is attractive, and promises at least to acknowledge something beyond appearance, it is, as Nietzsche showed in his notes for "The Will to Power," a very human noumenon the moment a description of qualities is attempted. It cannot, for humans, be any other than human. Preliminary to his collection of the poet's vocabulary, Mr. Rylands plunges into the old controversy as to what poetry is, and what distinguishes it from prose. No answer yet given is satisfactory. The most suggestive answers, like M. Bergson's philosophy, leave more to the imagination than they tell to the intellect, which is to say that they depend rather on stimulating intuition than on formulating a definition.

As Mr. Rylands perceives there are many occasions when Conrad's prose commands inclusion in the category of poetry. Perhaps it may be justly said of Emerson that all his prose essays contained poetry, whereas nearly all his poems were mannered prose. Coleridge's remark that prose consists of the "right words in the right order," whereas poetry consists "of the best words in the best order," is merely a circumlocution surprising the reader into perceiving a difference of degree, poetry being the higher. Perfect prose would contain the best words in the best order, while a great deal that is acknowledged as poetry, indeed, as good poetry, by all mankind contains words in a very bad order, the only excuse for which is that order was dominated by the rules of versification. Wordsworth's definition of poetry as an emotion remembered in tranquillity is poetic—although given in a prose essay—but it is not a definition. Tranquillity belonged to Wordsworth's poetry, but it is not essential to poetry as such. But emotion does seem essential to poetry, or rather, it is essential that poetry should awake emotion in the reader. So, of course, should the sight of a street accident, which is sufficient proof that only the beginning of even a psychological definition of poetry can so much as be hoped for in its power to evoke emotion.

As Mr. Rylands says, the subject-matter of prose and poetry is generally different, but even this is not essential. There is no subject forbidden to either medium. The view that prose is of the intellect, whereas poetry is of the soul, makes a distinction generally true, though all the self-imposed rules of prosody in which the poet works are intellectual; and it is a distinction not vitiated by the fact that false or derived emotion produces artificial verse. There is something in poetic expression which is individual in the same sense as experience is individual. Poetry is ego-centric as a child is ego-centric, it is an unique expression of an individual reaction, whether of pleasure or pain, to the things that happen to all of us. The lover will cry for his lost love in lyric verse and sing of the universe in dithyrambics in the future as in the past. Blank verse may or may not be poetry—it is largely fluent prose. For prose is social like logic. Its aim is to close the subject rather than open the mind. Oratory is not poetry, in spite of its appeal to the emotions, for the simple reason that it is not the unique expression of experience. It is calculated to produce a preconceived effect, in the form of persuasion, and its appeal is rather to mass feeling than to individual passion. One feels that poetry would still be poetry were it communicated to one alone, or to none, whereas oratory to so limited an audience would provide only a music-hall joke.

Mr. Rylands has written one of those entertaining and useful books behind which there has been a long garnering. His own style sometimes lapses into a decorativeness inapposite to criticism, and he cannot discipline himself, where he has found two alternative pieces of cleverness, to give the better the whole frame by sacrificing the worse. But his book is an addition to criticism. His quotations—and they are plentiful—are chosen with so fine a taste that the reader never wishes them fewer; and they illustrate his stylistic categories and his iconoclastic poet's word-book excellently. The second part of Mr. Rylands's work, an examination of the development of Shakespeare's style, is a dovetail of the first. In Shakespeare's earlier manner the critic finds imitativeness, hackwork, and plagiarism, along with something else. The poet is "flirting with the poetic diction" in vogue in his day. Later he grew tired of the Greek and Roman theogonies, soaring metaphors, and poetic vocabulary, and for the sake of dramatic realism studied expression in prose. His weariness with a technique from which nothing unique was to be hoped, Mr. Rylands shows, caused him to make fun of it through, for instance, the mouths of his clowns; as in *Twelfth Night*, "I might say 'element,' but the word is overworn." Mr. Rylands gives many other examples, as Faulconbridge's.

> "Here's a large mouth, indeed,
> That spits forth death and mountains, rocks and seas
> Talks as familiarly of roaring lions
> As maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs. . . ."

Finally, Shakespeare gains complete command of his instrument. He scorns all the worn old adjectives, finding fresh, simpler, and strong ones, not to mention being in rarer need of them. His metaphor is richer, more symbolical, yet more compact. His fastidiousness and power can be seen almost on show in his choice of verbs. The tropical vegetation of his adolescence has given place to one of equal luxuriance, but of greater discipline and sturdiness; or, perhaps, entire freedom from discipline that comes of mastery. But, as Mr. Rylands—who is no puff-vendor, but a critic—says, this is not the whole story, which cannot be rendered in a short article. Mr. Rylands earns congratulation for a very illuminating treatise on style.

* Words and Poetry. By George H. Rylands. (The Hogarth Press. 10s. 6d.)

Reviews.

Selected Essays. (First Series.) By Edmund Gosse.
Selected Essays. (Second Series.) By Edmund Gosse.
(Heinemann. 3s. 6d. per volume).

The publication of two volumes of the late Sir Edmund Gosse's selected essays is a better funeral address than all the columns of journalism which celebrated that event; and the author's preface to the first volume is a fair comment on his work on behalf of literature. As he says, he has never set up as a teacher. He has always been an artist, though, as he does not say, he has always been of more importance than the works in which he made them. He had no fads. "All my life long," he writes, "I have been wandering in the gardens of Armida, never rejecting the rose because it was not a jasmine, and never denying the beauty of orchids because they were not daisies." That is typical of Sir Edmund Gosse; anybody else in his place would have claimed not to have denied the beauty of daisies because they were not orchids, and the gesture would have been more lively. In a sense, Sir Edmund was a civil servant in letters. He allowed nothing that was of importance to be overlooked. When a new comet came into view he "drew attention" to it, and when a comet lost its glory "he drew attention" to it. It would be as ridiculous to call him a journalist—many reviewers have done so—as to call him a creative essayist. He served literature, and it was honourable service he rendered. His essays bear reading; and at the end of them one sits back with satisfaction at the ease with which almost an ordnance survey of English literature has been imparted. Gosse, it may be repeated for emphasis, was a civil servant in literature; He had no "sensations," no "stunts," no "favourites." He was completely Catholic in the best sense. He served the upstart no better and no worse than the classics. He was, indeed, as nearly as possible, an honorary Minister of Literature.

Do We Agree? By G. K. Chesterton and Bernard Shaw, with Hilaire Belloc in the Chair. (Cecil Palmer. 1s. 6d.)

Debates between Messrs. Bernard Shaw and G. K. Chesterton are always entertaining. They are entertaining, indeed, much as a pair of patter-comedians in a music-hall, practically the only difference being that the patter-comedians are expected to be more up-to-date with their topics. On this occasion Mr. Chesterton was slightly more in earnest than Mr. Shaw, who must be forgiven on account of age for the fact that his ideas have ceased to grow. Mr. Chesterton's "Distributism" is not in any sense a political philosophy. It is a protest against the swamping and standardising of human personality to accommodate it to a system which, while alleged to be democracy, is a mechanism. So far as it goes, Mr. Chesterton's attitude, although insufficiently developed, is a good deal more healthy than that of Mr. Shaw, who is a patriarch running an imaginary world on Mussolinist lines. Mr. Shaw's admiration of Mussolini is probably mixed with envy aroused by the fact that Mussolini got the job. So far as remedies go, both writers are utterly wrong. Mr. Shaw believes in the servile state, where everybody would be a civil servant, and where anybody who disagreed with Mr. Shaw would be killed (with the humane slaughterer) by Mr. Shaw personally. Although Mr. Chesterton believes in distributism, one industry after another will compel him to be collectivist for all practical purposes. Rain-tubs and filters have gone wherever reservoirs have been constructed, and that, so far as distributing the means of *production* goes, is the end of the matter. The means of production will follow—if it means a row or two—greatest efficiency. What can be distributed for enjoyment, and should be, is the product, access to which is income. Mr. Shaw seems to have got this partly right without knowing it, for although he does break out into sense now and again, his economics are as obsolete as those of Marx or Adam Smith.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

THE IDEO-NEUROSIS OF THE LABOUR PARTY.

Sir,—I am asked to reply to seven questions, and do so as follows:—

(a) *Does "J" agree that social economics are vitally necessary to the mental, moral, and physical betterment of mankind?*

"Social economics" may mean many different things. I agree that Social Credit is vitally necessary . . . etc.

(b) *Does he consider that the present financial policy of the capitalist system is scientific and to the highest advantage of the majority?*

I do not consider the present financial system scientific, nor that it is of *any* advantage to the majority.

(c) *Does our present financial policy allow of poverty and unemployment?*

It not only allows of poverty and unemployment, it creates poverty and unemployment and cannot exist without doing so.

(d) *Do the riches and labour of the world available for production remain constant, practically, throughout the waves of depression and prosperity met with under the present financial policy?*

The Real Wealth of the world available for production and distribution is practically inexhaustible, and in the form of consumable goods (and services) is constantly *increasing* as methods of production improve. The "waves" are the direct result of the artificial manipulations of the Tritons of the mythical "sea" of Finance.

(e) *Do economic laws control man's life or does man control economic laws?*

A few men, in their own interests, control a system of Finance which is camouflaged as "economic laws," and accepted as such even by the Right Hon. Philip Snowden, M.P. Man could release himself from the Financial Poverty imposed upon him by these so-called "laws" and consume his total production of Real Wealth up to his actual physical consumptive capacity.

(f) *Can these sources of riches be distributed more securely and fairly by a new financial policy?*

Real Wealth (goods and services) could be distributed in accordance with a new financial policy in such a way as to ensure the economic security of every human being.

(g) *Should this be the Socialist Credit movement? Is this the elimination of profits?*

The word "this" refers to a policy. I do not understand how a policy can be a movement.

The policy must be the Social (not *ist*) Credit Policy, operated by economic technicians, and not by bankers and politicians.

The ideo-neurosis is made plain in the second question in (g) above, because the question of the elimination of Profits does not loom large in the Social Credit programme. On this point I quote from Major C. H. Douglas.—(*Mr. H. G. Wells and Credit*, NEW AGE, May 17, 1928):—

> "In common with most Socialists, Mr. Wells, while having had at various times many hard things to say about the 'Capitalist' and his exorbitant profits, which have recently been calculated as being on the average about 2 per cent., evidently feels a strong measure of sympathy for the financier, whose disclosed profits are generally about 25 per cent., and whose undisclosed profits we know to be incomparably higher."

My case has been stated. It was stated quite clearly in your issue of July 12, 1928, but I am asked to state it again in the interests of my fellow creatures. I therefore state it again: that the Labour Party is trying to implement the "Dream of John Ball" without the necessary economic implement. The implement is known. It is known as Social Credit. It can be shown, however, that no democratic political party will ever be able to take hold of, and use, this implement. It needs quite a new type of organisation which can act as an Economic Party.

J.

"THE COME-TO-CHURCH MOVEMENT.'

Sir,—I do not know whether it be by a coincidence that the same number of THE NEW AGE in which I seek to point out the social value of Adler's psychology contains an article by John Grimm construed to expose it as "hypnotic dope." I must leave Mr. Mairet to defend his master from this singular accusation, and if, in the meantime, your readers' curiosity is sufficiently aroused for them to investigate the little book in question, so much the better. But I write to protest against the absurd thesis of John Grimm's article that there is some inevitable antagonism between concern for the individual's right conduct in social relations and the advancement of financial reform. If from fear of their "being used by the ruling classes to secure the ends of financial government" we are to abstain from all suggestions that the attitude of the average individual towards social obligations is in need of improvement, we must build our movement upon a hypocritical fiction which will be disastrous to its prospects with persons of any sense of the underlying realities and needs of the situation to-day. The financial system is but the apotheosis of a power-complex and a social irresponsibility which is the besetting sin of modern society and a large majority of its members, and until more of us make our hearts clean in this respect we shall not succeed in getting rid of what, in many ways, so well embodies our individual values.

MAURICE B. RECKITT.

[John Grimm replies: "I wrote my article without knowing that Mr. Reckitt was contributing one on the same subject. As regards Mr. Reckitt's letter, all that I can gather from it is that he dissents from my views. I supported them with reasons, and since he refrains from rebutting my reasoning he affords me no basis for further argument. As regards Mr. Reckitt's article, I see in it a detailed confirmation of my thesis, and I can easily understand how he came to suspect that I had had a sight of it and wrote my article as a direct reply. His suspicion is a handsome compliment to my perspicuity, and I would lift my hat to him but for the danger that I might not get it on again.]

[We take the responsibility for the juxtaposition of these two articles in the same number of THE NEW AGE. Mr. Reckitt's opening paragraphs seem to us to amount to a claim that pro-Adlerian theses ought to receive editorial protection. On what grounds?—ED.]

PUBLIC PROPAGANDA IN GLASGOW.

Sir,—May I invite readers of THE NEW AGE who live in Glasgow to co-operate in the formation and conduct of a Social Credit group for public propagandist purposes. In a recent Town Council election one of the candidates decided to stand on a credit-reform programme. He was late in deciding to do so, and was left only five days in which to expound his views: he was short of suitable speakers and had to cancel three of his projected meetings: also, by some accident, 2,000 election addresses went astray. Yet in spite of these handicaps he polled 940 votes. This encourages me to try to organise a series of meetings (probably at weekly intervals) with the object of "nursing the electorate" between the elections. I shall be glad to hear from everyone willing to help.

J. P. WHITE.

4, Caledonia-road, Glasgow, S.S. C.5.

"Letters to the Editor" should arrive not later than the first post on Saturday morning if intended for publication in the following week's issue.

The Social Credit Movement.

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

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

The adoption of this scheme would result in an unprecedented improvement in the standard of living of the population by the absorption at home of the present unsaleable output, and would, therefore, eliminate the dangerous struggle for foreign markets. Unlike other suggested remedies, these proposals do not call for financial sacrifice on the part of any section of the community, while, on the other hand, they widen the scope for individual enterprise.

All communications should be addressed, Manager, THE NEW AGE, 70, *High Holborn, W.C.1.*

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.