

# THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER."

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

A report (*Evening News*, June 6) of the death of Lord Portman states that he was one of the richest ground landlords in London. The Portman estate of 270 acres in Marylebone was acquired by Lord Chief Justice Portman in the 16th century. It then consisted of fields, but is now thickly built upon. The report says that he was a model landlord; that after the war he reduced many of his rents to the pre-war figure in order to make it easier for his tenants to pay. It adds that "death duties in the last ten years have caused considerable economies in the estates."

It does not particularly matter whether the *Evening News's* praise is exaggerated or not: the fact is that death duties tend to eliminate the "model landlord." The expropriation of the "lazy" landlord who "earned his money while he slept" has been a popular policy, but all that it has done has been to transfer power from the landlord-class to the financier-class. Granting that all landlords were rapacious, this rapacity of persons has been superseded by the rapacity of a system, and if there is anything to choose between the consequences of the two to ordinary people, we should condemn the system. We would sooner be oppressed by a visible person than be cheated into oppressing ourselves by a class of invisible persons.

The effect of death duties in causing economies in the Portman estate ensures that the new Lord Portman, however good his intentions, will not be able to be a "model landlord." And at every transfer of every estate the dominant doctrine, "pay up or clear out," must be more rigorously applied to the tenants. Death duties have to be paid in money, and bankers control money; so in the end the bankers control the administration of inherited estates. The more frequent the successions through deaths the more quickly does the control pass from the individual owners to the financial system. The

upholders of the principle of death duties make no secret of their ideal, which is to complete the extinction of the value of inheritances in as few successions as possible. They suggest, of course, that by this means they will fatten the purses of the people. Really they are swelling the reserves of the banks.

Behind these soft-heads are the astute insurance trusts, whose function it is to sponge up liberated purchasing power before the consumer can capture it. For, in face of death duties, owners of property who wish to pass it on to their heirs inviolate and unencumbered are compelled to insure it. The premiums of course are ultimately paid by the tenants. Thus the disappearance of "model landlordism" is inevitable. If a landlord refrains from exacting the full economic rent for his property, or if he spends more on improving it than he can recover with a profit comparable to the return on investments in general, he is penalised in much the same way as industrial concerns, namely, by compulsory "reconstruction." If, on the other hand, he is a miserly landlord, he gets hit by the graduated income-tax. Just as God has been said to cause the rain to fall on the just and the unjust alike, so do the bankers inflict a drought with the same impartiality. Wagnerites will remember how Wotan recovered the Rhinemaidens' gold from the dwarf Alberich, who had stolen it from them; and then used it to pay the giants for building Valhalla, the Home of the Gods. As the gods begin their stately progress across the rainbow into their glorious stronghold, Wotan pauses to enquire

"What wailing sound do I hear?"

Loge answers:  
"The Rhine's fair children, bewailing their lost gold, weep."

Wotan says:  
"Accursed nixies! Bid them cease us no more."

So Loge calls down to the Rhine valley  
"Ye in the water, why wail ye to us? List to Wotan's decree. Ye have seen the last of the gold. Bask and sun yourselves in the Gods' increase of splendour."

It is an exact parallel. The rent-rolls of the world

are become the reserves of the money-lords. Deserted mansions are so much ballast for the foundations of central banks. Individual power of committing injustice has been brought under the law of collectivism, and Mr. Sidney Webb is appropriately to be elevated to the Peerage.

Among the Labour M.P.s in the new Parliament are six in whom the Union of Post-Office Workers "possess a special interest," according to the *Post*, which paper notes with satisfaction that Mr. W. J. Brown also was elected. Mr. Brown is the general secretary of the Civil Service Clerical Association; and our readers will recall that he was one of the leading speakers at the great demonstration of Civil Servants at the Albert Hall some time ago, and that in his speech he reminded the Authorities that their economising would cause a loss of enthusiasm which would manifest itself in loss of revenue. The *Post* points out that the Post Office is the largest employer of all Government departments, and the second largest in the country, having no fewer than 250,000 employees. We are glad to see that Mr. George Middleton, the editor of the *Post* is among the above six elected Members of Parliament. Although he has not, to our recollection, allied himself with any particular school of credit reform, he has at least allowed a fair amount of space in his correspondence columns to be occupied by writers who stand for Social Credit—in fact, a controversy is proceeding between Mr. Pankhurst and opponents in the present issue. We welcome Mr. Brown's election because we judge him to be a man who will make his duty to his Service constituents the spear-point of his policy, and not allow their interests to evaporate into that nebulous thing called the "general interest." To paraphrase Dr. Johnson, altruism is the last refuge of a scoundrel who endeavours to substitute it for the fulfilment of definite undertakings.

There was once a time when seemingly it could be conclusively demonstrated that rigid insistences by wage and salary earners, by investors, by employers, and by consumers, were mutually incompatible, and could lead nowhere but to a deadlock. That was the time when everyone believed that the difficulty which all these interests experienced in obtaining money was a natural phenomenon, and that it faithfully reflected a limitation of the general capacity to make and distribute actual things. Today that idea has been demolished. Only a few are aware of it, but that is because only a few have had the enterprise and energy to overcome the obstacles which the money-interests deliberately place in the way of the study of the subject. The power to lend money is the power to intimidate persons. The power of the private lender is only leased from the banking system to whom political Governments have assigned the freehold. It is the banks who are the sole lenders of money in the last resort. Hence it is not surprising that all the main avenues of publicity are closed to independent criticisms of banking policy, and are wide open to inspired justifications of it. The banks' power of intimidation can be exercised at any time by the device of calling in loans or overdrafts. One might say that the power to grant loans is the power to bribe, and the power to recall them the power to blackmail. These are ugly terms to apply to powers which rest on legal sanction, but they are true. People must make up their minds whether they want to blame the banks for possessing these powers or to blame our so-called democratic system of government for parting with them. If the facts themselves are realised it does not matter much which moral they draw: what will have to be done about them will be the same in either case.

There was an occasion a year or so ago when one of our supporters wrote to Mr. Lloyd George on his

own initiative relative to the Douglas Proposals. He received a polite reply from one of the Secretaries saying in so many words that the scheme was interesting but that the difficulty was that it was *making little or no headway with public opinion!* A beautiful example of studied artlessness. If with a shilling's worth of expenditure on education you can overcome some million or two pounds' worth of expenditure on mis-education, then the politician will be pleased to take some action. Very much the same attitude was adopted by Mr. Lloyd George during the election. Hotly repudiating the statement that he had promised to make this country "fit for heroes to live in," he declared that all he did was to "appeal" to the people of this country to make it so. Mr. Baldwin too, had previously adopted the same attitude. In one of his speeches he stated that Government action with regard to difficult practical problems did "much more harm than good," and that in the last resort people who were confronted with them must rely on "their own efforts" to overcome them. If this is true, then why vote?

Nor does Mr. MacDonald escape the same condemnation. In his speech by wireless on Saturday night he said that he had always been sceptical about the possibility of a sudden cure for unemployment. The new Government had appointed no less a person than Mr. Thomas to tackle the problem, and he, Mr. MacDonald, assured the country that "no time or effort would be spared" to find a practical solution, also that there would be a careful avoidance of "extravagance." This assurance is very nearly the same as saying: We'll spend anything you like on the job *except money*. Our reply to that is: If they do not spend money, whatever else they spend will be wasted. Mr. MacDonald could, of course, reply that our paraphrase is unjust; for he did envisage *some* expenditure, and what he meant was that the sum should not exceed what was justifiable. If the money was devoted to developing the national resources of the country so as to increase commensurately its revenue-earning capacity—that would be justifiable expenditure. He will, then, spend money if it will enable Britain to sell more goods in foreign markets. He will put Britons into work by throwing foreigners out of work. This would be an intelligible objective if Mr. MacDonald's general policy were what America has stigmatised as the "intense nationalism" of the late Conservative Government. But Mr. MacDonald is an internationalist—a promoter of amicable relations—and is committed to the utter repudiation of the "Britain first" doctrine. He announces that he intends to pay an early visit to Geneva. Let us hope that he has discovered how to create international political friendship out of international economic enmity. The world is waiting for the revelation.

In the meantime here we are stuck with a Safety-First Labour Cabinet. The only man now holding office from whom it ever looked possible that something would come to stir up the financial question when he got into Parliament is Sir Oswald Mosley. We shall be very surprised if a word more is heard of his credit proposals which were so strenuously advocated in *Revolution by Reason*. We shall see that "reason" has killed the "revolution." We remember that when he was Mr. Oswald Mosley he was quite sure that he would never accept the title, Sir Oswald. Yet when the time came he behaved like the young lady in Tennyson, and, swearing he would never consent, consented. The question of "yes" or "no" was not worth making a fuss about, he explained. Neither will be that of financial reform. On the other hand there is a man who held office in the last Labour Administration who

did survey economic problems in the debates from a point of view approximating to our own. He is excluded from the present Administration. We refer, of course, to Mr. Wheatley. We do not know how far he would identify himself with the Douglas Proposals themselves, but it is enough to be going on with when we see a man display the courage of applying a standard of values in his criticisms which we can generally endorse. We are interested to notice that Mr. Garvin, in the *Observer* of last Sunday, suggests that his old colleagues may find that they have made a "far-reaching mistake" in leaving him out. Mr. Garvin's reference to the subject begins as follows:

"But—and here we touch what is, after all, the gravest of the practical perils that this Administration—the Left Wing is already saturated with discontent. Considering the part he played in the last Labour Government, the exclusion of Mr. Wheatley from the Cabinet is astonishing. He is a strong administrator. When his hour strikes—and he knows how to wait for it—he is a dangerous critic. He represents forces which are convinced and concentrated."

We hope that the discontent of the Left Wing will spread; for out of it may emerge a "cave" of Labour members, which may subsequently grow by accretion into a Parliamentary Economic Party containing representatives of all three political parties. There is, as our readers know so well, no point of principle which need frustrate this end, once given that the economic policy is that prescribed by Major Douglas and advocated in this journal. The difficulty lies in getting party-men to give time to investigate this truth. But if Mr. Wheatley's contributions to the debates continue to maintain the character of his previous ones, persuasion will become an easier task, especially when, as is bound to be the case, the logic of coming events disheartens those Members who are sincerely trying to improve conditions, and menaces the reputation of those who are not.

As Mr. Hilaire Belloc pointed out in *The Party System*, private Members of all political persuasions have long since given up that old practice of kicking out their own Administrations when they objected to their policies. This spirit of independence ought to be revived. If it is not there will be no honest legislation on anything that really matters to the country. To-day a Cabinet does not belong to its Party adherents in the House, let alone the House of Commons itself: it belongs to the banks. Not so very long ago we remember an intensive agitation in the Independent Labour Party to secure that the function of selecting the next Labour Cabinet should be reposed in the Party and be exercised by open election instead of secret nomination. We knew that it could not succeed; but since our knowledge was based on deductions from facts of which the I.L.P. was ignorant, and by all appearances still is, we are entitled to ask why the agitation went to sleep and has remained so just when the votes of electors have nudged it to wake up. For ourselves, we are pretty sure that guarantees were exacted, long before the election campaign was started in Fleet Street, that Mr. Wheatley would not hold office. Otherwise Lords Rothermere and Beaverbrook were quite capable of smashing Labour's chance at the polls off their own bats. We offer one consideration to sceptics. After what Mr. Garvin has said about Mr. Wheatley anyone would suppose that his speeches in the House would have had a fair measure of publicity. Instead of that he has received less notice in the aggregate than many private members. On one occasion, when he had made a more than usually brilliant analysis of the economic situation, a great London daily gave him exactly two lines. Boycotted by the Press, and blackballed by the bankers,

Mr. Wheatley has been rendered as innocuous as possible both as a publicist and as an administrator. So far as his holding office is concerned, the reason why he is excluded is not that he would have been able to persuade the Cabinet to adopt his ideas on finance, for on that subject the Cabinet takes orders from the banks via the Treasury and Mr. Snowden. The reason is that as Cabinet Minister Mr. Wheatley would have been entitled to hear secrets of a sort that the Mansion House interests consider it advisable he should not know, especially at this time when General Dawes is arriving from America to hustle along the Reparations-ramp, set up the European Central Bank, undo Sir Austen Chamberlain's work, and put France in her place.

We must allude to the case of Mr. Jowitt's post-election conversion to Labour. Not only did he (Liberal) and Mr. Tom Shaw (Labour) contest Preston as partners, but the local Labour Caucus advised the electors not to vote for a second Labour candidate who appeared on the scene. When Mr. Jowitt had announced his acceptance of office under Mr. MacDonald the local Liberal Caucus decided not to insist on his contesting the seat again. The whole affair savours of collusion between the two national Party organisations. We are glad, for the sake of its own reputation, that the *Daily News* lets its disgust be plainly seen, as it does in a sarcastic leading article.

We referred above to a controversy going on in the *Post*. A correspondent, Mr. E. E. Neale, writes from Nottingham to criticise the statement that "banks can create money by mere book entries." He says that this is true "up to a point," but that the creations of money are limited by the value of the security offered by the borrower. We suppose he means *ought* to be so limited by the security, because later in his letter he refers to the "post-war examples of Germany, Russia, Austria, etc.," as showing the danger of inflation through the use of the printing-press. He enumerates several forms of security normally acceptable to banks, such as property, "reasonable expectations" of receiving money, rateable values, i.e., the capacity of citizens to pay rates, also taxable capacity. But Mr. Neale is arguing in a circle without knowing it. All his forms of security have this one essential thing in common, namely, that whatever they are in themselves they represent a guarantee that money equal to the amount of the loan will be forthcoming when the bank wants it. So the ultimate security for all new money proposed to be created and issued as loans is the quantity of money already in existence. Now the creation and issue of a loan increases the quantity of money in existence. Therefore, the loan creates its own ultimate security.

This general principle can be illustrated as follows. Suppose we went with Mr. Neale to our bankers and proposed to borrow, say, £100 for three months, undertaking to write out a cheque payable to Mr. Neale and to hand it to him in exchange for his promissory-note made payable to us in three months. Suppose, next, that Mr. Neale undertook to pay the cheque into a deposit account in his name at this same bank under three months' notice of withdrawal. Suppose, lastly, that we undertook to endorse Mr. Neale's promissory-note to the bank as our security for the loan, instructing the bank to collect the amount at the due date and cancel our loan with the proceeds. Of course our bankers would take us for a couple of escaped lunatics, but they would have no reason to sniff at the promissory-note as our "security." (We ignore the question of interest because it does not affect the principle being discussed.)

Mr. Neale will probably retort that the illustration is fantastic, because the money never left the bank. Nevertheless the loan was made—or if it

was not the bank's balance sheet would be telling lies. For in accounting this transaction the bank would debit us in a loan account with £100, and credit us in a current account with £100. Then it would post our cheque to the credit of a deposit account in Mr. Neale's name, and debit our current account with the same sum. Our current account would cancel out, and there would remain on the bank's books a new £100 loan to us and a new £100 deposit from Mr. Neale. All this could be done in a quarter of an hour; and when we came out we should have increased the loans and deposits—the assets and liabilities—of the whole banking system by £100. And then, in three months, counter-entries would be made closing our loan account and Mr. Neale's deposit account, with the result that total loans and deposits—assets and liabilities—would be decreased by £100, thus reverting to where they stood before we appeared on the scene to play our little game.

Mr. Neale would be entitled to point out that in this transaction neither he nor we would be able to use the £100: that though technically it would exist as additional credit it would not be in effective circulation: it would be still and sterile. That is admitted, but the point has nothing to do with the question of whether the banks' freedom to lend for economic purposes is conditioned by the value of securities. The essential point is that in any closed credit-area the creation of new credit raises existing security values as and when the borrower spends it, and lowers them as and when he repays it to the bank. As we saw during the war, the British banks created new credit and increased the sum in use from £900 millions in 1914 to £2,000 millions in 1918. The "security" on which this increase of £1,100 millions was based was created by the issue of the loans. It was the kind of security which Mr. Neale describes as the "reasonable expectation" of business borrowers of getting back the money in prices. But what made the expectation reasonable was the fact that all the banks were lending money to finance the war. Mr. Neale's reference to inflation should remind him that it was manifested as higher prices and therefore a higher valuation of price-earning assets, and therefore higher security values. And if he will reflect he will see that one instalment of inflation ought, on his theory, to increase the freedom of the banks to permit another. Again, the very fact that, as we know to our cost, the banks called in loans (or refused to increase them) at a time when security-values were at their peak, demolishes the doctrine that these values govern the bankers' loan-policy. It is their policy which governs the values.

This is how they will be able to discredit the Labour Government whenever they want to, and accredit any other which they desire to. People's memories are short, and few remember that the much-abused Baldwin Government was thrown from power the first time because the bankers declined to finance its contemplated scheme for a £200 million loan for an industrial revival, and opposed its alternative idea of resorting to protection. Directly the question of this £200 millions was raised the British currency-exchange fell. This hammering of exchanges is the method by which the international banking-trusts depress security values. It is time that our politicians saw through all this "we-would-if-we-could" pose of the banks. The truth is that they are perfectly well able to do what is necessary when someone is able to tell them to—and to do it without risk to our financial stability if that somebody is smart enough to see that they do it the right way.

## Some Difficulties of a Credit Reformer.

(Notes for an address delivered to the Anthroposophical Society.)

By C. H. Douglas.

### II.

Shortly after the war I had several conversations with the late Lord Leverhulme on these matters, and he was quite clear that only the fear of poverty kept the vast majority of people at work, and he took it for granted that they ought to be kept at work. Two or three sentences after disposing of the question in the foregoing manner, he explained that he worked much harder than any of his employees. That, of course, was because he was different.

Analogous to this, and no doubt closely connected with it, is the rooted objection existing in the minds of most people that anyone but themselves should get something for nothing. I have heard innumerable cases of furious resentment against the grant of what is so improperly called "the dole" (which is, of course, a form of contributory unemployment insurance, to which the workman himself contributes) and these denunciations, proceeding from normally kind hearted persons of both sexes, are usually accompanied by remarks on the demoralising effect of money received without working. If you enquire, as mildly as possible, of such people, if by chance they receive any dividends which enable them to exist without working, you will, of course, be very unpopular, and you will be told that that is different, and if you suggest that a generalisation of the dividend system if it could be obtained (and it can) would be desirable, you will be called "Socialistic," a Parliamentary epithet for dangerous.

An extreme variant of the same idea is that there is some virtue in poverty.

Speaking to Labour and Socialist audiences I have been struck with the hypnotism exercised by such phrases as "Public Ownership."

It never seems to penetrate the minds of the large numbers of people who clamour for Public Ownership of this, that, or the other, that they already have public ownership of such things as the Army, Navy, Post Office and many other services. I should like to see one of the public owners step upon a battleship of the Royal Navy with a view to removing his bit of property or making some use of it. The real fact is, that the word "ownership" is quite meaningless when it is applied to the relations between any undertaking and a large number of what the law calls "tenants-in-common." It is quite impossible for a hundred people to own a piece of land, although there is a legal fiction to the effect that they can. Either they have to let it, and divide the rents or each one of them can walk about on it, in which case there is no rent and nothing to divide. Even a Public Park is subject to regulations which the individuals using it are generally powerless to alter as individuals.

It is a fact inherent in the nature of the case that ownership must vest in an individual, and any attempt to get away from this law of nature results as a practical consequence in the appointment of an administrator whose power increases as the number of his appointees increases. This is, of course, the idea which is contained in the continuous extension of the voting franchise, and a very Machiavellian policy it is, resulting as it does in the intelligent voter being completely disfranchised. Another very curious and almost universal form of resistance which is met with by the credit reformers is the general determination to believe that

any proposal which offers a radical amelioration in the economic situation must be a fairy tale. Inspired by the bankers and orthodox economists, political spokesmen have been at one in asserting that there is no short cut out of our difficulties. That is what they are paid to say, and it is perhaps not surprising. But what is surprising is the unanimity with which most people accept the statement. We all know Mark Twain's story of the man who was imprisoned for twenty years and then walked out having just discovered that the door had never been locked, and some of us think it is funny. Personally I do not think it funny. I consider it a somewhat boring statement of fact. The world at large is in prison, and shows many symptoms of dying in prison, and there is nothing whatever to prevent it from walking out.

No doubt some of you may remember a book by Mr. Tawney, a well-known Socialist, and a fellow of an Oxford College, called "The Sickness of an Acquisitive Society." I must confess that I never read the book itself, although I read several reviews of it, but I never saw the title without wanting to write another book under some title such as "The sickness of people who write about the sickness of an Acquisitive Society." It has always been quite incomprehensible to me why people should be expected, when they don't want to, to work unless they get something for working. Please do not misunderstand me. There is a very great satisfaction to be derived from creative work, quite irrespective of the result. But that is not the primary objective of work, used in the ordinary sense of the word. That primary objective is to obtain something which had not existed before the work was done, and the fundamental defect of the existing financial system is that it does not give people enough return for the work that they do, or conversely, they do not get in confident security a standard of life such as they have a right to expect without devoting far too much time and energy to its acquisition. It is my own personal opinion that the undue acquisitiveness of a small section of society very largely arises out of fear, and that by far the best way to reduce it to its normal proportion would be to remove the fear and insecurity in the existing state of affairs by making plain what is undoubtedly the truth, that the modern production system can meet every possible need of society without any stress or strain, if only it is freed from the fetters imposed upon it by the existing financial system.

I do not claim in the foregoing remarks to have more than sketched the outlines of the curious perversity which seems to exist in regard to our social troubles, but I hope that I have given you sufficient indication that the nature of that "change of heart," of which we hear so much, is not so simple as many people would have us believe. Those very persons who are loudest in their demand for a human spirit in industry are very often the most determined that the results which they pretend to desire shall not be attained by methods which would remove the necessity for the philanthropist. There is a great deal of truth in the saying that "People will do anything for the poor, except make them rich." It is my own opinion that until it is clearly recognised that the sane objective of an industrial and productive system is to deliver goods as, when, and where desired with the minimum of trouble to anyone, and that the moment you begin to mix this clear cut objective up with moral considerations, so called, including a strong dash of Mosaic law, you produce, maintain, and increase friction, inefficiency, and mental and physical distress, and that if you persist, as we are persisting, in this confusion of objective, you will eventually arrive at a situation involving the serious elements of breakdown.

(The end.)

## The British Empire.

"The Cambridge History of the British Empire" makes its bow to the public with this, the first volume, an enormous tome of 900 large pages, well printed in fine clear type. It has been planned in eight volumes, of which the first three will relate the general history of the British overseas expansion and Imperial policy, the next two will cover our rule in India, and the remaining three will deal with the particular stories of Canada and Newfoundland, Australia and New Zealand, and South Africa. The general editors of this big undertaking, Professors J. Holland Rose, A. P. Newton, and E. A. Benians, wish to underline the fact that each of these books will form a separate unit with a specific interest of its own.

The present volume describes "The Old Empire" from its beginnings in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with such events as the Cabot voyages—which resulted in the Newfoundland cod fishery being exploited by Bristol merchants—to 1783. The twenty-six chapters are nearly all contributed by different specialists. Once upon a time men like Goldsmith and Macaulay were permitted to write all by themselves entertaining but inaccurate histories of many volumes. But facts accumulate and knowledge increases, and general histories grow in size and become more accurate as they decline in interest. Now a man has to concentrate on writing a chapter only, or two or three chapters at most. The time will come no doubt when further sub-division will be necessary. But I digress.

It must interest anyone to note, for instance, in what a haphazard, almost unconscious way we English acquired our vast overseas possessions, and, having acquired them, in what a haphazard, almost unconscious way we seem to have held them, until they have grown together into a kind of empire to which there is no parallel in history, a commonwealth of nations freely associated; something which one of the present historians describes as "the most illogical human structure that the world has seen, and very nearly the strongest." As Edmund Burke said, "The settlement of our colonies was never pursued upon any regular plan; but they formed, grew, and flourished as accidents, the nature of the climate, or the dispositions of private men happened to operate." It was almost always the individual adventurer or a group of traders who worked out British expansion; the Government as Government rarely bothered to help them, often discouraged them, but generally overlooked them entirely. This was a source of strength as well as of weakness, as Sir Charles Lucas points out in his able Introduction. For when Trade Companies began to appear, for instance, the English groups, if they got no help from the Government when it was strong, were not affected by it when it was weak, or not nearly so much as were the Dutch companies.

It seems to me, therefore, though the suggestion is not made in the text, that the East India Company and such like enterprises were thus early editions of our present Civil Services; behind the adventures and discoveries of the individual, and the continual changes of the ostensible governmental, they provided the chance for strong and peaceful growth by continuity of policy and administration.

The English have never been fond of grandiloquent planning ahead, but have gone about their day's business; yet somehow, at the dawn of some quite ordinary day, the world has found them in grandiloquent possession. Thus the Portuguese and the Spaniards planned so gloriously the ahead of themselves that they "took possession" of the whole of the new world without being able, of course, to occupy effectively more than the tiniest fraction of it. Then the English trading ships, without questioning the rights of the absentee landlords, came into this port, sailed out to that island, and exchanged merchandise with the natives. The Portuguese and the Spaniards were furious and tried to forbid this traffic, and sent numerous ambassadors in protest. But the English ended all argument with the ironic suggestion that if all these regions were really under their dominion they could settle the matter quite easily by bidding the inhabitants to trade with Englishmen. "One loves the salt humour of it. It goes with the humour of the individual, such as Drake, who surprised the Spaniards by lightning visits to their "effectively occupied" strips of coast and filled his holds with treasure. It was all quite good-natured piracy, for he does not seem to have slain anyone. For instance, there was the robbery of bars of silver from a sleeping Spaniard: "and so we left him to take out the other part of his sleep in more security." J. S.

"The Cambridge History of the British Empire," Vol. I. (Cambridge University Press. 35s.)

## Phrenology and Child-Adoption.

"We can never keep a large enough supply of little girls." This statement was made last week to a *Star* reporter by Mrs. Plummer, secretary of the National Children Adoption Association. "We have far more applications for girls than we can deal with," she continued. To the same reporter the general secretary of the Homeless Children's Aid and Adoption Society, Mr. E. T. Beesley, said that a short time previously they had published in the Press a photograph of seven little homeless children and as a result received no fewer than 700 applications from people willing to adopt them. Mrs. Plummer remarks on the steady general increase in such applications, attributing them to the decrease in the birth-rate. "Young couples," she says, "refuse to put up with the worry and trouble of a very young baby," and prefer to adopt a child of two or three years of age, "when it has got over its baby ailments." She thinks that the run on little girls is because the women without children think a girl clings more to the home, and comes straight back from school instead of staying out playing games as a boy would. They think that when the girl grows up, too, she will be much "more of a companion than a young man," but overlook the fact that "a girl often marries five or more years earlier than a man."

According to Mr. Beesley, careful investigations are made into the references of all applicants. "Then, when we are satisfied, we send them a child as near to their requirements as possible. They are allowed to keep the child a month 'on appro,' so to speak . . . and if they are not satisfied they return it to us."

The views of this lady and gentleman would make an interesting subject for discussion, but I am here concerned only with their experiences and procedure. My reason is that they have reminded me of something which I had intended to include in my review of Professor Severn's autobiography (*THE NEW AGE*, May 2) but had to hold over through lack of space. It had reference to an episode in his professional life which he brought forward to prove the usefulness of phrenological advice in cases of child adoption. Briefly it was as follows:—

Two ladies, living together, wished to adopt a little girl and applied to an institution. As they both knew of Professor Severn they invited his assistance in making their choice. A little girl was duly submitted. When Professor Severn saw her he advised that she be returned. His chief reason was that her vitality was low, and that, therefore, she would be liable to frequent or protracted illnesses. She might ruin her benefactors in doctors' bills. So the ladies sent her back.

The cranial indication of vitality is to be found immediately behind the ears, and when vitality is very strong the formation of the skull in that locality stands out prominently, frequently so much as to push the ears outward and forward. (Notice the ears of a cat—the animal with "nine lives.") Conversely, low vitality will be indicated by flatness instead of prominence, and in extreme cases by concavity, so that the ears not only lie back but seem to stand in recesses like sculptured saints in their niches. But it does not follow at all that a person with low "vitality" (in the phrenological sense) need necessarily be a weakling, any more than that a person with an imperfect heart, or even with only one lung, is bound to die soon. Phrenological forecasts are based on the inter-relationship of all the faculties, and the fact of this inter-relationship allows large scope for mitigation or compensation in respect of the function of any one of them. Let me illustrate. I, personally, am told that my organ

of vitality is very well developed. I have a friend in whom it is weakly developed. A phrenologist, in the presence of both of us, told us so; but said that in the case of an illness we should both have an equal chance to survive it. His reason was that in me the organ of "hope" was weak; but in my friend very strongly developed. As he said: "You" (meaning me) "would think you were going to die, but you (meaning my friend) would take it for granted that you were going to recover." My vitality would *push me* through; his would *pull him* through. His faith would make him whole.

In the case of the little girl one presumes that Professor Severn doubtless took such things as these into consideration when arriving at the judgment he gave. The next little girl submitted was, of course, chosen for her bodily robustness. Upon examination her head confirmed the other evidence—she had strong vitality. But once again Professor Severn said: "Send her back." He came to the conclusion that she would be a selfish and ungrateful "daughter" to these ladies. This was because his diagnosis showed him that she had the organ called "Acquisitiveness" abnormally developed; and another called "Conscientiousness" very weakly developed. Excluding all other faculties, a person with uncompensated acquisitiveness will endeavor to prey upon all his neighbours; whereas a person with uncompensated conscientiousness is likely to be victimised all his life. Both faculties are necessary, but they must be in equilibrium, or within a certain margin of dis-equilibrium, to render their possessor a normal and tolerable member of society.

Little girl No. 2 having gone back, a third was submitted. This one Professor Severn pronounced good; for she had a well-balanced head, and would (among other things) be grateful, considerate, intelligent and refined. So the ladies accepted her; and in the result (for the child is now a woman) Professor Severn states that his forecast was fulfilled.

This episode will, of course, not convince anybody of the scientific soundness of phrenology. A critical reader, if he accepts the account as true, will yet want to know whether the *rejected* children also subsequently confirmed Professor Severn's adverse judgment. About this he makes no statement. So evidences relative to the subject must be sought in technical phrenological literature.

The point here is that if the reliability of phrenological indications of potential character in infants is as is claimed for the science, the practical value of a knowledge of it is clearly greater than that of a good many other subjects of study offered for the investigation of enterprising thinkers. For example, in the present case, not only would phrenology indicate the right child for a given applicant, but also the right applicant for a given child.

The great attraction of the subject lies in the fact that phrenological practitioners formulate their diagnoses definitely: so that if and when they make mistakes no one needs any special training to be able to understand what they mean and tell them it's wrong.

Phrenologists profess some measure of grievance against psychologists, who, they say, have run off with a good deal of credit which properly belongs to phrenological research. It seems that the lay public would derive a great deal more enlightenment if the Press allowed the phrenologists to measure their claims against those of the psychologists, than can be derived from debates between conflicting schools of psychology—especially those of the psychoanalysts whose controversies tempt one to parody Omar:

Myself, when Jung, did eagerly frequent  
Adler and Freud, and heard great argument  
About it and about. . . .

et seq.

JOHN GRIMM.

## Views and Reviews.

### THE CUSTOM OF COUVADE.

Couvade strikes the observer at first as ludicrous; after he has occupied himself a lifetime in searching for the origin and reason of it, he still sees it as a fascinating mystery. It is one of the wire puzzles of anthropology. No better or briefer account of the custom, of its variations and distribution; and no more just a collation of the hypotheses advanced as explanations, than this book \* is known to me. The orderly presentation within small compass gives a view in which the perspective is true; and at the end the student is free to hold what hypothesis he prefers, or simply to apply the doctrine of suspended judgment.

Couvade is the widespread custom according to which the father shares with the mother, in one way or another, the act of parturition. In some cases he goes to bed, and behaves as if he actually suffered the pains of childbirth; he may even receive, while the mother resumes her work immediately after her labour, much of the care and attention required by more civilised mothers, whose difficulties in childbirth are normally much greater. In other localities he may merely have to abstain from certain articles of food, or to adopt a particular diet. As another alternative the father may have to refrain from certain activities, such as the tying of knots, or he may have to pass his time untying knots. It may even be an offence for him to cross his legs. There are occasionally more extreme cases in which the father has to submit to what almost amounts to torture, including beating and deprivation of all food but the poorest. Mr. Dawson is inclined to agree with the idea that couvade originated in Cyprus, whence it was carried over a great part of the world, including the British Isles, the folk-lore and folk-customs of which still bear traces of it. There is a certain district of Yorkshire, Mr. Dawson says—he should have been more specific—in which, when a girl refuses to divulge the paternity of her illegitimate child, the mother inquires in the village at the time of birth, and identifies as the missing father the first youth who keeps to his bed. In this spreading over continents the custom of couvade, so far as records and drawings indicate, curiously missed out Egypt. Mr. Dawson leans to the view that couvade spread, against the alternative view that the evolving human mind, working similarly in response to identical deliveries in different localities, evolved similar rites and ceremonies.

When less was known of the customs grouped under the heading of couvade explanation was easier. In 1724 Joseph Lafiteau, a missionary with an eye for a story, recognised in couvade a dim recollection of original sin, the male parent presumably going to bed in shame. Max Müller was less ingenious. For him couvade was the husband's device for avoiding being henpecked by his wife's relations, the evidence being that in Müller's own time, in so-called civilised society, the wife's relations gave the husband a rough time, by ceaselessly reminding him that his wife was risking her life as the result of his thoughtlessness or lust. In 1888 Tylor, renouncing his previous theories, agreed with Bachofen, Tautain, and Giraud-Teulen, that couvade belonged to the turning-point of human society from the matriarchal to the patriarchal. As Crawley maintained—Mr. Dawson agrees—this appears to assume too much. That couvade is the assertion of paternity rights of a legal character is endowing primitive man with a legal subtlety that other considerations do not warrant. Frazer entirely separates the regimen followed by the father for the benefit of the child from

\* "The Custom of Couvade." By Warren R. Dawson, F.R.S.E. (Manchester University Press. 7s. 6d.)

the actions he performs not to impede the mother's delivery, and denies that anything in couvade is connected with father-right or mother-right. After summarising the various theories Mr. Dawson closes with a confession of our common ignorance. None of the theories covers all the facts. Even the natives' proffered reasons for practising the custom do not necessarily throw light on its origin, especially as they are as likely as not the responses of persons anxious to reply to leading questions in a manner pleasing to the questioner.

The one firm point in the whole of the discussion, however, is thrown by Mr. Dawson into a footnote.

"Couvade does not appear to have been recorded among the various peoples who do not understand the function of the male element in procreation, as, for instance, various Australian tribes and some of the Melanesians."

That fact at least justifies the association of couvade with the discovery of paternity, without enforcing the roping in of any question of rights or, for the time being, of lineal descent. Whether one believes in progressive revelation or evolution without external light, as far as the present peoples of this world are concerned, the recognition of paternity must certainly have been a moving experience. Whether it was inspiring or awe-inspiring, whether it stimulated the assertion of father-right or merely caused the father to suffer from nerves at the necessity for accepting a new responsibility, the discovery of paternity is enough in itself to serve as a focus for customs connected with the father's acknowledgment of his participation. In the spreading of the custom over the world that is the fact which the teachers could demand that the learners should test, and which must have impressed the learners greatly upon turning out as prophesied. How the discovery was made is hardly to the point. Possibly it came out through the domestication and subsequent observation of animals. Females unvisited by males failed to breed, while female animals visited by males produced offspring at a regular interval afterwards. When the wizard—or whoever he was—informed his tribe that the male partner was involved in human reproduction at a regular distance of nine months from intercourse a basis for couvade was already laid. The connection between female parent and child was obvious and physical; that between male parent and child was mysterious and magical, more so than the connection between seed-time and harvest, or between burying a man in the ground and the superior fertility obtained by breaking up the soil.

Any explanation of the origin of couvade cannot help being the work of imagination. In all records and current practice of the custom a long period of rationalisation has already taken effect. Simpler instances of couvade, as Mr. Dawson remarks, may not be more primitive than more complex examples; they may be degenerations. Nevertheless, a simplicity of some kind must be assumed to have preceded the complexity. It seems that we fail to exercise imagination sufficiently to perceive the magnitude for human consciousness, and thus for the creation of ceremonial custom, of the single discovering of paternity. Some instances of couvade almost treat paternity as a matter for shame; so it is treated by some civilised young men, who would secrete the evidence of their bondage. Others treat paternity as matter for pride, as when the mother rises immediately after labour to feed her husband with dainties and to honour him in various ways. Modern feminism does not permit this in our civilisation. The discovery of paternity, whether originally or by teaching, where a foundation of belief in sympathetic magic already exists, appears enough to account for the origin of couvade. To-day the husband is still over-awed, when his wife is in labour,

by his responsibility for the danger she is risking, and for the child who is being born. Unto us a child is born was no small revelation. With research based on so small a hypothesis, bringing in later questions such as matriarchal and patriarchal developments only as required, variations in the custom of couvade would probably, it is suggested, be accounted for; by local moods, by different attitudes towards the new fact, and by the tendency of mankind to complete every ceremonial drama rationally.

R. M.

## Drama.

### Sybarites: Arts.

Almost anyone may obtain an invitation to a country house party on the stage, since the author makes it his business to find means. At such a party Mr. H. Dennis Bradley brings together thirteen assorted types of modern men and women of fortune—in both senses. But Mr. Bradley has so much conscience about the miscellaneousness of his party that he nearly spoils it by the length of his explanation as to how and why the various guests are there. Con Delaney, the host, is a novelist of free love, whose wife is at best wifely enough to humour him by commanding the prettiest woman she knows to weekend and flirtation. She herself flirts with her husband's artist friend. Indeed, she becomes so far serious—or is she merely determined to show how thinly the philosophy of free love covers her husband's primitive jealousy?—that she promises to sit nude for the artist in London while her husband grinds out literary free love in the country. Other guests are Lord Byfleet, a self-made peer who regards politics as a career to be measured by financial success, and his "female appendage," Lady Byfleet. In spite of the author's contempt for her, Lady Byfleet is about the only person in the play who has no grievance against life, asking nothing except that her husband leave her to chew her cud in peace, and does not scheme to hide his illicit feminine affairs behind his political engagements, since she is disturbed by neither. The presence of a Chinese servant, who is also a doctor of Chinese sociology and philosophy, is so far-fetched that his biography has to be given to the audience at some length.

These and more besides are the Sybarites. A more scientific, if no more simple, description of them would have been the polygamists and polyandrists. This description is not vitiated by the inclusion of a bachelor or two, inasmuch as bachelors are polygamists by negation. They dream of possessing all women, yet are terrified by the responsibility of one. Even the staidier people introduced by Mr. Bradley as a sort of contrast to the demoralised lovers and self-interested politicians are streaked with polygamy, since the idealist who trounces Lord Byfleet for the hypocrisy of his wartime conduct presumably marries the divorcée; and the youth from Bloomsbury is to marry Lord Byfleet's daughter in spite of the announcement in *The Times* of her engagement to another peer.

To be more than half serious nowadays requires an apology. Intensity belongs to a less extensive world. Mr. Bradley seems to be just half serious. He hints at half a dozen serious criticisms of modern Sybaris without driving home any one of them. His commentary contains a deal of common-sense; his lines show observation; what is missing is intensity and drama. When a man and woman change their views of free love, as Con Delaney and his wife do, at the first pangs of jealousy, the episode may well be a picture of an actual example from society; but it is not art. The persons in the play appear to follow by nature Montaigne's advice that the last course

for a man frustrated in his desires by a woman is to satisfy himself on the first willing one he meets; but Montaigne was advising how to find ease, not how to create a play. Mr. Bradley's Sybarites are not present wholly to be flayed alive; they are present to deliver the author's cynical epigrams, for the making of which he has an entertaining talent, and with which his Sybarites shower one another as with confetti. When the decline of the birth-rate is mentioned after dinner, Lady Byfleet is perturbed by what will become, if we do not reproduce ourselves, of Eton. Although there are jewels in the confetti, however, it is precisely Mr. Bradley's cynicism that disqualifies him as a dramatist. It rarely ascends to satire. When it does it is not allowed to burn long enough to grow hot.

The thirteen types are not modelled creatively. Their author has suffered nothing for them. Their ingredients are mixed from recipes ready made in his mind. One suspects him of making the epigrams beforehand, sorting them out into types, and then bringing the types together as if they were people. They give the impression of assembled automata, which in crises do not struggle organically, but merely "re-act." The actors suffered severely from the author's failure to give life to the characters, as well as from the apparent absence of any attempt on the producer's part to do it for him. When, after a long period of introducing characters behind an epigrammatic barrage of free-love theory, Mr. Edmund Gwenn appeared on the stage, there was an audible sigh of relief. His mannerisms notwithstanding, Mr. Gwenn sincerely strives at all times to play every character, including the most unpleasant, as if he believed in the character's nature as well as in the meaning of the lines. Mr. Ernest Thesiger's Ming Fung would be more appropriate to a bigger stage, on which his acceptance of marionette convention would prove highly entertaining. If Mr. Bradley continues to write plays he must provide the actors with character to live as well as epigrams to recite.

### Because of Irene: Little.

An occasional phrase in "Because of Irene" indicates insight into human nature, but the occasions are so far apart that the audience cannot force itself to appreciate them; and some semi-farcical remarks by a bachelor whose hobby is married women indicates a perusal of Balzac on "Marriage." For the rest, which is almost the whole play, "Because of Irene," is in every way unsuited to the theatre. It opens with the leisureliness of Thackeray and the dullness of Sir Walter Scott. It begins as a naturalistic illustration of the triangle of modern marriage; it becomes a tragedy in which the husband, contrary to his nature, kills the lover; it is then transformed into a French farce in which the lover, who is not killed, plots with a friend to put the would-be murderer through the third-degree without publicity; finally it ends happily for no imaginable reason. All that the authors appear to have had to begin with is a plot, and that an impossible one for anything but a curtain raiser. There is no character, no wit, no thrill, and no stimulation of any kind. Nicholas Berkeley, the lover, is dilettante farce; Irene Pawle, the wife, is motiveless in all that she does; her husband is newspaper, not drama; and Lesley Deane is merely present so that things can be said to her instead of directly to the audience. As the play cannot run for more than a performance or two, the only question—but that interesting—which it raises is how its producers were deceived into the belief that it would justify the expensive services of a theatre. Every play-reader would be glad to guard himself against falling into the trap if there was one.

PAUL BANKS.

## Music.

I have recently had a rather startling and a little shocking glimpse of how the mind of even an extremely intelligent amateur can work regarding music and certain technical points thereof. I am thinking of a conversation I have had with a friend, a very keen music lover, quite without any inside knowledge but with admirable flair and natural soundness of taste and discrimination, an instinctive perception that are very unusual—in fact, the first man other than a musician without commercial interests in the thing one would have expected to see through the charlatanism of "musical appreciation." Yet he has succumbed like a ninepin to the thing in the person of one, it must be admitted, slightly less notorious of its practitioners. He cannot see that he is being told what anyone with a rudimentarily musical ear can hear for himself, that did he not already implicitly know them he would not be the music-lover he is, and that he is in the position of M. Jourdain, delighted by discovering he has been doing the thing he has been doing all along. It is useless for me to point out to him that he has all along been teaching himself "musical appreciation" by avidly listening to all the good music he could lay his ears on via gramophone and wireless, *in the only way to learn it*, that is by listening with *his own*, not someone else's ears—that to separate the hearing of music from "musical appreciation" is a grotesque absurdity—that you might as well give lessons and talks on how to smell or taste apart from smelling and tasting . . . *solvitur ambulando*.

The second glimpse into my friend's mind was even more surprising. He was unable to see the propriety or justice of pointing out faults of technique and production in a singer whom one has always praised for a great artist when one knows they are there and the ruin of the voice to which those faults inevitably lead. I was commenting on the fact that two of the very great German artists at Covent Garden this season are showing unmistakable signs of vocal deterioration from that very cause. He seemed to think it hard or unfair to draw attention to it! That is to say, when you see a motorist scorching down a road you know ends at a precipice, it is unfair to warn him, because he may happen to be a very good driver! It would, I should think, strike most reasonable people that the greater the artist the more under an obligation he is to any critic who has the knowledge, courage, and honesty to point out any vocal fault that may be beginning to creep into his singing, or any technical deficiency that, unremedied, may lead to the ruin of his voice. I was trying to point out to my friend that although to the layman the effect of certain fine artists is wholly satisfying and that they admittedly accomplish great artistic achievements, yet there are certain things they do in their singing that the experience of two or three centuries has shown to be pernicious to the voice in the extreme if persisted in. That a great number of the admittedly superb artists whom we have heard at Covent Garden during the last few years do these things is no endorsement or proof of their soundness, more especially when, as I have said, several of them show unmistakable signs of vocal deterioration as a result of them. No amount of verbal description can possibly convey to a layman's ear what these particular defects of method are, concealed as they are so often behind a glorious voice that has possibly not yet begun to suffer from them. Every connoisseur of singing knows what they are. The most ruinous is that which goes by the name of "forcing up the chest register" into the place of the "head register"; it is done by those with insufficient "head resonance" as it is called—it is done, in fact, to cover up another technical defect—one fault to conceal another. The other cardinal defect is that

known as lack of support, *non ho l'appoggio*, as Lablache said before he worked at it and developed it. The trained ear can hear both these things in a voice at once, or their absence. And no great singer of advanced years in possession of all his vocal powers, as a singer *should* be, to the last, has, it is needless to say, been a victim of these vices. On the other hand, many fine artists with deplorably short careers of ten or fifteen years or even less have all been afflicted with them. Half a dozen names occur to one at random. There were, up to quite recently, three singers living exemplars of the truth of these things. Lilli Lehmann, who has just died at over eighty, and who, although she had given up public work, still sang beautifully. Battistini, who literally died in harness at seventy odd, and Sir George Henschel, who, at over eighty, has recently been showing people over the wireless what the great old way of singing can achieve in the preservation of the voice. Warmly as I have again and again expressed my admiration for some splendid artists of our day, I do not know one whom I would dare to pick out as likely to be doing at Sir George's, Battistini's, or Lilli Lehmann's age what they did or Sir George Henschel does.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

## The Screen Play.

### "The Perfect Alibi."

I trust I shall not be accused of weakening on first principles if I admit that the dawn of a talking film art has broken. The next development of the screen, at least so one hopes, is that sound film technique will develop on lines of its own, leaving the silent film as we know it in its best manifestations to co-exist. Great hope for the talkies is given by such productions as "The Perfect Alibi" (Carlton). This is about the first film I have seen in which both speech and other sound effects are used not only with intelligence, but also to advantage. In this film, sound is an added dimension, not an excrescent and super-imposed accompaniment. Save for Mae Busch, the entire cast is composed of stage players without previous screen experience, and although it might be thought that the result would be that hybrid, the photographed play, the outcome is, in fact, a very good film. While we are having unloading on us far too many crook dramas in which the principal ingredients are a blend of New York's underworld and cabarets, one could put up with more if even a quarter were such excellent and exciting entertainments as "The Perfect Alibi."

This film has only one blemish: the scene in which Danny McGann (admirably played by Regis Toomey) dies, is too long, is too sentimental, and should not be played to the accompaniment of a ukelele. In addition to the perfect reproduction of speech, the sound effects are extremely well done. It may be contended that the celluloid projection of the gurgle made by a spot of whiskey issuing from its bottle is not necessarily art. I agree, but if we are to have these effects, let them at least be faithful to nature. The whole cast is so good that I will not single out individual members for mention. Credit for the production is due to Roland West.

### "The Donovan Affair."

"See and Hear The Donovan Affair" is the adjuration of the posters displayed outside the Marble Arch Pavilion, but on the night I was present it was largely a matter of hearing sounds rather than speech. Much of the projection was so indistinct that the dialogue was completely unintelligible, while some of the rest was characterised by that distressing booming which disfigures so many "talkies." Whether these defects were due to the acoustic properties of the theatre, which was one of the first large picture houses built in London, or to imperfect ad-

justment, I do not know, but it is not too much to suggest that exhibitors should refrain from showing sound pictures until they have satisfied themselves that the apparatus is functioning properly. Moreover, many film houses are needlessly handicapping themselves by presenting "talkies" before they have secured the services of a trained projector, who must unite experience with considerable specialised technical knowledge. I am aware that the supply is still extremely limited, but that is an additional reason for delaying the process of "going talkie" when so many excellent silent films, such as "Homecoming," are still available.

For the rest, "The Donovan Affair" belongs to the crook-thriller variety, emulates Edgar Wallace by the introduction of numerous clues which lead nowhere but are put in to make it more difficult, and is not particularly good of its kind. It is unfortunate that its exhibition should coincide with that of "The Perfect Alibi." Despite the handicaps of projection, Jack Holt appears to better advantage than in any silent film in which I have seen him, his screen personality being strengthened by the medium of speech. But his director must really tell him to curb the habit of non-stop grinning.

#### Avenue Pavilion.

There are occasions when the most impersonal critic may strike a personal note. The resignation of Mr. Leslie Ogilvie from the Avenue Pavilion is one. My readers are familiar with the work done by Mr. Ogilvie in making the Avenue Pavilion the most distinguished film theatre in England, and it is with regret that I record his translation to the management of the Tussaud Cinema. I am, however, glad to learn two things; Mr. Ogilvie's future policy will be to present programmes combining the best talking and silent films available, and his successor at the Avenue Pavilion is Mr. Stuart Davis, who has from the beginning been associated with him in the repertory cinema movement. Good luck to the two in the interests of good films.

DAVID OCKHAM.

#### Democratic Parliamentarianism.

(Points from Major Douglas's address to members of the M.M. Club on June 5.)

"Groups never invent anything; initiative always comes from an individual."

"Ballot-box democracy is incapable of government."

"Majorities are always wrong, and minorities always right."

"If you only get sufficient people voting, they will swamp those who know."

"It is the inevitable march of events on which we have to rely, and when this takes place, the Parliamentary system must go."

"Social Credit in operation will kill Parliamentarianism."

"Social Credit is in the ascendant."

"In the case of international conflict the existing financial system would go in three years."

"In future, functionalism will transcend all national boundaries."

"Parliaments will be replaced by functional hierarchies, which will be entirely governed by technicians."

"The Parliamentary type is an excessively inefficient type."

"Organisations cannot be altered by altering the personnel. In such a case the organisation either spews out the individual or he breaks up the organisation."

"The objective of the instalment system is to enslave the wage-earner."

"On the ground that he is a Commissioner of Income Tax and a director of the Bank of England, Mr. Kenneth Goschen, of Austin Friars, E.C., claimed exemption from service on the grand jury at the Old Bailey yesterday. The claim was allowed. Mr. W. W. Nops, Clerk of the Court, suggested that Mr. Goschen should take steps to have his name removed from the jury list."—*Morning Post*, May 29, 1929.

## Reviews.

"The Folk Trail." By Leslie A. Paul. (Noel Douglas. 5s.)

In the days before Kibbo Kift, the Woodcraft Kindred, had discovered the Social Credit Theory, it worked for a time with the Co-operative Movement, who were anxious to use its attractive methods to hold their children together. But the Kindred could not be used as a mere co-operative "container"; moreover, its methods of direct leadership and willing discipline proved unacceptable to its co-operative members: and after a short period the latter seceded to form their own Woodcraft Fellowships. The work of these groups is now explained in the book under review, the author of which is their Head Man. The methods of the Movement are described as camping for health, tribal government, pageantry, and ceremonial, teaching of world history and evolution, handicraft and co-education. Its Charter expresses the desire to develop "for the service of the people mental and physical health and communal responsibility" by camping and by "sincerity"; to become familiar with world history; and declares a faith in ownership by the community of the "instruments of production." This may be summed up as the Woodcraft technique plus co-operative, labour, and mild Socialist policy. Like most other organisations of the same type, the Movement has made the mistake, of accepting the theory of recapitulation by the child of the history of the race, which threatens to side-track Woodcraft education in this country. Its chief interest is to show the change which has been produced in co-operative education by the transforming influence of the Kibbo Kift.

"The Russian Land." By Albert Rhys Williams. (Geoffrey Bles. 7s. 6d.)

Mr. Williams has written a book about Russia which is quite out of the ruck. For instead of visiting the Metropolitans of Moscow, he preferred to see the peasants of far-away villages, and departed into the wilderness east of Archangel. Here he met some of the "bilini" singers, such as one Fernov, who could recite by memory some seventy epics—about ten thousand printed pages—enough for two months' non-stop singing. Mr. Williams says that these singers are fast dying out; but how many people know that such people still exist? In England we should have to go back to the Middle Ages to find them. These singers, by the way, are all illiterate. Indeed, they refuse to learn to read and write: "It puts out the memory," they say. One goes back to the days of Homer and Virgil in reading Mr. Williams's description of the Valley of Wine in Georgia. Here his road ran for forty miles through vineyards. The Georgians, being wise men, think nothing so precious as the wine they sell and drink a goodly portion of their produce. The pride of the valley was the chief drinker, whose record at one sitting was forty bottles. "He looked like a large barrel." The Georgians feast on every possible occasion. There are feasts for births and deaths, for christenings and marriages; feasts in honour of spring sowing and autumn reaping, in honour of horses and cows, and birds and worms. As in the olden days, the grapes are pressed by the feet in huge troughs. "Feet are better than machines," said the villagers, "for the feet press out only the sweet juice of the grapes without the bitter juice of the stems." And when the wine is made it is carried in goatskins—a rouble a skinful. Among them is a peculiar cup which only a Georgian could devise. It ran a tube from another cup. Thus, while appearing to drink a single cupful, in reality one drank two."

Wherever Mr. Williams went he made friends, and he is able to describe the people and country very well. The present writer found such pleasure in reading it, that he read it through a second time. This is better praise than any adjectival exclamations.

"The Crater of Mars." By Ferdinand Tuohy. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.)

Here is a book of gossip about the last war by a man who visited every front either as war correspondent or as intelligence officer. Mr. Tuohy began by being one of Northcliffe's lieutenants, and in October, 1914, was appointed official correspondent for Associated Newspapers on the Western Front. In January, 1915, he was entering Russia by way of the Gulf of Bosnia, visited Petrograd and Warsaw, and from a church steeple witnessed the second battle of the Bzura. His job resolved itself into getting general information from Warsaw and seeing details for himself by sallies to various parts of the Russian front, these journeys often requiring a week's travel in flea-ridden and evil-smelling trains. On his return he joined the Intelligence Corps and was sent to France. From there to Egypt and Mesopotamia, and then to India. After India to Palestine and Allenby's G.H.Q. In this chapter we have a few discreet words about Lawrence of Arabia. Mr. Tuohy points to the fact that since 1918 Lawrence has been in the Tank Corps and the R.A.F., "the two most up-to-the-minute branches of

the Army, which will play the leading parts in any next war, especially in the desert." From Palestine the author was sent to Salonika, then to Italy, and back to France. Before he had time to be sent round the world again the war had ended. As may be guessed, Mr. Tuohy's gossip is that of a clever and well-informed person, the more interesting because he obviously knows so much more than he is willing to tell.

J. S.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

### PROPAGANDIST METHODS.

Sir,—I am sorry to say your extremely flattering references on June 6 to my article in the *Nineteenth Century* ("The Problem of Financing Consumption") have landed me in a predicament.

You discussed it from the point of view of effective "advertisement" of Social Credit principles, and drew attention to all sorts of complicated "methods" which I am alleged to have employed in writing it. Now in the ordinary way it would be no answer to say that I was not conscious of employing any such methods at all. You would only need either to pay me a subtle compliment or to impute to me a still subtler vanity in order to put yourself straight. But when you add to your comments definite practical advice to "propagandists" to hang up a list of these methods in their bedrooms, it is another matter. (By the way I see that in this context the word is "commandment," not "method"). My article is held up as a model and the methods are described, by which such model articles are produced. If I keep silent, then, the obvious inference is that them was my methods.

Whereas as a matter of fact what immediately struck me, as I read your comments, was the thought that these are precisely the methods one would have to try and employ if one were setting out to persuade people of an idea whose truth one secretly doubted oneself. And that is just what I ordinarily understand by the word "propaganda." Not that it need always be dishonest, for we secretly doubt the truth of every idea which we have taken on trust from someone else without working through it and, so to say, living it ourselves. It would be a long time before I would admit that any article I wrote was either advertisement or propaganda for anything. They are both badly discredited words. Not to have mentioned either Major Douglas or the *New Age* in that particular world, to my mind, have been not a mistake in "policy," but deliberate untruthfulness.

Perhaps I might be allowed to say that the only method which I personally would recommend to anyone setting out to write about either economics or any other subject is the one which most writers know for short as "eye on the object"—i.e., try and say exactly what you mean in the way your audience will most clearly understand, and without showing off.

I am very sorry to carp; and I conclude by thanking you once more for your otherwise singularly gratifying remarks. There is even more pleasure than there is vexation in these blushes. The allusion (in particular) to Ranji's leg-glances will probably be found engraved on my heart in the tomb.

OWEN BARFIELD.

[We doubt whether our readers construed our comments as does Mr. Barfield. What we intended to point out, and (since reading the comments again after receipt of his letter) what we think we made clear, was that his article conformed to the six methods or "commandments" we enumerated. We distinctly attributed these to "experts," and not to Mr. Barfield, who, for all we knew, was not aware that they were laid down in textbooks on the art of advertising, and who, we more than suspected, had not consciously followed any scheme at all when he wrote. What we did was to show reasons why advertising experts would admire the technique of the article.]

We think that our readers will agree with us that there need be no element of vexation at all in Mr. Barfield's reaction to our remarks.—ED.]

### PASTORAL.

O see, O see the virtuous cow.  
Care lies not heavy on her brow.  
The chastely-minded cabbage grows  
Content in segregated rows.  
O Man, thy busy ways forsake  
And from the cow thy lesson take.  
She cultivates with zealous care  
The principles of *laissez-faire*.  
Content, though humble is her station,  
Rapt in silent contemplation.

R. S. CHALMERS-HUNT.

## Retrospect.

JUNE 4, 1925.

"Is America saving too much?" (Virgil Jordan).  
Professor Olin on the gold standard and Britain's financial freedom.

The *New Republic* on instalment-selling—"inflation of personal credit."

Eugenics and over-population.—Mr. Wicksteed Armstrong's pamphlet.

Mr. A. J. Penty and Mr. William Wright on agricultural possibilities.

Closure of Debate on Finance Bill.—Liberals' protest.

JUNE 11, 1925.

Mr. Brailsford's "Minimum Wage" plan.  
Stinnes Trust—commencement of the smash—the nature of a "vertical" and of a "horizontal" trust—the Stinnes Trust as example of a nearly complete horizontal trust to that extent potentially independent of external financial accommodation—this the reason for its disintegration by the intervention of the banks.

Samuel Hall's suicide—"hounded to death" by income-tax questionnaire.

JUNE 3, 1926.

French currency crisis.—Mr. Herbert Hoover on how to pay international debts without disturbing trade—his "invisible exports" fallacy.

The *Daily Mail's* two opposite hypotheses of the strike.

The strike as a Capital-Labour lock-out of the trade unions.

Lloyd George and Lord Oxford—controversial correspondence.

Lloyd George attacks deflation at Llandudno.

The coal lock-out as an inflationary event.

The *New Statesman's* intimate account of how the strike was precipitated.

A central bank for India.—"Dawes" treatment.

JUNE 10, 1926.

Britain in Egypt—Zaghlul Pasha's return, and his impotence.

M. Briand's ideal—to "divorce financial policy from political intrigue"—why not financial intrigue from political policy?

Finance Enquiry Petition—the *Daily News* and the *Banker* on the Petition.

JUNE 2, 1927.

The Government on the Arcos raid.

The Midland Bank and the Russian loan of £10,000,000—the influence of the Bank of England—attitudes of parties and Press.

The *Evening News* publishes Sir Herbert Samuel's Liberal manifesto.

American telephone monopoly—extension abroad.

The Midland Bank's new, stampless cheque.

Mr. Thomas Keens (S.I.A.A.) on business amalgamations and their effect on efficiency.

A British Ambassador appointed to Argentina.

JUNE 9, 1927.

British trade with Russia—examination of the theory of "changing" manufactures for food—equilibrium of the financial exchange would cause disequilibrium of the physical exchange, and vice versa, because food-costs are only a low proportion of the total costs of manufactures.

The Arcos raid—Communists' version.

Mr. Snowden in the *Constitutionalist* on Russian State-capitalism.

Senator Reed on America's "profitless prosperity."

The *World To-day* on its "Next War" issue.

The Trade Union Bill [now an Act]—Government power to sequester the funds of a union proposing to call an "illegal strike." The answer:—to keep T.U. funds in currency notes.

The *Midland Cheque-Note* (editorial article).

JUNE 7, 1928.

The Northcliffe Trust proposes to buy Aberdeen Newspapers Ltd.

A secret society against income-tax inquisition.

The Hyde Park case—Scotland Yard's libel action.

B.E.A.M.A. repudiates attacks on industrial inefficiency—lays blame on deflation policy.

Expository—the recovery of capital costs accompanies its construction.

*Current Political Economy*.—The Agricultural Credits Bill and the National Farmers' Union.

JUNE 14, 1928.

Experiments in cheque-circulation by Florida merchants.

Mr. W. W. Hill contrasts bank-premises and school-premises in point of adequacy of provision.

America's search for a new industrial use for sugar.

Lord Morris on the displacement of men by machines.

Miss Savidge and the Hyde Park case—official inquiry into alleged inquisition by Scotland Yard.

Mr. Kellogg's proposal to outlaw war.

The amenities of Oxford and industrial encroachments. (Article, "Oxford Awake," under *Current Political Economy*, by "N.")

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