

THE
NEW AGE

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LITERATURE AND ART

EDITED BY ARTHUR BRENTON.

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THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER."

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

Mr. A. W. Humphrey has published a short book* about wages. The matter was written as a section of a larger book which the author contemplated publishing; but as he has been obliged to postpone doing so he has issued the present one "on account." It follows along the lines adopted by Chiozza Money in his well-known pre-war work, *Riches and Poverty*, and in fact reproduces some of the most striking of that author's statistics of wages and incomes. Mr. Humphrey brings them up to date. For instance, he shows that in the year 1924, "15 per cent. of the people with incomes took more than half the entire income." (p. 43.) Again (p. 83) he takes the Rowntree Poverty-line Budget of July, 1914, and expresses its cost at the price-levels of 1928, showing that a family of five would require in that year 59s. 7d. a week in order to live up to the poverty-line (!). He quotes wage-rates of the railway companies for a certain week in that year, and shows that only three grades of workers out of eleven get more than 59s. 7d., the others ranging from 57s. down to 48s. On the basis of these and many other statistics he comes to the conclusion in his last chapter (p. 88) that at least 25 per cent. of the population are living at or below the poverty-line.

In a synopsis on the cover of the book Mr. Humphrey says that "the evidence supports the view that the poverty problem cannot be solved within Capitalism." By the term "Capitalism" he must be presumed to mean private enterprise; in which case the implication is that public enterprise in some form or other is the remedy. But it is at this point that the trouble really begins. It is easy enough to see that it is possible for the State to redress inequities in the distribution of a given aggregate communal income, but very difficult to see how the State could do it, and more difficult still to picture any Ministers of State even attempting to do it. It is all very well to point out that say six people out

of 100 are taking say £50, and leaving only another £50 to be shared by ninety-four people; but it does not necessarily prove that under a collectivist control of distribution the 100 people can all get £1 each to spend on the means of life.

There are two obstacles. One is technical, and the other is moral. The collectivist controllers, if they distributed the whole £100 in this way for raising the standard of life of the ninety-four people, would, by so doing, be allocating all of it to purposes of *consumption* and none of it to purposes of *saving*. Secondly, one would have to imagine these controllers having antecedently agreed that it was wise and prudent to allow the poor to draw so much as £1 a week, or in fact to draw anything perceptibly more than they get at present.

Mr. Humphrey, apparently, would be willing to try it, but unfortunately, as things work out in political life, the power of "trying it" is reserved for Ministers who can be trusted not to try it. This comes about because whereas the electorate chooses the House of Commons, it is the City which chooses the Cabinet. Hence it is that to-day we have a Socialist Cabinet who, whatever else they may disagree about, are unanimous in declaring that "Socialism in our time" is not practical politics. Snowden and MacDonald left the Independent Labour Party on account of that very issue. Our commentary on this is that if "our time" is too early for Socialism it is too early for a Socialist Government. Every argument which the Labour Government can advance to prove that nothing can be done for Labour is an indictment of its policy in having taken office.

As the *Daily Express* has advertised THE NEW AGE as a Socialist journal we had better remove all misapprehensions by stating that we are definitely hostile to all predatory political programmes, from whatever party they emanate. They are based on an illusion about the actual strength of this country's economic resources—an illusion derived from observ-

* *The Workers' Share. A Study in Wages and Poverty.* By A. W. Humphrey. 92 pp. Allen and Unwin. Cloth 3s. 6d. Paper 2s. 6d. net.

ing the apparent weakness of this country's financial resources. This apparent weakness is due entirely to the acts done by the banking monopoly in pursuance of its financial policy. The situation that we pictured just now where six "capitalists" take £50 and ninety-four "workers" take £50 illustrates our point. The friction arises because (a) there is only £100 available for distribution and (b) at the current retail price-level £50 will not buy enough to keep ninety-four people in tolerable comfort. Neither of these conditions is under the control of either the capitalist or the worker. Both of them are under the control of the bankers. The bankers administer two "laws," the one governing the lending and withdrawing of money and the other governing the accounting of costs. These two "laws" are complementary: that is to say that loan-policy affects the retail price-level, and the retail price-level affects loan-policy. The consequences are automatic, and take place irrespective of the virtues and vices of employers and workpeople. For instance the "good employer" cannot necessarily pay the wages he likes. He certainly cannot if he owes an overdraft to his banker which he finds difficulty in repaying when asked. The banker's auditor then steps in as arbiter of wages. Again, apart from this direct difficulty, the generous employer can only exercise his generosity at the sacrifice of his borrowing powers. Banks lend money most readily to the employers who can earn the highest profit in the shortest time. This means wage-cuts; and although it is the employers who announce them, it is really the bankers who impose them.

Similarly with regard to other incomes than wages. The policy of the bankers encourages the amassing of maximum profits, but—and this is a vital distinction—discourages the distribution of high dividends. Now, when critics of profiteering notice those six people "taking" £50, as against ninety-four people taking another £50, they do not notice enough. They should inquire how the six people dispose of their incomes. If they will do so they will find that a considerable proportion of those incomes is re-invested in industry. This has an important bearing on the problem of poverty, because in the ultimate analysis poverty is not a shortage of money but a shortage of things. It does not follow that because "fifteen per cent. of people with incomes took more than half the entire income" that those people took more than half the total products put on the consumption-market, or anything like that proportion. Moreover, even supposing that they did, the injustice of such division need not necessarily result in poverty among the majority. It would do so only in the case that the total product on the consumption market represented the maximum output of which industry was capable when working at full potential efficiency. This is obviously not the situation today, as is proved by the spectacle of idle men and machines in every town in the country. There are good reasons for estimating that after a very short preparatory period at least twice the present quantity could be put on the consumption market.

Because of this we have no hesitation in declaring our wholehearted sympathy with Mr. Maxton and his supporters in the Independent Labour Party when they insist on something which they describe as "Socialism in our time." In fact we would sharpen the slogan and demand something which they would describe as "Socialism this year." That something, however, has nothing to do with partisan and predatory programmes. It can be advocated by Conservatives, Liberals and Socialists alike because it is a purely economic proposition and because its objective must command general assent and co-operation when properly understood. The proposition is that,

for a beginning, the unused resources of industry shall be mobilised for the deliberate purpose of filling the needs of the general body of consumers.

"Easy to say; but it can't be done," will be the immediate reaction of most people. But whether it can be done or not is for disinterested technicians to decide. The only question which the public may legitimately answer is this: "Supposing that it can be done, do you want it done?" Take any individual in any station in life and ask him to say, speaking for himself, whether he would like his income to buy, say, 10 per cent. more things next quarter than it has bought this. The vast majority of responses would be in the affirmative. There would be a residuum of congenial moralists who would object to the policy on the ground that the poorer classes could not be trusted with more purchasing-power; but these would be swamped by the reasonable and humane people who constitute the majority. It is hardly necessary to point out that political party-traditions could not affect the answer. We know of nothing in the principles of the four parties in the State which involves opposition to the raising of the general standard of life. On the contrary, does not each of them claim that it is trying to bring that very thing about? Whatever do they mean by "prosperity" and "progress" if they do not mean that?

The strife between these parties, and the resulting deadlock in the House of Commons (which appears likely to be the inevitable aftermath of every future election) arises from the fact that each of them seeks to practise a predatory technique for attaining its objective. They have to deal with a population of which every section is quite willing to accept economic benefits but is decisively hostile to being deprived of any. To each party some section of the community can say: "Yes, we understand what you want to do, and can see how you will do it; but we don't like it and won't have it." And these sections so employ their voting power as to return three impotent Oppositions instead of a Government with a clear majority. The result is that the Governor and Directors of the Bank of England have become, and look like remaining, the effective British Cabinet.

But now suppose that a new policy were announced, of which each of the aforesaid sections of the community could be reasonably expected to say: "We understand what you want to do, though we do not see how you will do it; but we like it and will try it." This attitude would provide the foundation for a healthy political coalition. Not a coalition of two parties to suppress a third; but a coalition of all parties to carry out an agreed national policy. This would break the Parliamentary deadlock—in fact the Government would represent the whole House. It need not have previously consulted the electorate, because the electorate's opinion on the policy could be taken for granted, while the question of the technique of the policy would not be its business to decide, even supposing it wanted to be consulted, which it would not. That is to say, the present House of Commons could resolve itself into an *ad hoc* Economic State Council and proceed at once with the administration of the policy.

Everyone who has grasped Major Douglas's analysis of the credit-system will realise, after a little reflection, that a Government convinced of the rightness of the new economic policy he advocates, and the technical soundness of the means he recommends for accomplishing it, will find little or no difficulty in administration. The reason is that the spirit of the administration will be that of *direction*, and not, as now, of *coercion*. The particular acts which

the Government will require to be done by people engaged in economic activities will be congenial in their very performance. The congeniality is assured by the fact that these acts will be immediately profitable to the parties performing them, whether they be owners, managers, technicians or workpeople. This will be so because the Government, having resumed its constitutional prerogative of controlling and dispensing the nation's financial credit, will be in a position to bestow a financial reward on everybody who co-operates in the working out of the new policy. That is to say the Government *buys the co-operation and pays cash with order*. The financial credit so dispensed will not be the proceeds of taxation but the proceeds of creation. It will be additional financial credit issued to secure additional economic effort.

By hypothesis, the Government will have adopted the principle that economic effort in production requires co-equal economic effort in consumption. So while, on the one hand, it will finance all new operations which end in the delivery of more goods into shops, it will also finance the equally vital operation of clearing the goods out of the shops. The technical method of doing this need not be discussed at present: the point is that personal incomes will in the aggregate buy more goods, and that every single personal income will participate in that general benefit.

The class-conscious agitator will of course growl at the idea of the distribution of the benefit without distinction. He will complain that this policy will perpetuate the existing inequitable distribution of wealth. Very well; let it be granted that it does so—at least initially: what is to be done about it? Let us hark back to the six people who take one half of £100 and leave ninety-four to take the other. There are, let us say, 200 articles available. In that case the share of the worker is approximately one article, and that of the rich man approximately seventeen articles. Now let us suppose that the same hundred people are able to produce double the quantity, and let us grant for the sake of argument that the scheme under which they can do so will fail to rectify the unequal distribution of the product. In that case the 6 people will be able to get 34 articles each and the 94 people two articles each. Would any reasonable person want to scotch the scheme on that account—to withhold a concrete ration of one extra article from every worker while he raised an interminable hullabaloo about an arithmetical ratio? If that is Socialism, then Governor Norman is the "compleat Socialist." Nobody who claims to voice the needs and desires of the working class population has the right to assume them to share the revenge-complex which affects the left-wing agitator. Whatever may be the "just share" of the worker in the wealth to be distributed (supposing anybody could calculate such a thing) his one pre-occupation is to get something on account. He is in a hurry: he does not care how little the relief may be so long as he gets it quickly. Any working-class leader who neglects to explore the possibility of getting it for him quickly is playing directly into the hands of the bankers whose policy it is to keep alive the expectation of prosperity while constantly delaying its realisation.

We do not overlook the immediate practical problem which confronts the Socialist. At the present time he has enough to do to protect the worker against further reductions in his standard of life, let alone getting it up a little higher. Nevertheless, the situation will be hopeless unless the source of the pressure is realised. For until it is, Capital and Labour will continue to regard each other as the

cause of their discontents: they will mistakenly continue to fight each other for supremacy in Parliament: they will do so under electoral conditions which are sure to negative the supremacy of either. On this last point it is a matter of common knowledge that plans are in hand for a further reform of the electoral system which is expressly designed to ensure that every future Party Administration will depend on a minority of the total votes in the House of Commons. We say "expressly designed" because whatever the precise form which those plans eventually take they will be based on the principle that the balance of votes in the House shall reflect the balance of votes at the polls; and anybody who cares to examine the figures at the last few General Elections can judge for himself what the result must be. We are not sorry for this, because when that prospect is clearly defined the impotence of representative government will be made manifest. Every Administration will be able, like the Labour Government, to excuse itself to its supporters in the country for failing to carry out its electoral promises. And, again like the Labour Government, it will confine itself to legislation of a non-party character. This legislation will not promote any economic interest: it will promote purely financial interests. All parties will have become merged in the Bank of England Party and will co-operate in legalising its decrees. We shall have a subservient Parliamentary Coalition whose policy cannot be altered by anything that the electors may do.

We are not sorry for this either. Since the situation has led to the necessity for a Coalition to act on its own initiative in the name of an impotent electorate, taking the peoples' "will" for granted, this will establish the constitutional propriety of a virtual autocracy. The propriety will remain the same whether the autocratic power be exercised, as now, to enforce the obedience of the nation to the bankers' policy, or, as will happen, to enforce the obedience of the bankers to a national policy. That is to say, the Government, having decided upon its new policy, cuts out the farce of consulting the people, and proceeds to administer it straight away. Given the will, the means are to hand.

Ironically enough the bankers have contributed to making the task easy, for in the prosecution of their policy they have so degraded spiritual values that practically all non-criminal allegiances and services are purchasable for money. A Government which has resumed its right to create money can employ this co-operation for its own purposes. It can the more easily do so in this case because the nature of the co-operation required would not conflict with the conscientious scruples of the vast majority—in fact, the new policy would eliminate most of the distasteful and objectionable duties which people are obliged to carry out at present in the course of their work. Look at some of them: the Covent Garden dealer piling up dust-carts with tomatoes for the refuse-heap; his clerical staff sending account-sales to the growers showing (in one instance recently) a return to the grower of one penny for each fifty-six pounds; the local bank-manager under orders from headquarters refusing overdrafts or pressing for repayment; the tax collector prosecuting penurious householders in the Courts. Is it to be supposed that these functionaries feel that they owe loyalty to anything but their salaries? In a number of cases it would not be really necessary to outbid their paymaster—they would work for less if they could work with a better conscience.

Similarly in other directions the bankers are facilitating the means by which the Government can

dispense with them. They have multiplied the number of their branch premises. Good, these are of potential public service: we can make good use of them. They have centralised the direction of financial policy under a single control. Good again: an excellent economy of means when the Government takes over the direction. They have procured great amalgamations of economic enterprises under public corporations, which again will save time and trouble in administration under a new economic policy. And incidentally to all these developments they have made possible a compilation of mass-statistics which will be of direct use when the Government calls for the calculation of the first national price-factor.

It is necessary to realise that the things which the bankers are doing are evidences only of the use they are making of their privileges as credit-monopolists: they are not evidences of an increase in their power to retain those privileges. That power fundamentally rests on their superior wisdom being unquestioned. From this point of view it can be argued that they have less power now than in, say, 1920, when they brought in their deflation policy—palming its initiation off on the Government. Notice that whereas Sir Austen Chamberlain at the time took the responsibility of announcing that the Government had "set its heart" on a deflationary policy; to-day responsible criticism of that policy is widespread, and is directed, not against Sir Austen, nor the Government, but without a single exception specifically against the Bank of England. Let it be granted that few critics assert that deflation should not have taken place, but they all say that it took place too soon or was administered too drastically—which is only a degree less damaging to the bankers' hitherto reputed omniscience. The public are well on the way to a realisation that high-financial experts can make mistakes. It is because of this appearance of distrust that the bankers have broken their tradition of dignified silence and have been releasing through the press and the B.B.C. a continuous stream of subtle propaganda designed to allay the distrust or at least to prevent its spreading. How well or ill they are succeeding is for our readers to judge from what they see in the press.

Since 1920 the banks have secured further privileges from the Government, the most dramatic of which was the transfer of currency-note issue from the Crown to the Bank of England. But this transfer has not increased the fundamental power of the bankers to resist any interference with their monopoly. What it has done has been to make the challenge more difficult to deliver within the framework of normal political procedure. It can be no protection to them at all if a certain alternative procedure is adopted. The position is that under normal procedure a proposal to reverse the transfer would, being one of major magnitude, have to be submitted to the electorate. Left to themselves the majority would be indifferent. But they would not be left to themselves. The banks have the press in their pockets and the press has the electorate in its pocket. So in two or three days the whole country would be scared stiff. And even supposing that by some miracle the sponsors of the proposal did get back as the Government. It is nearly certain that the Bill to give effect to the proposal would have to be passed for debate by the same Committee which ruled out Mr. Maxton's Bill to nationalise the Bank of England a year or two ago on the ground that it was legislation against a specific interest and form of property. So that would be the end of that.

Another procedure is necessary. It consists in doing what the banks have always done. They

have acted first and talked afterwards—when they have talked at all. We can drop the subject of the currency note and deal with the exercise of the State's control of national credit. Basing its policy on the new economic principles it would have got a scheme ready for attacking two urgent practical problems, which may be described as follows:—

- (a) To raise every individual clear of the poverty line,
- (b) To raise every business enterprise clear of the bankruptcy line.

The two problems being not only inter-related but having one common cause, the scheme could attack both simultaneously. What is more important still, it could produce instant amelioration of business and personal conditions. For instead of being based on the injunctive principle underlying every remedial scheme hitherto known, namely, "Do your duty now and your relief will come later" (which it did not) it will be based on the opposite principle: "Take this relief now and do your duty in return for it." The State Credit Officer would receive the business manager (there are no individual owners left now) and say something like this:—

"Now; what's your trouble?—What are you making?—How much more can you make?—How much money will you want to make it?—Materials? so much: yes—Labour? so much, yes.—By the way, what is the rate drawn by your lowest-paid employees? Ah, a bit on the low side. Give them ten per cent. more—the whole lot, I mean, or you'll have jealousy. What's that? Oh, never mind its raising the cost. Let me see; you sell to another manufacturer and not to the public, don't you? Well, you won't drive him to any of your competitors; their wage bills will be raised the same as yours. And now what profit would you call fair and reasonable in your trade? A bit more than you have been getting? Quite so: well, it's for you to say. So that's that. I'll make out an order for you to draw on State up to that amount as you require it, and the loan is to be liquidated as and when you receive payments from your customer. We shan't drop down on you before you've sold the goods. All you do in the meantime is to prove your commitments, and draw the money to meet them. The goods will be wanted all right—enough of them to keep you and your competitors hard at it with your existing plant. And as we shall be financing your customers on the same principle as yourself, your market is assured and your payment certain."

Here is embodied a business proposition instead of a political wangle. There is nothing to consult the electorate about beforehand. You might just as well ask them to say yes or no to a breakfast. A dividend or a wage—every Liberal, every Conservative, every Socialist, every Communist, wants one or the other or both. When once it is proved technically feasible to give it to them, a foundation for a united policy has been provided. And it would best be initiated by a Dictatorship empowered to deal in any way it chose with people who attempted to frustrate its objective.

"M. Bergery, speaking for the Socialist-Radicals, said that the powers of the international Bank should have been more strictly limited. They were left with the alternatives of the Treaty of Versailles or control by international finance. At this point a man in the public gallery threw into the Chamber a handful of pamphlets, which the ushers collected and handed round. M. Paul Reynaud, the Minister of Finance, who severely criticised the Young Plan when it was drawn up, replied to the debate. The Plan, he said, represented a moral victory for France, since it gave priority to reparation payments. The debate was adjourned until to-morrow."—Debate in the French Chamber. *The Times*, March 29.

Current Political Economy.

The German Graf Zeppelin which flew over London on Saturday,

"excited only enough interest"

while over the ninety thousand crowd at the Cup-final to make Mr. Hannan Swaffer

"wonder why rather more people were waving their programmes than had been the case a minute before."

When it passed over Fleet Street Mr. James Douglas, Mr. Swaffer's Commander-in-Chief, was sitting in his office in Shoe Lane. Whatever he was doing it cannot have been so interesting as the Cup-final. Mr. Douglas

"suddenly caught (his) unconscious nerves growing tense, tight, and taut."

"He shuddered without knowing why he was shuddering. Horror took hold of him, nameless horror, which gave him gooseflesh" (the words up to now are Mr. Douglas's choice), and war-fever, ill-temper, and an urge to rip graves open to the extent of about half a page of the *Sunday Express*. Mr. Douglas was not expecting the Zeppelin, although he is a newspaper editor and therefore knows all the news. It came upon him as a surprise, and he wrote his feelings down spontaneously under the thrill of the experience. When he knew it was the Zeppelin he "panted up the stone stairs in a stampede of compositors, typists, and office-boys. Gasping . . ."

Being entirely unprepared for the coming of the Zeppelin, Mr. Douglas was emotionally off his guard. In italic, he says:—

"the first Zeppelin over London since the war fanned the cold ashes of memory into a flame of rebellious resentment. The war emotions surged up. I bristled with the old anger. A man beside me muttered, 'A fine show, but I was better pleased when I saw the Zepp at Potters Bar falling in a golden rain of flames.'"

Since this last is the style in which men mutter when they are beside Mr. James Douglas, no wonder what goes before is the style Mr. Douglas writes when beside himself. Note the colloquial touch of "Zepp" in the man's remark; and the unmistakable phraseology of the mutter, as the Higher Critics might say, in

"falling in a golden rain of flames."

While the Zeppelin passed over Fleet Street Mr. Douglas seems to have had that awful experience of seeing all his past life filmed in front of his eyes, as people in crises are said to do. He even recalled the night when he dined with Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson in Kitchener's rooms, that Sir William sat in Kitchener's chair, and that Mr. Douglas smoked Sir William's cigars. Dr. Eckener, the commander of the Zeppelin, is interested in aeronautics. He even holds that there should be no international rivalry. But Mr. Douglas, after digging up all his memories of London under bombs, says again in italic:—

"The experts have no war memories. But London does not forget."

He makes this statement shortly after writing that "the present generation cannot visualise . . . Piccadilly Circus as I saw it . . ." etc., but the muddle is good enough for Mr. Douglas. After all, he is engaged only in journalism, not responsible writing.

Elsewhere in the same *Sunday Express* Mr. James Douglas, for another third of a page, calls on the public to "refresh its mind with the poetry of nature." That does not seem bad advice, but as it comes from Mr. James Douglas one can be reasonably certain beforehand that it is cant.

When it is coupled with an injunction to "Shun foreign casinos," one knows that it is cant; that Mr. Douglas is writing up a British jingo sentiment in his characteristic cant style. The reason why he was caught unawares by the Zeppelin may be gathered from this article. Mr. Douglas had spent Easter

"steeped in the silences and solitudes of the Welsh mountains and vales and lakes and rivers . . . drank deep draughts . . . pure snow-cold mountain air . . . refreshed . . . poetry . . . air and sea and sky and the green earth."

No wonder he was seized with goose-flesh at the noise of the unadvertised, secretly spying Zeppelin.

"I came back to London a new being, with a new store of thoughts, and a new stock of health, and a fixed determination."

Let us offer up a thanksgiving that the Zeppelin did not fly over Fleet Street just before Mr. James Douglas went to the Welsh mountains. He would surely have seen red, and, possibly have written something he might have regretted. His whole article on his experiences on the Welsh hills forms a perfect commentary on his Zeppelin article.

"The mind should be a picture-gallery for our delight, a mansion for all lovely forms, dwelling-place for all sweet sounds and harmonies. In moods of dejection we can re-create joy by thinking back to life images of beauty and quiet and peace."

In this sort of writing Mr. James Douglas describes his impressions of Tintern Abbey and other things . . . "shadowy light . . . hallowed mystery . . . radiant vision . . . ghostly unreality . . . exhalations and revelations of spiritual wonder . . . brooding adoration . . . annal-steeped loveliness . . . serenity and sweetness and peace . . . the uncrowded solitudes . . . apple pies and cherry jam."

Possibly Mr. James Douglas was actually writing this poetic reminiscence, absorbed by it, as the Zeppelin came upon him and inspired him with another article.

Both articles are cant. Neither is the spontaneous response of emotion to experience. Neither has anything to do with literature. Both are political. Mr. James Douglas has consistently pursued a policy of fooling the emotions of the people. From Lesbianism to murder-cases, Mr. Douglas has stirred up and muddled pools that others were trying to cleanse; and always in the name of morality or humanity. The Graf Zeppelin reminded one of the war about as strongly as the English airship did when that was over London; that is to say, it recalled episodes but next to no emotion. If the effect on the staff of the *Sunday Express* had been as Mr. Douglas described it, God save the people from their teachers. The Zeppelin commander was here as a guest. Everybody knew he was coming. Mr. Douglas knew. If the teachers of the victors cannot or will not recall the war without becoming hot all over, and wanting to start it again, what can be expected of the teachers of the vanquished? Much use for earnest men to think out the material causes of war in the hope that intelligence may prevent further wars, if Puritans out to shock their flock at any price, from behind the screen of morality, put themselves into the right state of mind for the generation of cant war-fever about past wars.

BEN WILSON.

AN OLD GARDEN.

To the garden, old trees
Fling dark-scented memories.
This house is much too newly built for dreams,
But here, in this old garden,
The grass remembers feet that passed long, long ago,
Young lips that kissed among the flowers.
A Juliet and her Romeo?

HERBERT BLUEN.

"The New Age" and the Press.

Owing to the fall of Easter, last week's number of THE NEW AGE had to be made up only three days after the number for the previous week. Hence there was no time to see whether the interruption in our usual weekly commentary had aroused any interest in any other papers than the *Daily Express*.

We reproduce below all the references that we have seen since. They are very few in number, but that is nothing to be surprised at. For the publication of the suspended matter was bound to result in an anti-climax. It was, as everybody who has since examined it will agree, a reasoned argument against Mr. Garvin's suggestion that this country should give military hostages to another country which happens to be its most serious commercial rival. His judgment was impugned, but his character was not attacked. Altogether it was a tame ending to what the *Daily Express* had made to appear a thrilling story.

It is a humorous situation. Here we have the writer of "The Londoner's Diary" in the *Evening Standard* saying that it was inexplicable how anyone should want to attack Mr. Garvin, and testifying to the universal respect and admiration in which he is held in journalism. Now, one would have expected that, this being so, they would have made it their business to check back the version of the affair published so conspicuously in the *Daily Express*, because its account undoubtedly left Mr. Garvin under the imputation of having procured the suppression of our comments. There were two alternative courses open to Mr. Garvin's loyal friends. The first was to examine what we said and to show, if they felt able to, that Mr. Garvin was justified in doing that which was imputed to him. The second was this: that having found nothing in what we said which could justify what was imputed, they could have asked Mr. Garvin if the imputation was in fact true. We cannot suppose that they neglected to make both investigations. But they have not made any public comment on the result. By their silence they have let their esteemed colleague down, because as a matter of fact (a fact which they must be aware of) Mr. Garvin's attitude with regard to the publication of the expunged Notes was impersonal. He was asked what he thought about the advisability of publication, and his answer can be faithfully embodied in the sentence: "I don't mind for myself; but am doubtful as to the consequences." This clears Mr. Garvin's reputation as a fair-dealing journalist; and it is a curious circumstance that it should be left to the journal which "attacked" him to defend his character. We cannot congratulate him on his admirers.

Returning to the question of Press comments, the report in *The Times* is the one that really matters. It is as full and fair an account of what happened as was possible at the time of publication. It corrected the distortion caused by the *Daily Express's* premature version by reproducing the extract from Mr. Garvin's speech which was the subject of our criticism. Moreover, the report was excellently placed, occupying a position in a column next to an account of the Naval Conference. In face of this the silence of the rest of the Press matters very little.

We wrote to the *Daily Express* as follows:—
Sir,—

Will you be so good as to let me correct an error in your account on the 17th inst. of the excision of a certain amount of editorial comment from

the issue of THE NEW AGE of the same date? The statement was made that this journal is Socialist. Never in this world. Its political philosophy is best described as Old Tory—in the tradition of Dr. Johnson.

ARTHUR BRENTON,
Editor.

This is what appeared on April 21. It was published at the bottom of a centre column on a miscellaneous page:—

"THE NEW AGE"—OLD TORY.

Mr. Arthur Brenton, editor of THE NEW AGE, writes to the *Daily Express* that his journal is not Socialist in its opinions. "Its political philosophy," he states, "is best described as Old Tory—in the tradition of Dr. Johnson."

So one inch on page 10 is to serve as an effective correction of a misstatement appearing in half a column on page 1. However, we suppose it makes very little difference so far as readers of the *Daily Express* are concerned. To them probably Old Tories and Young Socialists are members of the same breed of queer animals.

The Press extracts first mentioned are as follows:—

"The nature of the attack made on Mr. J. L. Garvin which has resulted in a certain Socialist paper coming out with two blank pages remains unknown. I presume it was personal, but I am at a loss to know what Mr. Garvin can have done to provoke it. As the *doyen* of English political journalists and as a writer who states his views with equal force and candour, he is in a position which invites attack, but I have not encountered any journalist who has anything but respect both for his abilities and his personal qualities. All Fleet-street will regard this attack with astonishment and disapproval. On a few occasions Mr. Garvin has been the recipient of ill-tempered onslaughts, but he has always known how to comport himself with dignity and restraint."—*Evening Standard*, "Londoner's Diary," April 17.

"THE NEW AGE appeared on Thursday with two pages almost blank. The paper, which is published by the proprietor, Mr. Arthur Brenton, is printed by the Argus Press, Limited. A paragraph in heavy type says: 'The Argus Press decline to take the responsibility of printing the remainder of this week's notes. We shall communicate to our readers the text of the expunged matter in a supplement to the next issue of THE NEW AGE.' Mr. Brenton told a Press representative that the expunged matter was a criticism of Mr. J. L. Garvin's attitude towards the United States. It is a comment on a speech in which Mr. Garvin is quoted as saying: 'I advocate, and hope to live to see, the putting at the disposal of the American Fleet of every British naval base throughout the world, upon the most reasonable and practicable terms that can be established between our two countries. Not rivals of the sea are we, but joint guardians and trustees for ever.' The Argus Press are also the printers of the 'Observer,' edited by Mr. Garvin. At the offices of THE NEW AGE, it was stated that the printers informed them on Monday afternoon that they did not feel inclined to publish the article attacking Mr. Garvin. 'With our consent proofs of the notes were sent by messenger to Mr. Garvin,' said Mr. Brenton, 'and, as you see, the paper was published without this article.' A representative of the Argus Press said: 'We exercised our rights. We did not approve of the matter and we refused to publish it.'—*Times*, April 19, 1930.

"Sir,—You allude to THE NEW AGE as a Socialist paper. You will naturally wish to have this view put right when you remember that the paper alluded to is the very anti-thesis of Socialistic since it is the primary organ of the Major Douglas Credit Reform movement, a movement which is, as you know, based on the Constitutional Law of Equity, a law which connotes maximum liberty of the subject.—J. GOLDBER, M.I.Mech.E., M.Inst. Fuel."—*Evening Standard*, April 24.

"THE NEW AGE caters for everybody. Last week it came out with two blank pages—for the benefit of those who have not learnt to read."—*Reynolds*, April 20.

Music.

B.B.C. Mahler Eighth Symphony: Queen's Hall, April 15.

This great and glorious work, the summit and crowning achievement of Mahler's life work, received its first English performance—after nearly twenty years' existence—on this occasion. In spite of an indifferent and completely uninspired performance, the burning exalted spirit of the music—the work of a very great and ardent musical soul—made the occasion one of the great experiences of a lifetime. No work since the B minor Mass has more wonderfully, nor with greater loftiness, nobility, and such all-consuming passionate sincerity, expressed the Catholic spirit. And from the magnificent setting of the great Latin Church hymn, *Veni creator spiritus*, which works its way through a majestic double fugue to a sublime climax through the amazing richness and diversity of the truly inspired sentiment of the closing scene of Goethe's "second" Faust, the *one-wholeness* of the work, its supreme structural conviction, its undeviating progress to the ineffable grandeur and nobility of the mighty final choruses, the work is one of the authentic marvels and glories of all music of all time. One must, of course, be grateful for even one very imperfect opportunity of hearing this grand work, but that cannot prevent one's chagrin and disappointment at hearing it treated on the part of all concerned with complete lack of understanding, total lack of sympathy, and, on the part of the soloists, sheer incompetence, into the bargain. Our singers, our "vocalists," as they call themselves, it seems, have always something worse, some more shocking exhibition in store, than anything they have yet committed. To begin with, scarcely one of the soloists could technically cope at all with the great sweep of Mahler's superb vocal lines, and in default of being able to feel, let alone express, the pure exalted and passionately devotional and religious (in the finest sense) feeling of the music most of them had recourse to a revolting, sanctimonious sentimentality that was very horrible.

And what of the attitude of the Press to this great occasion? I should think any English musician, serious minded, intelligent, and with any feeling for the musical honour of this country, must be profoundly ashamed and humiliated at the exhibition of malignant stupidity, impudent *parti pris* and unscrupulous pettiness for which it has been made the excuse. The usual old tags apropos the alleged "weakness" of Mahler's themes pop up with rejuvenated vigour once again, of course. No allowance of course is made—indeed it is doubtful if people capable of such remarks are even aware of the extent to which clumsy or unsympathetic handling can disfigure and make trivial the greatest and sublimest things under the sun. . . . cf. the loathsome crawling foulness of "When Buddha Smiles" (the title of a jazz-piece). And even allowing for a moment that the work *did* suffer this disfigurement, what of the *Leonora III.* overture which went before it, which sounded the flimsiest, emptiest of trumpets? I have just been discussing this matter of Mahler's themes with one of the greatest of contemporary creative musicians, a man of vast knowledge and a critic of unparalleled subtlety and insight, and he pointed out that no one comments on the truly wretched, miserable and utterly *chétif* character of Beethoven's themes in, for instance, the fifth Symphony—and incidentally in many other places—wretched little fragments that are hammered and banged at with an implacable persistence that stuns people into acceptance of them, and which is not surpassed until we come to Stravinsky. Had Mahler, for instance, dared to perpetrate a theme like the initial one of the fifth Symphony, or of the empty, pert triviality of those of

the *Leonora* overtures, and manufactured whole movements out of them, he might have deserved what is said of him; but, of course, Beethoven having died a hundred or so years ago is sacrosanct: Mahler, whose work is unknown except to a few, is game for any wretched scribbling hack who has ink to sling at his betters. And what possible value or weight can be conceded to opinions of people, not one in ten of whom had probably ever heard the work before, and had almost certainly never studied a score of it? And what of the unmitigated impudence, the presumption that dares profess any opinion at all of a work of this size and intricacy after one hearing only and with no previous knowledge? Only in our charlantry-ridden musical life is such a state of affairs possible.

The B.B.C. would earn the very great and deep gratitude of those few of us who *know* and love our Mahler—as Mr. Ernest Newman well pointed out, we may not be a very large crowd but we are a remarkably distinguished one—and may be presumed to have forgotten more about Mahler than those who have been treating us to their opinions as they are pleased to call them, will ever know—if they would do the work again with singers who can sing and have the great generous voices the broad lines of the music demand—voices like those of Florence Austral and Eva Turner, for instance, for the two soprano parts. They might also leave the work in Goethe's own incomparable and glorious poetry instead of inflicting on us an English "version" (1) the sort of thing a translating and typewriting office supplies.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

Drama.

Down Our Street: Vaudeville.

As a Stepney schoolboy, born and bred, Mr. Ernest George was one of the lads. To be a lad in Stepney one has to have a quickness of perception and movement which would make a fortune in another class of society. With these qualities prominent, as the phrenologists say, if Mr. George had preserved his childhood's devilry he would have become a dramatist of genius. "Down Our Street" is an uncommonly live play, and where it falls below the best the cause is that the author, behaving as Christian first and dramatist only afterwards, elected to think the best of human nature for the sake of the worst of mankind, known in the theatre as the public. In aliveness, character drawing, and oratory, the play comes close to a Cockney "Juno and the Paycock." It has the same faults as well as the same qualities, but it lacks one major quality which O'Casey's work invariably possesses. Both plays have the flavour of the music-hall at its best; and in both the music-hall is overdone in the second act. In the second act of "Down Our Street" Bill Collins, who corresponds to Cap'n Jack Boyle in "Juno," walks about his barber's shop airing his grievances with the shaving-brush as baton until not even Fred Anning, for all his docility, could have stayed in the chair.

This does not, of course, move the play forward, but Mr. George, instead of starting it in motion in the first act, had given a magnificent music-hall picture of an Italian café in the East End. Portraiture, acting, setting, were perfect; the whole cast enjoying, with the zest of a boy sucking a lemon in public, this opportunity of mimicking people who give a show at every moment of their lives, and for whom good manners do not require the inbreeding of emotions down to Pekingese magnitude. The café proprietor, excessively good-humored, with a cheerful word for everybody, and a fear of disorder, based on experience, that made him ready, at the first sign of it, to hustle the trouble-maker out; the flashy Jewess

who let the world know how much she despised it because a boy had thrown her over; her pal, who realised that both would be more sensible to parade for a couple of new boys; the resigned husband and wife taking a cup of tea "in peace" (which means that if either speaks the other flings an accusation of nagging) on the way home from shopping for a funeral; the bookie's tout and the ne'er-do-well who played out of their turns at dominoes; the proprietor's nephew, Pietro, just over from Italy, who knows little English, but has realised that a smile is the secret of business; one may not meet all of them at the café on the same evening, but they are all true, and together make good theatre. The call by a tram-conductor for a can of tea—brilliantly performed by Mr. Ronald A. Shiner—warmed every Cockney heart.

Why did not Mr. George collect these people again in Bill Collins's barber's shop? And collect them again—or some of them—in a pub or a club? No plot or story is necessary to such a dramatic collection as this. But Mr. George dare not do without a story, that of the barber's "modern" daughter, who, misunderstood by her old-fashioned parents, kept herself chaste, independent, and self-reliant, even after running away and taking shelter under the roof of a girl who had fallen from goodness. To this story all the first act had contributed was that Charlie Stubbs, who was sweet on her, had been in prison; that he might be a thief; and that he had certainly a bad reputation if not a bad character. So the play had to begin again for the sake of the story, for which also Mr. George developed the major fault that sets up the barrier between his play and work of genius. That Charlie Stubbs was innocent and straight—I do not yet know how he came by the fur-coat honestly—and that Belle returned from the West End a virgin, diminished the tragedy of Mrs. Collins—the Juno of the play—and allowed the audience to go home feeling that all was well with the East End. To accomplish this Mr. George had to steer his play against wind, tide, and fate, into a harbour to which it was not destined. When O'Casey had awakened us about the slum-folk of Dublin he kept us awake; Mr. George awakens us to the reality of the East End—and puts up a screen of conventional romance that we may go to sleep again. Mr. George could, if he would, create the unsentimental comi-tragedy of the East End.

Small parts and large ones are well done. Mr. Morris Harvey as Bill Collins and Miss Nancy Price as the Juno are seen at their best in the last act before Belle returns, in two magnificent dramatic character-studies. These and Mr. Rosmer's Sam, the tipster-bookie's-agent, Mr. Nan Brandt's Charlie Stubbs, and Miss Maisie Darrell's Belle—which also rose to greatness in the third act before she confessed her virtue—provoke regret that London has no equivalent of the Abbey Theatre as a home for such plays. Mr. Milton Rosmer's production and Mr. Aubrey Hammond's three settings—the café, the barber's shop, and the barber's living-room—are first-class work that honours the theatre.

Debonair: Lyric.

Mr. Frank Vosper has collaborated with Miss G. B. Stern in dramatising the latter's novel, "Debonair." The play would have been obviously recognisable as a dramatisation of a novel if this information had been withheld. It does all the things which are appropriate to the novel form and inappropriate to the drama. In Scene I. Loveday Trevelyan arrives at her mother's home in Porto Rinaldo, destroys her passport, looks haggard, and finally sits at her mother's feet to tell her story and thus create the precedent of intimacy between mother and daughter. The curtain then

rises on Charles Elvaston's rooms in Gray's Inn, where part of the story is enacted. The next scene is a hotel in Budapest, where more of the story is shown; then back to Gray's Inn, and again to Porto Rinaldo to hear the end of the story. This is not the end of the play, however; which continues for two scenes at a villa at Lagnello. In the course of this Grand Tour characters come to the surface, are seen for a minute or two, and then disappear into the mist. This kind of panorama is life, and it is the novel; but it is not drama, and it can have neither the form nor the clarity in theatre-setting that it can have in a novel. In a novel one accompanies a certain person or persons; if one digresses from them it is to return to them; their fate is the warp on which the changing patterns are woven. Nearly all the justifiable censure of Shakespeare's plots has consisted in pointing out—without observing the fact—features proper to novels rather than to drama. Drama may no more be a slice of life than a novel is a length of life, but there is something in the distinction. The novel is character extended; drama is character under pressure. In this instance the authors find great difficulty in escaping from the narrative form even on the stage. Not only does Loveday begin a story as the first scene. Much of the second is a story about Loveday told by Elvaston to his mother. In this scene also Elvaston actually reads aloud a description of his mother's character. At Judith Maitland's villa characters who appear for the first time converse about matters entirely irrelevant to the play, as well as bring Loveday's affairs up to date behind her back.

Mixed with irritating foreign matter and this doubling backwards and forwards in time and all over Europe are both good scenes and good portraiture. The middle-scenes, in which dramatisation has been accomplished, particularly the scene in the Budapest hotel, are excellent. On the strength of these and of Miss Celia Johnson's magnificent performance as Loveday Trevelyan the play may be trimmable into a success. The authors appear to hesitate between the truth about Loveday Trevelyan and trying to save her soul, and at the end they test credulity beyond measure by saving her soul. Her trade is providing wealthy men with kittenish liveliness, naiveté, and anticipations of possession, in return for money, clothes, and presents. If the men grow insistent that anticipation should become realisation and gratification, to quote the old advertisement, she exercises her speciality, which is running away. She ran away from any job she got because she would not exert herself to do it properly, and preferred payment in advance. When she turned up at her mother's house at the tail of a telegram she had been running away every day or two for a year. The briefest expression of her character is in the fact that to leave her Budapest job, and escape the dancing-partner employer—who had given her presents of fabulous cost—this female pimp borrowed money without intent to repay it from a Budapest prostitute. As she is the type Continental woman regarded as representative of English modern women it is understandable why woman-beating was anciently encouraged by English law, and regrettable that it has declined. The single principle of her career is that all men are mugs, some of whom have money; and that woman, being woman, may part the fools and the money with impunity. It is amazing that any other character consented to stay in the play with her, the only possible explanation being Miss Johnson's acting, which reminded me of Chesterton's remark that a Borgia may not have been more moral than a London clerk, but he was certainly more alive. Miss Johnson exposed her immorality shamelessly, with almost indecent delight in her own vitality.

While the authors were trying to tire Loveday Trevelyan of "all this sort of life," and fit her wearied spirit into domesticity as Elvaston's wife, the actress was defying them, converting a hateful, despicable character into a fine aesthetic phenomenon, and making it clear why men wanted her if not why they let her run away at crucial moments. Other excellent performances were given by Miss Mary Jerrold as Mrs. Trevelyan (some of her lines should be cut, since repetitions are not required to keep drama on the rails). Miss Kate Cutler is the tolerant modern with a sleeping Medea inside her, and Doris Fordred as "Pinkie," the Budapest lady of fortune, and May Hallat as Myrtle Hardy, a guest at the Lagnello villa. The men's parts were also well acted, but none stands out since women dramatists simply do not portray men so that they may recognise themselves. In women's plays men are mere tailor's dummies. Possibly these creatures, passionless, spineless, and will-less, are as truthfully presented as those of women; if they are it ought to shock men that such results are all the product of so many years' effort to create an impression.

PAUL BANKS.

Treatment of Tuberculosis.

Umckaloabo is not a fancy name for a secret nostrum, but is the local name of a certain root which grows in the Transvaal. Dr. Sechehaye's book* is a careful and lucid exposition of the properties of this root, and contains numerous accounts of its effect on sufferers from tuberculosis. Although the author's experimental knowledge is published primarily for the benefit of the medical profession, it is expressed with the minimum of technical terms and can be easily understood by the lay reader. Strange as it may sound, I really enjoyed reading the book. I should not have felt that I had wasted my time even if the author had completely failed to sustain his proposition that Umckaloabo is an "efficacious remedy against tuberculosis." For it is much more than a plea for serious investigation of the claim advanced; it throws strong sidelights on the manner in which the medical profession receives such claims, and exposes the unscientific nature of the grounds on which they are so frequently rejected. I must also ascribe a good deal of my enjoyment to the admirable translation done by Miss Grant. I doubt whether anybody would have suspected that the book had been written originally in French.

The history of the discovery of Umckaloabo is briefly told. Major C. H. Stevens, in Birmingham in 1897, felt ill. He consulted Dr. Taplin, who found a serious lesion of the left lung-apex, and said to him: "My boy, you are in for it." Mr. Stevens took his advice to go out to South Africa. In the same year, at Bloemfontein, he met a Boer who told him of a witch-doctor, Mike Kijitse, who said he knew a remedy for lung disease. So the patient went to Kijitse's village, near Maseru, on the Basuto-land border. The witch-doctor treated him by crushing roots between stones, boiling them, and administering the liquor. In three months Mr. Stevens had ceased to cough or expectorate. He left for Cape Town with a stock of the roots. Soon after he went back to England and again saw Dr. Taplin who, finding only a little dullness in the left apex, declared him cured, "at the same time laughing at the supposed efficacy of the nigger treatment."

In 1905 *Truth* got up an investigation on the question. It elicited opinions from ten doctors who had experimented with the remedy, and ultimately

* The Treatment of Tuberculosis with Umckaloabo. By Dr. Adrien Sechehaye, Doctor of Medicine of the University of Geneva. Translated from the French by Miss A. H. Grant, Geneva. Published by B. Fraser and Co., 62, Pepys Road, S.W.20. 162 pp. 5s. net.

stated as its conclusion that Umckaloabo is very useful in coughs and in certain cases of tuberculosis even in an advanced stage. Later on *Truth* turned against Mr. Stevens, reproaching him for publishing the laudatory sections of its report and omitting to quote the others. It held that he had no justification for claiming the remedy to be a complete cure.

In 1910 the British Medical Association published its celebrated book, *Secret Remedies: What They Cost and What They Contain*. In that book Mr. Stevens was expressly attacked as a quack trying to make money under false pretences. It said, among other things:

"The farce of revealing a formula by the employment of such fancy names as those given by Mr. Stevens is one of the oldest dodges of the quack medicine-man, and no such names as Umckaloabo or Chijitse appear in any available work of reference on pharmacy."

Mr. Stevens brought a libel action against the B.M.A. which took place between October 22 and November 1, 1912, in London. The jury disagreed, and a second trial took place from July 15 to 23, 1914. The jury found that the words used against Mr. Stevens were not libellous, and were a fair comment on matters of public interest. The evidence and arguments at the two trials are reviewed and discussed by Dr. Sechehaye to the extent of twenty-eight pages of his book.

The anonymous expert who wrote the book, *Secret Remedies*, had stated that Mr. Stevens's remedy, upon analysis, was constituted as follows:

"Rectified Spirits of Wine, 23.7 parts by measure, Glycerine, 1.8 parts by measure. Decoction of *Krameria* (1 in 3) to 100 parts by measure, or else it may be made with tincture of *Krameria*. The estimated cost for 2½ fluid oz., 1½d." (*Secret Remedies*, p. 32.)

Mr. Stevens brought witnesses to disprove that Umckaloabo was *Krameria*. Mr. E. M. Holmes, a botanist and former Professor of *Materia Medica*, declared that the two roots were absolutely distinct in physical characteristics and under microscopic examination. In fact, he had never seen any roots like Mr. Stevens's before. Another witness, Professor Hehner, handed the Judge a table showing no fewer than thirteen chemical reactions every one of which differentiated Umckaloabo from *Krameria*. Mr. Frank Harrison, who had made the analysis for *Secret Remedies* said in cross-examination that he had found a tannin in Mr. Stevens's mixture identical with that of *Krameria*, but could not designate with certainty the plant from which this tannin came. (*B.M.J.*, p. 1254.) He added that in analysing the incriminated mixture he had found no alkaloid, and had proved there was none. (*B.M.J.*, 1254.) "That," he declared, "did away with the *prima facie* suggestions that there was something there which would do good." (*The Times*, October 30, 1912.) Commenting on this Dr. Sechehaye says:

"But one . . . must protest with energy against this way of drawing conclusions by juggling with the most elementary principles of any scientific method, and in contempt of simple good sense. Indeed, here is a liquid in which various chemists have ascertained that, besides alcohol, glycerine and tannin, there is a residuum from which it is impossible to extract or in which to identify any known substance; all that can be said is that it contains no alkaloid. The chemist of the B.M.A. hastens to conclude therefrom that, since these unknown substances are not catalogued, and are not within the limits of his erudition, they can have no activity whatever; hence the conclusion at which he must arrive at any cost, that Mr. Stevens's remedy is inefficacious . . . *Quod erat demonstrandum!*"

Several pages of the book are occupied by citations of the names and testimonies of medical men who told the Court that they had tried Mr. Stevens's remedy and had found it efficacious. Thus, Dr. E. F. Grün, the author of a book on the treatment of consumption, by the Koch method, which he

wrote after having studied Koch's work on the spot in Germany, specially mentioned three serious lung cases in which unhelped-for cures followed the administration of the remedy. Dr. Th. M. Martin testified that, having had all the symptoms of bronchial and catarrhal tuberculosis, and having been obliged to give up his practice on account of his deplorable state of health, he tried the remedy. The symptoms disappeared, and he was able to resume his practice. He concluded that it was the "best internal remedy he had ever come across for persons suffering from lung disease." (*B.M.J.*, p. 1251; *Med-Evid.*, pp. 72-4.)

The B.M.A. brought evidence to suggest that these results were misleading. Dr. Bulloch, Professor of Pathology at the London University, said that Stevens's liquid, even undiluted, put into contact with cultures of the Koch Bacillus for more than forty-eight hours, did not prevent their development; after six days the K.B. were still alive; therefore this liquid is neither an antiseptic nor a germicide; he added very rightly that he did not know what chemical action this drug may have when mixed with human blood. (*B.M.J.*, pp. 212 and 213.) The author proceeds:

"On the other hand, the defenders of the B.M.A., and after them the Judge in the summing up of the case, did not fail to draw the following conclusions from these negative results: the liquid is not a germicide, therefore it can have no effect on K.B. in a diseased organism, therefore it is perfectly useless. (*B.M.J.*, 1914, pp. 271 and 272; also 1912, p. 1253.) This sophisticated reasoning cannot bear a moment's impartial examination; in reality it does not even take into account the elementary distinction between a reaction *in vitro* and a reaction *in vivo*, as Dr. Grün remarked later on. (*B.M.J.*, 1914, p. 213.)"

This means that you cannot argue that a reaction which takes place in a test tube will be the same when it takes place in a living body. Dr. Secheyay gives five examples of this truth. I will quote one:

"On this subject let us quote Professor Levaditi's experiment (*Annales de l'Institut Pasteur*, 1909, p. 604 and following; 1924, p. 179 and following): Spirilli, trypanosomes, trepomena, killed *in vivo* by atoxyl and other arsenical products of the same series, remain alive and kicking in a solution of these substances, but if a trace of extract of liver be added *in vitro* they are stiffened and destroyed."

The author comments on this and the other examples.

"Here are facts which demonstrate, with all desirable clearness, how organic tissues, with the help of 'substances transformatrices' can provoke the latent microbicidal action of a product which is inert *in vitro*."

There was an amusing interlude when Mr. Stevens, during the trial, produced a file of thirty witnesses as former cases of pulmonary or surgical tuberculosis, all of whom said that they were cured by a course of Umckaloabo.

"After having listened to some of them, a juror cried: 'Are we compelled to sit here for a year to hear these witnesses?'"

"The Judge: 'We cannot refuse to hear any evidence which may be relevant.'"

"Mr. Stevens: 'I could go on calling witnesses for a month, but will try and conclude it to-morrow evening.'" (*B.M.J.*, p. 215.)

This is rich. The jury sit patiently through hours of testimony from specialists who say: "We have analysed this remedy and cannot find any curative property in it"; but begin to fidget directly witnesses come along to say: "We tried this remedy, and are cured." Such an attitude is symptomatic of hypnosis. This juror had evidently made up his mind that either the cured patients never had consumption, or, if they had, something other than the Stevens remedy had cured them—exactly the attitude of the orthodox experts themselves. In fact, one expert, Dr. T. D. Ackland, commenting on the recovery of a patient treated with the remedy by Dr. Grün, declared that the

remedy had "nothing to do with it." He explained that constant expectoration by a consumptive patient might scoop out the whole lobe of a lung, and the clearing out of the cavity by this means might itself lead to the healing of the patient. (*B.M.J.*, p. 1255.) Dr. Secheyay's comment is this:

"That coughing plays a useful part, by eliminating numerous bacilli, is undeniable . . . but that a patient should heal his caverns by dint of spitting, is anything but ordinary, unfortunately! If such were the case, the cough of consumptives would have to be provoked and encouraged."

I must compress my account of the rest of the book by quoting the section-headings. Chapter II. is devoted to "Pharmacology, experimental researches, manner of use." Chapter III. "Clinical observations." Chapter IV. "General considerations, specific nature, conclusions." JOHN GRIMM.

The Screen Play.

Journey's End: Tivoli.

I have not had the advantage of seeing Mr. Sherriff's play on the stage, but since one is assured that the film version is a faithful transcript, I feel no sense of deprivation. For if the film is no film, but merely a photo-play, the drama on which it is based appears to me thoroughly bad, and clogged with false sentimentality, just as one might expect of a great popular success. Both "Tunnel Trench" and "Suspense" strike me as immensely superior; "Journey's End" is an emasculated conception of war as seen through the eyes of a sentimental public school boy who believes vaguely in "playing the game," even if he has only the haziest idea as to what the game actually is. Frankly, such presentation of one of the great tragedies of history nauseates me.

All that would not be so bad if James Whale, who produced the original stage version, had made a good film. But he has not. The screen version of "Journey's End" has no element of cinema; it is merely a baldly photographic reproduction of a bad play. Mr. Whale must really learn the essential difference between the technique of the stage and of the screen if he is going to direct any more films, unless he be content to turn out nothing but a series of snapshots. The acting in this production is entirely of the theatre. On his first appearance, Colin Clive succeeds in keying up the atmosphere, but he soon relapses into staginess. The film is, of course, a 100 per cent. talkie, and sound might have been used to far better advantage to suggest the environment of warfare. Mr. Whale might also have selected for his Colonel and General two players who did not speak with an American accent.

Journeys end in soldiers' bleatings.

Free and Easy: Empire.

Not even death is more inevitable than that screen favourites should sooner or later be made to appear in talkies, irrespective of their suitability for this medium. Buster Keaton is one of the few genuine mimes of the screen who, like Chaplin, should not be allowed to speak because the spoken word detracts from instead of adding to the characteristic quality of his art. "Free and Easy" is Mr. Keaton's first talkie, and as a film it is rather better than the average production of its class, while the environment of the film studio has not yet been quite so overdone as that of the back stage. As an advertisement for the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer organisation, the film might, however, have been rather more successful if the publicity note had been a little less obvious.

The salient feature of Buster Keaton's screen personality is that he lives in a world where things happen to him. He influences nothing, but is the sport of a fate which is always on the side of malice, although sometimes allowing him to triumph over

circumstances. Bewilderment and a passive acceptance of whatever befalls are his long suit, and in such rôles gesture and facial play suffice, as they do in the case of Chaplin. Dialogue is here an intrusion, and the speaking Buster Keaton lacks some of the personality of the silent player, although his voice is pleasing and just as one would have expected it to sound. Edward Sedgwick directed, and Anita Page, in a conventional rôle, gives yet another impersonation of Anita Page.

DAVID OCKHAM.

Review.

The Art of Study. By T. H. Pear. (Kegan Paul. 3s. 6d.)

Mr. Pear, the Professor of Psychology at Manchester, having delivered a series of broadcast talks to children on "How to Concentrate" used the notes as a foundation for lectures to students entering the University. These lectures, called "Effective Methods of Study," have been recast as this book, "The Art of Study." At page 24 I nearly put the book down because of the author's casualness:

"Words help us to think; to make matters clear to ourselves. But sometimes words discourage us from thinking. Those denoting political classifications often do so." That is the last of the "political classifications," and the reader can hardly help wondering whether Mr. Pear is talking to him over his head as a child, or down to him as a grown-up. Fortunately, the book improves immensely; and becomes a sort of advice of a pedagogic Polonius to his pupils. For the student who would understand something of method and attitude to study the later chapters are filled with good advice. Indeed, they are too full, and excellent precept follows so rapidly on excellent precept that atmosphere alone is left. Possibly, that is as well, since Mr. Pear's work is done if the student is thereby stimulated to create the method most suitable and economical for himself.

A. N.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

DIVORCE LAW REFORM.

Dear Sir,—As a Catholic I must protest against the remark made by Mr. Eric Montgomery in his article on "Divorce Law Reform." He says, "The Roman Catholic Church forbids divorce on any ground whatsoever, though its wealthier members can usually for a consideration get their marriages set aside as null by means of a papal dispensation."

Mr. Montgomery's enquiries must have been limited to the English daily Press reports on the unnecessary famous "Marlborough Case." In all fairness, does he claim that the Press in question meted out simple justice to the Catholic case?

Would it surprise your contributor to hear that the majority of petitions for declarations of nullity come from people in humble circumstances, and frequently no expenses are incurred by them owing to their poverty? An improvement on English divorce law.

But Mr. Montgomery should not insult Catholics by imputing such mercenary motives to the Prelates forming the Sacred Roman Rota. He cannot be expected to understand the extraordinary respect in which Catholics hold their pastors nor the confidence placed in them by over 400,000,000 people, yet one would imagine that the knowledge that the Church sacrificed England rather than grant one man a divorce would cause him to hesitate to publish such baseless assertion as I have quoted above.

I suggest that Mr. Montgomery should withdraw or give us some proofs for the statement.

W. L. KENNEDY.

THE LAW OF DIVORCE.

Sir,—Mr. Roland Berrill has accused me of indulging in a cheap form of attack upon the Roman Catholic Church when I wrote "The Roman Catholic Church forbids divorce on any ground whatsoever, though its wealthier members can usually for a consideration get their marriages set aside as null by means of a papal dispensation." He considers that the use of the words "for a consideration" amounts to a vulgar gibe and is moreover very ill-informed. Mr. Berrill's remarks lead me to think that the state of his own mind is very ill-informed on this subject. The particular words at which he has taken umbrage were employed by me simply to emphasise for the purpose of my

article the refusal to recognise divorce by a religious body which at the same time has no objection to declaring certain marriages null for numerous reasons. The procedure whereby a nullity decree is obtained from the Court of the Rota is costly enough, and is beyond the poor man's pocket, since, besides the usual fees, it frequently involves the appearance of the parties before the Court at Rome and the payment of a substantial sum to the papal treasury.

I am not concerned with the reasons for which the "Auditores Rotae" will recommend the annulment of a marriage by papal dispensation, since I do not profess to be able to understand them. Mr. Berrill says that they "reveal the Rota as high-handed, capricious, and benevolent, which is what it ought to be." No body which acts in a judicial capacity ought to be either high-handed or capricious—if it is it will certainly betray unjust acts which do not square with benevolence. Such a body should rather endeavour to do what is right between the parties in accordance with the principles by which it affects to be guided in its decisions. The logical ground on which a nullity decree is granted is that the marriage never really existed; in other words, marriage, not being regarded as a sacrament until consummated, may be dissolved if non-consummation be proved. But the Rota would appear to go beyond this in practice, e.g., in the recent case of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough it was held that the marriage was null because the Duchess had not given her consent to it, despite the fact that they had lived together for more than thirty years and had several children.

Although I am not myself a member of the Roman Catholic Church, I view with far too profound a respect the doctrines and organisation of that body to utter a vulgar gibe at its expense. I do not know whether Mr. Berrill is a Roman Catholic. If he is his remarks show that he is a fool—if he is not they show that he is a knave. Like all other religious bodies, the Roman Catholic Church has to find the means whereby its continued existence may be ensured, and keeping this reflection in mind I venture to express the hope that even Mr. Berrill will be able to understand how I came to refer in connection with the divorce question to one of its sources of revenue.

ERIC MONTGOMERY.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. F. S. B.—Thanks for copy of letter sent by you to a newspaper. The points you make would be understood by your fellow students of Social Credit, but are not nearly clear enough to enlighten other people. For the ordinary Press it is necessary to write briefly, to concentrate on one point only if possible, and to make your conclusions as nearly self-evident as you can. A letter of such a character, based on the contents of your tenth and twelfth paragraphs would have had a fair chance of going in. You have tried to say too much at one time.

A. E.—We thank you for your cuttings from *The Advertiser and Times* (Cleckheaton) and *The Cleckheaton and Spensborough Guardian*, both dated April 17, giving accounts of Mr. C. M. Hattersley's series of four lectures on the economic problem at the week-end school held in the Co-operative Hall, Cleckheaton, on April 12 and 13, under the auspices of the Cleckheaton Industrial Co-operative Society, the Spensborough W.E.A., the Spens Valley Trades Council, and the Heavy Woollen District Club and Institute Union. It is encouraging to see that between them these two journals gave nearly five columns to reports of Mr. Hattersley's arguments. We congratulate you and your friends on your initiative in promoting these lectures, and are glad to hear that you expect to be able to assemble a Group in Cleckheaton for the systematic study of Social Credit. Write us if and when it starts: we will gladly announce particulars.

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