

THE NEW ENGLISH WEEKLY

A Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts

Vol. I. No. 12.

Registered at G.P.O. as a Newspaper.

THURSDAY, JULY 7, 1932

SIXPENCE

CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
Notes of the Week	269	The Ballet in England—VI (concluded). By	
Lenin. By J. S. Collis	273	Arnold L. Haskell	283
Facts and Figures. By A. N.	274	A Recent Novel—Faraway. By Storm Jameson	284
Spanish Chronicle. By George Pendle	275	Views and Reviews—Reverent Agnosticism. By	
The Chronicles of Palmerstown.—VII. By		B. C. B.	287
Conclavist	276	Readers and Writers. By R. H. C.	288
The French Legend of Edgar Allan Poe. By		Reviews—	
Randolph Hughes	277	The Tragedy of the Dardanelles	289
Three Poems. By Ruth Pitter	279	Selections from Remy de Gourmont	289
Arab Woman and Child. Charcoal Drawing		The Wisdom of Anatole France	289
by Joan Bell	280	War and Revolution	289
Hippodrome. By E. C. Large	281	In the Beginning	290
The Drama—Continuous Grand Guignol. By		Behind the Electron	290
Paul Banks	282	Current Cant. [A. F. T.]	291
		Letters to the Editor: From C. E. Bechhofer	
		Roberts, Ezra Pound, Ifan Kyrle Fletcher	291

Notes of the Week

When the Bank and Treasury of England are united on a policy there is nothing in the way of publicity they cannot effect; and the spectacle of the shepherding of three million bondholders from 5 to 3½ per cent. on their investment in the dead commands our admiration. Though long overdue the Conversion occurs as a move in a well-thought-out plan, undoubtedly originating in the Bank of England—since the Treasury is reduced to the status of official receiver on behalf of the Bank—the object of which is to revive the gambling spirit of the small investors by driving them from their secure 5 per cent. cover and then tempting them by low money rates into speculative ventures in which, it is pretty certain, the majority of them will lose their all. To ensure that the folds in which they are to be shorn shall be speculative and not gilt-edged,

the Stock Exchange, within an hour or two of the drive, took the precaution of marking up all the gilt-edged stocks in the market. The same public that danced in the street on our return to the Gold Standard because the £ could thereafter look the dollar in the face did everything but dance upon seeing the stocks which it was not intended that they should buy go soaring up. Confidence was returning, the country was saved again, hurrah for Mr. Chamberlain who had done it all between trips to Lausanne. All we had to do was to sit down and wait for the applause of the world which, as those inside were aware, was certain to come since it had been ordered in advance.

* * *

A sober estimate of the prospective effects of the Conversion upon our national situation, however, will compare very unfavourably with the great expectations thus created. The distribution of two

thousand millions of ready money, which is what the Government risks, will in all probability release for fresh spending even in the form of new investments only a negligible fraction of it. In other words, nearly the whole of it, we reckon, will be "left in" to draw in future its $3\frac{1}{2}$ instead of its 5 per cent., leaving an unappreciable margin for the speculation in "new issues" that is hoped for. The cheapness and the abundance of Money in the factories where they make it, is, as by this time even "experts" are aware, of no avail as an inducement to speculative production so long as, in fact, there is no speculation in it whatever, but only the certainty of a total loss. Who, for example, would speculate in production for a market known to be in reduced circumstances, that is to say, poor in purchasing power? Loans at no per cent. at all would quite naturally be declined in such circumstances. And the truth of the matter is that practically all of the markets both at home and abroad are now in that condition, and, what is worse, are daily shrinking still further. The more naive of the wretched remnant of evicted War bondholders may be cajoled into a "flutter" in new issues, but in the absence of a turn of the tide in the quantity not of Money but of the distributed Money called purchasing power, it is perfectly certain that the mass of people will cling like limpets to their gilt-edged securities even if the yield on these, by Conversion, is reduced to 1 per cent. Mr. Chamberlain, indeed, has already given notice that the rest of the Government securities are now marked for a fall. As dividends on ordinary commercial stocks become more and more exiguous and precarious, the security of even 3 or 2 or 1 per cent. on Government stock will be more and more preferred. We suggest to Mr. Chamberlain, in short, that as private business goes from bad to worse, his Conversions may safely become bolder and bolder. Instead of saving a mere 23 millions on the Budget, he could easily multiply the amount by two or three.

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The relief of the Budget by the amount of 23 millions will, again, have none of the effects popularly expected of it. By representing a Budget as the barometer of national welfare, it is easy to persuade the masses that its favourable indication of balance means fair weather, even though it continues to rain cats and dogs. Not a penny, in all probability, will be remitted in the taxation imposed by the forthcoming Budget, and, even if it were, the result for the majority of the relieved taxpayers would be merely the cancellation of part of their present obligations to the Banks. A balanced National Budget, however, is anything but an indication of the prosperity of the nation. Apart from

the sufferings of the actual warfare the nation was never more generally prosperous—in other words, purchasing power was never more widely diffused—than during the years 1914-1919 when the Budget was completely unbalanced. Had the credits then created been, as they should have been, non-repayable to the Banks, there is not the smallest doubt that the prosperity of the war-period might have been extended and enriched during all the subsequent years of peace. It requires a little more thought to grasp than the newspaper-fed public can muster to realise that an issue of Bank-credit, whether to the Government or to private individuals, is already a form of indirect taxation, since it most certainly dilutes and therefore diminishes the purchasing power of the pre-existing quantity of money. To "repay" such issues of credit is therefore to pay it twice over, once as indirect and a second time as direct taxation. We will assume that for the present the suggestion of non-repayable issues of credit to private producers is beyond ordinary imagination. As "Peregrinus" might say, the world is not rotten-ripe for such a cure for its economic sickness. But in the case of a Government exercising nationally indispensable functions, it should be possible to conceive a Budget consisting of indirect taxation exclusively, that is to say, of non-repayable issues of credit. Truly enough, the safeguards against the drowning of the community's purchasing power by floods of Government diluents would have to be strict; but, even with Governments as they are, the effects upon the community would be infinitely preferable to the present safeguard, namely, the obligation laid upon the citizen to pay all Government loans twice over, and with interest.

* * *

It is at last clear what the Government will try to do at Ottawa. Mr. Baldwin has said it. It is to get as far as possible in the direction of Free Trade within the Empire. Without denying the attraction of the ideal carried over from the tradition established by Cobden, we cannot but say that it is no longer within the bounds less of future than even of immediate possibility. It is useless to pretend, as Mr. Baldwin does, that there is room in the Empire for both the manufactures of the Dominions and the manufactures of the Mother Country. There literally is not room for both to-day, in terms of distributed purchasing power, and there will be even less room to-morrow. Why is it so hard for Lot's wife to resist looking back at Sodom and Gomorrah? Thanks to the transportability of machinery and engineers, every adult community to-day is either aspiring to or in possession of the means of relative self-support; and except for complementary trade, the foreign trade of the past has

seen its hey-day and is now inevitably declining. Free trade within the Empire, if it were feasible, would possibly delay the process of economic self-sufficiency for another decade; but only at best to reproduce the conditions of that other Free-trade Empire, the 48 United States of America. But, in the first place, it is not possible since the Dominions are not States but nations; and, in the second place, no power exists either actually or potentially to prevent each of the Dominions aiming at economic self-determination and self-sufficiency. The army of delegates and lobbyists shortly on their way to Canada are bound on a fool's errand. One or two industries may succeed in dividing the Empire between them until the competitive foreigner manages to break their monopoly by dumping; but, if the experiences of our Cotton representatives is any guide, the final result of the negotiations will be a disappointing deadlock. Economic nationalism is not a theory or merely an ideal arising in the study of the political theorist; it is a diagnosis of the direction of inexorable facts. And unless nations can learn to live without taking in each other's washing and turn to doing their own, it is certain that their economic linen will be dirty. The need to export, we repeat, is an artificial need, created by the simple fact that at present no community can purchase its own production. We have only to create and distribute sufficient purchasing power in every community to enable the community to utilise its own productive resources to the full in order to reduce the present fever of foreign competition and avoid the intermittent fits of war.

* * *

At Sheffield recently Mr. Baldwin discovered and drew attention to a "curious phenomenon," namely, that while there had been a rise in the unemployment figures, there had been no corresponding decrease in the volume of industrial production. And he drew from it, astonishingly enough, the right conclusion, namely, that we are producing more with fewer men. There is, of course, nothing "curious," in the sense of novel, in the phenomenon whatever, since the whole aim of mechanical invention is to produce more and more with less and less human labour. The curiosity of the phenomenon is that Mr. Baldwin and the world in general remain unaware both of the fact and of its implications. Mechanical invention, it may be said, is the first effective challenge that Man has made to the curse laid upon Adam that only in the sweat of his brow should he eat bread. By calling upon and harnessing to his own needs the higher powers of the solar energies Man has succeeded in so completely escaping the curse that an almost paradisaical state of leisure for everybody is

well within his reach. What is it that still forbids the once exiled and cursed Adam to return in conscious triumph of conquest to the state from which he once fell? The answer is another Adam, Adam Smith, who, formulating the "laws" of economics *before the machine was invented* (he was a contemporary of Watt), managed to impose upon subsequent generations down to the present the principles of a past age of scarcity. It is improbable that had Adam Smith lived to see the storm that has arisen in Watt's tea-kettle he would not have realised the need to reformulate his economic generalisations. Unlike his successors he was not case-hardened in his own traditions. And it is probable that he would have realised that unless for each additional unit of mechanical productivity society deliberately created a new unit of purchasing power, the gulf between Production and Consumption would continue to widen at precisely the same rate as the progress of mechanical invention. A critical phase has now been reached in this process that began with Watt, and Mankind has now a decision to make of the greatest significance for its future. Is Machinery to be destroyed and the world re-submitted to the curse of the first Adam? Or, in defiance of both Adams, is Man to use Machinery for the very purpose for which he invented it—to save labour and create leisure? That, in simple terms, is the world-theme of our age; and it seems impossible to defer decision, passively or actively, any longer.

* * *

Mussolini's recent dictum that the root of the world's present troubles is political and not economic must have come as a shock to those who for a generation have been divorcing Political Economy into the sterile pair of Politics and Economics. Economics, in the most general sense, applies to the whole system of Production of Goods and Services. We can visualise it as the community in the role of the producer. But Politics, in the same general sense, is concerned not only with the community as producer but with the community as the fulfilment of the needs and hopes of the whole man. There can be no doubt that in the ultimate sense the political aim of every organised society must be to provide for each of its members the conditions favourable to their individual development. And even if, owing to the curse of Adam, communities have hitherto been constrained to subordinate the individual in the interest of the group, the original *raison d'être* of society imperatively demands that the individual shall be freed at the earliest possible moment. Now it is undeniable that every modern community has at this moment the means at its disposal to provide both a progressive abundance of

goods and a progressive abundance of leisure to an increasing number of its citizens. And the question of the politics or communal policy involved is reduced to this: has the community in its political capacity the will and the intelligence to utilise its economic resources for the instrumentation of the very purpose for which societies were formed? There are groups and individuals within every society who, strictly speaking, remain prehistoric in their outlook. Still shivering with apprehension of scarcity or, again, still lusting for egoistic power over others, they are perfectly content to see the economic system, long after the need has passed, employed as an agency of government under compulsion. If these conservative elements in society prevail, the course of history for the next few generations is clearly predictable. Individual rights in communal creations and possessions cannot be denied indefinitely with impunity. Sooner or later the individual will break loose, and the resulting forms of society will fall into two types, the Bolshevik and the Fascist, arising respectively from the triumph of the employed or the triumph of the employing classes. In both forms of society, individual liberty will necessarily tend to a minimum as the power of those who exercise State functions tends towards a maximum; and in each instance the victory of the machine over the spirit of Man will once again have been complete. We have reason to believe that Mussolini is not unconscious of all this and, on that very account, is by no means a propagandist of Fascism outside Italy. As between Bolshevism and Fascism he naturally prefers Fascism; but there is, he is aware, a third solution awaiting the advent of a truly modern statesman. Can it be that Mr. Winston Churchill believes himself to be the man?

* * *

Unabashed by his exposure as one of the blindest men of his age—it will be remembered that Sir Arthur Salter declared the notorious scoundrel Kreuger to be “the greatest man of the age”—Sir Arthur Salter has reappeared in the columns of the “Times” as the Moses and Joshua rolled into one who is going to lead the world out of the present desert into the Promised Land—ah, no, not of Plenty and Leisure; but of a return to the price-level of those blissful years that led straight to the last World-War. More extraordinarily still, his re-appearance has been hailed with the delight of resurrection by a group of “experts,” to the number of sixteen, who have agreed to sell all their minor differences and “to come follow me” in Sir Arthur Salter’s new dispensation. It is no objection to Sir Arthur Salter’s proposals that they are unintelligible to the man in the street. The man in the street is

quite properly concerned with policy and results and not with means. But it is an objection to the proposals which Sir Arthur Salter puts forward that their very objective is simply the restoration of the status quo; and the evidence for this is his “bold” suggestion to encourage exports by State-guaranteed foreign investments. For what does the proposal to encourage foreign investments imply? In the first place, that our only means of distributing purchasing power at home is by means of wages paid on account of goods exported abroad; in other words, that we continue to starve in the midst of plenty failing a foreign consumer. In the second place, that the field for foreign investment is as wide as it ever was when, in fact, it is contracting from both natural and artificial causes. And, in the third place, that other countries with the same domestic means of production and the same idiotic inability to use them for themselves, will not immediately take up the challenge of a State-assisted foreign investment policy to adopt it for themselves. According to the African proverb, two rams cannot drink out of the same calabash. The calabash of Foreign trade, moreover, is shrinking as the rams multiply and increase. It will now be seen, perhaps, why Sir Arthur Salter’s proposals to restore the status quo imply also the rest of the Latin tag.

ON READING A SPITEFUL PAMPHLET

Leave be, for this will also pass away,
 Even as ills have passed away before;
 We too must pass, while others have their day.
 Men yet unborn will knock upon the door
 And cross the threshold, eager to begin
 The round all know but none can comprehend:
 So shall they tread the cage we laboured in,
 So shall they, too, Life’s little penny spend
 Each for his hour of beauty, joy and pain,
 Wisdom and folly, youth and age and death;
 Glimpses of sunshine gleaming through the rain:
 “All this will pass” the ancient wisdom saith.
 Ah, then, leave be; let me forgive, forgo,
 While there is time. Life will be lovelier so.
 HUGH P. VOWLES

ILLUSION

When Adam spake for the first time to Eve,
 Breaking the virgin peace of paradise,
 Was there no veiling of her candid eyes
 At the dim thought: “To live is to deceive”?
 Or could he not her simple truth believe
 Because already, tragically wise,
 His heart had heard the serpent’s luring lies
 Trouble the Eden that they soon must leave?

Airs of strange tenderness steal even now
 From the abandoned Garden, and he hears
 Still the same promise while they cool his brow;
 But Man, in prescient wickedness, knows well
 Why he pursues across the flooding years
 Beauty, the bastard child of Heaven and Hell.
 R. L. MEGROZ

Lenin *

This is a good life* of Lenin in action. From the point of view of stating exactly what happened it is the best that has been written. Again and again Mr. Maxton has put in a clear sentence what others would reserve for a complicated paragraph. The story is told without the flourish of a single literary decoration or dramatic apostrophe.

We are given some new facts. This is the first book I have come across in which Lenin's income in the years of exile is stated. We are not left wondering how he managed to find sufficient capital to work for Communism. Instead of vague reference to "Party Funds" Mr. Maxton states that he had thirty shillings a week for himself and his wife while in London; and he does not say that he lived somewhere near the British Museum, he says that he lived at 30, Holford Square. For the first time Lenin's various publications from the "Iskra" to the "Pravda" are arranged in a straight line, which helps to get us considerably nearer to the extraordinary sower who went forth to sow his seed. Artfully concealing his own battle to get his material straight, Mr. Maxton places the clear result in front of us without any "However that may be" and with a masterly asceticism in "buts."

We see again the picture of this man who for the greatness of his task renounced all worldly joys, and who with a pure heart and a stainless soul turned the world upside down without making one dramatic gesture or uttering a single memorable phrase. Speaking of the early days after the seizure of power when few of his colleagues were certain of success, Mr. Maxton writes:—"He himself had no doubts. History had decreed that it must be. Marx had explained without possibility of denial that power must come to the workers, and that power must be used to establish Socialism. These things were inevitable. He was merely the instrument chosen by the forces that compel history to be made, and he, no more than the Czar, could escape his destiny." The phrase "Man of Destiny" has been much overworked lately. If any man is a man of destiny then all must be, and we get tired of hearing each dictator in turn from Lenin to Mussolini and Mustapha Kemal hailed by followers as men of destiny. Nevertheless there is interest in the fact that some men are superlatively conscious of their Fate. It is this which makes Lenin, the great mystic, so fascinating. Under the unconscious guise of identifying himself with a theorem, he completely gave himself up to the movement of history, almost ceasing to be a personality at all, and becoming a vessel for the flow of life. He had no doubts: every event was cast in the crucible of unalterable Law.

The chief defect in Mr. Maxton's book is that he does nothing to support or explain this apprehension of Lenin's. He shirks the task of relating him with Marx and Marx with Hegel. He may reply that it was not his intention to deal with Marx. It should have been his intention. Whether the reader is knowledge-

able or not he needs every new definition he can get as to the meaning of the materialistic conception of history as opposed to the idealistic conception. Mr. Maxton has shirked this duty. Likewise he draws attention to Lenin's philosophical work "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism." He does not tell us what the first principles of Empirio-Criticism are, nor does he show with what principles Lenin met these philosophers. He just says that he answered them jolly well.

He did not answer them at all,—though he was clever enough to pretend to answer them, and in their own jargon as Mr. Maxton's quotation shows. We must not fall into the error of thinking that Lenin could successfully grapple with concepts outside his particular field. No man was ever less capable of making intelligent observations on philosophy or religion. He lived with one idea, and only one. "How burdensome it must be so to live!" exclaimed a colleague once. Yet it was not burdensome. Not for him. For the interpreters life is burdensome, for the poets and the seers: gladly would they renounce all worldly joys and live with one thought only. They dare not, for then they would not know life. Lenin did not wish to know life—but to change it. Psychically his yoke was easy and his burden was light. Or do I exaggerate? When Chekov listened to music he felt—All things are forgiven and it would be strange not to forgive. For that very reason Lenin dared not listen to music: "I know nothing more beautiful than the *Appassionata*," he once said. "I could hear it every day. It is marvellous, unearthly music. Every time I hear these notes I think with pride and childlike naïvete what men can accomplish. But I cannot listen to music often; it affects my nerves. I want to say amiable stupidities and to stroke the heads of the people who can create such beauty in a filthy hell. But to-day is not the time to stroke people's heads: to-day hands descend to split skulls open." Lenin lived beyond ordinary good and evil: that was good which forwarded, that was evil which retarded, Marx in Action.

If we understand his enormous concentration upon his Idea then only can we comprehend how between March and October 1917 he stood in the midst of sheer confusion *knowing* what was happening and what would happen. He had almost ceased to be a person and had become a vessel. Thus and thus would events go, he said: this wave will recede, that one advance; and so great was his identification with the historic flow that even as he pronounced so it occurred.

If Mr. Maxton's book had been entitled "Lenin in Action" we would have no complaint to make save one. The author keeps his admiration for the great man well in hand, almost to the point of preserving an eloquent silence on this score. But even so he lets his implied judgment go too far, and near the end oversteps the mark. He speaks of the enormous task that Lenin had to accomplish—the reconstruction of a continent and the beating back of foes. No man could have accomplished this superhuman task save Lenin, he says. And that is absurd. Lenin could not have succeeded if his colleagues had not also been superior to all other

* "Lenin." James Maxton. Davies. 6s.

revolutionary leaders in history. He could not have got on without Stalin, the man of steel, and Trotsky, the man of flame. The Union could not have been saved without Trotsky's pen, tongue, diplomacy, and sword. Not without his sword anyway; the Red Army was Trotsky's creation not Lenin's, and lacking that Army and its Commander, success would have been unthinkable against the Whites within and the forces of Koltchak, Denikin, and Wrangel without. Lenin was no magician. It is romance, not history, to make him so.

J. S. COLLIS

Facts and Figures

Mr. Fred Henderson's last book, "The Economic Consequences of Power Production," began the initiation of a great number of readers into practical, as distinct from expert, economics. Even Mr. Bernard Shaw praised the book for "not only going to the root of the matter, but being readable." In "Money Power and Human Life"* Mr. Henderson has both gone nearer to the root of the matter and traced out more of the branches. He has gone, in fact, deeper and higher than the aged eyes of Mr. Shaw can fairly be expected to see. May the grand total of Mr. Henderson's younger and more apt pupils, however, not diminish. For the present book is as readable as the previous one.

Those already convinced that the socialisation of credit is a necessity for the preservation of human society will find nothing very new in "Money Power and Human Life." To other well-wishers of mankind and themselves, however, who can bear the thought that Adam Smith, Ricardo, Karl Marx, Joseph Chamberlain, and J. M. Keynes, may not among them have said the final word on political economy, I recommend the book with confidence. If Mr. Arthur Greenwood had shown any indication of developing a politically responsible mind since he signed, about ten years ago, the Labour Party's adverse report on Social Credit, I would recommend the book to him. Mr. Henderson may or may not recollect that report. If not he may be interested to learn that his patient, earnest, and, as far as he could manage it, disinterested, study of industry in relation to the money-system, has led him to disprove convincingly, after ten years, all the major pronouncements made by that Committee of false Trustees of the welfare of Labour.

Money, Mr. Henderson proves, while it is an effective, universally accepted, title to obtain every kind of goods, is created in relation neither to the power of industry to produce goods, nor to the desire of the community to consume them. The power of creation and destruction, expansion and contraction, of this universally accepted title to all goods, is lodged with a Monopoly, which has no social responsibility for ensuring either the production of goods or their distribution. The truth, indeed, is almost the reverse. Producers and distributors are responsible to the Monopoly which has persuaded the community that all its members would be morally and eternally damned if the Monopoly were not held sacred; and that, though

* "Money Power and Human Life." By Fred Henderson. Allen and Unwin. 6s.

all its members starve to death, they would be eternally saved provided the Monopoly had not been desecrated. And that Monopoly, by exacting that every title to goods issued, for whatsoever immediate purpose, should constitute a debt to be repaid to the Monopoly, inevitably maintains the Age of Scarcity, in spite of the obvious fact that when the powers of production alone are considered, an Age of Abundance is immediately possible. Such are the consequences of the Money Monopoly; Mr. Henderson demonstrates that without its consent there can be no money in existence with which current production can be bought. The money already in circulation was advanced by the monopoly only for the purchase of the consumable commodities which resulted from past production. Whereupon Mr. Henderson concludes that the community, if it is to have the benefit of its accumulated productive resources, of plant and transport, and all other powers of creating service, must issue credit to consumers directly, without its passing through the Monopoly at all. The figures, in a word, must be made to fit the facts. And Mr. Henderson promises to publish later detailed practical proposals for the transition period between the Age of Scarcity, which is now an anachronism, and the possible Age of Abundance. I shall look forward to the proposals with great expectations.

I refer again to my remark that Mr. Henderson's study has been, as far as he could manage it, disinterested. Mr. Henderson, although he has grown a Social Credit head, has still a Marxian heart. He can accept the results of his observation and thought only after he has dyed them red. For that reason I especially recommend the book to all Marxians who suspect that Marx might have revised his gospel if he had lived to see the Monopoly of Financial Credit supreme over all other monopolies, and over the State itself; if he had lived to see bankrupt Capital in pawn to Finance. Nevertheless, Mr. Henderson's looking backward to his old love, Surplus Value, is a serious weakness, which he can overcome not by trying to reconcile Social Credit with "Das Capital," that is, the new with the old, but only by reconciling "Das Capital" with Social Credit. Far from the Money Monopoly appropriating Surplus Value, that is, securing the *ownership* of the entire difference between the producers' subsistence and the total possible product, it prevents a great part of the total possible product from ever coming into existence. The Money Monopoly cannot itself consume very much, but it can, and does, nevertheless, prevent the community from consuming. Far from increasing its own share of an ever-increasing output, it prevents the output from increasing, and even reduces it. The distribution of the Common Dividend which Mr. Henderson now advocates does not require the expropriation of any rights to consume already allocated. It can be issued, and easily issued, out of that portion of total possible production which is not yet, because of the Money Monopoly, allowed to come into existence; out of a product, that is not yet "owned" by anybody, and the ownership of which does not, therefore, have to be taken from anybody.

A. N.

Spanish Chronicle

BARCELONA AND JUNE

I

A few nights ago I was in the Sierra de Guadarrama. The girl who showed me to my room in the hotel, said: "Your window faces the midday"—*el mediodía*. She did not say *el Sur*, for the South is abstract, intangible. But the midday, the warm sun at its zenith—that is real: you feel it in your bones, it bleaches your hair, tans your skin. Thus the newspapers of Madrid are called *El Sol*, *Luz*, *La Tierra*—Sun, Light, the Earth. The realism of Spain.

But in Spain the flesh is at war with the spirit. The Spaniard is still (as El Greco painted him) torn by an essential dualism: head in Heaven; feet in Hell. And this conflict exists even in the language of the people. *Querer* means both to "love" and "to desire"—thus implying idealism and passion, anxiety and frustration. (Unamuno experiences God as *physically* as he experiences toothache.) *Esperar* means "to hope"; but it also means "to wait." In the heart of these words themselves there is a ceaseless struggle. The word made flesh, and the word made spirit. The language throbs with life.

In politics these same characteristics appear. The average Spanish politician is too human for politics, too human to stick uncompromisingly to a political system. The Spaniard is *todo un hombre*. A whole man. Therefore, reaction comes quickly in Spain. No political theory is sufficiently wide and deep to embrace the Spaniard's humanity.

Since April 14, 1931, the country has been swept by a modernising frenzy. The movement to reconstruct the State from the ground upwards was a direct reaction against the exaggerated feudalism of the monarchy. But this frenzy has not merely brought forth the most genuinely *modern* Government that exists in present-day Europe; it has also made inevitable a counter-movement, a Catholic reaction. This latter is as yet a very minor force; but as a manifestation of the Spanish spirit, it deserves attention.

II

Last week I met one of the leading reactionary intellectuals. "The condition of Spain?" he said, in reply to my question. "Rotten, rotten. I am Catholic and Royalist. Are we to be ruled by a lot of ruffians? No: we must have the King back, but with *increased* power (he lost his throne by being too democratic; by belonging too thoroughly to this 'epoch,' as you call it). Until the Government shoot the men who burned the monasteries I will not shake their hand. The Ten Commandments come *first*."

I protested that we were living in the twentieth century, and that only a Government that employed twentieth-century methods could survive. His eyes sparkled. "I stress (he said), I stress the eternal values, as against those fictitious 'truths of our epoch.' And why shouldn't we shoot? Haven't soldiers always shot? What can be more glorious than to be a soldier, a soldier of Christ? When Madariaga speaks to me of pacifism, I *hit* him."

And so on. I came away feeling how insufficient was my humble relativism against a man who believed that he held Absolute Truth. Indeed, there is nothing to set against a supernatural faith, except *another* supernatural faith (as Mohammed against Christ). Nothing merely *natural* can compete.

With this reactionary spirit abroad in Spain, it was inevitable that the visit of H. G. Wells last month, should arouse considerable opposition in the Press. As a novelist Wells was applauded; as a politico-economic journalist he was attacked right and left. He symbolised "modernism," science, technique—the very forces that are changing the face of Spain to-day; and Spain, seeing those forces embodied in a single man, reacted, stressed all that is eternal in herself and in the human heritage.

Thus Ramiro de Maeztu wrote contrasting Wells with the Spanish scholar Menéndez y Pelayo: "Menéndez y Pelayo was all wisdom and discipline: voluntary servant of his religion and of his country, *soldier of his duty against the current of his age*, stronghold of Spanish wisdom in face of the encyclopædic deluge. Wells, on the other hand, is the child of his time, favourite of fortune, fecund writer, who has been unable to read difficult books, all caprice and fantasy, irresponsible imagination, success and freedom."

And Eugenio Montes in *El Sol*: "Wells has always been mistaken in all that he has said. And perhaps this innate disposition for error is the origin of his unclipped celebrity. There are some—though they do not abound in our time—who reach fame by their creative works, and, so to say, against the tide. Others there are—and of these Wells is the perfect example—who succeed, precisely, through inability to create. It would cause Wells considerable effort, not to think as the rest do. He coincides, naturally and without effort, with the masses—because his spirit is impregnated with the topical."

There speaks Spain, "vertical Spain"; Spain, which is transforming itself day by day in the very direction which Wells, the Open Conspirator, indicates; Spain, whose faith in "the modern" is exuberant—"a Faith which does not doubt, is a dead Faith," says Unamuno.

III

The Spaniard to-day is striving to be true to his tradition, and yet true to his age. He accepts his destiny, but would modify it by *reason*. Azaña, in his three-hour speech before the Cortes on May 27, said: "Two distinct forces take part in our political life: the force of tradition, which persists in its offspring; and the force of intervention and action, which can introduce a new direction." The politics of Azaña and the philosophy of José Ortega y Gasset are thus expressing the subconscious desire of the Spanish race: that every man should be a whole man—every nerve alert—a tight-rope walker from the past into the future.

The contribution of Spain to twentieth-century Europe will be, not a neat theory of reconstruction, but an insistence on that which is *human*. Spain does not produce theories, nor robots, but *men*. The men may

be maniacs (they often are), but always they are genuine, and always "whole." And since Spain is (as H. G. Wells remarked) "the most disentangled country," a country whose problems are simple in comparison with the intricate entanglements of Great Britain, France, and Germany, it may well be that she will exercise an important, vitalising influence. She believes in man. The other nations have almost forgotten him.

In these circumstances the Communist agitator in Spain must necessarily fight rather a thankless battle. The Spaniard is too proud of his own, full manhood, to conceive of or admit the necessity of *class* war. Class war? What is class? *Homo sum*. When the peasants of Andalucía recently adopted an attitude of civil disobedience (they refused to harvest the crops), it was due, not so much to any antagonism towards the "bourgeoisie," as to the fact that crops were abundant—plenty of food was at hand, and there really was no need for them to work. The Spanish peasant does not possess the Savings Bank mentality.

GEORGE PENDLE

The Chronicles of Palmerstown

VII

BY CONCLAVIST

During 1926 unemployment continued to increase—the average for the year being 4,947. To meet the situation the Corporation again raised the rateable value of the town, putting it up to its highest point, £153,000.

In 1919 the rateable value was £129,000. In the time of the town's greatest distress the ratepayers were thus compelled to find £24,000 more than in the days of prosperity.

The Corporation also continued to raise loans for road making as relief work. By both methods they were able to reduce the rates of the year to 17s. 1d. in the £.

At any time under any circumstances the wisdom of raising loans on the credit of people living on the dole and parish relief is questionable, but the folly of doing so in Palmerstown would occur to anyone who gave the matter a moment's consideration. Everything used in the making of roads had to be imported, stones, cement, soil, sand and gravel, and paid for out of the loans. The final operation was done by the Trinidad Asphalt Company, which brought in its own workmen. The result was that out of every £100, borrowed, Palmerstown got about one-third. The money being obtained at 5 per cent. for a term of 20 years, it meant that Palmerstown would have to pay £200 for every £33 6s. 8d. received in wages by its road-makers.

Up to March 31, 1926, £116,550 had been borrowed for this purpose, which, along with that obtained for housing and other purposes, raised the town's liabilities to £476,694. In 1919 the liabilities per head were 18s. Now they were £14. In the former the interest paid on loans was £1,226, in the latter £7,638.

I noted earlier how, whilst the town grew steadily

poorer the town's own servants were never so well off in their lives. Before the war the Town Hall staff numbered 11; now it stood at 25.

In 1919 the Medical Officer's salary was £150; now it was £800. The office of Town Clerk was held by a practising solicitor at an honorarium of £100. This was now raised to £700; his office was furnished at the public expense and 50 per cent. of its upkeep paid out of the rates.

Teachers' salaries in Elementary Schools in 1919 were £23,863; now they became £49,114, which raised the demand on the rates from £16,200 to £21,150.

Again the Medical Officer in his annual report called attention to the deplorable housing conditions in certain parts of the town and the injurious effects it had on the health of the people. He reported that 316 people suffering from tuberculosis were receiving treatment at the dispensary, 20 were in hospital and 68 had died during the year. Cancer accounted for 49 deaths, and of the cases of pneumonia notified 19.5 per cent. had died.

To add to our afflictions we have now an epidemic of smallpox, and, as may be expected, its ravages are found mostly amongst the poorer people.

In 1926 there were 220 cases on which the medical officer comments:—

"It was almost inevitable in an area that was so overcrowded and among a population which comprises so many unvaccinated persons that Palmerstown should sooner or later become affected."

A peculiar feature about this year was that whilst the Burgess Roll in five wards showed a decrease of 832 electors compared with the previous year the most overcrowded ward had an increase of 28. The answer? More one-room tenements.

Having read in the Press some sympathetic remarks made by Mr. Baldwin regarding the slum-dwellers of Glasgow, I addressed to him the following letter:—

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Having observed your kindly efforts on behalf of the slum dwellers of Glasgow I beg to lay before you the case of the slum children of Palmerstown, as disclosed in the enclosed article.

I'm afraid my composition is not in the classical style—but then, sir, I am myself of slum birth and rearing and have carried through life the handicaps of my origin. Whatever hardships, indignities and lack of opportunities are endured by the slum children of Palmerstown to-day, I in my childhood suffered them all, so when speaking on their behalf I am appealing as one of themselves.

I know well, sir, that in your generous intentions towards the people you are hampered in every direction by ignorance and interests, but should you be able to do the least thing on behalf of the poor children of this unfortunate community you will have my eternal gratitude.

NITWITGENAGEMOTA

Historical Notes by the up-to-date Member for East Edinburgh in the Exchange Fund Debate. The principles of the Bullion Report were regarded by all students of finance after the Napoleonic Wars as something that could not be disputed . . . From 1821 up to 1915 we had a long period of prosperity.

Why not have a reduced standard of living all round?—"Fairplay."

The French Legend of Edgar Allan Poe

BY RANDOLPH HUGHES

We may take as representative of the latest enthusiasm for Poe in France, M. Valéry and M. Camille Mauclair. Between them, they resume and repeat all that has been said by the most fervent of Poe's earlier admirers; and, in the extent and the boldness of the claims they make for Poe, they go much further than any of their predecessors. No one will question their prestige and influence (though some few may question their competence). M. Valéry in particular has a reputation that is European and even extra-European, and his opinion is in some sort official; while M. Mauclair is held in high esteem in many quarters, and is looked up to by a large number of earnest souls as an initiator into the mysteries of several arts, not excluding that of love. With the authority of such reputations attaching to them, the vastly excessive claims made for Poe, so far from being corrected, are in a fair way to being perpetuated and definitely consecrated. Unless they are challenged and quashed, they will more and more find acceptance not only in France, but also in England, where French studies are cultivated by a rapidly increasing number of people, and French criticism—not undeservedly for the most part—is listened to with no little respect. This is a matter which has to do not only with the right appraisal of Poe himself, but what is much more important, with that of Baudelaire and several other French writers Poe is supposed to have influenced. Baudelaire himself has exercised an extensive influence over subsequent literature, and he has been chiefly influential in virtue of the very qualities which, according to the legend, he received from Poe. We shall prove that almost if not entirely all the things which Baudelaire is widely believed to have derived from Poe were already existent and well-established in French (and other) literature, and that Baudelaire therefore received and assimilated them as part of his national intellectual patrimony, and had not the least need to go to Poe for them; and also that he did not fail to seize (as he has been accused of doing) a certain profound inner meaning, an esoteric or metaphysical significance, in many of Poe's stories, for the simple reason that the stories contain nothing such; and incidentally that Poe, not only as an influence, but intrinsically as an artist and a thinker, is an absurdly over-rated person.

Before proceeding to this, our true subject, we may glance at a not unrelated matter which has an especial interest for Englishmen, and also for Americans. Accompanying this elevation of Poe into apotheosis is a curiously complacent and somewhat naïve belief that the American writer has never been properly appreciated in what are called "Anglo-Saxon" countries, and that it was reserved for the profounder insight of the French to discover and understand his genius. This, which reminds one of the fatuous German appropriation of Shakespeare, is irritating to any English-

man who is acquainted with the real facts, and is irritating in proportion as he loves France. Something of the same sort happened in the case of Byron, regarding whom a great deal of erroneous opinion is still current on the Continent, and most of all in France. One is not infrequently led to feel that, in the judgment of the French, we do not rate him highly enough, while they have no doubt that he is a great poet—one of the world's very greatest. They cannot understand that competent English readers—making certain reservations of course in favour of "Don Juan" and other analogous work—should think him a lamentably bad poet, or at least a shockingly bad artist. On the other hand, both Coleridge and Shelley, immeasurably greater poets than Byron, are comparatively unknown in France, and have certainly exercised little influence there. Appreciations of this kind, especially when they are persistent, are enough to make one despair of foreign criticism. But all these cases, and others that might be cited, are nothing in comparison with what has taken place with regard to Poe, the poor genius, neglected and rejected by America and England, whom the French with indignant charity have taken under their protective wing. M. Jean Dornis, in a nebulous and chaotic work entitled "*La Sensibilité dans la Poésie française*," is at no pains to disguise what is the common opinion among his countrymen. The crass "Anglo-Saxons," according to him, have had no appreciation for Poe except as a writer of detective stories, but the superior Latins—"*Les compréhensifs Latins*" M. Dornis calls them—have been sensitive to all his great qualities: psychological penetration, subtle analysis, depravation, mental maladies, etc.: none of the old clichés is forgotten. M. Paul Valéry, who (some people no doubt will think) might have been expected to know better, is even more sweeping in his judgment, although he expresses it less offensively. "Let us not fail to notice," he urges (as if the thing had not been said a hundred times), "that the universal glory of Poe is dim or contested only in England and America." He finds (after how much examination!) and is painfully puzzled to find, that Poe is undervalued by those of his own race. "*Ce poète anglo-saxon est étrangement méconnu par les siens*." And he goes as far as to say that Poe would be "completely forgotten" to-day if Baudelaire had not introduced him into Europe! This is a fair example of the paucity of knowledge that often lies behind M. Valéry's statements. Now the truth is that Poe has received the fullest and most generous recognition, and has even been overvalued, in "Anglo-Saxon" countries; and that he has never at any time been in danger of being forgotten in those countries. In his own lifetime, and before Baudelaire and Forgues (the author of the first French appreciation of him) had begun to play showman to him, he was amply recognised, not only in America (where there was hardly any recognition worth having), but also in England, and there precisely by people of the kind whose approbation he himself would most have valued. As for America, he was well known there, and encouraged, long before the appearance of "The Raven"; thus, some of his earliest verses received a very flattering reception from

one John Neal, a writer impressive enough in America to be saluted as a genius by J. R. Lowell, who specialised in the distinction of genius from talent, and would very rarely grant certificates of the former; Neal so greatly admired the verses in question that "he drew a proud horoscope for their author" and thus gave Poe a very good start while he was yet in his nonage. By December, 1835, Poe had advanced so far from obscurity into fame that the "Southern Literary Messenger" of that date said it was unnecessary to apologise for the superlative terms in which it referred to him as one of its most distinguished contributors, for "such mention of him found numberless precedents in the other journals on every side" which had praised the originality of his imagination, and his gifts as a humorist and a satirist. In the following 10 years he established himself still more securely, and even in the esteem of some of the official pundits. Lowell himself, in a long article begun and finished before the publication of "The Raven," but printed a short time after "The Raven," concurred in Neal's judgment as to the juvenile verses, and was even more sweeping in his laudation than Neal. Speaking of those verses as a whole, he gave it as his considered verdict that they were "the most remarkable boyish poems he had ever read." "We know of none that can compare with them for maturity of purpose, and a nice understanding of the effects of language and metre." A pronouncement at which some readers no doubt will smile, if they do not gasp. We are not surprised therefore that Lowell proceeds to award Poe *his* certificate of genius (a mere man of talent, it appears, never "flings his inkpot at the devil," and this is one of the things by which ye shall know him); and Lowell awards this certificate to Poe not only in virtue of his early poetry, but after careful examination of all his work. In assessing the work as a whole, it is interesting to note that Lowell anticipates some of the later "discoveries" of the French, and even some of those that M. Valéry and M. Maclair insist so loudly upon. Poe has "a wonderful fecundity of imagination;" he "employs the strange fascination of mystery and terror;" he deals in "the impalpable shadows of mystery," and he does this with such "minuteness of detail" that "he does not leave a pin or a button unnoticed." "The predominating quality of his mind"—the French, who dwell particularly on this, as a thing imperfectly apprehended by the insensitive "Anglo-Saxons," should give special heed at this point—"The predominating quality of his mind is analysis." Lowell (87 years ago!), in developing this statement, even anticipates one of the cardinal claims made by M. Valéry for Poe, and formulated by M. Valéry as though it had never been sufficiently recognised, and were in need of the utmost emphasis of affirmation; we refer to what M. Valéry grandiosely names Poe's solution of the problem of literature; or, to speak more simply, to the manner in which Poe strictly subordinates his means to the desired end. "His mind," says Lowell, "at once reaches forward to the effect to be produced. Having resolved to bring about certain emotions in the reader, he makes all

subordinate parts tend strictly to the common centre. Even his mystery is mathematical to his own mind."

After the publication of "The Raven" Poe was as famous in America as any literary man has ever been anywhere. The poem first appeared in the "Evening Mirror" of January the 29th, 1845, and it was accompanied by a note written by N. P. Willis, which commended it to the world in the most panegyrical terms. According to Willis, it was not only "the most effective single example of fugitive poetry" that had ever appeared in America; even in the whole range of English poetry it was "unsurpassed for noble conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent sustaining of imaginative life . . .," and Willis went on to prophesy that it would "stick in the memory" of whoever read it. It appeared again the following month in the "American Whig Review," accompanied once more by a contemporary article. Willis's prophecy was very quickly fulfilled, and long before the French began to busy themselves in the matter. "Everybody has been raven-mad about his last poem," wrote Briggs (a journalistic colleague of Poe's) to Lowell, some six weeks after the publication of the piece. It was not only the American intelligentsia who extended this welcome to the poem; as Woodberry, one of Poe's later biographers, notes, "the popular response was instantaneous and decisive. No great poem ever established itself so immediately, so widely, and so imperishably in men's minds." Even in the Memoir written by Griswold on Poe soon after the latter's death, and usually regarded as a treacherous and slanderous document, the French might have found things that would lead them to change their opinion regarding the Anglo-Saxon appreciation of Poe. "The astonishing natural advantages of this poor boy—his beauty, his readiness, the daring spirit that breathed around him like a fiery atmosphere . . ."—such a description should please the most fervent of Poe's French admirers; they would also like (if they did not feel sore at being anticipated) Griswold's reference to Poe's excursions into "the shadowy confines of human experience," to his command of "images of beauty and terror," to his "refinement of reasoning," to his "subtle metaphysical analysis," and to many other of their hero's attributes or endowments; they would also learn from Griswold that Poe was one of the most sought-after authors of his own day; that his stories were "as popular as those of Willis, commonly regarded as the best magazineist of his time"; and that "his poems were worth as much to magazines as those of Bryant or Longfellow," who are generally denounced as villainous usurpers of Poe's rights in the domain of poetry. And Poe himself well knew what he owed to his American friends, and never thought of himself as an obscure and unrecognised genius in the land of his birth. For example, in a letter written some six months before his death to Willis, he ungrudgingly acknowledged his great debt to the latter: "You made 'The Raven' and made 'Ulalume,'"—which should be quite sufficient to show that he himself would have been the first to admit that he did not have to wait for the French to render him that signal service.

Three Poems

BY RUTH PITTER

WEEPING WATER, LEAPING FIRE

Weeping water, leaping fire :
 God and my grave are my desire.
 With swarming strife and scanty joy,
 Little ease and long annoy,
 I am damned and drowned in rue—
 With love then what have I to do?
 With chaste stillness, blessed peace,
 No annoy and utter ease,
 Lulled in morning's lap I lie,
 And mend my sorrows in the sky.
 I am redeemed and flown above—
 Then what have I to do with love?
 Heaven is stillness, motion hell,
 When I stir not I am well.
 Wake me not for I would be
 Laid where quiet waits on me.
 Lovely Boy, I know you lie;
 Frown as you will, but pass me by.

THE LOST HERMITAGE

("Templo valedixi cum osculo." Samuel Johnson.)

I'll none of time :
 I leave this place! this roof come down!
 This is a graveyard jest, a dream
 Too hard for rhyme;
 We'll laugh at it when we sit down
 Before God's Christmas fire, and tell
 Our tales of worms, and ghosts, and hell,
 That our eternal hearth securer seem.
 My heart dwells here,
 In rotten hut on weeping clay,
 Tends here her useful herbs, her bloom;
 Will not away,
 May not be startled to one tear,
 Is tenant of her little room
 For ever, though they rase
 Her cell, and rear a prison in its place.
 Ringdove in oak,
 Stormcock in elder, finch in thorn,
 The blackbird in the quicken, jay,
 Starling that spoke
 Under the roof before the day,
 Titmouse abhorred when damsons bud
 And song-thrush hatched in cup of mud :
 Frost on the grass,
 The lonely morning, the still kine,
 Grief for the quick, love for the dead,
 The little hill's unchanging line
 And nightingale so near my bed;
 Pass and return, return and pass,
 This time like many a time that was,
 Many to be,
 Swelling and lapsing seasons lulling me :
 All these are laid
 Safe up in me, and I will keep
 My dwelling thus though it be gone;
 My store is not in gold, but made
 Of toil and sleep
 And wonder walking all alone :
 So Time's brought low,
 My heart's above all he can bring,
 And forth in spite of him will go
 To gather acorns; ay and sing.

THANKSGIVING FOR A FAIR SUMMER

Now, before the wheat
 Standing so nobly, falls;
 Ere yet the first owl calls
 Or that thin sickle and fleet
 Of harvest moon her earliest quarter passes,
 Or the ground-frost may crisp the twice-mown grasses :
 Now let me sing
 My quiet stave, when redbreast too
 Sings in, as I beneath, the yew :
 Before they bring
 The apples home, and once again
 The equinox beats down the leaves in rain.

We had thought summer dead :
 Year upon year
 Prone in the furrow lay the smutted ear;
 More wan than red
 Hung tasteless fruit; flowers made earth their bier;
 Kine to the lowering sky
 Frowned in mute patience, and the hooded hind
 Driving them home, in the soft ruts plodded by
 With streaming shoulders and a heart unkind,
 Sullen and bowed
 Against a swagging heap of swollen cloud.

But now hot camomile in headlands grows,
 Strong-smelling as from toil of reaping : bees
 Their delicate harvest in the rusty rows
 Of scarlet bean, and woodbine that still blows,
 Though flower with berry, gather and do not cease;
 No mushroom yet, for dryness of the leas;
 No leaf too early sere, for droughty root,
 Drops from the trees,
 But grave broad green guards the thick purple fruit.

Not only thanks for ample grain
 And apple that shall give her wine
 As in old seasons strong again;
 Not for low streams where lilies shine
 In many a pool unvexed by flood,
 Unvexed by aught but boys at play;
 Not only for the sun in the blood
 And the long, blest, eventless day :

But chiefly for the sign,
 For the fair time as token of grace
 That life is yet benign,
 That this our race
 Yet doth possess a pleasant place;
 For frequent doubt
 Assails us, and might overthrow,
 Were not the bow
 Of blessing high in heaven hung out :
 Our time is dark,
 And save such miracle as this,
 Where is the mark
 To steer by, in our bitter mysteries?

So for the sun
 That all men love and understand,
 Lo here is one
 In gratitude lifts either hand :
 O dearest land!
 Heaven give harvests without end,
 Heaven mend our quarrels, cure our ills,
 And the whole peace of heaven descend
 On all the English plains and hills!



Arab Woman and Child

Charcoal Drawing
By JOAN BELL

Hippodrome

I had known the young man, but in what circumstances I could not remember. The poster surprised me at first, for I had not expected to see him in a tableau. I remembered he had been beautiful, with his easy muscles and sincere boyish face; now they had discovered his quality and shown him in tights for Apollo. He lay wreathed on a plinth of marble, milk white, attended by a Goddess, white as himself, with a large and muscular torso,—like the Venus of Medici. As I looked, wondering who gave him his circus name, and how he was faring in the accommodating life of the theatre, a schoolmaster came up and stood before the poster. He was a little corpulent, in middle age, with a leaden mouth and inky, dyspeptical eyes. I recognised the sag of his greatcoat; but he had forgotten me. I went up the road, on Mary's errand, to buy paraffin at an oilshop, and thought about myself.

The Hippodrome was very crowded, for on that day the shops had been closed early, and the comic conjuror was confident of his popularity. He balanced pyramids of axioms and hypotheses, and ran round in circles on deductive wheels. From his hat he drew out large buoyant theories and endless yards of information. His mouth was leaden and he had inky, dyspeptical eyes.

The lights were dimmed, and we could see him, among Egyptian columns, in the cap and hood of a pedagogue. He picked a small ball of glass out of the air. He held it out on his chalky fingers and when the people stared it kindled to a mystery.

At first it flushed with a green light, that was soon intense and steady, and then the green began to spin, shaping a coreless vortex that drilled into the darkness. The pedagogue pattered explanations and we could see the substance of the vortex overflowing in the glass.

"A point has position but no magnitude," he said, "position but no magnitude."

Green circles spun out, small at first, but increasing as they floated above us. The great ones drifted into the domed roof and lay along the edges of the galleries. Smaller ones, without space to increase, sank over our heads and on to the mouths of the trumpets.

"Straight lines are circles of infinite radius," said the pedagogue, "infinite radius."

At once a litter of right lines fell from the roof and walls of the auditorium. They lay along the backs of the chairs, up the steps, across the boards of the floor, and down the cords of pendants and the sides of doorways.

I looked and saw with intense revulsion that the lines and circles were breaking up and fitting themselves to every ledge and boundary, while the sphere wriggled its little vortex in the dark and generated countless multitudes more.

Deathly lines and circles! I watched them overlaying everything: twisting appearances to themselves, stripping and cramping, pinching Nature to poverty, setting my eyes in trammels.

The people around me were proud and astounded; but in a moment the lights were turned up and they had forgotten.

The schoolmaster whacked the drop scene with his cane, and as it ascended, I saw the young man of the poster, lying alone on his plinth of marble in the attitude of a philosopher. The limelight flung his white body against the green continuum of eternity, and he was clearly adequate. The light was shut off, shadows moved about the plinth, and they were standing together on the marble, the young man and the Goddess, symbolic of the genus: MAN. The green and the statuary changed about with limbs in the darkness, and I saw them go through the act. Once they seemed to be running together, gathering in a single pose all the graces of motion; then they were still, deeply at ease, listening to small music in the air. At the last their theme was GROWTH and they stood stern and fair, swaying, or seeming to sway, no less than the grasses on a summer morning. The people were very orderly, following the descriptions in their programmes.

Lusty and sentimental turns succeeded each other, but as I had seen them so often I was indifferent, and sat eating chocolates. At the usual time the Safety Curtain was let down, with its blotches of advertisements, and a bioscope projected false teeth and suites of varnished furniture.

The pedagogue stood in the centre of the stage with a whip. The Goddess, still in her white tights, crouched like a great frog to jump through an iron rectangle that he held out for her. She pretended she could not jump, and crawled miserably away, her breasts hanging loosely. The young man, watching from one of the boxes, attracted my attention; he was wrapped in a dark greatcoat and his face was white as paste. Two military officers, in grey caps, were holding him between them, as though to prevent him from leaping on the stage. The pedagogue cracked his whip, and the crouching Goddess sprang through the frame, falling flat on her stomach with her legs apart. The people cheered and the candelabra in the roof shook with calls and commotion; but I could not help watching the young man. He was wrenching himself away from the officers and lurching forwards in the box.

The pedagogue raised the whip again and the Goddess squatted, this time like a dog, her thighs bent in, her hands before her on the floor. The young man opened his mouth, and I thought that he would scream, but when the whip cracked I saw one of the officers put a small pistol to his temple and discharge it at the same time so that nobody heard.

The act was successful, with many encores; and I was not further distracted by the young man, who had fallen limp in the greatcoat, and been laid upon a chair, between the two officers.

E. C. LARGE

The Drama

CONTINUOUS GRAND GUIGNOL (Duke of York's)

A solid three hours of, for courtesy, entertainment; a whole revue and five plays, every one of them, the "News of the World" says, a masterpiece. It is a generous acknowledgment of fellowship. For any one of the plays as a news story would fill half an issue of that delectable Sabbath newspaper. It is also, incidentally, an encouraging acknowledgment. Such obvious at-one-ness between the news and the dramatic editors proves that at any rate in the office of the "News of the World" taste is not in dispute.

The point at which I broke into the continuity of the programme was "Something More Important," by Mr. H. F. Maltby. My first experience of Mr. Maltby's work, six years ago, was of a farce which almost every reviewer in London said was too bitter to be attractive. It was, I remember clearly, a brilliant piece of social satire, sparkling with wit. The last of Mr. Maltby's works produced, "For the Love of Mike," had plainly, for box-office sake, been turned in collaboration from social satire to that jagged nonsense nowadays so fashionable. In "Something More Important," a corpse is carried out of a flat in a seaman's chest under the eyes of the police, who are engaged on "something more important," namely, a raid on a night-club next door. I have a suspicion that the piece was produced years ago. Whether or not, the persons responsible, from politicians to reviewers, for the degradation of Mr. Maltby, Satirist, to a maker of magazine-story thrillers, deserve to be punished in the mood of Grand Guignol.

The next piece, "Congratulations," gave me a genuine surprise. Who would believe that the constable who had a sergeant's overcoat thrown from the bedroom window, and who appeared, appropriately, and finally, as a ten-line story in the "Pink 'Un," years and years ago, walks the earth as a play. There seem to be few things in Heaven and Earth for today's programme-makers. Anyhow, it was new to somebody, for I heard him applaud.

"The Old Women," by André de Lorde, with a cast of nine players, began so slowly that I listened to the two actresses who recounted the history of the asylum as impatiently as a bored child waiting for the end of mother's gossip. Before the finish, however, a couple of lunatics held down a cured patient while another lunatic pricked out her eyes with a needle. "To put a man out of existence," Montaigne said, "we demand a clear field and the light of day; to bring one into existence we work in the dark and alone, and as closely as we may." "The Old Women" confirms that the censor and the police hunt out all the wrong things. The censor thinks the nude human body respectable only in representation. Alive, he says, it is wicked. The police merely arrest gangsters for helping demented tradesmen to realise necessary insurances, without so much as recognising the social danger of such stupid gruesomeness as this frivolous, idiotic, play.

As the chattering of the lunatics died away, to continue, the orchestra administered a soothing mixture,

made up of such syrupy ingredients as "After the Ball," and "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree," from which one could prophesy exactly what the revue would be like, which came next. A comedian delivered "a few words on the political situation." "Coming to the question of labour," he said, in his nonsensical discursion, "you are talking to a man who has laboured." It was as well nobody threw up the obvious reply from the auditorium, for later on in the revue the same comedian explained his appearance by telling his Partner that he had been up to London to play "in this non-stop." She gave the right reply. Said she, "You must be tired." Back, however, to the singer who followed the political speaker, and who sang a sentimental melody about the end of a dreary day and the comfort of the little stars that twinkle in the sky. Next the flower-girl fell asleep in the park, and dreamed of winning the Irish Sweep, the existence of which seems to threaten the whole world with Celtic night. The fulfilment of her dream was almost entirely a leg show. The revue finished with the chorus, a hefty set of lassies, giving a really remarkable display of acrobatic dancing. And if God and man require a display of split somersaults four times a day during a heat-wave, God and man should charitably try to bear the sight of relatively comfortable nakedness.

"Eight O'clock," by Reginald Berkeley, which heads the programme, but which for me came next, was written as serious propaganda against the concentrated hypocrisy of church, state, and society, crammed into the last hour of a criminal condemned to death. By allowing it to appear in this galley, and to be corrupted into Grand Guignol by the signalling of the drop, off-stage, with a mallet, Captain Berkeley has associated himself with the press; with, in fully explanatory terms, the type of mind which would make a public show of actual hanging. Just as, in such an event, a jazz-band would have to be in attendance, so it was in this. Immediately the body had dropped, the jazz band did its liveliest, and jazzed away any serious impression "Eight O'Clock" might have made. The programme was completed by a music-hall sketch, in which a relation makes a will while the intestate corpse is hidden in the wardrobe. This, however, is a comic piece, in which a conspiring, greedy, mother-in-law is thwarted because the still cleverer relation leaves the whole estate to himself, and both are thwarted because the lawyer accidentally causes the corpse to fall out of the wardrobe.

The very existence of continuous theatre is due to the political chaos which it reflects. Treat human beings as competitors, instead of beneficiaries, of the machine, one of the consequences is bound to be the cruelty called continuous theatre. Do not suppose that this new thing is simply an outlet for young players who would otherwise have no chance. It would still be cruel if it provided that. But several of the players at the Duke of York's are men and women of real talent and experience. It is damnable that they should be reduced to slave-labourers competing against the untiring machinery of the cinema; and damnable also that they should be reduced to exhibiting the lunacy of Grand Guignol.

PAUL BANKS

The Ballet in England

BY ARNOLD L. HASKELL

VI.

(iii) THE CAMARGO BALLET SEASON

GISELLE

Two-act ballet by Coralli, revived by N. Sergejev.
Music by A. Adam

"Giselle" is the oldest ballet in the current repertoire. Produced for the first time in 1841, with Carlotta Grisi in the title-rôle, it has never ceased to be given. Its last revival in London was with Pavlova, an unforgettable occasion, and there is a link with her in the present performance, for her scenery is used.

"Giselle" must not be taken in a patronising manner, as Ernest Newman has taken "The Swan Lake." To do so is to miss its many real beauties. It is a museum piece; produced some ten years after the famous manifesto of the Romantic movement, Hugo's preface to "Cromwell," it is a true product of its period. It differs greatly in spirit from the revived romanticism of a Fokine ballet. It is the difference between Deveria and Bakst, though Théophile Gautier inspired both "Giselle" and "Le Spectre de la Rose." It has been so mistakenly associated with "The Swan Lake" that it is as well to make some comparisons. They are both in a museum but separated by a corridor at least. "Giselle" is a tableau de genre, perhaps the greatest work of a small master, while "The Swan Lake" is a masterpiece that is ageless. "The Swan Lake" is a modern work, choregraphically close to Fokine, while "Giselle" is charming just because it is tied so definitely to a period. "Giselle" is far greater as a whole than it is in detail. It is essentially great for the opportunities it gives a ballerina, and it is one of the greatest tests of her greatness. If she succeeds only in making it quaint she has failed. She can galvanise this old-fashioned material into a moving, living drama. Any work that has such possibilities should be given at regular intervals. This must now be kept alive in England as an inspiration and a test. The majority of our Giselles will fail perhaps, but they will be the finer artists from their contact with it.

Olga Spessiva succeeds beyond doubt, and in the first act she is incomparable, the ideal Giselle. Her technique cannot be discussed as far as line is concerned, though her ear is at times at fault. Her spirit is perfect. As I can remember there was more fire and exaltation in Pavlova. Spessiva is all tenderness with the particular charm of an old engraving or a last century necklace. Something too delicate to be defined. Her acting is the true acting of the ballerina, restrained and circumscribed by convention, but at the same time remarkably individual and realistic. Every young dancer should analyse this for herself. Spessiva acts with every muscle of her magnificent body. Perfection makes intelligent writing difficult, and criticism here seems futile.

She reaches a climax with the end of the first act, Giselle's madness. In the second act she lacks something of that unearthly quality that was Pavlova's. How far this is due to the fact that she has returned to the original convention of the ballet skirt it is diffi-

cult to say, but while in this act she gave me the atmosphere of an old print, and the tragedy was in the background; Pavlova made the drama itself live, so that one could not think of some of the crudities of the choregraphy. The story of Giselle cannot be ignored, that is why I have called it the work of a small master. In "The Swan Lake" it is a mere pretext for the dancing. By its very construction it requires a tour de force to produce an unearthly atmosphere in this second act. The music has charm and is an excellent accompaniment, but it is no great help to the imagination in this respect. There is at any rate no one to-day who could have approached Spessiva's performance. In invoking Pavlova I am invoking an ideal.

Anton Dolin was finer than I can remember him since a sensational Blue Bird at a Diaghileff gala. He performed the entire variation, which is now so often altered, with immense brio—yet there was more in reserve, and in the first act his happy, tender lover underlined the tragedy to follow. With Dolin and Spessiva we have seen the finest performance for very many years. It is the climax of this season.

Ruth French is a very beautiful dancer, whose work has never had the success it deserves—Pavlova considered her beyond doubt the finest of our dancers. I can never remember having seen her more beautiful than last night, with a truly glorious line, the well turned out carriage and the poise of a ballerina. No other country would conceal such a dancer for so long. Why has she appeared only once this season?

Prudence Hyman has now more than justified all I have said and prophesied for her, perhaps somewhat rashly, during the past two years, both because she was chosen by Sergejev to perform the difficult variation and pas de deux, and for her magnificent execution. Coming on immediately after Spessiva, she showed that while comparison would still be out of place, she belongs very definitely to the same breed. She came out of the wings as "someone," and immediately inspired her audience with confidence. She should do great things. It is interesting to note that this very rôle was taken by Spessiva herself to Karsavina's Giselle.

Stanley Judson danced with great lightness and a good style, especially in the pas seul. He is not yet a perfect partner, but he improves rapidly in all directions.

It is the best dancing we have seen this season, and four of the chief executants are English.

I have seen this work on various occasions, the superiority of the Russian style is very marked. A visit to the Paris Opera followed by a visit to the Scala at Milan convinced me of that fact. Russian dancing is a blend of French grace with Italian strength and precision, acquired gradually through the example of many remarkable artists. Whatever the nationality of the dancers this performance was a triumph for that style.

(iv) RIO GRANDE

Ballet by Frederick Ashton. Music by Constant Lambert. Décor by Edward Burra.

This, one of the most attacked ballets of the season, is in many ways its best. It has a definite atmosphere that together with "Mercury" places it as a post-Diaghileff ballet, while "The Origin of Design" and

"My Lord of Burleigh" are in a sense pre-Diaghileff. It tells a very simple story in a surprisingly direct manner. It may possibly be vicious, but it is never in any sense vulgar. Ashton has assimilated his material and balletised it in a manner he was unable to do in "High Yellow," so that although it is an earlier work it is far more mature.

It is very much Markova's ballet, and one of her finest rôles. She has caught the mood to perfection, sailed as near vulgarity as possible, and because of her perfect restraint and the fact that she keeps her audience at a respectful distance, she has made of it an exceedingly subtle portrait. Markova translates her emotions so perfectly into terms of ballet that one does not always give her full credit for her acting ability. Always competent, it rises very high at times, as in the present case. This has been very much a Markova season, she has at the age of 21 made a new career and scored a real personal success, not only as a ballerina in "The Swan Lake," but in the lead of the majority of the new works. She has always been a perfect craftsman, now she is rapidly gaining a mature artistic expression.

Lydia Lopokova is excellent in the latter part of the ballet, and her air of complete bewilderment at what has occurred to her is genuinely pathetic, but immediately after her first appearance she seems to me to be over-acting. Frankly, I prefer her in such ballets as "The Origin of Design," where the characterisation is less definite, and she can express herself more through her dancing. She is far more of the dancer than the actress. Suitably cast she can be the most youthful, impish, mischievous soubrette on the ballet stage. I can remember her, too, as an adorable Sylphide, unlike any other I have seen. As a Good-Humoured Lady her wit was light and spontaneous, while of late she has laboured and underlined it.

Walter Gore is an admirable happy-go-lucky, care-free sailor, exceedingly virile and athletic. His movements are full of humour, while William Chappell as a more languid, beachcombing type is an admirable foil to the flashy Markova.

For the first time the chorus has been well worked into the ballet, a hint at the only rational method of presenting most operas, so that it will please eye as well as ear.

The music is admirably danceable. It has been said that the whole spirit of the work is antagonistic to it. I doubt it. Probably Constant Lambert alone can tell, and his conducting seems to signify approval. As a conductor he is the ballet dancer's dream, neither mechanical nor temperamental; always considerate and conscious of the fact that he is not conducting a concert, but is an element in a complicated whole. His sympathetic understanding is an immense help to dancing in this country; also as a composer of ballet music he thinks in terms of dancers, décor and the stage in general. Too much of the season's music has been compiled from various sources, and has purely musical rather than theatrical value: economic necessity again, and also the lack of co-operation between artists that I mentioned in my introduction. The music of "Giselle" may be definitely poor, but once the whole

convention of the period is accepted, it has undoubted theatrical value, another very excellent reason why Mr. Newman should not discuss ballet under the heading "This Week's Music."

In spite of all the season's mistakes there has been a very genuine advance except on the decorative side. Markova and Dolin, Ruth French and others whom I have mentioned, have laid once and for all the English dancing bogey.

When I think of my luncheon conversation with P. J. S. Richardson, of our hopes and our fears, I feel a very real thrill that the curtain has gone up at last, and I am grateful to those who have been able to turn our spade work into something very beautiful in so short a time.

A Recent Novel

It has become almost obligatory on young novelists to make a grand tour, preferably outside Europe, and to record their experiences in the form of memoirs or of a novel. A great many of these books—from the writer's desire to be in the foreground, delicately savouring, suffering, or merely feeling bored—are only tiresome, and we catch ourselves wishing that the young author had not been able to raise the price of a round ticket. When we find an author of Mr. Priestley's maturity and experience setting out with us on one of these conducted tours we expect from him everything that the young author has neither the mind nor the heart to give us. "Faraway" takes us on a long voyage, from Southampton through New York, Chicago, San Francisco, to Tahiti, Easter Island, and various other named and unnamed islands, including the one for which Mr. Priestley is personally responsible, and so home to Buntingham, Suffolk, with a head full of memories—and what else? Nourished and enriched by that we have seen and endured? Our perceptions quickened by our contact, through Mr. Priestley's mind, with a new experience? This and nothing less than this is what, when we begin to read, we have the right to expect. And then, as we turn page after page—expecting each moment to feel ourselves seized, made to live again in the book with a quickened responsiveness, made to see, to feel, more clearly and sharply, forced to cry out: 'Yes, that's it, now I understand, that is what life is, that is what without knowing it I have felt'—a sense of bewilderment overtakes us. We turn back, feeling that we must have missed some essential pages, some phrase, perhaps, that will let us into the author's secret. But, no, there was nothing. Incredulous and reluctant, we realise that the author has no secret. He is telling us all he knows and feels. This—this we can see at the first glance—is all. But look for yourself.

When the book opens, William Dursley, a man of forty who does not look his age, is playing chess with his friend as he does every Tuesday night. William, we are told, is vaguely dissatisfied with his staid life as head of the family malting business, in which nothing happens. Almost at once Uncle Baldwin happens. He bursts upon Buntingham, with every attribute proper (in fiction) to a retired Pacific trader, a

purply-red face, a masterful beak for a nose, a flow of stories, an occasional obscene chuckle, and two fantastic visitors, a man and a woman, who spend the night drinking with him, wreck the room, and depart. (It is this man who defeats William, but the author drops him for four hundred and fifty odd pages and brings him on, at the end in so casual and clumsy a way that he has no greater effect than a line drawn to mark the end). Uncle Baldwin dies as a result of these excesses, leaving William the third of a secret. The other thirds are held by a certain Commander Ivybridge, retired, and one P. T. Riley, of San Francisco, and the secret is the uncharted island in the Pacific on which Uncle Baldwin discovered pitchblende. William goes in search of his partners and is fortunate in finding in the Commander as typical a retired naval officer as ever "shut his mouth, tightened his lips, and focussed his wintry blue eyes." On p. 100 the booming noise of which we have been uneasily conscious for some pages comes out clear and strong on the words: "And don't mind me, Mr. Dursley. Ah'm Lancasheer, you see—a Lanc'sher lad." No doubt it had to be. Mr. Ramsbottom has a line of talk that any Lanc'sher (or York'sher) comedian could use. On this, his first appearance, he holds the centre of the stage with it for several pages: the words of the chorus, in which all can join, are "Ah do like good stoof." The repetition of that "Ah" in the enormous type in which for some reason this not abnormally long book is printed, is curiously maddening. But Mr. Ramsbottom has bought a share in the secret and with a sinking heart we realise that he will cry "Ah" and "stoof" to Faraway and back. Happily he and the Commander depart together for Papeete, leaving William to go round by San Francisco and P. T. Riley. On p. 136 we begin the tour. Hope has revived in the silence that follows Ramsbottom's departure. Surely now, with William's plunge into adventure, the author will break through the superficiality which has so far baffled us; William will come to live; the miracle for which we have been waiting will happen; the author will take us to the heart of these apparently trivial happenings, will immerse them and us with them in his peculiar understanding of life. The miracle does not happen. Instead we are invited to watch while some of the sequences of a film called "Faraway" are run through. The first scene is shot in R.M.S. Gargantua, the next in New York. In the company of Mr. Thadelberg, who has no other business in the book, William sees the Night Life of New York. "Mr. Thadelberg, announcing the fact that it was now three-thirty, said he thought they could call it a day." The next scene is one of those fat-looking trains that chuff towards us across the screen and fade to show the interior of a Pullman car. William notes especially Chicago and the Great Salt Lake—"but nothing happened inside him." Nothing ever does. Inside William is a hollow place, from which his creator tries to distract our attention by a series of travel pictures—a big liner, a speak-easy, views of Chicago, San Francisco, Papeete. . . . Occasionally he varies the sequence with an account of William's thoughts and emotions—it is as if he pressed another button and from a slot in its side

the figure delivered a metal strip on which is printed: "He thought of . . . the few women he knew well and the other women he always thought he would like to know better." What are these women whom Mr. Priestley thus abruptly pins onto his model of a shy Suffolk maltster? They no more exist for the reader by this hopeful mention than they add anything to the now hopelessly blurred and smothered figure of William himself. It is not enough—it is incredible that we should be saying this of a writer of Mr. Priestley's reputation—to say that William felt bored, excited, tired, happy, miserable, thought this, told himself that was the other. If we cannot be induced to feel that William ever for one moment exists then all his author says he feels and thinks is so much babble.

Arrived at San Francisco, William "explored Chinatown," "lunched, somewhat idiotically," "told himself that it was all too good to be true," "caught a glimpse of the bay," "dutifully stared," "had a glimpse of the Fleishhacker Municipal Pool," "had an astonishingly long walk through Golden Gate Park, where he had a very Japanese tea." "Incidentally"—says Mr. Priestley, William here felt "a genuine thrill." Incidentally! If it is possible to feel sympathy for a stuffed dummy we should feel it for the dummy of William as his author propels him from spot to spot. Go on, says the author, giving him another push, explore, eat, tell yourself, regard dubiously, glimpse, stare dutifully, feel a genuine thrill. William does his best. He finds P. T. Riley in the person of a lovely vivacious young girl. At their second meeting, "incredible that he could have forgotten that blue-black hair, the indigo of her remarkable eyes." At their first, Terry says: "Have you seen anything of our city yet?" He "told her what he had seen of the place."

"And you like it?" she inquired eagerly.

"Very much," he told her. "It's one of the most interesting cities I've ever seen. I want to see some more of it."

And I'll be blessed if the author doesn't set William off on a *second* tour of San Francisco. Again William is "genuinely thrilled." It would be easier to believe it if any faint tremor communicated itself to the reader. But Mr. Priestley's lively description conveys nothing at all except the names of streets and suburbs. It is as mechanical as Baedaecker and of course less useful. On this second tour William is allowed to say a short philosophical piece. He does it with the right diffidence—"I mean to say." It takes him some time to say, and it is this: "Why is nothing as good as it looks at first?" He adds modestly, or Mr. Priestley adds: "I'm criticising life." Philosophy is infectious: so the "loud, affable and nasal Viking" who has been showing him the sights, rises to cry "Women have no imagination." "After the two girls had made their inevitable shrill protest . . . William continued." He continues to Tahiti on the Marukai, in company with Terry. Description of the ship: more and more dummies, the passengers, are brought on and described at enormous length before William is allowed to fall in love with

Terry, who confesses that despite her hard-boiled exterior inside her she is "as sentimental as a greeting card." Long description of a fancy-dress dance. On p. 235 they reach Papeete (and the Commander and Ramsbottom) and at once go bathing and see "magical little fishes." The food eaten in the South Seas described ("very little good stooft"): Papeete described: the Club described: another bathe, with even better fishes: a great deal more food: Mr. Ramsbottom has an adventure: a Tahitian picture theatre described. By now "William was drunk, not with wine . . . but with love," and before getting into Terry's bed he has "just time to tell himself how astonishing, how cool, how oddly prosaic, women" are. Then off he and the Commander and Ramsbottom go in the Hutia. The captain described: the voyage described: they land on an island and meet a Mr. Drivnak: they land on more islands and meet other people: Ramsbottom is chased by an eel. Alas, they fail to reach Faraway, and return to Papeete, to find that Terry has been taken up into Hollywood. The great Sapphire himself has arrived on his yacht to make a picture in Tahiti. Sketches of film people: the making of a film described. The situation will be familiar to any film fan. Will Terry turn from her William to snatch at fame and Hollywood? She does—but since neither she, William, nor their love has ever been real it leaves us unwrung. William takes to drink, gets fever, and is nursed by the "commonplace, honest, smiling, compact little woman of thirty or so" who has been waiting since p. 263 for her cue. Like William, she is a native of Suffolk, and in something under fifty pages after William stared at Terry with hot, pricking eyes Margery Jackson is returning his kisses "with a passion that surprised him." It surprises us. Do puppets feel, then? And off William goes again on the Rose Marie. The captain described: the Marquesas described: meeting with a man called Hulberry who says the world is perishing of self knowledge. William denies this. On p. 442 they reach Faraway. On p. 449 Mr. Ramsbottom says "stuff" clear out, but four pages later he is at his "stooft" once more and never again so forgets himself. A series of misfortunes culminates in their arrest by a cruiser of the Chilean navy. This part of the book, to the death of the Commander, some seventy-five pages, is worth more than all the rest. Abandoning all attempts at philosophy, and at sight-seeing, Mr. Priestley comes down to unpretentious narrative. For the first time, and that when he is dying, one of the characters comes to life.

They have lost the pitchblende. But the cruiser is going to Easter Island. How fortunate! The author will be able to include a full description. Does.

Back in Papeete, William marries his Margery, and in the last chapter there he is in Buntingham—playing chess with his friend, while Margery looks on and eighteen-months-old John Dursley lies "in soft rosy sleep" upstairs. The film is nearly run off. A knock at the door. It is Terry, of course, ravishing as ever: she was in England and just ran over. And off she goes again, leaving William as vaguely dissatisfied on p. 568 as he was on p. 9.

In San Francisco William bites into a luscious-looking pear, only to find it woolly and flavourless. The reader's experience of this book is very similar. It ought to be all right. Love, adventure, strange countries, suspense—what more could an author offer? What more would Conrad have offered? Precisely everything that makes the reading of a book an experience deeply felt and enriching. To be worth having an experience must leave us better than it found us, wiser, more sensitive, more finely and acutely responsive to life. "Faraway" does none of these things. In reading it we do not feel that we are in contact with anything more discriminating than a movie camera or a typewriter. The author's response to life is invariably a stock response, shop-worn and careless. Women are this, retired naval commanders are that, Lanc'sher men are something other. He has no delicacy or penetration—it is all slap-dash and hit-off. The stock epithet is perpetually at his pen-end: champagne is "a mounting tide of liquid gold," days follow each other "in dream-like sequence": in acres of description, scarcely a phrase that is better than a coloured label. The book gives the impression that it was written at top speed by a man who was either an excellent reporter's memory or a large notebook. It might even have been written by a man who had never seen the South Seas. Mr. Priestley has a great deal of uncritical invention—but no imagination. At no moment does he reveal anything that we are the richer for having seen. The book has vistas but they are such as would find a place in the prospectus of any real estate agent, excitements, but not the excitement of literature: at no moment do we feel the shock of a discovery, the sudden release of all our senses which is the reward of reading as faithfully as possible the words found by a great writer to convey to us his sense of the inner significance of an act or a conversation. You may say: We have no time for novels that make such demands on us. More truly, we have no time for any other. Novels which are no more than the uncritical record—in which there is not a quiver of life—of events and stock characters, are definitely not worth the time it takes to read them. Even less so when they are, as this is, bumped out to a predetermined length by crowds of irrelevant and lifelessly lively characters (the 'properties' of a novelist), inessential dialogue (of which the short passage quoted above is a fair sample), and descriptions of cities, islands, ships, and what not, which are never better than rather wordy reporting. If Mr. Priestley can do better, how heartily he must despise his public.

The period of the book is several years after the War. It might just as well be several years before. There are no indications, apart from a casual remark pinned on to a character on p. 474, that Mr. Priestley is anything but impervious to his age. In this as in other ways he reveals the essential poorness and clumsiness of his response to experience. A great writer is great in just so far as he is more sharply aware of his times than are other men, and great books are not written in the turn-tail mood.

It would be pleasanter to praise Mr. Priestley for what he has, for an immense indiscriminating vitality,

a certain almost engaging if heavy-footed naïvete, pleasanter, safer—and unfair. For there are unmistakable signs in "Faraway" that he is overwriting himself. With "Good Companions" his success seemed placed on a solid basis (not only on numbers: a million readers are usually as fickle as they are indiscriminating, as ready to swallow any easy novelist as to try any patent medicine—and to drop both for no reason). But in that book he seemed to have caught the knack of holding the mirror up to 'the commonplace man' so that the likeness, while remaining like enough, pleased and soothed. We have seen a fastidious and intelligent reader defeated by "The Good Companions" after twenty odd pages. But Mr. Priestley neither writes nor wishes to write for the fastidious. Writing to please the many he gave them characters with whom, and without effort, they could identify themselves. He did it with a confidence, a vitality, an insensitive gusto, which none would wish to decry. Repetition has destroyed the spontaneity. The characters of "Faraway" are not merely commonplace people steeped in a commonplace emotion. They are dead—stuffed. It is somehow painful. Mr. Priestley has not the intellectual, nor the moral and emotional equipment of the great novelist. His considerable merits as a popular entertainer have never, until now, been in doubt.

We have wasted a great deal of time on this book. Our best excuse is that more is in question than a single book, or a single author.

STORM JAMESON

Faraway. By J. B. PRIESTLEY. Heinemann. 10s. 6d.

Views and Reviews

"REVERENT AGNOSTICISM" *

The hint given of a certain caution and wariness in the title of Mr. Huxley's book "What Dare I Think?" is amply justified in the conclusions at which Mr. Huxley arrives concerning fundamental questions as to the nature of the universe and truth, and our right and proper attitude in regard to these ultimate realities. It is therefore with small surprise, although with a measure of disappointment, that one finds, as one draws near the close of his book, that he has advanced little, if at all, beyond the position adopted by his illustrious grandfather. Thomas Henry Huxley was an agnostic; and could lay claim to a certain originality for his position in so far as he defined it, and invented the name to describe it. His grandson is a *reverent* agnostic; he says—"The first, and in a way most important, ingredient of any religion congruous with science must be a reverent agnosticism concerning ultimates, and, indeed, concerning many things that are not ultimate." But it must be clearly shown that, while one has a perfect right to be an agnostic in regard to the nature of truth, a "*reverent* agnosticism" is a contradiction in terms.

It is really time that the fallacious character of this sacrosanct attitude to truth *as such* was exposed. If we agree with Mr. Huxley that "The truly religious

* "What Dare I Think?" By Julian Huxley. Chatto and Windus.

man must be content not to know . . . the ultimate nature and purpose of the universe . . ." we must, ipso facto, refuse to commit ourselves to any definite conclusion in regard to that ultimate nature and purpose. But a "reverent agnosticism" makes, by implication, a tremendous assumption about the nature of ultimate reality, for it infers that it is of a kind that is worthy of reverence; an assumption as bold and gratuitous, if not as precise, as the one made by the Christian when he says that the universe is the expression of a God of love. No, the agnostic is manifestly bound to admit that the nature of truth, if and when discovered, might reveal the fact that truth was in no way deserving of reverence, anyway, that an attitude of reverence or other kindred emotional states might be wholly inappropriate in relation to it.

Mr. Huxley warns us against the danger of mistaking "wish for fact, the strength of one's desire for a thing for a proof that the thing exists." He says ". . . it is of the very essence of the scientific spirit to refuse admittance to desire and emotion in the quest for knowledge—save only the one desire of discovering more truth." (Incidentally, he omits to explain why the one desire so dear to the scientific spirit is the one thus exclusively privileged.) He further demonstrates his (*soi-disant*) complete lack of prejudice in regard to the nature of truth when he says—"There is, however, no reason why the universe should be perfect; there is, indeed, no reason why it should be rational. What exists exists; and acceptance is man's first task." But why? And what place is there for reverence in view of such a contingency? Why must I, who am a rational being, with a longing for perfection, accept and hold in reverence a universe the nature of which, in the final event, may prove to be neither rational nor perfect? And if I am to deny in myself these values of rationality and perfection in favour of a non-rational and imperfect universe, then it would seem that, by virtue of the same reasoning, I must be prepared to deny in myself other values that I hold important because of their absence in the universe in which I find myself. In the end it comes to this, that man is faced, or may be faced, with the choice between the truth that he finds within himself, and the possible truth of the universe which may be indifferent, or even inimical to that truth. It may be contended that such a contingency is absurd, because it would imply a dualism which is unthinkable, and impossible in the nature of things. If so, the answer is that the scientific agnostic, having taken his stand on the assumption that man does not, and probably never can, know the ultimate nature of truth and reality, has forfeited all right to suppose that any contingency is either unthinkable or impossible. Also, if man may not suppose that the universe reflects his desires, as Mr. Huxley contends, neither may he, by the same token, suppose that it reflects his thoughts. In any case, once the agnostic starts to make reservations of this kind his attitude ceases to be the purely scientific one he so fondly imagines, and becomes, instead, one that depends on "deductive reason" and "abstract principles," an attitude that Mr. Huxley gravely mistrusts.

B. C. B.

Readers and Writers

The fragment on Poe published elsewhere is taken from a considerable work which Professor Randolph Hughes is now finishing on Baudelaire. The legend of Poe in French criticism, it seems, is not only an exaggeration of Poe's status in letters, but it has also proved a blind spot in the French view of Baudelaire. French men of letters, even the most admired among them, have failed to recognise the greatness which is in Baudelaire outside his notorious field of poetry to almost exactly the same extent to which they have read a greatness which is not there into the work of Poe; and, I imagine, for the same reason that Byron's romantic figure put dust into the eyes of a considerable number of leading European critics, never forgetting one of the greatest of them all, Dr. George Brandes. The reason, needless to say, is that the French have never been able to appreciate English poetry *critically*. There are, of course, lots of English critics who have no critical appreciation of English poetry themselves. An ear for poetry even in one's own language—particularly for the inner harmonies of poetry—is so rare a phenomenon that only at most two or three critics in a generation have it; and sometimes, as in America to-day, not one outstanding critic has it. But there is, so to say, a tradition of right understanding in regard to one's own poets that ensures, at least in the long run, a correction of any one generation's blindness, whereas, in the case of a foreign poet—Byron or Poe in France for example—an estimate once made usually continues down the ages unchanged. Professor Hughes may be pretty sure that however completely he may establish the superiority of Baudelaire over Poe and Poe's inferiority to many less famous English poets, French criticism will never change its now traditional valuations. I doubt whether M. Valéry, in fact, will trouble himself to read Poe or Baudelaire again; he will be so certain that French criticism in general and himself in particular have them rightly placed for all time. English critics, however, will get some amusement, as well as instruction, out of Professor Hughes' masterly examination, if only from seeing French criticism made a little ridiculous. There are too many literary Aristides in France.

Mr. Wyndham Lewis has I don't know how many new books coming out this autumn, and each of them, without any doubt, will make something of a literary sensation. Mr. Wyndham Lewis, in fact, is the only English writer who can still produce a "sensation." All the other writers of our immediate generation have long ago shot their bolt; they cannot alarm or even shock us any more. But Mr. Wyndham Lewis, perhaps because as yet nobody quite knows what he is talking about or because he is obviously still anxious to deliver some message or other, is still capable of creating an expectation and consequently a "sensation." He stages some very intriguing titles for his work as well. "The Enemy of the Stars," though perhaps only a paraphrase of "The Apes of God," carries a promise and a threat that very few young imaginative readers will be able to resist. "The Old

Gang and the New Gang," and "A Tip from the Augean Stable,"—also to be published this autumn by Mr. Desmond Harmsworth,—likewise have titles that should be "selling." But whether, when all these books have appeared, Mr. Wyndham Lewis will still have sensationability left, I'm sure I do not know. Carlyle never said all he had to say in thirty volumes, and continued to astonish England to the last. Despite his present autumnal output of six or seven or eight works, Mr. Wyndham Lewis may still, for all anybody knows, be only getting up steam for their successors.

I'm alarmed for his fate, I must confess, by the effect of his works on his critics. They go into ecstasies scarcely distinguishable in symptoms from St. Vitus' Dance. The best wine doesn't make you drunk, but only quietly clairvoyant; and I suspect the vintage when its indulgents reel off extravagant praise of it. Of "The Apes of God," for example, Mr. L. A. G. Strong says that it "belongs to the race of giants"; Mr. Richard Aldington says "it is one of the most tremendous farces ever conceived in the mind of man"; and Mr. L. P. Hartley says that "it is like Ulysses deriding Polyphemus, a joke too heroic for mortal minds." Miracles, of course, do happen; Shakespeare was one of them; Swift was another; and there were great men before Agamemnon. But I have more than my doubts whether the literary miracle implied by these phrases and praises has really occurred in just our particular day and generation. I become a little more sceptical, too, when I look at the company in which this "giant" is placed. "You look up at it [Mr. Wyndham Lewis' work] from a distance, as you look up at 'Ulysses' or the whole achievement of D. H. Lawrence," says Mr. Strong. "'The Apes of God,'" says Mr. Aldington, "is the greatest piece of writing since 'Ulysses'." The reference to Mr. Joyce's "Ulysses," as to a standard, tells us more than all the eulogy itself; it tells us, in fact, precisely what value to attach to it. My doubts of the quality of the vintage are doubled.

It becomes necessary sooner or later for every critic of contemporary literature to risk his verdict on certainly the most astonishing literary work of the present century. If Mr. Joyce has done nothing else, he has at any rate created a touchstone for the literary appreciation of his contemporaries. Merely to dismiss Mr. Joyce as a colossal curiosity of letters is as idle as to proclaim him a colossus of innovation whose advent has inaugurated an epoch in literature. No critic anxious to be right in soul about Mr. Joyce's work,—that is to say, never to have to change his judgment of it,—there being finality in art-judgments as in all others, which satisfy for ever—can commit himself to opinions such as these. Mr. Joyce has to be taken more seriously. He has to be taken rather as one of the "problems" of contemporary civilisation,—a "problem" like "Capitalism," let us say. In Mr. Joyce's work,—idea, construction, treatment, vocabulary,—the English language itself, appears to be exhibiting the corresponding phenomena of the "crisis"

of industrial civilisation. For the moment, I believe, it is impossible to say how the chaos will be, or even if it will be, resolved. The past and the future are at grips for supremacy, and nobody can be certain which will win. There is much more, of course, that could be said; but my verdict, all pleadings taken for granted, is that Mr. Joyce's work is the crisis of industrial civilisation in literature, and will pass with the crisis, end this how it may.

R. H. C.

Reviews

The Tragedy of the Dardanelles. By EDMOND DELAGE. With an Introduction by General Sir Ian Hamilton. The Bodley Head. 7s. 6d.

In his spirited foreword to this "narrative in a nutshell" of the bravest folly of the War the principal victim commends it to the younger of the young generation athirst for adventure and glory, with a broad hint that the ex-Service men have already had their bellyful of war literature which has had for its chief effect the destruction of any last shreds of respect for "those in authority." Sir Ian is wise in his generation. For, stripped of the romance that will always attach to deeds of derring-do, the story of the Dardanelles campaign contains no redeeming feature. The strategic conception of linking East with West as a diversion from the stalemate in France—incidentally to furnish the Russians with ammunition which was already sorely inadequate for the main theatre of war—was one of those brilliant inspirations that could only have occurred to a politician like Mr. Winston Churchill, with the mentality of an eternal schoolboy. Having been duly impressed by the terrible effectiveness of the German guns against the most modern fortifications at Antwerp the hotspur First Lord of the Admiralty jumped to the conclusion that to demolish the Turkish forts would be child's play, and then the rest would be plain sailing. It was nothing to him that the experts—naval and military—condemned any such expedition out of hand as madness. His bluster and the fire of enthusiasm knocked down the scruples and words of wisdom of his grown-up colleagues in the Cabinet like so many skittles. Yet no youthful reader—and few of the War-generation—will want to throw the blame for the subsequent catastrophe on Mr. Churchill, even though his fundamental premiss was entirely unsound. Nelson had well said: "Any sailor who attacked a fort was a fool"—and none of our precious naval strategists seems to have realised the destructive properties of the mine—fixed or floating. The real culprit was the English slow-moving mind, as reflected in Parliamentary habits,—"Asquith grasped everyone's point of view and decided nothing," "the intellectual anarchy in which the directors of British policy were floundering"—hopelessly unfitted for the conduct of any enterprise like war where "time counts for far more than money." And Kitchener, the soldier, was perhaps the worst offender. To be sure, indeed, it took a Welshman to win the war,—and it takes a Frenchman to present a true balance of our assets and our limitations. M. Delage has provided a first-class mirror as well as a truthful and stirring tale.

Selections from Rémy de Gourmont. Chosen and Translated by RICHARD ALDINGTON. Chatto and Windus, Phoenix Library. 3s. 6d.

The Wisdom of Anatole France. Being Selected Passages from his Works, chosen, with an Introduction, by J. LEWIS MAY. John Lane, The Bodley Head, Ltd. 3s. 6d.

It would be an impossible task to sum up the genius of Rémy de Gourmont in a sentence. Jules Sagaret spoke of him as representing in our time the *encyclopédiste honnête homme* of the eighteenth century. But even that does not go far enough. For nearly thirty years he was more or less cut off from human society—a physical infirmity and his own innate mentality made him shun it—and during the greater part of that time he was shut up amongst books. Even at the University his mind would follow no set course and when he became free from all set courses he let his mind wander wherever it would. The result is a conglomerate mass of intricate thought and vivid, eclectic criticism. His mind was always developing. As Mr. Aldington says in his introduction, "compare Gourmont's work in 1890 with his work in 1905—is the sensual, mystic idealist of "Sixtine," the author of the sceptical Nietzschean "Dialogues des Amateurs"?" But with all his change he is strangely like, though subtly different from, Anatole France. France, too, was a man apart, shut off from his fellow-men. Each indulged in those "silent orgies of meditation" of which Nicolas Ségur speaks. Each regarded all Life from a detached and distant standpoint. Each wrote because he had to write. But whereas France's "whole work may be summed up as one of long meditation on the vanity of human endeavours, of the futility of the problems, even the mightiest, that exercise the mind of men," Gourmont strikes the note of his work in "Une Nuit au Luxembourg": "L'exercice de la pensée est un jeu, mais il faut que ce jeu soit libre et harmonieux."

Books of extracts from an author's works are often worthless. If the author is well known the extracts are usually not congenial, and if he is little known the extracts lose by the loss of their context. Both objections apply in some measure to these two books, but neither Mr. Lewis May nor Mr. Aldington claims more than an attempt to create a taste for the authors they translate. In that they ought to succeed, for the translations are admirable and the passages well chosen.

War or Revolution. By GEORGES VALOIS. Allen and Unwin. 6s.

M. Valois' theme is that of the French Syndicalist thinkers, including Sorel, restated from the aspect of militarism, and brought up to date. Its attempt to interpret all previous social development as dependent upon militarism leads, however, to exaggeration. Thus, because militarism is essential to the rule of minorities, militarism is parasitism: hence M. Valois deduces, with Latin logic, that it is a historic development from the earliest and most direct form of human parasitism—cannibalism.

Our present states, according to this view, have all been constructed upon the system evolved by the rule

of military minorities. Religions and ideologies have been pressed into their service. Whereas Marx conceived militarism to be only the instrument of the real social struggle, which was a struggle between economic groups and classes, M. Valois considers it rather as an economic activity in itself, a progressively organised form of plunder, adopted even by the minorities which instituted our modern democratic and even communistic states. Nevertheless, the rule of militarism is doomed. Modern mass production, by involving the whole state in war, has made it impossible for war to be particularly profitable to the fighting class; it is far more profitable to the producers.

The supreme danger of the present crisis, in this view, is that the war-system of modern states is undermined and threatens chaos by its fall. The only hope lies in a widespread revolutionary action to place the state upon a new basis. Its values and its structure must become those of the producer and not of the soldier. All our cultural values must be revised: they have been modelled upon ruler-values (traceable back to cannibalism) instead of upon producer-values, which are those of useful contribution to social wealth. It is thus a kind of communism which M. Valois urges: but he fears that even the Soviets are moving towards the rule of a minority increasingly military in its organisation.

To us, however, the war-system does not appear doomed. The great war impoverished certain nations, but in the victors it increased the *relative* wealth of the wealthy, a point fatal to M. Valois' argument. The crazy tendency of modern states towards war is a result of the financial anarchy upon which they are founded, and would disappear with financial order. We scent danger, too, in the insistence upon a society founded upon production and work, in the present state of Western civilisation. Ruskin said that wise consumption was as important as wise production and far more difficult, and it is certainly the first necessity of a truly pacific state.

M. Valois is a good European, and it is a pity that he has fallen into the "autistic" thinking which is the bane of so many sociological writers.

In the Beginning. By PROF. G. ELLIOT SMITH. Thinkers' Library. Watts and Co. 1s.

The Diffusionists are not really a new school of ethnology, but a group whose work shows an increasing coherence and a growing influence. Their guiding principle is that of the diffusion of all human cultural ideas from definite points of social origin. Primitive or natural man, they say, is not at all inventive or intelligent in our sense of those words. He will shiver with cold at night for centuries, and never think of using the skins of animals to keep him warm, though he is already using them for other purposes. Except in the rarest cases, men never think of a new idea, nor even of a new use of a thing already discovered, until some individual human brings it to their notice.

These rare cases, upon which the whole of human culture depends, occur when a new factor in the environment is brought in contact with specially-developed individuals of specially intelligent groups. Each new discovery, however, whether it be the use of

the totem, or of gold, the invention of weaving or the wireless valve, spreads rapidly as soon as it succeeds, for men are highly imitative. In spreading, too, an invention arouses more inventive imagination, which is exercised in adapting it to new conditions.

At first sight there appears to be nothing very much, or very new, in this principle of the Diffusionists. But there is more than meets the eye. Hitherto, much of the work of ethnology has been rendered vague and inconclusive by its assumption that the whole of mankind is gifted with reason and inventive power, and that the arts and sciences of civilisation as we now know it, have originated from many, and often similar, inventions with which man has met the difficulties of life. There is hardly any evidence to support this assumption and much against it. Moreover, the Diffusionist hypothesis encourages us to trace each element in world-civilisation to its earliest origin, with a definite hope that we may thus be able to reconstruct and to understand the whole development of culture.

"In the Beginning" is a brief and popular statement of this principle of ethnology and of the view of world-history to which the Diffusionists have come. We are told that civilisation originated about six thousand years ago in the valley of the Nile, with the discovery or invention of a few original methods in technique and social organisation, which have made all our subsequent discoveries possible. Besides kingship, the use of gold, and agriculture, Mr. Elliot Smith credits prehistoric Egypt with the origination of the idea of God. The first god was no other than a dead and mummified king, worshipped as a magical being because of the benefits of his reign and in order to perpetuate them—much as Lenin has been mummified by the Russians.

The work of this school is introducing a welcome sense of order and definition into the welter of modern anthropological knowledge. It is superfluous therefore to point out the dangers of over-simplification of the problem, although one begins to feel them.

Behind the Electron. By W. HENRY LEWIN. The C. W. Daniel Company. 3s. 6d.

Speculation is not so reliable as a test tube but it may be equally arresting. Mr. Lewin has let his fertile mind wander along channels suggested by fairly recent discoveries in the field of the radiant activities of matter. He presents us with some pleasant titbits of scientific information. We read of the properties of the Kathode rays—of the ponderability of effluvia and the mutual radiant activities of gold and lead in contact. From these, and other illustrations the author proceeds adroitly to his main speculation. Human personality, he suggests, is built on its power to create the more or less perfect soul. This soul has the faculties of radiation, selection and absorption. These faculties have as media the directed movements of electrons—activities analogous if not exactly similar to the radiant activities of other matter. The idea of an invisible but material contact being achieved by thought alone is one with which more than one poet has toyed, but to find it put forward in all seriousness is provocative. Mr. Lewin has a vivid and not unreasonable imagination. Mr. Ludovici has written an appreciation of the book.

Current Cant

"To-day, legs mean nothing."
"Passing Show"

"We Irish have become an apologetic people."
"Irish Press."

"The public may well smile at the audacity of the Socialists."
"Daily Mail."

"Nakedness is purifying, challenging . . . it fills you with a wild desire . . ."
Beverley Nichols.

"All around me are young English men and women who, under Shakespeare's magic direction, are discovering themselves."
John Drinkwater.

"Many friends of the Duchess of York spoke of her dress. It was a little masterpiece of pearl work."
"Evening News."

"Yes, Chicago was awful, but in its distress it was grand, for it was angry."
Mary Borden.

"Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's swift move at Lausanne."
"Daily Telegraph."

"My Dear Rothermere . . ."
Hannen Swaffer.

"There is no worse trade than crime. Take it from me, because I know."
James Spenser in "John Bull."

"Uncle Sam is tight-rope walking over the gulf of depression, a noose about his neck."
Shaw Desmond.

"All the circumstances are present to enable a substantial success to be achieved at Ottawa. That conference ought to be the turning-point in our history."
Lord Beaverbrook.

"Let the Bishop consult the popular press of the past. He will find that the standards of taste and knowledge and responsibility were never so high as to-day."
"Daily Telegraph."

"Many well-known men and women of Mayfair are taking part to-night in a motoring 'Scavenger Hunt Party,' organised by the Countess of Munster . . . The motorist who arrives first with his 'scavengings' will be awarded a prize."
"Evening News."

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"John O'London's Weekly."

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Compton Mackenzie.

"To make sure that the accompanist was in correct tune and pitch, five competitors had their scores taken from last Sunday's 'News of the World'."
"Words and Music."

"Her kisses were false. The story of a girl who lured a man to love her."
"Week End Novels."

[A. F. T.]

Letters to the Editor

MONEY AND PRICES

Sir,—Perhaps credit-currency-reform requires not only its own economics, politics and vocabulary, but its own dialectics also. This may explain why your editorial replies to my questions seem to me so curiously indirect, and why they ascribe to me (and bid me clear my mind of) so many illusions which I do not hold. We should end, therefore, in mutual misunderstanding, if you had not, since my last letter was written, summarised your main thesis in twelve statements ("Notes of the Week," June 23) which you claim to be "incontrovertible." Several of these statements are generally accepted, but—am I wrong?—you part company with most writers on these problems when you say that, "The variations of quantity [of Money in circulation] have no necessary relation with the facts of Industry as a whole, but only with the exigencies of the money-market. . . . This subordination of all Industry to the Money industry is at the root of the world's economic misery." The innuendo is that the money-market acts, not merely independently of Industry, but in utter disregard of its interests. This statement, far from being incontrovertible, as you claim, seems to me a highly disputable half-truth. You may be right, but I have not yet found in your columns any satisfactory evidence for your view, since all the arguments I read there beg the question by assuming that the money-market is in fact disregarding of the interests of Industry. Meanwhile most economists assure us that the crisis in the money-market only reflects (but did not cause) the crisis in commodity-markets generally, and is thus derived from the paralysis of the world's purchasing-power through various factors—not least, the hoarding of gold—due to the aftermath of the War.
C. E. BECHHOFFER ROBERTS

[A necessary relation between Finance and Industry is one in which a unit of financial Credit appears with a unit of Production and disappears with a unit of Consumption. It is not necessary to labour the evidence that the present financial system fails to do this, since this is not even its aim. Under the present financial system Credit is determined in quantity not by the facts of Production but by the facts of Currency.—ED.]

READERS AND WRITERS

Sir,—“R. H. C.” must control himself. “Fairness”! WHAT!! justice from a literary columnist and a pseudonymous one at that! “R. H. C.” may be permitted his own idiosyncrasy as governing his private conduct, but to ask it of literary columnists in general! Too, all too solidly revolutionary.

Two-thirds of his British and American confrères alike would all be out of their jobs the day such a measure were insisted on. Ignorant as deep sea molluscs, tittering and dithering in fear for their salaries, afraid to have an opinion not known to be approved by their owners and subscribers,—why! “Phoenecian” is probably Mr. Canby himself, long hidden in the backward recess and cranny of his “orgum,” or perhaps it is the versatile Benet, doubling his dulcet personality.

But where, O benevolent editor, in what sphere of licherary choinulizm do you pragmatically find the that which you requisite?

And until the dead hand of custom has been pried loose from editorial sanctity, where will you find it? I mean as long as all papers print reviews of books by individual

authors, and no man prints criticism of the *imboscanti*, like Bruce Richmond and the half-dozen or two dozen other editors hidden behind their papers, or the publishers' advisers hidden behind their firms' anonymity, poisoning the thought of the people in your moribund country, and in mine that is on the verge of insanity (*dementia præcox*).

E. P.

Sir,—As I had not seen a copy of your paper until two days ago, I did not read "R. H. C.'s" original notes on Ezra Pound. I wish I had. I gather from last week's issue that he claimed for the poet the high-sounding title of the greatest living American man of letters. No wonder the "Saturday Review of Literature" was annoyed! For years much critical opinion in America has been opposed to Pound's work, for obscure reasons, which may, perhaps, be traced to Pound's long absence from his native land.

But I cannot help wondering why "R.H.C." should hit the Americans so hard and have not one word of reproach for our own critics, who all, with the exception of the late Harold Mouro, have been persuading themselves that Pound does not exist. His recent booklet on "Reading" must have been an unpleasant reminder.

Now that attention has been drawn to the neglect of this poet, I would like to mention that the only collected edition which has the author's complete approval is "Personæ," published by Boni and Liveright in 1926. And with good reason, as it is the only edition which contains "Alba," forty-two words joined together with magic to make a beauty which leaps in the mind, and "Envoi, 1919," an imitation which is at least as lovely as its original in its combination of sense and sound. One hopes that a few people will be persuaded by "R. H. C.'s" words and to them this note of the best edition will be useful.

IFAN KYRLE FLETCHER

EDITOR: *A. R. Orage.*

MANAGER: *Stanley Nott.*

AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE: *Gorham Munson, c/o Coward McCann, 55, Fifth Avenue, New York.*

AMERICAN DISTRIBUTORS: *Coward McCann, 55, Fifth Avenue, New York.*

CONTRIBUTORS: *MSS. invited for prompt consideration. Payment only by arrangement. New writers welcomed.*

SUBSCRIBERS: *Postal Rates: 30/- or \$6 per annum and pro rata.*

ADVERTISERS: *£10 or \$40 per page and pro rata; or 10/- per inch.*

Address for all purposes: *THE NEW ENGLISH WEEKLY, 38, Cursitor Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Holborn 9634. Cable address: Newengweek, London.*

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