

THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER."

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

No. 1926] NEW SERIES Vol. XLV. No. 15. THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 1929. [Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] SEVENPENCE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

In the *Spectator* of July 13 we came across a letter by Commissioner David C. Lamb, of the Salvation Army, under the heading "An Unemployment Problem." We wish that letters of this type could appear by the million. As will be seen in a moment it consists simply in a statement of an authentic experience followed by its obvious implication. Needless to say, the implication is clearly irreconcilable with all the theories and plans offered by political experts for the cure or even amelioration of unemployment. And the same result would follow the publication of every other actual experience when set down simply and calmly as this one is. The following is Mr. Lamb's letter:

"Sir,—Not having completely mastered present-day economics, may I through the columns of the *Spectator* ventilate some aspects of a problem which is worrying me not a little at this time? My 'troubles' took definite shape some four years ago when, during a visit to the West of Canada, a message reached me from a Local Authority on the Clydeside (Glasgow) asking if the Salvation Army could place some twenty odd able-bodied men (several of them married) who were, and had been for some time, out of work. The men had been engaged in the shipbuilding industry, and inquiry disclosed the fact that their unemployment had arisen from the restriction in warship building which followed the signing of the Washington Treaty some three years previously (in 1922). I was then led to wonder if the statesmen who were parties to the Treaty saw the possibility—and shall I say the certainty—of such reactions?"

Perhaps the Right Hon. J. H. Thomas will take the necessary—and long—view when, with his special Unemployment Committee, he comes to grips with this most baffling problem. In that case it may be that the Income Tax payers of the present generation will get no relief! There was no apparent economic hiatus in Isaiah's vision. He saw the sword and the spear being beaten into the ploughshare and the pruning-hook.

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Street, E.C.4."

The irreconcilable problems here exhibited in juxtaposition are of course armaments and unemploy-

ment. Everybody, we suppose, has heard the traditional story of the old lady on whose tombstone was inscribed an epitaph commencing: "Here lies the body of Sarah Lowder, who died through taking a Seidlitz Powder," and concluded by a rhymed narrative in which it transpired that she dissolved and drank the white and blue packets separately, with the result that the remedy designed to clear her system burst it. The only feature in which this story fails to typify current economic medicine-taking consists in the fact that the old lady paid the penalty by disobeying the directions: we suffer by obeying them. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. J. H. Thomas are, as it were, two Seidlitz Brothers, the one making and selling the white-packet powder of Disarmament, and the other blue-packet powder of Employment—both independently of each other—and both in utter ignorance of the mutually incompatible natures of their specifics. And when a journal like THE NEW AGE hints at the necessity for consulting the Pharmacopœia of experience, or the *Materia Medica* of facts, it is sneered at as a medical fanatic. Mr. Lamb, in spite of his disclaimer, is much more a master of present-day economics than are present-day economists. And so, in his degree, is everybody who gets up and says to them: "Yes, I can see how each one of your prescriptions will make some part of me better, but I find that when I take them all the whole of me gets worse."

Let us consider for the thousandth time this problem of unemployment. Mr. Thomas has already stated that he has no hope of solving it. The reason is not that he cannot think of enough jobs to absorb all the unemployed, but that he cannot think of enough approved jobs. Approved jobs are jobs approved by Mr. Snowden, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his test of such jobs is this: Will they bring in a return of money greater than their cost?—or, as both he and Mr. Thomas would say: Will they increase our economic efficiency? Now, as we shall see in a minute, both these formulæ mean: Will these jobs result in the con-

struction of labour-saving equipment—will they put men out of work?

Let us consider the hackneyed illustration of "wasteful" employment—digging holes in the ground and filling them in again. It is curious that the discoverers of this happy image did not leave it complete at the "holes." For its extension to include the subsequent filling-in was not necessary for their case; in fact, it tends to weaken it, because it allows of the introduction of the idea of one piece of work creating the opportunity for another piece of work to be done. Thus, they would call it "unsound" to pay a man £1 to dig a hole; and if the digging of that hole created the necessity to pay the man another £1 to fill it (say that it were dangerous to leave it open) they would call that more unsound still. And why? Because the first employment led to the second employment—because, in a word, it provided continuity of employment. Yet the unemployment problem is a problem of providing continuous employment. Therefore the very attempt to solve the unemployment problem is unsound. Mr. Thomas's official objective is illegitimate, Mr. Thomas himself is a redundant Minister, and his salary is an unsound investment.

Let us look at another logical implication of the policy of restricting employment to "sound" schemes. We will keep to the hole-digging illustration. Can we form a concept of circumstances in which the hole-digging would be considered economically beneficial by the financial experts? We can. It would be something like Dean Swift's famous specific for correcting the evil of excessive fertility among the poor, namely, to kill the babies for food. That is to say, supposing your employed man, having dug his hole, would fall down it and break his neck, there would be an immediate economic return for the wages he had received. This can be indicated by a few simple token figures. The man would, in the normal way, need continuous employment at the rate of, say, £2 a week, in order to maintain life. Call this £100 a year and capitalise it on a 5 per cent. basis. This gives a sum of £2,000. That sum would be regarded by financial purists as a measure of the "loss" that the "nation" would incur by this man's continuity of employment. That is to say, it would be worth while putting down money to any amount up to £2,000 to procure his sudden death. And supposing the fellow were so unconscionably careful as not to meet with the fateful accident for a whole year, the "nation" would even then have got rid of a £2,000 liability at the cost of £100. With a prospect like this in view the Treasury would willingly approve the borrowing of that sum by the Government; and the Bank of England would lend it on the most favourable terms, for the lethal security would cover the advance twenty times over. And now the beauty of this concept begins to blossom freely. For, with such a handsome "saving" on the death of man No. 1, the "nation" could afford to hire man No. 2 to bury him in hole No. 1, and to dig hole No. 2 for his own interment in due course by man No. 3; and so on. In this manner the surplus labour of the nation is eventually absorbed completely and eternally, the Government's death-bonds rise to a handsome premium on the Stock Exchange, and the bankers sing the Doxology in the Mansion House.

If we are charged with letting logic drive us into a fantastic distortion of what happens in practice, we must refer our critics to Commissioner Lamb's letter. It is true that the authorities responsible for digging work for those disemployed shipbuilders did

not propose to put them to death; but they did propose to get rid of them. Would Commissioner Lamb, they asked, find these men jobs in Canada? But notice, the solution of this particular unemployment problem in England did not depend in the slightest degree on whether Commissioner Lamb found work for them in Canada: it depended entirely on his taking them out of England. The suggestion about work in Canada was introduced merely because there was no prospect otherwise of getting the men out of this country. And it is the same with unemployment generally. The death-and-burial solution pictured in our illustration really is adopted, but is described by the more euphonious name of "Emigration," and made to seem plausible by such florid and fulsome phrases as "peopling the Empire."

The fact that the problem pointed out by Commissioner Lamb arose out of the Washington Agreement suggests another curious reflection. The money spent on armaments is considered to be wasteful by financial orthodoxy. Battleships, for example, do not produce anything themselves, nor do they bring about a reduction in the cost of production elsewhere. They represent heavy expenditure in pay where. They represent heavy expenditure in pay and upkeep on the one side of the financial account, and no revenue on the other. Of course, in the case of particular nations armaments may "pay for themselves," as the saying is, by coercing weaker nations into accepting the economic domination of the stronger, with the result that the stronger get an unfairly large proportion of world-trade. But we are here discussing the principle of armaments in general in the light of financial principles in general. On this plane, armaments are wasteful. The curious reflection to which we referred is this; that supposing there could be a regular recurrence of heavy fatal accidents among sailors and soldiers, the army and navy would begin to "pay their way" in the financiers' sense. The Services would have now become the hole in which the nation could bury its surplus labour. Armaments would be a "sound economic proposition."

It will at once occur to a critic of this analysis that there is a vital difference between death and emigration as the solution of the surplus-labour problem. It can be expressed, and in fact frequently is, in the statement that a British emigrant abroad can continue to spend money in the Motherland while earning it outside; whereas in the case of a dead worker, although he has renounced his demand for wages he has withdrawn his custom into the grave. But under the present organisation of trade in the world, wherever such emigrants find employment, their employer must necessarily strive all he can to prevent their spending their money on other countries' goods. If Commissioner Lamb had placed those unemployed British workers in Canada, every penny they earned would have been added to the total of Canada's costs of production, and Canada would have required to collect all the earnings again in her home market in order to cover these costs. There is a vague notion among the sponsors of emigration that the geographical transfer of a human being will somehow solve an arithmetical problem. So far as this notion takes on any intelligible shape at all it consists in the suggestion that if only John Smith, to whom you cannot afford to pay wages in England, will only betake himself to Canada and earn some there, he will help to expand production there, and then the "exchange" of productions between the two countries (by some method or other not defined) will create added mutual benefits to both (on some principle yet to be discovered) and everyone will live happily ever after. We can conceive some such result happen-

ing under a barter-economy, but we challenge anybody to prove its possibility under the existing money economy. To begin with, the theory is disproved by objective facts. We have seen these John Smiths in the Argentine rearing calves—and shooting wheat—and burning it. We have heard their employers being ordered by bankers to sow less cotton in America, to plant fewer sugar canes in Cuba, and generally to do all such things as will fulfil the purpose of keeping prices up—which purpose, of course, is the exact opposite of that by which the emigration theorists justify their policy. Instead of expanded production, there is deliberately contracted production.

As will be seen elsewhere we have received a second letter relative to our footnote of a fortnight ago to the extract from the *Star's* report of a session of the Marconi Committee in 1913. In the footnote we said that nothing was known at the British Museum about the *Eye Witness*, which was the journal that originally disclosed the dealings of Ministers in Marconis. Further investigation since has cleared the matter up. It appears that there are three catalogues covering the publications deposited at the British Museum—one being the huge general catalogue, and the others, two small special ones devoted respectively to "Periodicals" and "Newspapers." One of our readers who went there to look up the *Eye Witness* naturally consulted the "Periodicals" catalogue. It was not there: neither was the *New Witness*. He then turned to the general catalogue. Neither title was indexed there either. Eventually both were tracked down in the "Newspapers" catalogue. It remains to be ascertained on what principle *The Eye Witness* (subsequently called *The New Witness*) has been tucked away in the index to newspapers when it obviously belonged to the category of "Periodicals." It was a weekly publication; and it certainly was not a journal of news—it was a journal of views. The discovery of this seeming anomaly led to an investigation to find out under which category *The New Age* was placed. Lo and behold, it is neither under "Newspapers" nor "Periodicals," but is in the general catalogue. We appreciate the compliment of being kept separate from the Fleet-street types of literature; but we cannot help remarking that one of the consequences of this flattering discrimination must be that people who consult only the appropriate catalogues must be left under the impression that there has been no journal called *The New Age*, or that, if there has, it is no longer in print. Who on earth would look further for a weekly journal after finding that its name was not in either of the special catalogues in which an inquirer would certainly count on finding it? However, our burial-place, if so we may provisionally interpret it, is not side by side with that of the *Eye Witness* in the unconsecrated ground of daily journalism; and that is a comforting thought to be going on with.

The flattering obituaries of the late Sir Drummond Fraser reveal evidence of a very prevalent illusion, which is that because a man has worked hard without seeking his own private interests his work must have been in the public interest. There could hardly be a more flagrant distortion of fact. From the point of view of the interest of the individual—and what is the "public interest" if it is not the aggregation of individual interests?—the most maleficent agencies on earth have been the selfless, disinterested custodians of the public's welfare. Political and ecclesiastical history teems with proofs of Shakespeare's declaration that there is a noble brow to bless every damned error. Sir Drummond Fraser's biography in, for instance, the *Evening Standard*, is

nothing but an enumeration of his services to the banking interest. He was the first, we are told, to realise the importance of mobilising the savings of the middle and lower-middle classes. Importance to whom? Not the cotton operatives for a certainty. In this connection it is a grotesque piece of irony that the *Evening Standard* should display in black type the information that "by a tragic coincidence," an article from his pen is published "to-day" (i.e. the day of his death) or the "evils of speculation"—an article addressed to the small investor and containing his warning against "the illusory attractiveness of speculation to investors of comparatively small means." What is the use of telling drowned men to mind the water? Sir Drummond Fraser received his K.B.E. for his "work regarding war-savings." He originated the scheme for "day to day borrowings to finance the war," which he "succeeded in persuading the Treasury to adopt after a good deal of opposition." We need not continue to quote these items of "public service." The answer to each is: Yes, yes; but what have the public got out of it? Readers of this journal will realise that our remarks are not intended as a personal criticism of this man, but are an emotional outburst against the newspapers which, by their manner of eulogising him, are creating a halo round bankers in general and are encouraging the perpetuation of the evil policy of which he was, after all, only an unwitting instrument. His most appealing quality is his human frailty. When he lost two sons in the war he began to tire of his work; and when his wife followed them he entered up his life's final balances and closed his ledger for the Last Audit.

Current Political Economy.

Now that Parliament has closed for three months it is possible to look at the Labour Government's attitude, programme, and prospects. Of the first the only truly descriptive word is that adopted by Mr. Bonar Law to describe the attitude of a previous Conservative Government. Labour has itself adopted tranquillity. During the sittings just closed the Government's defence of its conduct of affairs has been that these should commend themselves to the Conservatives in view of the nature, character, and experience of the Conservatives themselves. The tinkering which Mr. J. H. Thomas has proposed for dealing with unemployment is commended to the Conservative on the ground that it is what the Conservatives would do if they were still in office and still Conservatives. The dismissal of Lord Lloyd from the governorship of Egypt is justified on the ground that it logically follows, by fate rather than administrative action, from the experience of the previous Government, judged by its own values. So with practically every matter raised, either in debate or in question. We are acting, the Labour Government explains, as deputies for a Conservative Government, in the hope that, if we do our work to the satisfaction of the employers of Conservative Government, we shall not be thrown on the unemployed.

Where present-day Conservatism has degenerated from traditional Conservatism the Labour Party has acted as though under the direct command of present-day Conservatism. As a consequence the only censure of the Government—with the exception of Mr. Churchill's personal waspishness—has come from the Socialist members of the Labour Party; and to this the Government's reply is invariably that it is a responsible Government whose duty is not to change the basis of civilisation in any degree, but to develop the system which in theory, rhetoric, and conviction, it has condemned. The

Labour Government might very well inscribe on its professional banners the judgment of the Conservative leaders; Socialism is an excellent thing in theory, but it should be tried either somewhere else or some other time. From the proposals for dealing with unemployment by subsidising the interest paying capacity of colonial development magnates out of the home-income, to the exclusion of Mr. Trotzky from this country, it is as if the present political Government was a Conservative-Liberal-Labour coalition herded together by the fear of Socialism.

At the end of the session, therefore, all the orthodox newspapers sing in unison of the temperateness of the new Labour Government, if they shake admonitive fingers about the future. There is little need. The Labour Government will spend its recess as other Governments have done; in devising means of being so busy at present that its future may be kept well ahead. In the week in which Mr. Snowden was the chief guest at a banquet given by the Lord Mayor of London to the directors of the Bank of England and the Merchants and Bankers of the City of London, the cotton operatives of Lancashire were threatened with a reduction of their wages to the extent of one-eighth of the whole, with no wages at all if they resist. In a week, then, that threatened a lock-out involving over a quarter of a million workpeople, and want among their families; and prejudices all the civic enterprise dependent on their industry, Parliament broke up for a three-months' holiday because precedent dictated that it should. While the purchasing-power of the people is being reduced by the immediate fulfilment of the threats against wages, the threats at which the orthodox are alleged "to feel great uneasiness" are left in the realm of the imaginary future.

The naïf young Socialist would suppose in his inexperience that Mr. Snowden went to meet the bankers to advise them of forthcoming Nationalisation; what he actually went for was to protest his goodwill toward bankers, and his complete acceptance of the principles of orthodox finance. For several years many bankers—excluding the Bank of England—have been dissatisfied with the basis and policy which underlie the British credit-system. Both in its attachment to an accidental consideration which has nothing to do with the power to produce goods, namely, gold, and in its present attachment to the internal belchings of the United States credit system, the British credit system fails to serve British industry and consumers satisfactorily. So much is admitted by every student, be he economist, banker, or industrialist, who has felt the pinch sufficiently to be moved to inquire. Judged by the echoes of this fact in the Parliamentary session just closed, the Labour Government is more afraid of the subject of finance and credit than were its predecessors. On the "Unemployment" question which Labour was returned, more than for any other reason, to solve, the Government will continue to push and thrust inside the narrow cage of the orthodox financial system until it wears itself. It has, indeed, begun to do so already. Mr. Thomas, after a month or so of office, has learned Mr. Churchill's electioneering lesson: that unemployment is not nearly so bad as it is represented but it would be easier to allay the conscience of the country by revising the statistical method of presenting unemployment than by solving it.

That Labour will continue to act as it has done is not, of course, evident in its threats or promises. It is evident in its state of mind. Mr. Snowden appeared to be approaching holy ground at one

moment in his speech to the bankers. The banking system ought to be conducted, his remarks implied, for the benefit of industry; but he added that it should also create employment. Such a remark is evidence in itself that Mr. Snowden is making no effort to perceive either the function of an economic system or that of the credit system which should form part of it. Employment, or work, is the tyrant that all the resources of civilisation have been developed to abolish. Why, then, should the credit-system be conducted to create it. The Labour Government is attempting, as its predecessor did, to open a door with its hand while pressing its foot against it. It proposes to remedy the ills of the miners by a selling scheme which will abolish the income of somebody else. All its notions for increasing the efficiency of industry are based upon abolishing somewhere jobs the payment for which enters into cost. There is no harm, of course, in improving the efficiency of industry by clearing out of it every unnecessary keeper of a toll-gate between manufacture and consumption. But as long as Government—all Governments—consider that, without employment for all, there cannot be incomes for all, it will go on unpicking with its left hand what it weaves with its right. It will continue on the dilemma of being bound to create a job for every one it abolished. If a bridge is to be built the reason should be that a bridge is or will be required, not that men must work. If a tunnel is to be bored under the Channel the reason must be that a tube to Paris is required, not that navvies must in no circumstances be free to join in the entertainment provided at Deauville. In Parliament last week Labour leaders avowed that they would, given the power, set all able-bodied men to useful work, the penalty for non-compliance being starvation. The motive, of course, was the same as that of the prisoner who would put the warders on skilful. There are, however, limits beyond which what is and is not useful work is difficult to define. Some people regard art as making dolls; and others regard the road scheme as the encouragement of a form of vicious lunacy. But compulsory work is ridiculous for the reason that there are far more volunteers than there are posts, which can be substantially reduced provided one condition: that the credit system is arranged in relationship to both production and consumption, and thus ensures the distribution of what can be produced. It is a sad comment on Parliament that the moment a man gets a job there he forgets that the object of an economic system is the production and distribution of goods and services for consumption. The attitude of the Labour Government is one of trying not to shock its opponents; its programme is capitalist-imperialism and rationalisation of industry; and its prospects are of keeping its job just as long as it takes to put these schemes under way, with loss of office if it should attempt anything more comprehensive and social.

BEN WILSON.

THE CARDINAL POINTS OF STAGE ARCHITECTURE.

[Palace, Church, Inn, Brothel.]

"COMICALL SCENE."
Whereof the houses must be made for common or ordinary people . . . but specially there must not want a brawthell or bawdy house, and a great inn and a church; such things of necessity to be in . . ."

"TRAGICALL SCENE."
Houses for tragedies must be made for great personages, for that actions of love, strange adventures, and cruell murders happen always in the houses of great Lords. . . .
SERLIO. His Second Book of Architecture (English translation. A.D. 1611. J. S.

The Philosophy of Social Credit.

(From C. H. Douglas's Writings.)

It may, . . . be of practical value to emphasise the undoubted fact that at the present time the alternative is not between change and no change, but between a change for the better and a change for the worse. If the present system, with its sanctions of rewards and punishments, were working satisfactorily or even tolerably, nothing could be more academic than the discussion of more desirable alternatives. . . . But the facts are wholly otherwise. It is almost certain that where there are no proposals of any sort, good, bad, or indifferent, Socialistic, Communistic, or Imperialistic, being pressed forward at the present time, by every means and sanction which can be applied to them, the present social and industrial system would no longer work. As we shall shortly see, there are quite definite mechanical defects in it, and the result of those mechanical defects is to produce a psychological re-action, which can only result, if allowed to proceed to its logical conclusion, in a state of affairs which will involve both the temporarily fortunate and the temporarily unfortunate, in a common chaos.

This restriction of output (using the phrase in its very broadest sense, to include all descriptions of unspecified activity at present widely outside the range of economics), is nothing but social suicide. . . . The test of a natural law is that it is automatic and inexorable, and the proof of the contention which is advanced in this book, that as soon as Society ceases to serve the interests of the individual, then the individual will break up Society, is proved by the course of events at this time.

The stage is set for a change of mechanism; in place of a Society based on restraint, a Society based on the conception of assistance, of co-operation, is overdue. Let us be clear that the only assistance which is tolerable or acceptable is that which can be declined if it is not wanted.

A system of Society which depends for its structure on the theory of material rewards and punishments seems to involve, fundamentally, a general condition of scarcity and discontent.

The organisation by which these arrangements are enforced is, of course, familiar in the form of the Common Law.

the gap between Demand and Supply has nothing to do with the ability of the production and industrial system to meet the calls which are made on it; it has to do with the organisation which stands in between Demand and Supply, that is to say, the Financial or Ticket System.

Now, this condition has not entirely escaped attention, but most, if not all, of the attention which has been directed to it is, I think, stultified by accepting as true, premises which proceed from the very system which is attacked. There is, of course, the crude idea on which, originally, most of the orthodox labour-socialist propaganda was based. . . . the simple suggestion . . . that the majority of the population were so poor, because a minority were so rich.

This orthodox theory, then, assumes that the money, equivalent to the price of every article which is produced, is in the pocket, or the bank pigeon-hole of somebody in the world. In other words, it assumes that the collective sum of the wages, salaries, and dividends distributed in respect of the articles for sale at any given moment, which represent collective price, are available as purchasing-power at one and the same moment. Certain persons have more money in their pockets or bank pigeon-holes than they wish to spend on consumable goods.

There are two hypotheses as to the method by which changes of so far reaching a character as those we have been discussing might come about, one of which may be described as the evolutionary method, and the second as the revolutionary. For my own part I am inclined to believe in the probability of a combination of the two.

The outstanding fact in regard to the existing situation in the world at the present time is that it is unstable. No person whose outlook upon life extends even so far as the boundaries of his village can fail to see that a change is not merely coming, but is in progress; and it requires only a moderately comprehensive perception of the forces which are active in every country of the world to-day, to realise that the change which is in progress must proceed to limits to which we can set no bounds.

Nothing will stop it; "Back to 1914" is sheer dreaming; the continuation of taxation on the present scale, together with an unsolved employment problem, is fantastic; the only point at issue in this respect is the length of time which the break-up will take, and the tribulations we have to undergo while the break-up is in progress. But

while recognising this, it is also necessary not to fall into the error which has its rise in Darwinism; that change is evolution, and evolution is ascent. It may be; but equally it may not be. That is where the necessity for the revolutionary element arises; using, of course, the word revolutionary in a constructive sense.

There is, at the moment, no party, group, or individual possessing at once the power, the knowledge, and the will, which would transmute the growing social unrest and resentment (now chiefly marshalled under the crudities of Socialism and Communism) into a constructive effort for the regeneration of Society.

The position will be tremendous in its importance. A comparatively short period will probably serve to decide whether we are to master the mighty economic and social machine that we have created, or whether it is to master us; and during that period a small impetus from a body of men who know what to do and how to do it, may make the difference between yet one more retreat into the Dark Ages, or the emergence into the full light of a day of such splendour as we can at present only envisage dimly.

To have a clear understanding of the principles which underlie the problem is essential to those who may hope to play a part in its solution; . . . but nothing can be more fatal to a successful issue than the premature publication of cut and dried arrangements which are likely to be completely out of date long before their adoption can be secured. As the world is constituted to-day, effective action is only possible through certain centres of influence; that is to say, short of complete social anarchy as a preliminary to a new world, it is necessary to work through the arrangements which have grown up in the system with which we are all familiar.

While the evolutionary process depends most probably on the formula to which the present civilisation is working, and, given adherence to that formula, is independent of human psychology, it is fairly obvious that the effectiveness of "constructive revolution" does depend, to a large extent, on this latter factor alone.

It is only very rarely that we find a response from those who have been "successful in business." On the whole, the most promising type of mind is either that which has always been free from financial anxiety, and yet, at the same time, is familiar with the technique of the modern world, or, on the other hand, the worker, whether by hand or brain, whose incentive is very largely artistic in origin, in the ranks of whom may, of course, be included practically all persons of really scientific temperament. Most unfortunately, this latter class is, of all the divisions of Society, that least equipped, either by temperament or organisation, to exercise effective pressure.

Since, however, most men are complex characters, it is probably true that an effective appeal can be made to a very large majority if the appeal is made in the right way. It is my considered opinion that the right way with most people is to discountenance severely any discussion of the general advisability of such matters as we have been considering, and, as far as possible, to put the appeal in the form: "Suppose that you yourself were offered certain conditions, such as we suggest, under which to carry on your business or your own personal economic life, would you accept them?"

If (a man) can be kept on the more or less solid ground of his individual tastes, and the means which would enable him to achieve them, he is amenable to reason.

if it be possible to clarify the relation between the analysis of the financial system, the foci of discontent, and the logical remedy, with sufficient emphasis and over a sufficiently wide area, then the stage will be set for the greatest victory which the human individual has, within history, achieved over the forces which beset him to his fall.

"America is still looking round for new worlds to conquer, for I understand that the unissued capital of the Carmelite Trust has recently been placed 'over there.' This means 1,000,000 shares of 10s. each, but, so far, I have been unable to ascertain the exact terms of the deal. It looks very much like having a New York market in the shares, and may lead to some liveliness at higher prices. I also hear that Wall Street is showing signs of participating in the newspaper market, with special reference to the Rothermere Press."—Midas, *Financial News*, May 7.

"There is a general impression growing throughout the world that Great Britain is going to transform itself from an industrial State to a Banking State; that is, from a nation principally concerned with producing goods by machinery to a nation principally concerned with the profits of handling credit."—Hilaire Belloc.

Life-Force.

I.

At the British Association's meeting at Cape Town several of the speakers attempted to suggest a satisfactory expression for the force of life now that mechanism seems no longer enough. General Smuts, advancing his concept of "holism," said that the living, as opposed to the non-living, had several distinctive properties. The living

"retained its identity through the most varied changes. In material systems energy ran down and was dissipated with the lapse of time; living systems, within limits, showed the reverse process of building up higher forms of potential energy. Lifeless objects behaved mechanically under changed conditions, whereas living creatures showed a wide range of adaptability and readjustment."

General Smuts expressed the opinion that both Vitalism and Mechanism would have to be discarded as explanations. His concept of "Holism" was the alternative suggested. Wholes, he said, were not mechanical aggregates or constructs of parts. On the contrary, each part was influencing, moulding, even deforming every other part.

That there is in every living creature a certain power of purposive co-ordination of the parts, whether the whole be one cell, several cells, or several organs each containing cells of differentiated functions, is, of course, true and obvious. It is also, as yet, almost unique among living creatures, though machines, e.g., time-switches, threaten the borderland even of co-ordination. That any co-ordination possessed by a machine is imposed on it in the construction and setting, whereas that of the organism appears to come from within, was well-enough known when the mechanistic hypothesis commanded strong support. It would be very interesting, indeed, if somebody would summarise briefly the contributions of the various sciences to the abandonment of the mechanistic hypothesis. If organic creatures really are so different from machines as they are now alleged to be, surely the revolt against mechanism was due to come from the biologists. Actually, I suspect, it reached them rather late in the day. Outside philosophers, of whose findings science takes notice only when they are useful to its own purposes, doubt of the mechanist theory probably came from the physicists before the biologists. In short, as Dr. Whitehead and others admit, the trouble with the mechanist theory was not that life refused to fit into it, but that matter refused to accommodate itself. It was the atom, not the elephant, that exploded the theory of mechanism.

Without wishing for the present to say anything of the vitalist hypothesis, I wish to agree with Professor Wildon Carr's remark on the same day that those who are perceiving the insufficiency of the mechanist hypothesis are still clinging to it too closely. The organism, they seem to say, convinces us that it is not a mechanism; but we intend to have it as nearly as possible a mechanism. The driving force of the scientist in his desire that the universe, man included, should be comprehended as mechanism is not mechanical. He has a purpose in his actions. Mechanism is the nearest of all things external to man to reflecting man's notion of causation; which is also man's notion of controllability. Logic is itself sprung from the desire to control things. Like the theory of causation and logic, the machine seems to stimulate the optimistic will-to-power belief that man is becoming master of the universe. With the universe's customary irony, a little more mastery has led to the loss of the grounds for optimism.

The mechanistic hypothesis was ever an unfortunate one. The case against it was as strong in the past as in the present, but those who believed in the mechanist theory were advancing so rapidly that they had no time to hear the refutation. To interpret the universe in terms of mechanism is to group a greater within a lesser. It was a fair criticism of the theologians that their god was anthropomorphic—that he changed as they did. It is equally a fair criticism of the scientific mechanists that their god is mechanomorphic—that he changes as the machine changes. The anthropomorphic view had at least arrived at the realisation that however much greater than a man the Creator might be, it could not well be less than a man. The mechanomorphic view is the narrower inasmuch as no mechanist has ever seen a machine that was not the invention of an organism. It is inconceivable that a machine should invent an organism; it is demonstrated that organisms invent machines. From the reflexes in the organism itself (the special arrangements about wear and tear, identity, or co-ordination apart) to the linotype, there is no known machine which did not originate in a mind intelligible to man. For the purpose of the machine has to be known before it can be known as a machine. The mechanistic hypothesis, then, was as much more inadequate than the anthropomorphic (or vitalist) hypothesis as the machine is less than the inventor.

The scientist of mechanist leanings has not yet reached assurance as to his own functions. He is generally to be found expressing the faith that the business of science is to observe, observation being itself mechanical. Probably the dawning intuition among scientists that they must do more than re-among scientists that they must do more than re-cord, that they must re-search with ends in view, rather than search with no end in view except what comes to them, is the real reason for their perception that mechanism is not enough. The world has to be tended as well as watched, or it will make a mess of itself for which the scientist will not be able to escape responsibility. The view that the man is only the machine complicated has no less to be said for it than when Samuel Butler wrote that the machine was the man simplified; and by the man for the man's purposes. But when the man was merely the machine very complicated our minds were in the machine. It was our saviour. Now we are conscious of the man again, if only because of his troubles; and as a result we are not mechanists. We are humanists.

R. M.

"I have often refuted this Social Credit doctrine in detail, but Mr. Colborne expands it to a point which shows its inherent defect of confusing the option call of cash with cash itself, since the former is transient and if borrowed carries the obligation of repayment with interest thereon, whereas the latter is permanent and circulating unless hoarded. . . .

"The scheme provides that new money be issued from the National Treasury in part payment of wares sold below cost, and the proportion of such cost is based upon a formula which in actual practice can never be determined in terms of current money.

"No index of production can be correctly computed in units of money-value nor can any record of consumption be reliable when reduced to terms of actual money payments. . . .

"It is explained that such new money will return to the banks in repayment of loans, but it does not tell us what the banks will do with it. It assumes here that all money-credit is created by banks, also destroyed by banks when repaid; this view is only partly true, for if loans are repaid in cash the bank will pass on such cash to the Bank of England whenever in excess of its daily average requirements."—H. R. Scott in *The Hindoo*, Madras, June 29.

Drama.

The Merry Wives of Windsor: Apollo.

This version of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" is Mr. Oscar Asche's comment on all previous modernisations of Shakespeare's plays; any lack of success they may have had, it is implied, was due to the modernisation being no more than half done. Mr. Asche has not simply modernised the costumes and furniture, and instructed his actors to mutter instead of rant. His way is more thorough. Mr. Page, gentleman, as Shakespeare knew him, has become Page, butcher, an acknowledgment that, since aristocrats were forced by poverty to trade, trade is no longer beneath an aristocrat. Mr. Ford, also gentleman, is here attired in so automobilious a manner that when the scene changes to his house it is a disappointment that his works are not visible through the window. Possibly the curtains were drawn to hide them. Sir Hugh Evans is a Welsh parson who rides a bicycle.

But these modernisations are but a beginning. An old beggar-woman outside the Garter Inn plays a cheap gramophone, complete with metal horn, in a perambulator; and, again faithful to the modern style, nobody apparently gives her anything. Windsor is no place, perhaps, nowadays, for her industry, which prospers better with the London theatre queues for audience, whose members, unable to run away, have to meet the busker's glittering eye with as steely a glare if they would save twopence. The arrival of the newsboy with the four o'clock winner brings the host out of the pub to learn whether it can afford to go back. Anne Page climbs on the pillion of a motor-bike showing precisely the true to life, whether proper or not, amount of thigh. Only one thing, so far as I can say in retrospect, was not modernised, and that was well worth leaving as it was for merriment's sake; one could apparently get a drink any time at The Garter. Nothing was lost by this, since in other respects The Garter was up to the last pre-totalisator moment, the landlord occupying his quieter morning hours by sitting on the bench outside the pub to receive betting-slips, the policeman's included. In addition to all this and more, Mr. Asche has modernised the lines where necessary, and not only in trifles such as the multiplication of Anne Page's fortune to correspond with the fall in the value of money. If Mr. Asche could have had the Drury Lane theatre, he would surely have given the audience the treat of a cockney charabanc party passing merrily through Windsor.

In some respects this modernisation contains, in spite of its thoroughness, incongruities; such as Falstaff's dealings with his followers, and his being preceded by his page-boy. Had Shakespeare prepared the modernised version he would have been more thorough still, and would have completely rewritten the duel scene. Far from joining the solemn scholars who would appropriate Shakespeare for commentators and glossary-writers, I am with those who would spread him for public laughter. Those who would speak his name with reverence, and who regard the alteration of one jot or tittle of his inspired lines as sacrilege, rarely give him much worship. They treat his divinely inspired text as for awe, but not for a busy man's digestion. It is the moderniser who believes in Shakespeare, not those who do not present his works at all, nor those who do not see them, no matter when or how they are presented. What Shakespeare needed, as even Mr. Gordon Craig says, is a producer, and now that he has a producer, in Mr. Asche, the only thing that appears to work against success is that Shakespeare's name appears among the contributors; and,

possibly another thing, in that the merry wives of Windsor, even in the modernised version, are faithful to their husbands, to the discomfiture of Don Juan Falstaff. That, of course, hardly could be modernised. Solemn faced detractors notwithstanding, Mr. Asche has produced a merry entertainment. If it does not bring Shakespeare over the mental horizon of modern youth, it deserves no better than the forcible feeding with Shakespeare in childhood which is so bad for both Shakespeare and the victim.

Mr. Asche's Falstaff was less broad than in some traditional versions, but not less comic. The part is, indeed, a creation, not merely a modernisation. Here is the Falstaff of to-day. He is not one of those adventurers, along with Gil Blas and others, who have become respectable through mummification between the leaves of old books; he lives in the knowable here and now, as laughable a nuisance as he ever was. Some of the actors, through long association with the traditional style, showed a tendency to drop into it at times. But they were obviously struggling against this tendency, which is accordingly likely to wear off. There are, nevertheless, many excellent performances, including Mr. H. R. Hignett's as Shallow, Clement Hamelin's as Corporal Nym (in the ex-ser-viceman's cast-offs), Leonard Calvert's as Simple, Alfred Clarke's as the landlord, Joan Harben's as Ann Page, and Marie Ault's as Mrs. Quickly.

The Skin Game: Wyndham's.

As Mr. Galsworthy in "Exiled," which has just been withdrawn, wrote "The Skin Game" up-to-date, the question may be asked as to why a revival of "The Skin Game" should follow. The answer is that it is a better play. Neither the sentiment nor the growing cynicism is so obvious. From recollection of the first production of "The Skin Game" I have long held the notion that the play was a dramatisation of the struggle of the old-fashioned gentlemanly landlord, protecting his tenantry, their country's pride, against the modern industrial go-getter, whose dreams were filled with a million of mill-chimneys sticking up through the floor of Heaven in front of the Throne. Now I see the play as the misfortunes of Chloe, a young wife, with a buried past, who found herself mixed up in somebody else's quarrel. Apart from the sociological associations resulting from the fact that Hillcrist is a landowner and Hornblower an industrialist, the play is simply the record of what dirty work may be done in a row between two men if one of them allows his wife to take charge of it.

Sociologically the quarrel between land and capital was fought on the economic issue; the industrialist had more money to spend, in wages, salaries, custom, and taxes. As a result, he became master of the state. The issue between Hillcrist and Hornblower is a personal matter; Hornblower, in common with most people, hates being looked down upon, and determines to get on top. That he is handicapped by a daughter-in-law who before her marriage lent herself out to divorce-arrangers is a mere moral accident; yet from the first sight of her, in spite of her having come over, the married woman with authority and property queers the pitch of all the others to ruin the blackleg-woman who had at one time been employed professionally to dissolve marriages. Thus the play, giving at first the impression of a sociological conflict between aristocracy and plutocracy, fixes itself on one particular dreadful example of bad etiquette in quarrelling. The misfortune of Chloe has nothing to do with land versus capital. They represent the humanitarian Mr. Galsworthy in-advocately showing that man's inhumanity to man is not a patch for severity on woman's inhumanity to woman.

It is a far call to the previous production, but I trust myself to say that this is better. Mr. Edmund

Gwenn's performance as Hornblower, more sympathetic towards the character than on the previous occasion, is of the highest quality. I doubt, however, whether even Hornblower would have the skill in playing with his hat that Mr. Gwenn displays, or even that he would do it so much if he had. Mr. Edward Irwin's auctioneer was uncommonly fine and well-studied acting. But there is no failure in the whole cast.

PAUL BANKS.

"Keeper of the Groves."

By "Old and Crusted."

"—they walked on their way, and came yet nearer and nearer, where were Orchards, Vineyards and Gardens, and their Gates opened into the High-way. Now as they came up to these places, behold the Gardener stood in the way; to whom the Pilgrim said, Whose goodly Vineyards and Gardens are these? He answered, They are the King's, and are planted here for his own delights, and also for the Solace of Pilgrims. So the Gardener had them into the Vineyards, and bid them refresh themselves with Dainties. He also showed them there the King's walks, and the Arbors where he delighted to be."—*The Pilgrim's Progress*.

See! on the cumber'd plain
Clearing a stage
Scattering the past about
Comes the new age!

(*Bacchanalia; or The New Age*.—M. A.)

Once upon a time, and that not so very long ago either, a part-worn pilgrim visited Oxford and spent many hours wandering in and about gardens, quads, and chapels—musing, worshipping and regretting. He carried away with him many indelible impressions, mostly pleasant, but some painful—and of these latter more anon. Strange to relate, it is not so much the glories of Christ Church or the lure of Magdalen, not even the alms-dish on the altar in Brasenose chapel, that will haunt him for all time, but a simple mural tablet, in the garden of John's, bearing these words:—

"FORTUNATUS ET ILLE DEOS QUI NOVIT
AGRESTES.

HENRY JARDINE BIDDER,
KEEPER OF THE GROVES.

This rock garden which he made and loved is his
monument."

Now the pilgrim, having been a gardener of sorts for the better part of a mis-spent life, and having struggled with fell circumstance through the relentless years to keep at least one tree-shaded nook inviolate for the generations to come, felt his heart warm towards good Master Bidder and the college dignitaries who rewarded his services in so gracious and enduring a manner.

Those four words, "Keeper of the Groves," acted like magic; they crystallised into one concept a whole disordered rabble of vague longings; it was

"like the vision of a new world, by the opening of some unsuspected window in a familiar dwelling-place,"

which Marius saw when the priest of the temple of Æsculapius, among the hills of Etruria, lifted the cunningly contrived panel, which formed the back of one of the carved seats, and "bade him look through." The vision the pilgrim had in the garden of S. John Baptist College was that of an England cleansed from the stains of her long travail, a land of beautiful homes set in fair gardens amidst woods and pastures where ran rivers of sweet waters unpolluted by the refuse of those distorted energies miscalled industry.

But if that vision is ever to be a reality halt must be called to some of those mischievous, if well-meant, schemes which threaten the countryside with defilement if not with utter destruction. Truly this England of ours sorely needs a "Keeper of the Groves." No, it is not the well-known "beauty spots" that

are in danger—these are fairly safe—but rather the spaces in between; the homely meadows and fields of buttercups, the shady places where shallow waters fall, where purple orchis and yellow iris flourish, that demand protection. These are the spaces through which are to be driven those hideous straight roads—mostly unnecessary if a restless generation only knew it—to the reckless destruction of tangled hedgerows and wayside strips of common-land ablaze with the golden splendour of the plant that is only out of bloom when kisses are out of fashion.

Here, then, is much congenial work for a Lord High Keeper of The Groves, one exercising the higher, middle, and lower justice; with power to hang, eject, or pillory according to the gravity of the offence and the finding of his court of Pie-Powder—if his Lordship deem fit to make a jury case of it. A jury of gardeners could always be empanelled at short notice to deal with a local authority bent on cutting a by-pass through an area of well-cultivated allotments, and short shrift would these fussy aediles receive at the hands of outraged artisans who saw the work of their leisure hours imperilled by official callousness.

But the problem of keeping the groves inviolate is made doubly difficult by the activities of those gentry who advertise (*sic*):

"Attractive Non-Basement,
Labour Saving Houses.

With Garages,
erected around a charming garden,"

and of the man-in-a-hurry, who, having made a bit—no matter how—in the City, is bent on building a country residence with rose-garden, lily pond, and herbaceous border all complete; yea, even if he know not a peony from a potentilla.

To check this cupidity and exercise a wise supervision over the new men who threaten old acres, the Lord High Keeper of the Groves should have a college, a Most Venerable the Master of the Precincts, to whom all building plans, both public and private, should be submitted—and this is where Oxford comes in—but not the Oxford of this year of grace. Before she can presume to send forth the disciples whom it should be her privilege to train for the high task of Keeping Groves and raising noble buildings, she must tend to her own door-step—purge High Street, cleanse Cornmarket, and face the fact that outside the College precincts at least three-quarters of the City of Spires calls aloud for demolition. Relentless destruction alone can provide the space wherein the Oxford of our dreams can express herself in marble, stone and bronze—space for the King's walks where his subjects may saunter at ease without suffering risk to life and limb and offence to nose and eye; harbours where they may "refresh themselves with Dainties"; halls where the butterfly hatch is always open—for, be it known, that despite her generous hospitality to the learned and famous, Oxford offers but scanty "Solace for Pilgrims" of the humbler sort, whose wallets are ill-lined and who have naught to recommend them save that they have learned

"To look with feelings of fraternal love
Upon the unassuming things that hold
A silent station in this beauteous world."

It is well said of "that sweet City with her dreaming spires" (where all things ancient and of good repute are reverently cherished, and where whatever is new and crude is distilled to sweetness and mellowness in her magic alembic) that the devotion of her sons is her proudest possession. It is written in her story from the stormy times of the great Cardinal to the day of that other pilgrim whom dock-tailed Grizzle bore to the doors of the Mitre on a visit to his

friend the Provost, "the kind and learned Dicky Bend,"

When, to delight his wearied eyes,
Before him Oxford's tow'rs arise.
"O, Alma Mater!" Syntax cried,
"My present boast, my early pride;
To whose protecting care I owe
All I've forgot, and all I know."

down to the drab Victorian era when Thyrsis doubted and Arnold wept for him. Through all the ages, through good repute and ill, this love of Alma Mater has burned with undimmed flame.

And what of the many who may not call her "Mother" yet hold her in great affection and look to her for guidance and comfort? What of the stream of pilgrims who visit her shrines year by year and depart, some comforted, but many chilled and depressed? Might they not parody the words Kipling puts in the mouth of the returned soldier and say?—

"If Oxford were what Oxford seems,
An' not the Oxford of our dreams,
But only cocktails, punts an' paint,
'Ow quick we'd drop 'er! But she ain't."

And in that faith let this pilgrim protest in all love and humility that a future awaits her, glorious beyond the dreams of her most devoted sons, a possibility of service beyond computation to the land in whose crown she is the brightest jewel and of whose groves she shall in truth be the Keeper, while the ages run—when she welcomes in her schools the teaching of the man who has shown us how

"to master the mighty economic and social machine that we have created,"

and pointed the way to

"the emergence into the full light of a day of such splendour as we can at present only envisage dimly."

Creative Conflict.

By W. T. Symons.

The note of the day is pacifism which is passive: a cessation of strife from mutual fear, not a transmutation of energy from mutual love. On the world scale it is universal servility masquerading as Peace, and drawing the thoughtless goodwill of modern progressivism into unconscious service of ends abhorrent to men of spirit. Disarmament may be the first political issue; it is anyhow the essential condition of the world's complete subjugation by Finance. But it is not the prime concern of the human spirit.

The desirability of reducing the risk of physical warfare between the nations is being used by the powers which control the world to inculcate a complete denial of conflict on every plane. Agreement! Agreement! But at what cost! The cost of exalting compromise to a pedestal of supreme virtue; and not merely compromise: acquiescence is demanded in the steady narrowing of the field of human freedom, and the destruction of cultural distinction. World Economic Conferences; Mond-Turner meetings of "sane" Labour and benevolent employers; Rationalisation, the extreme instrument of capitalism—all of them have secured the blessing even of those who imagine themselves the protagonists of liberty; yet all are induced to play their Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark ever appearing on the stage! With Finance the centre of interest and of criticism, what might not be done by these dramatisations of economic distress!

Thus an ignoble military and economic peace is engineered from the apex of financial world-power,

and basely accepted, but for those few whose revolt is that of despair. And their revolt, being merely instinctive, however right, is no match for the machine-brains of the acquiescent mass doing the will of the dominant few. Nothing is to be sacred; nothing to be defended to the death. Nothing is to be so deeply desired that conflict shall be encountered in its pursuit. This is not the way of life.

The divine way lies in the conflict of ideas, and their pursuit with all the force of temperamental difference and variety of experience. The way is not without guidance. Thanks to the modern psychology in its march from the class-room into life, a new understanding of human relationship has arisen, no longer based on mere aggression, or on negative, sentimental abandonment of the self to placate the "neighbour," but resting firmly upon a high self-valuation and respect which accords an equal respect to him.

The real meaning of the half-and-half principle is that each half contributes the utmost that the other half permits, not to produce a hotch-potch of concession, but to produce a new living idea in the living way, by stressing the differences and throwing the contending elements into the alembic of each mind, that each thought may make its fullest contribution—and something new be born of the unity in conflict. The false idea that devitalised units of thought can combine is being replaced by the truth that socially fruitful union takes place only between vital units.

What is true of human relations is true of public, national and international affairs. Conflict of ideas is essential; and on this plane each contributory thought should demand the fullest possible acceptance that the opposing thought will permit. Only thus can body be given to the new political and social creation which the idea of Real Credit implies, and which the direction of financial credit to its purposes will bring about.

The basis of vital political thinking is the Real Credit of each community; and the objective of sanity is the fulfilment of the individual and a finely organised society. But within that "frame of reference" lies in the whole fruitful conflict between those whose temperamental tendency is to jeopardise the freedom of the individual by giving too great place to corporate control—of political, industrial and cultural affairs; and those who tend to jeopardise the essential minimum of corporate control, by leaving to the individual those spheres of life which need the kind of wisdom and strength which men have only in their corporate capacity.

We would neither recall the challenge of the duel to quicken the sense of personal honour, nor perpetuate war to safeguard the corporate pride which sweeps men out of triviality and cheap, dull egoism. But the spirit that expressed itself in that heightened personal and corporate consciousness is in danger of being drowned instead of transmuted. Conflict alone can maintain human distinction; but it is ours to determine the plane of conflict.

The profound truth of economic determinism finds its challenge in the stream of events, which necessitates perpetual adaptation of method to the changing world. Every theory of abstract economics and abstract politics will be falsified unless it continually adapts itself to the determinism within which it operates.

And here the genius of Social Credit is apparent, for it is securely based upon the statement that "the future of man is unknown"; the only certainty, that the utmost economic freedom which is physically possible is the medium in which that unknown can flower in all the marvellous profusion of human genius.

This is the negation of cheap peace and servility. It is the affirmation of human dignity and a living faith in God. Its genesis is creative conflict.

Revolutions of Culture.

By V. A. Demant.

Civilisation is an intermittent phenomenon. This has been recognised by the most cursory dabbles in human history. Civilisation is also a recurrent phenomenon. Its cycle has been described by ancients like Berossus, the Babylonian, who wrote of "The Great Year" with its summer and winter of culture. In the West the Etruscans, an Eastern people, knew of the Great Year in which each successive race sprouted, flourished, decayed, and died. Their own lasted about 1,100 years. For these sages the Great Year had a divinatory meaning: moderns have accounted for it by less oracular causes. Professor Huntington connects it with changes of climate and consequent migrations; Flinders Petrie, the Egyptologist, believes that civilisation arises from a mixture of two different races which takes about eight centuries to produce a homogeneous mixture. This is the period of greatest culture, and it lasts four or five centuries of diminished ability. Moralism as well as Science has had her say, and a warning finger held up for men to behold how moral degeneracy or economic greed accounts for the decay of this or that Empire.

Oswald Spengler is one with the ancients in that civilisation obeys no human control, and one with the moderns in that it has no significance.* There is no history of man, only the story of great "Cultures"; peoples, races, nations, are "the symbolic forms and vessels in which men of these cultures fulfil their destinies." In a majestic, learned, ingenious sweep Spengler reviews the course of civilisation as a panorama of eight "Cultures": Egyptian, Babylonian, Indian, Chinese, Classical, Arabian or "Magian," Gothic, Modern or "Faustian." Each culture performs a cycle which, with a little pushing and pulling, appears similar in all cases. It begins in primitive religiousness "with a mighty theme that rises out of the pre-urban countryside, is carried through in the cities of art and intellect, and closes with a finale of materialism in the world cities." Then begins another revolution. "With the formed State, high history also lays itself down weary to sleep. . . . Only with the end of grand history does Holy, still Being reappear. It is a drama noble in its aimlessness, noble and aimless as the course of the stars, the rotation of the earth, and the alternance of land and sea, of ice and virgin forest upon its face. We may marvel at it or we may lament it—but it is there." Though the drama be aimless, Dr. Spengler has no doubt of its constituent forces. These are none other than our old friend the dual nature of man interpreted as Being and Becoming in the East, as God and Sin by Christianity, as Apollo and Dionysos by Nietzsche. In this massive and somewhat showy work the duality is an eternal conflict between Being (plant like), Blood, Time, Politics, Destiny, War on the one hand, and Waking Being (animal), Intellect, Space, Causality, Religion, Science on the other. It is the endeavour of thought to comprehend life which at once produces culture and also acts as a kind of valve gear which shuts down its own steam when a certain pressure is reached. Self-conscious understanding interlocked with speech forms a concept of thought, and with it a counter concept of life, and distinguishes life as it is from what it might be. Instead of straight uncomplicated living we have the antithesis represented in the phrase "thought and action." But "the plant-like—cosmic Being heavy with Destiny, blood, sex, possess an immemorial mastery and keep it." Thought tries to supplant Being—demands truths instead of facts. This gives

* "The Decline of the West." Volume Two. "Perspectives of World History." By Oswald Spengler. Translated by C. F. Atkinson. (Allen and Unwin. 21s. net.)

rise to culture—cities versus an earth-bound peasantry, cathedral versus castle, Christ versus Pilate, Science versus Blood. Knowledge is only a late form of belief; both, as Truth, kill life. "In the historical World there are no ideals, but only facts—no truths but only facts. There is no reason, no equity, no final aim but only facts—and anyone who does not realise this should write books on politics—let him not try to make politics."

Herr Spengler tries hard to exclude all judgments of value, but we overhear continually his disillusionment with the intellect of man. The book is an unconscious complaint in the guise of a philosophy; its erudite fatalism is a majestic defence against the cruelty of life. But it has neither the bracing quality of Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence as a Yea saying to life, nor the balm of Oriental cosmic rhythm. We are in the last stages of the Faustian Culture where the two centuries of party politics are over, not because they have been rejected but out of boredom. The triumphs of the machine and of money represent the final spasms of the intellect, and Faustian man has become the slave of his creation. "The ancient wrestle between the productive and acquisitive economics intensifies now into a silent gigantomachy of intellects, fought out in the lists of the world-cities. The battle is the despairing struggle of technical thought to maintain its liberty against money-thought." The invention of double-entry book-keeping in 1499 is one of the supreme triumphs of the human intellect and one that marked the greatest divorce of modern economics from life. There is no going back. "The moment when money is celebrating its last victories, and the Caesarism that is to succeed approaches with a quiet, firm step—our direction, willed and obligatory at once, is set for us within narrow limits." With the coming of Caesarism and world-shattering wars the only relief will be a spell of primitive piety out of which a new culture will arise, probably in Russia. "The timeless village and the eternal peasant reappear, begetting children and burying seed in Mother Earth—a busy not inadequate swarm, over which the tempest of soldier-emperors passingly blows—masses are trampled on in the conflicts of the conquerors who contend for the power and the spoil of this world, but the survivors fill up the gaps with a primitive fertility and suffer on. And while in high places there is eternal alternance of victory and defeat, those in the depths pray, pray with that mighty piety of the Second Religiousness that has overcome all doubts for ever." This is too pompous to make our flesh creep; and though the range of the author's knowledge and the depth of his insight into the whole drama of human politics, religion, economics, and thought almost persuades, this pretentiousness is suspicious.

I acknowledge the picture of Western Decline here presented, but I refuse to see in it a repetition of similar cycles of the historic past. I find that in order to make the parallelism Dr. Spengler has to violate the history of some of his plants. Classicism is cut off short, and described as a different thing when it re-appears in certain forms later in the Roman Empire or the Renaissance. Christianity is two distinct growths, Magian and Gothic, and has no part or lot in the Faustian age. In fact, like all pretentious philosophic schemes, this one fails precisely because it is not comprehensive enough. A cosmic view of history is impossible without a cosmic theory of the Universe; and this German philosopher clearly does not want "Gnosis." Therefore his eight culture cycles follow one another without significance, a curious attitude in one for whom Time is a reality. Because of time the twelfth stroke of a clock is different from all the others precisely because it is the twelfth; it has a different quality, and if Dr. Spengler tells

me that this difference has only significance for consciousness and not for life, I will say the same for his book. For the eighth, the Faustian culture is distinctive at least in this that it has raised up Oswald Spengler. In truth, like most philosophers, in weaving his design he leaves himself out of the picture; some psychologists would say in order to hide behind it.

If "mentalism," intellect, consciousness, is the disintegrating demon which brings culture to its end, at any rate this disintegration has become conscious of itself in "The Decline of the West." This is a book, not a campaign; the work of a Faustian Intellect, not the throbbing pulse of destiny in a feudal baron. Intellect has become conscious of its own unreality. How then shall we believe intellect's account of itself? I detect an ulterior motive behind this book. "War is the creator of all good things." The author has given himself away. This is a valuation. No one was taken in by a War for "Kultur"; and so when war comes again Germany can enter into it with a good heart and no mind, as part of her destiny in the Revolution of Culture.

Retrospect.

JULY 30, 1925.

The coal crisis—expiry of the coalowners' notice—international reactions.
American coal situation—Mr. Virgil Jordan's account—"over-capacity" and "excess of labour force."

AUGUST 6, 1925.

The coal crisis—rumoured subsidy—the Court of Inquiry's report—wages to be a "first charge" (sic) after (!) deductions from gross profits.
Captain Peter Wright's attack on Gladstone—morals and Ministers—contemporary versus post-obituary "libels"—the right to initiate exposures or the investigation of allegations—in whose discretion is it to lie?

JULY 29, 1926.

The new coinage.
The Office of Works demands rents for cricket pitches in the Royal Parks.
Mr. Churchill at the bankers' banquet—the test of the soundness of a financial measure was whether it was disagreeable.
The American Debt—demonstrations in France against American tourists—Senator Borah reminds Europe that America did not demand any territory at Versailles.
The Jewish Question. (Editorial summing up of correspondence—the attitude of THE NEW AGE defined.)

AUGUST 5, 1926.

Secession of L.G.O. inspectors from the Transport Union—decentralised labour and sectional strikes—a general strike strengthens the borrowing powers of capitalism.
Repression of Catholicism in Mexico—the possibility that financial interests in general will exploit "anti-clerical" prejudices against ecclesiastics who preach "unsound" economics.
Bellum Ex Machina. (Editorial article on Hobson's "Evolution of Modern Capitalism.")
Virtual Wealth. (Editorial review of Prof. Soddy's "Wealth, Virtual Wealth, and Debt.")

JULY 28, 1927.

Workmen's Compensation Act—do a workman's savings invalidate his claim for compensation—case in the House of Lords.
A strike in Tokio of employees of the Nipponophone Company for a share in its reserves.
Professor Gustav Cassel on the need to economise gold.
Nicaragua—the bombing of "insurgents" by American airmen.
Mr. Alanson B. Houghton says that war should only follow a referendum endorsing declaration.
The Problem of the Coalowner. (Editorial article on Sir Adam Nimmo's reply to Sir Herbert Samuel.)
A Credit Analysis. (Expository. By Arthur Brenton.)

AUGUST 4, 1927.

Standard Oil and Royal Dutch at war over acquisition of Russian petrol resources—the British Empire's oil policy.

Anglo-American naval conversations—America's threat to outbuild Britain—the rationing of naval construction reflects the rationing of credit creation.

Birth-control—Mr. R. B. Kerr on the need for it.
The Midland Bank and a Financial Inquiry, IV. By C. H. Douglas.

JULY 26, 1928.

Anglo-American oil rivalries—Mr. Ludwell Denny's history of Britain's secret acquisition of monopoly—control of resources in his book "We Fight for Oil."

Mr. Pollitt and the Communists' decision to oppose Labour at the next election.

The Miners and the Crisis. By N. Major Douglas's debt-repayment scheme reprinted.

AUGUST 2, 1928.

America's Note to China—preparing to assume world-leadership in the formulation of a new policy towards China—recognises "Nationalist" Government—hints at abrogation of treaties concerning Customs and Extraterritoriality.

Colonel House dines with the Prince of Wales and Mr. Baldwin.

The Railway wage-pact—Mr. Thomas agrees to the £3,000,000 per annum reduction—the voice: "there won't half be some pinching on the railways now."

Professor Morgan indicts bureaucratic government—selection of instances of Departmental self-determination from his article in the Evening News.

Sugar—the world's growers conferring how to reduce crops; also competing to get supplies of a certain new and more prolific cane (!)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

"THE EYE WITNESS."

Sir,—You state in a footnote to the republished *Star* report of the Marconi Committee that the British Museum has no knowledge of a journal called *The Eye Witness*. This is strange, for that paper ran from June 22, 1911, to end of October, 1912, when the name was changed to *The New Witness*. *The Eye Witness* was edited by Mr. Belloc until June, 1912. Mr. Cecil Chesterton was the first editor of *The New Witness*. It was in *The Eye Witness* that the attack on the Marconi scandal was made.

I have complete files of *The Eye Witness*.
(Signature illegible.)

[We refer to this subject in the *Notes*.—ED.]

DEPOSITS AND INVESTMENTS.

Sir,—Some time ago I remember reading in THE NEW AGE a criticism of the Trade Unions for investing their funds with their opponents. I have now received a circular of the "New AGE Guarantee Fund," inviting subscriptions, and it is evident, judging by the footnote, that subscriptions will be paid in to the Westminster Bank.

I should be pleased if you will give me your view on this matter, as I do not feel inclined to forward a donation until I know the reason for this procedure.—Yours faithfully,

G. W. CRAWLEY.

[Deposits on current account in a bank are not investments.—ED.]

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