

THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER"

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

MELIORIST ministries throughout Europe are no doubt drawing the proper conclusions from the result of the German Election. The waters of the political sea are banked up round its furthest reaches of Nationalism and Fascism on the one side and Communism on the other. As the "Workers' Weekly" comments, "the counter-revolutionary Social Democrats have slumped nearly fifty per cent." and all the other moderate, die-easy Parties have yielded up power to the irreconcilables. Whereas the Communist vote in 1920 was only 440,000, it is now 3,500,000. And what was the declared policy in support of which all these votes have been gathered? It was, to quote from the Communists' election manifesto, "to make the elections a great working-class demonstration against Parliament, against 'Democracy,' and for the Soviet Republic and Communism." The reason for its success is no mystery. It is very clearly conveyed, for instance, in Mr. Clifford Allen's Presidential Address to the recent I.L.P. Conference when he remarked to his audience that while they were waiting for the Labour Government to prepare its measures to meet the many problems with which it was confronted, "*we cannot, and must not, forget the fact that the vast majority of the workers are not enthusiastic politicians as we are, but are preoccupied with the daily task of balancing the family budget.*" We congratulate Mr. Allen; his words ought to be engraved on bludgeons of granite and used about the heads of all political enthusiasts alike. The workers are not politicians; they are practical economists. They have a ludicrously simple method of assessing any and every system of government: they look in the larder. Of course, the stupid fellows ought to visualise what the shelves may groan under next week, next month, or next year. What can a "constitutional" government do with a fellow who must always be eating to-day? It is not fair. However, there it is. Want is always in a hurry.

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted—"Open then the Door!
You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more."

The prime task of statesmanship is to feed the people. And if they must not eat unless they work, the task becomes one of providing the work. And the continuity of the work must be unbroken, for men must eat every day. With these considerations in mind let us listen to another passage in Mr. Clifford Allen's address—

We must give our Government opportunities to work out the detailed application of our programme. You can repeat the Socialist creed on unemployment in a quarter of an hour, but it may take a new Party several months to prepare the necessary legislation through which to translate it into practice.

We should remember, moreover, that the preparing of these practical schemes is rendered more difficult because Labour proposals have to be applied in a society, most of whose members are still opposed to our ideal, even though defeated at the ballot box. . . . there is the hard fact that the industrial and social system . . . is still dominated by our opponents.

The first part of this passage is reasonable enough; the preparation of legislation, of course, takes time. If this were all, the position would be satisfactory; but the rub comes when the legislation has to be "translated into practice" in an industrial and social system "dominated by our opponents." Is there not a strong hint here that the I.L.P. are not to expect anything worth while to happen until after the next election? And what then? Supposing that Labour were returned with a clear majority. Would that get them over the "hard fact" of non-Labour domination over industry and society? Mr. Allen said—

If a Labour Government could apply its remedy for unemployment in a new society, all of whose most powerful members accepted its point of view, it would be a comparatively simple matter to put our principles into practice.

Quite so. In fact nobody would have waited for the advent of a Labour Government to put them into practice. But, as things are, the prospect of common consent is remote enough if Labour can produce no principles other than those hitherto preached.

Then . . . if we see . . . industrial magnates daring to assert that they cannot carry on their industries if they have to pay a living wage; then I say the spirit of science will cause men to ask quite instinctively, "Why is this so; what is the remedy?" That is why I plead that our Government, with the power of initiative in its hands, should fearlessly summon the attention of expert and nation to inquiring into the Socialist remedy for existing ills.

Even as we write, the Report on the Mining Industry has just been issued, and in it are figures proving that the magnates of that industry cannot carry on their industries if they have to pay a living wage. Why it is so, and what the remedy is, Major Douglas made known to the world years since. Whether Mr. Allen cannot understand the remedy, or whether it is that he does not like the remedy, we do not know, but that he is as yet publicly ignoring it is clearly shown by his statement that "a living wage must be enforced as a national policy," that production shall be carried on "without unemployment" and "in the most efficient fashion." We can only say that the spirit of science which seeks to prevent labour-saving inventions from saving labour needs to question its science in a new spirit.

We are not sorry at the fate of the Proportional Representation Bill; nor should we regret a similar tragedy befalling the attempt to enact the adoption of the Alternative Vote. On the contrary, what is direly needed is Disproportional Representation. It would be a good thing if the elected members of the leading Party in an Election were allowed two, three, or four votes each in the House—sufficient for it to swamp all the other Parties combined. But it will not be done. The closer to exact equipoise the voting strengths of the three Parties are maintained the easier will be the task of the secret financial government. Besides that, the Government which fails to deliver the goods will always be able to plead the in-office-but-not-in-power defence. It can say (as already has been said in effect) to the electorate—"It is all your fault for not making up your minds clearly whom you wish to govern you." As though the poor voter could be expected to pick out the best of three perfect Parties!

They come as a boon and a blessing to men, The "Onoto," the "Swan," and the "Waterman" pen. No, we are in a period of political paralysis during which there is nothing to stop the initiative of government from passing completely to the credit monopolists. Not that this matters in the least so far as the fortunes of the people are concerned. So long as the three parties base their policies on the premises dictated by finance, those of us who challenge those premises know that whichever Party gets on the board the Community will still be left waiting for its dividend. In this regard, Labour hath no pre-eminence above Capitalism: as the one lieth, so lieth the other. Not in intent but in ignorance. No; if all our statesmen have to go to the City to know what they can do, then let the City govern us openly. At least it knows what it wants, and it possesses the means of getting it. And at least we shall be saved the spectacle of the continual wrangling of political drivers on the footplate of the economic engine. If they would only come off and let the financial designer try to drive it himself, we and they would all receive the object lesson we are waiting for.

The Communists are busy assailing Mr. Snowden's Budget. The "Workers' Weekly" emphasises chiefly the same criticism as we made last week. It includes in it the further point that the people who will actually gain will be the middle-classes, for the reason that "their salaries do not fluctuate so violently as the

workers' wages, and so the sliding scale will not operate downwards so far as they are concerned." "The Inhabited House Duty, which has annoyed the lower-middle classes especially, has been abolished." Speaking of the cheaper breakfast table, it remarks—

We have not to forget the activities of the price manipulators who have a knack of making the best of new situations and work on the principle that the public have proved that they can pay the high prices; they will begin to work for a shortage of goods, and on that plea, take the tax reduction for themselves.

Then, going to the question of our Debt, it has the following passage—

Why did not Mr. Snowden tell the workers especially that the time had come for the cancelling of this Debt completely? Why did he not say frankly that the £650,000,000 paid off the National Debt had been paid out of the sales of old war stock? He states that this is the last year from which any income can be derived from this source. If this means anything at all it is this: that having paid £350,000,000 per year for five years, i.e., £1,750,000 interest, the State has only managed to reduce its debt from £8,000,000,000 to £7,680,000,000 although it has paid back £650,000,000 out of the sales of war stock. A little arithmetic will show that although the Government has paid out £2,400,000,000 since the end of the war it has only reduced the amount upon which it has to pay interest by £320,000,000.

This is all usefully said, but the emphasis is in the wrong place. The burden of interest, as described, makes a dramatic picture, but a misleading one. It conveys the suggestion that interest charges are somehow in a different category from other transfers of money, and that in some way or other the country could pay its way better if they were reduced or abolished. There are circumstances in which this can be true, but speaking generally, and looking at the question from the other side, the receipt of an income in the form of interest involves no more and no less disturbance of the ratio of prices to purchasing-power than does the acceptance of dividends, salaries or wages. And, let it be asserted once more, the only money manipulations that matter are those which affect that ratio. Differentiating, as Communism does, between the capitalist and the worker, we say that the interest question does not affect their relative positions. Whatever interest capitalism receives from the Government it has first to pay to the Government in taxes. But what about the worker; does he not pay taxes? He does, but in the long run his wages are so adjusted in the working of the present financial system as to enable him to pay them and leave himself with just about sufficient money to keep alive. Mr. Orago used to say that the wage-earners did not pay taxes; and, in the profound sense in which he spoke, it is obvious that he was right; as obvious as though each week the pay envelope bore the words—"Here are your wages—so much; and here is your tax money—so much." This trick is worked out through several stages, but it begins in the City, where all such tricks originate. We hope nobody will run away with the idea that we are "standing up for the capitalist" in pointing these things out. If so, let him refer to the Capital Levy controversy of last November, and he will see that this fact of capitalism paying its own interest to itself was used by advocates of the Levy to induce acceptance of the idea in non-Labour circles. A good deal will be said on this question of interest in the days to come. It is a good advertising subject, and will arouse the emotions of all those well-meaning students of affairs who still believe that the way out of our difficulties is to make things cheap by all sorts of sacrifices and inhibitions in order to give the people more for their money. The right way out is in the opposite direction. Begin by giving people more for their money, and the things will make themselves

Depositors and Bank Failures.

II.—THE HOME BANK FAILURE—continued.

[Last week we recorded the opening of the Debate in the Canadian House of Commons on the motion of Mr. William Irvine. The importance of the motion lies in the fact that it raised the question whether depositors in banks which fail should be reimbursed, either by the remaining banks or by the State.]

Mr. Irvine concluded his speech by saying that if the Government would not accept his resolution or support it (to reimburse the depositors of the Home Bank) he had three questions to put:

(1) Would they guarantee that the commission should report to the present session of parliament in time for it to deal with its recommendations? (2) Would they promise that the depositors should be reimbursed from some source? (3) Would they give a reasonable assurance that the Bank Act would be amended this year in some way adequate to meet the requirements of the situation.

He was followed in the Debate by Mons. E. C. St. Pere, who supported the principle of reimbursement in a speech which, in our opinion, is worthy the study of every politician the world over who would learn how to raise the prestige of his profession from the humiliating position it now occupies in popular appraisal. His speech was delivered in the French language (we shall quote one or two typical passages later in support of our opinion).

First, however, we will survey those parts of his speech which deal with the possible objections to Mr. Irvine's resolution. That the reimbursement of depositors would "create a dangerous precedent" is one of these. A precedent, certainly, said M. St. Pere in effect, but on what grounds "dangerous" if one is to believe the assurances of bankers that the law now existing will effectively prevent false declarations in the Reports of banking institutions? The "danger" is only proportional in magnitude to the possibility of further bank failures. Therefore, to the extent that these are guarded against by existing legislation the "danger" becomes non-existent. If the whole banking system is on a sound basis, there will be no more failures, and thus the point about precedent does not arise: there will be nothing for it to precede. Another objection might take this form: that the Home Bank was not the only institution where the depositors could place their savings. They ought to have chosen a good bank. ("Ils auraient dû choisir une bonne banque. Ils sont responsables de leur actes. Que Dieu leur soit en aide!") "Choose a good bank!" commented M. St. Pere. "Would the banks, before the failure of the Home Bank, have dared to advise the public to that effect? Assuredly not, for they would have thereby implied that there were weak brethren among them; and that would have been in direct contradiction to their own conception of the solidity of their system, and, by extension, of the stability of each of its members. We now quote M. St. Pere on the subject of the "sentiment versus business" argument:—

Monsieur l'Orateur, un honorable député déclarait tout récemment devant cette Chambre, que les affaires et la sympathie faisaient toujours mauvais ménage. Oui, si l'on considère que l'existence et la prospérité d'un peuple sont intimement liées à l'idée de vivre pour se matérialiser; non, si la compréhension de cette existence et de cette prospérité est plus latinisée, c'est-à-dire que si tout en considérant à son juste mérite le côté "affaires" on apporte à la solution de certains problèmes financiers la bienveillance—vertu morale qui nous porte à vouloir du bien à nos semblables sans égard à notre propre intérêt et qui est d'autant plus motivée que ses commandements nous imposent de plus durs sacrifices. Les déposants de la Home Bank s'attendent à recevoir

cette bienveillance des honorables députés de cette Chambre.

Then again, answering the objection that "no law protects the depositors":—

Monsieur l'Orateur, je sais que la demande faite par les déposants rencontre des adversaires. On objecte qu'aucune loi ne protège les déposants. Raison de plus de réclamer en leur faveur, car il serait d'actualité de tuer cette nouvelle maxime de "nullum jus, summa injuria." N'allons pas oublier que celui qui prétend se cantonner dans les limites de la stricte légalité (le manque d'une loi protectrice pour les déposants est la stricte légalité—pour les adversaires de leur demande) et aller toujours jusqu'au bout de ses droits, est parfois souverainement injuste. Mettons plutôt l'équité en pratique! Elle ressemble à cette règle de plomb des architectes Lesbiens, qui, se pliant aux accidents de la pierre, en suit les formes et les contours.

Lastly, on the duty of the State towards its weaker subjects:—

Toutefois, dans la protection des droits privés, il doit se préoccuper d'une manière spéciale des faiblesses des pauvres. La classe riche se fait comme un rempart de ses richesses et a moins besoin de la tutelle publique. La classe pauvre, au contraire, sans richesses pour la mettre à couvert des injustices, compte surtout sur la protection de l'état. Si la loi de justice, monsieur l'Orateur, ne peut suffire à donner à tous les hommes le nécessaire dans leurs besoins, grand et large sera toujours, ne l'oublions pas le rôle subsidiaire et sublime de la compassion et de la charité.

A later speaker, Mr. Carmichael, although dissenting from the view of Mr. Irvine, nevertheless suggested that some progress would be made if the Canadian Government "started in the banking business alongside of our present banking institutions." If so, they ought to be "just as successful as the Commonwealth of Australia, which has made over \$18,000,000 in some ten years of business, and which has kept the rates interest down near the earth, and has the resources of the country back of every deposit."

A strong moral argument in support of the Resolution was that Canadian citizens were always being enjoined to save their money and to "put it in the bank." It was true that being placed there it earned the depositor interest, but that did not absolve society generally from the responsibility it undertook in sponsoring "thrift" as a civic virtue. Still less did it lighten the responsibility of the banking system itself, for, in addition to its action in encouraging the popularisation of this virtue it did a good deal of direct advertising for the same object. The Home Bank itself was conspicuous in this last respect, and one speaker quoted several examples from its placards—examples which made grim hearing to the House; and how much grimmer to all the "littles" and "humbles" who lost their savings in the attempt to become "good Canadians." Again, there was a good deal of curiosity shown as to what happened immediately before the failure. A bank does not close its doors before it has used every effort to prevail on other institutions to save it. Moreover, long before such a bank reaches that extremity those other institutions become fully aware whither it is tending, and therefore cannot plead that its ultimate failure comes as a surprise. In the present case the unstable position of the Home Bank was known to the Government and to the other Canadian banks some years ago. There seemed to be a disposition on the part of some of the speakers in the debate to concentrate on the refusal of the Finance Minister to make an independent examination of its books then. We can imagine his putting up a strong justification of his inaction, and, no doubt, as the situation develops, such a justification will be forthcoming. One point has already been urged in his defence, and that is that the mere fact of a Finance Minister taking action of the sort suggested, directly it became known, would precipitate the very crisis that his action was in-

tended to suspend. To us, the right policy for the Canadian House to adopt is to avoid very carefully making a scapegoat of any political administrator, but to fix the responsibility for the trouble on the experts who advised him. One may be quite certain of this. That what the Finance Minister did not do he was advised by the magnates of Canadian finance not to do. Let the Finance Minister who flouts banks cast the first stone. The ground to take is to assume as a fact that the Canadian Bankers' Association intended to let the Home Bank fail. That is equivalent to saying that they willed the confiscation of the money of its depositors. On their behalf it may be urged that, as one consequence, the directors of the bank have been made subject to prosecution, and that if they are adjudged guilty of illegal action they will be punished. But at what a cost—eleven million dollars—and all at the expense of the victims of the alleged illegalities. Stern moralists as they may be, we fancy they would be only too glad to let whatever crimes may have been committed go unpunished for a small percentage of that sum. Another consideration is that, had the Canadian Bankers' Association properly reviewed their wider responsibilities, and had they decided, as they should have decided, to absorb the Home Bank, they could have done so at only a fraction of the cost to themselves that they have, as it is, imposed on the depositors. The bank was insolvent, true; but it was not known to be so by its customers; it had, therefore, a goodwill value, one that, under sound management, these other banks could have consolidated and extended in such manner as to have gradually brought about a recovery, and thus achieved the two-fold triumph of observing the humanities and keeping their charters unscathed. Instead of seizing this opportunity they seem to have said to themselves—"Let it go; we shall inherit its trade for nothing and its effects for a song."

(To be continued.)

At a Venture.

By G. W. Harris.

I.—POTENTIALS.

It is, perhaps, a little difficult in a world where the printed letter has acquired an almost unbreakable tyranny, to write anything which shall show the appearance of novelty. We are constantly being told, even when we think that we have arrived at some new and brilliant idea, that it has all been far better expressed by philosophers during the Ming dynasty or even before that.

Yet, by way of consolation, it may be urged that Nature, although by no means infinite, is almost infinitely variegated and that the working out of all the possible combinations of ideas, however old they may be, is not yet likely to be an accomplished fact.

With this preface we may then refer to some well-known idea with more boldness, hoping that the particular "potential" which we propose to discuss has hitherto remained amongst those possible combinations which have not as yet met their printer's ink. The division which Bichat made his own, although he probably took it from Buffon, and Buffon from someone else, of life into animal and vegetable suggests some rather interesting inferences. Bichat pointed out that the activities of life (in his work entitled "Recherches sur la vie et la mort") may be broadly divided into those which we perform consciously and those which seem to go on without our being aware of the functioning. He further showed that the real and im-

portant activities are to be found in the realm of the unconscious. We are not usually aware of our heart beating, of our movements in respiration and of our stomach unless it be deranged. Yet if any of these cease, life ceases with them. Whereas our conscious activities, such as writing, talking and walking can cease without any danger to the tenuous thread of our lives. If we adopt this idea of the fundamental distinction between the conscious and the unconscious, and use it, for example, in the contemplation of that accumulation of records which we call history, it may help us to a point of view which, if not new, at least has the appearance of freshness. This would explain why it is generally quite impossible to write the history of current events, since man for the most part lives in a kind of trance, and is too far influenced by the happenings around him to be able to use his more or less conscious faculty of judgment. On the other hand, when dealing with the records of past events, he is probably able to see the leit motif running through the actions of those who lived in former times, a leit motif which was necessarily hidden from the participants in the events.

Thus we might infer that in the realm of thought it is the conscious which carries the most weight, whereas in the world of action it is the unconscious which has the greater permanence. The beauty of the generalisations, however, lies in the fact that they are rarely true and it is not pretended that no exceptions could be found to our conclusion. But if we examine certain events in history, applying the formula of the conscious and the unconscious, we may be able to see interrelations and correlations which were before by no means visible owing to the inadequacy of the method used.

Conscious empires, that is those which were founded by the conscious efforts of the persons who acquired them have for the most part been short of duration. If we compare the Empire of the Roman Republic and of the British Isles with those founded by Genghis Khan, Napoleon the First, and even Cæsar, it seems clear that the conscious was of far shorter duration than that of the unconscious. The early Romans did not set out to conquer an Empire, but fell into it almost in the same way in which England began to expand from the times of Elizabeth onwards. On looking back, how rarely, if ever, except where the actors were endowed with what is vulgarly called second sight, do we find any one conscious of the ultimate destiny and destination of such a country as England. In fact, it would seem, by an almost conscious irony of fate, the efforts at state building of the most enlightened or the most ruthless have lasted but the twinkling of an eye compared with the muddling vis inertiae of the ancient Roman or modern English statesman. A stone is thrown into a small pond and the thrower watches the ripples widening out in concentric circles until they seem to vanish near the bank. Apparently the force of the stone's fall has ended; yet it is a reasonable inference that the undulatory movement is carried on far beyond the horizon of vision. Darwin's celebrated demonstration of the dependence of a certain type of clover for its very existence on the number of cats and thence of old maids in the neighbourhood gives a very good notion of the potentialities of the unconscious.

All this may, however, lead us to the conclusion of a disheartened Greek philosopher who complained that opinion and appearance governed all things and that as it was never possible to foresee the results of any given action in like manner it did not matter one iota what is done because figs may readily come from thistles, good from evil, and success from failure. Herein we touch upon the tyranny of words, a subject which, although relevant to the problem in question, would require far more space than is possible to-day for its discussion.

The Theatre.

By H. R. Barbor.

THE FINANCE AND THE ART.—II.

THE interposition of purely commercial speculators between artist and theatre to which a former article (THE NEW AGE, May 1st) drew attention has resulted in a chaotic condition of affairs in the world of make-believe. The theatre, divorced, or, at any rate, estranged, from her right and proper lord and master, has been brought to bed of some extraordinary bastards, mules and monsters. These hybrids have in large measure ousted the lawful offspring of the older normal and healthy union of stage and artist and unless they can be displaced by a peaceable or violent reversion to the sane process of theatrical evolution, the theatre must inevitably die.

Various reforms—revolts even—will be necessary before the British theatre can be established in that dignity and social usefulness that it enjoys in almost all civilised countries, and, at the moment, only one of these is in course of active operation. This is the movement towards a system of collective bargaining typified by the four-year struggle of the Actors' Association to set the players on a plane of such relative economic security as will enable them reasonably to presume to the status of a profession and to give them a voice in the governance of the art-cum-industry which exists fundamentally by virtue of their talents and technique alone.

The debouch of the London stage during the war probably accounts, indirectly in any case, for the re-organisation of the Association into a trade union. Some actors have been goaded into the assurance that something had to be done to save their decency if not their art. The late Sydney Valentine's attention was attracted to the unionisation of the theatre and with him as first honorary Chairman and Alfred Lugg as General Secretary, the Actors' Association was constituted a trade union affiliated to Congress. The movement met with hostility both from the managerial and from the acting sides. Mr. Charles Cochran, one of the most generous and fair-minded, as he is also one of the ablest impresarios in the country, obligingly flung a challenge to the new union which caused the threatened actors to band themselves more strongly than otherwise they would probably have done. Other managements pledged support to the Association, which proceeded to draw up minimum terms of employment suitable for the widely divergent conditions of London and provincial engagements. The principal clause common to the two contracts established a minimum wage of three pounds per week. Other clauses stipulated duration of, and payment for, rehearsals, and governed provision of wardrobe, fares, and so on. Both, from the point of view of any actor who has respect for a great calling, must appear miserable documents, undignified comments on the condition into which the theatre has declined. Yet they mark perhaps the most significant advance that the theatre has made, from the economic viewpoint. Yet feeble and pitiful as these "Actors' Charters" are, the A.A. has found it almost impossible to enforce them.

The chief reason for this inability of the executive to protect "the profession" from conditions which navvies, scavengers, railroad porters, and unskilled labour generally would never tolerate, is to be found in the inability or refusal of the general run of players to envisage the simplest economic influences conditioning the practice of their art. During the past week this stupidity has been abundantly evident in the comments which many prominent players have made in the daily Press with reference to a current theatrical dispute. The alleged inability of reconciling collective bargaining with "an individual art like acting" has been stressed, and the good, easy players have never

recognised the fundamental fact that, unlike a novel or a picture, a bust or a lyric, the drama calls for its embodiment upon the co-operation of a number of diversified talents and techniques. Painting may be loosely called an individualistic art and it is for the painter alone to decide what, when, and how he will practice his craft. Acting, inasmuch as it calls upon player, technical worker, theatre staff, musician, clerk, cleaner, manager, fireman, and so forth, is not individualistic, it is communal. And being so the inter-action of the various requisite social elements must be stated and maintained by carefully framed and rigorously enforced regulations. Otherwise chaos is inevitable. There must always be divergence of interest between artists and managers, managers and staff, staff and actors. These can only be mitigated by consent, and to make every house of entertainment a law unto itself, given the present continuous change of personnel, is to invite disaster. The various organisations must lay down their requirements in general terms and decide the availabilities in accordance with the conditions governing the industry. This may sound axiomatic; but it is so often overlooked or denied that we must recognise it before proceeding with our discussion of the economy of theatredom.

Now the A.A. has laid down its minimum demand as £3 per week minimum salary for artists (when in work!). Yet this elementary demand has not been met. Many managers who would abide by the Contract say that they cannot because other managers do not. None dare openly argue that the minimum is too high. The Association of Touring Managers, who first recognised the A.A. contract after interminable discussion and retrenchment, have latterly refused to accept the proposals for revision made by the union, with the result that the Association (which offered a mutual closed shop policy—or at least one of mutual exclusive recognition) has been obliged either to enforce its demands by other means or go under altogether.

Owing to the political prejudice and to the timorousness or snobbishness of some players, it was impossible for the Association to close its ranks and enforce its minima. For the mean or bogus manager could always carry on with a "scab" company. (This is true mainly of the provinces: nearly all the actors of reputation in the West End are members of the A.A.) The union was obliged then to seek, as a means of enforcement, to "close the shop." But, to do this, assistance had to be sought, and having (naturally enough) found that the managerial side were, to say the least, apathetic, the support of sister unions had to be sought.

These sister unions are the music-hall artists' organisation (Variety Artists' Federation), the technical and labour staff (National Association of Theatrical Employees), and the orchestral players (Musicians' Union). The V.A.F., although proposing and supporting in Trades Union Congress the complete unionisation of places of entertainment, are opposed to federation with the N.A.T.E. and the M.U. An older union than the A.A. with a magnificent record of practical assistance in raising the status of the vaudeville players, the V.A.F., refuses to ally itself with non-performers. To this position they are led in part by the different nature of their employment as compared with that of the "legitimate" performer. Most variety artists are "individual" in the sense that they are directly employed by the proprietor of the theatre in which they work. They depend for success more directly on their unaided efforts. Their attitude as unionists then is comprehensible if not laudable. As a general work-plan the A.A. recognises the V.A.F. ticket in regard to a vaudeville player employed temporarily in "legitimate" productions, and conversely the V.A.F. recognises the A.A. ticket when actors appear occasionally in variety bills, in sketches, and so forth. The two unions meet on common ground in revue, and, to

a certain extent, in musical comedy. The V.A.F., by the way, has virtually closed its own shop tight; no variety man consenting to appear in the bill with a "scab" turn.

The actors, after seeking effective alliance everywhere else, were eventually, and after years of alternative negotiations, obliged to federate with the M.U. and N.A.T.E. A Federal Council, with power of joint action in case of necessity, has been set up recently, and the three unions have devised a policy which aims at closing the whole of the British theatre to non-union artists. This they propose to do by the policy of strike and boycott. Members working in houses which employ non-unionists will be called out, and, should the proprietors seek to replace them by black-leg labour, the public will be requested to abstain from visiting the "black" house, local Trades Councils and labour organisations being especially enjoined to assist in bringing the proprietor to recognise the Council's claims.

This Federal Council of the three theatrical unions is not to be confounded with the Joint Protection Committee of the Entertainment Industry, a body which comprises representatives of the V.A.F., Association of Touring Managers and other organisations, and which has been especially concerned with driving bogus managers out of the business and advantaging its constituents in other ways. The J.P.C. does not share the Federal Council's ambition to close the shop.
(To be continued.)

Abacadabra Plus X.

By C. M. Grieve.

ON AMERICAN LITERATURE.

I've been having a regular debauch—in American literature. I was set off by a man called Grubb—suitably enough writing in "The Glasgow Herald" on "American Spring Books." What made me read the damned thing I don't know. It forced itself upon me. There was no evading it. I read it from start to finish—with, all the time, the fullest realisation, on the one side of my brain, of this poor Grubb so cautiously, so judicially, so grotesquely, compiling it, and, on the other, of innumerable perfectly individualised Glaswegians of the intelligent upper-middle class and professional class and University fringe absorbing it and basing their decisions as to what they must ask for at the library the following week upon it. It gave me a bad Sunday. I went right off the deep end. I emerge bewildered on the shore of another article.

Grubb's potted catalogue—put together with such nice commercial discrimination, with so sure a knowledge of the publishing world—was prefaced with a note on the success of the efforts of the Year-Round Bookselling Committee of the National Association of Book Publishers, and the statement that "it is to be hoped—in fact there are signs that shortly something will be attempted—that an effort will be made here to inaugurate some kind of propaganda for the expansion of interest in literature in this country." "Of course," Mr. Grubb concedes, "a number of new bookshops are always being opened, but it is doubtful if so many as 167 would have come into being last year in the U.S.A. had it not been for the enthusiastic and comprehensive propaganda of the N.A.B.P." I believe he is right; and if I have one prayer to make it is that I may never be compelled to spend a second in any of them. I would certainly find Hell as conventionally conceived infinitely preferable: and surely it holds no tortures at all comparable to those to which any person of even the most rudimentary intelligence would be subjected if compelled to read any of 99.9 per cent. of the books they stock or the smallest decimal fraction of Mr. Grubb's 100 per cent. list.

Readers cannot be too careful. Mr. Grubb is right when he says that many of the books he mentions,

probably a greater percentage than in previous years, will find their way into the British market. This is how his article ran: "That most popular of American writers, Don Marquis, is said to have written 'one of the funniest of books since 'Innocents Abroad,' which is saying a good deal, but Mr. Marquis generally manages to give us an entertaining volume. He has collaborated with that charming essayist, Christopher Morley, in 'Pandora Lifts the Lid.' Mr. Morley is also having published a second volume of his 'Modern Essays.' . . . Fiction brings its usual crop of novels . . . One of the most interesting happenings in this section of American literature is the publication, at one time, of four novels, with the scenes laid in New York, by Mrs. Wharton. These four volumes, each a separate story, are . . ." But I cannot take the responsibility of transmitting their titles here. Readers interested in the application of mass-production and the methods of Henry Ford to book-making are referred to last Saturday's "Glasgow Herald." But, seriously, can anyone credit that Scotland's best—by a long way Scotland's best—newspaper should not have got beyond the stage at this time of day of printing on a page devoted to "special literary features" an article which not only begins and carries on in the way I have described, but concludes thus:—"It is good news that in a week or two there will be issued Miss Caufield's new novel, 'The Home Maker' and one will look out for 'Birth' by Zona Gale. A very good new American novel published this spring is 'The Interpreter's House,' by Struthers Burt. 'Dan Barry's Daughter,' by Max Brand seems to outstrip the average western type of romance, and it is having a big sale. Another charming dog story 'Treve' comes from Mrs. Terhune, while Grant Overton gives us 'The Thousand and First Night.' A good deal is expected of Arthur Tuckerman, a young and most promising novelist. His first novel, which was exceptionally good, entitled 'The Breath of Life,' was published last year. His new one is called 'Gallop-daws.' Other volumes of fiction which are worth noting here are:—'The Gay Ones,' by Charles Hanson Towne; 'For Love of a Sinner,' by Robert Gordon Anderson; 'The Inverted Pyramid,' by Bertrand W. Sinclair; 'Blue Blood,' by Owen Johnson; 'New Friends in Old Chester,' by Margaret Delaud; 'Easy,' by Nina Wilcox Putnam and 'The Orphan,' by Clarence E. Mulford."

So now you know! Go thou and Grubb likewise.

Fortunately the half hath not been told! And the article moved me to seek for "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." This ambition to see American literature steadily and see it whole has led me a dance ever since. I rooted out C. E. Bechhofer's "The Literary Renaissance in America"—which (I perceive on a second perusal) is not altogether the worst book ever published by a former contributor to THE NEW AGE. "It is not strange," runs Mr. Bechhofer's last paragraph, "that the extraordinary and two or three years before should be followed to think that this is only momentary. Now that the literary renaissance is an accomplished fact—as is the advance of national self-consciousness of which it is the reflection—one may anticipate the rise of new literary planets at any moment. I venture, therefore, to direct my readers' attention to the American books of to-day and to-morrow as one of the most important and significant phenomena of our time, and I confidently anticipate that our interest will not be disappointed."

None of the young and rising authors to whom Mr. Bechhofer refers in his final chapter seem to have overcome that check yet. Mr. Grubb has no announcements to make regarding any of them. Theodore

Dreiser, Willa Cather, Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson—none of these appear in his library list. And I do not imagine he has ever heard (or ever will hear) of Miss Ruth Suckow, Mr. Newton Fuessle, Mr. Claude Washburn, or any of the other weird little people Mr. Bechhofer built up his hypothesis and hopes of renaissance upon.

The best antidote to Bechhofer is D. H. Lawrence's "Studies on Classic American Literature," a series of amazing—no! not critiques—but rhapsodies. Franklin, Fennimore Cooper, Hawthorne, Poe and Whitman are drab little figures lifted on the fountains of his style like the little red and yellow balls that bob so erratically on water-jets in the shooting-gallery at circuses. How they bob and lapse and waggle up again! "C'est un fleuve qui rompt ses digues et envahit tumultueusement les petits canaux creusés par la littérature d'autrefois, les noyant sous sa masse. Nous nous laissons porter par le flot, éblouis par les miroitements et les scintillements de ses innombrables vagues, inondés du ruissellement de cette improvisation éclatante . . . L'élan qui emporte cette chevanchée est un bondissement de révolte," a French writer has observed, "sous les contraintes et les hypocrisies niveleuses de la démocratie vers l'originalité, la spontanéité, la liberté du désir." It could not be better or more economically described. Every literary aspirant in the U.S.A. should be compelled to learn it off by heart. And yet I do not know if even that would effectively thin the ranks. I have a fear that scores who will eventually swell the Grubb lists could swallow it like a pill, without turning a hair but that few, if any, of those who might augment the Bechhofer list could survive such an ordeal. The latter have certainly some slight literary importance which the former lack and, for lack of better, they must be carefully preserved. I am afraid that Laurence would shatter them into their original atoms; whereas Bechhofer supplies just the quality of stimulation which their delicate mentalities can stand.

Talking of American literature it is some twenty years ago since I last debauched myself upon it. You can imagine how young I was when I confess that Emily Dickinson impressed me as, distinctly, a poetess—of slender but authentic gifts. But my team then—if, as I had intended (which happily I do not), I had written a little book on American literature—would have been Sidney Lanier, "H.H." (Helen Jackson), Emma Lazarus, Emily Dickinson, Ambrose Bierce and George Sterling.

I am confident that I could have made claims for them in a book very similar to Mr. Bechhofer's, quite as well justified as those he makes for his very different set of authors, and with a very similar result in the long run.

(To be continued.)

Music.

A LENGTHY and animated discussion on deadnads, conducted, as is usual with newspaper controversies, with a careful avoidance of the heart of the matter, so careful that this avoidance has the appearance of being tacitly concerted, has been proceeding lately. That heart of the matter is that only a minute and tiny fraction of the swarms of concerts inflicted on us can or would draw an audience—a paying audience—and further that it is a financial impossibility for the music-lover of average income to attend and pay for attending more than one or two concerts, at most, a week. The absurdity of expecting paying audiences when concerts take place, as they do at the flood-tide of the London concert season, at the rate of from anything between forty and seventy or more a week is evident. Again, concerts are given in London with a lack of in-

telligence and regard for co-ordination with other events that is inconceivable except when one considers that musicians are the most stupid of human beings. For instance, the past two or three weeks have been almost empty of concerts of interest to a serious and musicianially-minded listener; but on one Saturday afternoon are crowded together at the same hour three first-class concerts, to which it is conceivable that some at least of the audiences at each might have been glad to go to the others had they not clashed in this absurd manner. The afternoon in question was April 26th. On that day Monsieur Ravel was appearing in a concert devoted to his own works (with two first performances), the Flonzaley Quartet were playing at the Wigmore, and M. Moiseiwitsch was giving a recital at the Queen's. To pretend that there is a public large enough for three such attractions in one afternoon, together with the rivalry of the Cup Final, is to invite, and get, the meagrely-filled hall that greeted M. Ravel. When, in addition, is committed the folly of charging 21s. for stalls, still less can it be wondered at that Monsieur Ravel's audience was not a better one. As I do not pretend to possess that faculty, so common and so necessary to newspaper reporters, of being in three places at once and having their "countenance turned on every side," I propose to confine myself to talking about that which I actually heard, for, unhappily, I also lack the faculty possessed by a notorious member of the drove of critics, of criticising performances which I did not hear, and which did not take place.

The programme of the Ravel Concert was badly put together. It contained at least two works that had better been left out. To play as thoroughly indifferently and clumsily as did Monsieur Ravel and Monsieur Gil. Marchex as a piano duet, a work, "Ma Mère l'Oie," which is thoroughly familiar in its orchestral form, seems a gratuitous proceeding. To follow it with a group of pieces from one of Monsieur Ravel's worst works—"Le Tombeau de Couperin"—which is neither a Tombeau nor Couperin nor Ravel—was a still worse error of judgment. One was beginning to get thoroughly depressed and bored until Marcelle Gérard sang, with very great intelligence and interpretative insight, some of the composer's best songs. Monsieur Gil. Marchex is not by a very long way a pianist of sufficient accomplishment to fulfil to satisfaction the exacting demands of technique, nuance, and tone-shading demanded by the brilliant "Gaspard de la Nuit" poems. His reading was jerky, dry and unimaginative. "Ondine" was singularly unlimpid. One has never had a vivid memory of Bauer's matchless playing of this work effaced or even dimmed—a reading transcendently imaginative and of an iridescent fluidity and beauty almost beyond belief.

The new song, "Rousard à son Ane," is a further experiment along the lines of sparse texture begun by the duo for violin and 'cello. The accompaniment is a bare 5th meandering about with an ungainly movement. Monodic or quasi-monodic music can be, and is justified when it rises to the heights of India sung by an accomplished artist, but Monsieur Ravel's "Rousard" is a skeleton of anatomic, possibly, but most certainly not æsthetic interest.

The "Tzigane" for violin and piano, also, at a first hearing, seems very tentative and unsatisfactory. The moments when it is palpably Ravel are delicious, but those in which it is "Tzigane" (which, unhappily, for my taste, greatly predominate) are quite unfitting. In fact, incredible although it seems to have vited. In fact, incredible although it seems to have vited, it is often banal and dull. That authentic masterpiece of modern French chamber music, a brilliant affirmation and expression of Ravel's qualities at their very best—the Trio—was omitted, as it always is. Why do concert-givers so persistently shy at this work

and give us instead the very inferior, and, it must be confessed, threadbare quartet and harp septet? Is it that concert-givers, like so many other people, have not the extra intelligence demanded by this admittedly very difficult work?

Madame Evelyn Scotney, an American soprano, although quite unboomed like some of her compatriots, to whom I have referred before, shows, in addition to a natural voice of considerable beauty and charm, a technical mastery and control over means of expression that very definitely place her as a singer of importance. In both lyric and florid singing she reaches a high degree of excellence, and it is a matter, or would be a matter, of astonishment, if one did not know what are the conditions of musical journalism in America, that this really accomplished artist is, as far as I have been able to see, practically ignored, while those not worthy to serve her as doormats are exalted to Parnassus. She has mastered, too, a thing which is so rare, and apparently difficult of accomplishment by even the most gifted of non-Latin singers, that peculiar resonant and vibrant warmth of tone which is typical of Italian voices. An admirable support was that of Umberto Urbano, also a singer of rare beauty, both as regards voice, method and style—he has points of contact as a technician and singer with that superb artist Dinh Gilly, and what high praise that is will be realised by those who have perceived the greatness of this latter. I suppose one ought really to make a vehement protest against the scandal and insult of singing such filth as Neapolitan gutter songs, even, or especially, as encores before an audience in one of the great centres of musical activity of the world. However, as the audience was a Royal Albert Hall Sunday afternoon one, it probably got what it deserved, for it greedily gobbled up the vomit and clamoured for more; so Signor Urbano plainly and correctly took its intellectual and artistic measure, and having cast one pearl before it with his beautiful singing of a splendid piece of music—the “Eri tu” aria—thought that was quite enough to waste.

Since writing the above I have discovered that Mme. Scotney is not an American but an Australian. She seemed an artist of almost too improbable excellence to be the former.

An interesting comment upon the honesty of one of the pleas for the cancellation of the visit of the Vienna Staatsoper to London, that was so extensively put about by partisans of the B.N.O.C.—a plea to the effect that there is not a public in London for two opera seasons simultaneously, and that external competition would kill this company—is to be found in the fact that the B.N.O.C. are actually having a season at His Majesty's at the same time as the regular Covent Garden season, and also that the Carl Rosa Company will play at the Scala at the same time. As a witty Frenchman once said of some egregious congenital imbecile who wrote second piano parts to all the Beethoven Sonatas—“If the good God had wished to protect Beethoven from his friends, protecting him from his enemies would have been a very simple matter after that!”

KAIKHOSEU SORABJI.

Reviews.

Reasonable Religion. The Message of Emanuel Swedenborg. By E. Brayley Hodgetts, President of the Swedenborg Society. (J. M. Dent and Sons, 6d.)

The author has endeavoured to condense the vast theological works of Swedenborg into 250 pages. In the preface he makes it clear that the book is addressed to those unfamiliar with Swedenborg, and hopes to stimulate the readers to study the original works. This warning is necessary, as the serious student will find much to disagree with, and much that is Mr. Bradley Hodgetts' own version of Swedenborg's message.

Modern intuition is fast coming to see—as Swedenborg himself has said—that “all religion has relation to life.” Politics, Economics and Finance are most vital matters of life and reflect the real religion of a nation. A first book on Swedenborg should therefore present him in full, as Statesman, Philosopher, Scientist, and Theologian, but in this book we feel that Swedenborg, the theologian, is over-emphasised. It is divided into twelve chapters, covering such subjects as Life and Creation, the Origin of Evil, Sex, Revelation, Prayer, the Church, the Godhead. Here, for instance, is a view of creation: “In both the spiritual and natural worlds there are three atmospheres, distinct from each other according to degrees of altitude, and decreasing in their downward progression according to degrees of latitude. As the atmospheres decrease in their downward progression they become continually more compressed and inert, until they cease to be atmospheres and become substances at rest, and, in the natural world, fixed substances, like those in the earth described as matter.” “The primary cause of all things is God-Man or the Lord. The first emanation from God is the sun of the spiritual world. Atmospheres are the things through which that sun presents or manifests itself in ultimates.” “Yet there is nothing of the Divine itself in the substance and matter of the earths. Substance and matter are the ends and terminations of atmospheres, the heat of which has gradually ended in cold, the light in darkness, the activity in inertia; but they have nevertheless brought by continuation from the substance of the spiritual sun that which was there from the Divine.” This book, which, though it cannot be classed as good literature, is worth reading for its suggestiveness.

The Philosophic Basis of Moral Obligation. By J. E. Turner, M.A. (Macmillan & Co., London, 12s. 6d.)

It has many times been affirmed, though oftener by poets and prophets than by philosophers, that the aim of human conduct should be personal completeness; that the individual should become the perfect microcosm or the image of God. Mr. Turner has attempted a reasoned justification of this attitude grounded on modern scientific knowledge and interpretation. He naturally adopts (and offers a good deal of evidence in support) the idealist outlook; he views the universe as a unity, as an immanently determined and co-ordinated system working towards the fulfilment of a purpose. By showing that between freedom and necessity there is not antithesis but continuity, necessity gradually merging into freedom as organic life develops heterogeneity, precisely as night becomes day, he tries to avoid the well-known dilemma. Alongside the diminution of mechanical necessity a new necessity grows. The moral imperative supplants the physical. By reason of the increasing freedom individuals may disregard the moral imperative, but only at the expense of spiritual frustration. Only by fitting one's self into the purpose of the universe and fulfilling, to the full extent of one's knowledge and power, one's function within the whole, can one obtain autonomy, with its immunity from spiritual storms. To become free, in fine, one must bow to the Eternal.

Although Mr. Turner apologises for concentrating on the basis of moral obligation without showing its application to the problems of the common man, many readers will regret the omission. Insofar as he has found threads which unify physical science, psychology, and philosophy, his work is of value. We English, however, are a pragmatic race. We demand, as Emerson said, not the reasoned support of principles, but a working model.

The Houses of the Workers. By A. Sayle. (T. Fisher Unwin, 12s. 6d. net.)

Although a pound of sound theory is worth a ton of contemporary practice, we cannot dispense with data. Here is a book packed with the information needed to

expert. The author was formerly Housing Sub-Inspector in the Ministry of Health and his book expresses this advantage. Among its other functions it is an authoritative history of the country's post-war effort at building houses, and describes the debacle with admirable detail. The first portion of the book is devoted to posing his subject. The actual condition of the houses in village, town and city is described, so that we are properly impressed with the omnipresence of the leaky roofs, the out-of-date sanitation, the unreliable water, the shortage, the overcrowding, and all the rest of the idiotic inconvenience. A few well-chosen photographs complete the visualisation. Then follows the story of the Housing Survey of 1919, and of that quixotic push so large in hope and small in science; and the medley of instability, the obtrusion of interests and the economic turmoil. All reading like a retribution. The part of the Local Authorities and the apathy which was found to be associated with the fact that the Chairmen of Housing Committees or Medical Officers of Health were substantial holders of local property—all this is here for the inflammation of the Labour melodramatist. Though Mr. Sayle displays not the slightest glimmer of illumination as to the cause and solution of the housing “problem,” he may be expected to have some success in his declared aim to “create and keep alive the conviction that bad housing is bad policy, bad business, and bad religion.”

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Stanley Spencer. Contemporary British Artists. (Benn 8s. 6d. net.)

Henry Lamb. Contemporary British Artists. (Benn. 8s. 6d. net.)

Harbottle. By John Hargrave. (Duckworth & Co. 7s. 6d. net.)

The Christian's God. By William Burton, D.D. (James Clarke & Co., Ltd. 5s. net.)

Psycho-analysis and Aesthetics. By Charles Baudouin. (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 16s. net.)

A Forgotten Empire. By Robert Sewell, M.R.A.S., F.R.G.S. (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 10s. 6d. net.)

The Puppet Master. By Robert Nathan. (The Bodley Head. 7s. 6d. net.)

The Latin Genius. By Anatole France. (The Bodley Head. 7s. 6d. net.)

Wage Slavery. By J. K. Heydon. (The Bodley Head. 5s. net.)

Labour and the New World. By Philip Snowden, M.P. (Cassell and Co., Ltd. 5s. net.)

The People's Corporation. By King C. Gillette. (Boni and Liveright. \$2.00 net.)

The Masque of Venice. By George Dunning Gribble. (Benn Ltd. Paper 3s. 6d. Cloth 5s. net.)

Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary. Translated by H. I. Woolf. (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 10s. 6d. net.)

Byron. By H. Hensley Henson. (Cambridge University Press. 2s. 6d. net.)

Up Hill and Down Dale. By Kenneth Ashley. (The Bodley Head. 5s. net.)

The World is My Oyster. By Edwin Pugh. (T. Fisher Unwin. 7s. 6d. net.)

Charles Holmes. Contemporary British Artists. (Benn. 8s. 6d. net.)

The Early Ceramic Wares of China. By A. L. Hetherington. (Benn. 12s. 6d. net.)

Chemistry in the Twentieth Century. Edited by Dr. E. F. Armstrong, F.R.S. (Benn. 15s. net.)

The Cruise of the Amaryllys. By G. H. P. Muhliauer, Lt., R.N.R. (The Bodley Head. 8s. 6d. net.)

Cat o' Mountain. By Arthur O. Friel. (Melrose. 7s. 6d. net.)

What is Socialism? A Symposium edited by Dan Griffiths. (Grant Richards. 2s. 6d. net.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Guild Idea.

SIR,—I think Mr. Reckitt has forced my remarks to his own extravagant conclusion. I remember this much of wage-slavery—that its basis is poverty and destitution; I know this much of Guild Socialism—that it is a penal system against leisure; I know this much of Economic Democracy—that its basis is economic security by right of birth. There is nothing in the Guild system which meets the same end, despite the obsession for Freedom and Justice. Human beings in receipt of a secured income cannot be reduced by Robots since they can exercise the will to refuse. “Dividends for all” is the condition of whatever is accessible in Democracy and Freedom.

In my scepticism of the spiritual nature of industrial technique, I merely wish to emphasise that the spiritual factor cannot be worked into any engineering formulae, schedule of quantities, or bill of costs; and as these are the sort of things which actually carry industry on, I don't care much if my deductions therefrom conflict with a literary epigram. Mr. Reckitt wonders how I ever became possessed with the Guild idea. To be quite frank—so do I; though I suppose it was because I thought it the way out of the wage-system, which it certainly is not. Nevertheless I am sorry to find myself in disagreement with Mr. Reckitt.

F. H. A.

The Fundamental Idea.

SIR,—If Nietzsche's idea had been a Will to Life—to create—instead of a Will to Power—to dominate—then, it seems to me, “we Nietzscheans,” and son others, including perhaps even “Labour,” since events (1914-24) have disclosed only or mainly a will to destroy, a will to negation, might have together found, like our real opponents, one simple, common, and fundamental idea of cohesion. We have many ideas; positive ideas; but we (I mean the positive ideas and forces of the world movement) utterly lack this idea of unity. Yet we have here the precedent conditions of any success—an idea containing the whole of our creative force, a force now dissipated whilst sections of us, in principle in agreement, heave bricks at one another.

Our opponents have such a principle, a material governing principle—call it Money—the supremacy of things: based on the notion “duty,” duty to such things: based on the notion “Executive, or Government things as authority, to the Executive, or Government, or War Office or Party, etc. On the other hand, ours, I take it, moral not material, is Man—the supremacy of man: based, in turn, and instead, on the notion “responsibility,” responsibility for all things, including authority, and so on. Nor is this out of my own head; rather is it an interpretation of the now universal libertarian (*versus* authoritarian) pre-war demand, by groups and States, for (1911-24) “status and control.” Here, going behind “duty,” the principle is responsibility. We have thus, on one side a negative idea and force, on the other a positive idea and force. But the latter (ours) is, as I have just again said, childishly innocuous, dissipated by ourselves.

Now this, I submit, is due to muddleheadedness: many of us still think of democracy as a fact, and not, as it is, an ideal. These, though not our opponents, expect the vast, passive, socially and politically thoughtless majority of all classes; creatures, as they are, of habit and of negative and authoritarian ideas (which they don't understand); not only to accept, but to understand, ours—ideas which, on the contrary, are positive, constructive, new, and, therefore, to these, more difficult. In other words, instead of bravely and sanely ourselves leading, we, unlike our opponents, still await an understanding where any real understanding is impossible. We further forget that men are unique,

and that men and groups can only at best agree in principle. The unity of our libertarian forces, therefore, can only be secured on the basis of some one fundamental moral principle and universal, one which contains all or most of our other positive ideas. That principle I have described above.

Take, for instance, the I.L.P. The members generally, their mental development precluding any larger vision, any real sense of reality as that obtaining in their leaders, have eyes only for domestic (national) or "Labour" affairs, and really believe that they control the machine. They worship, "sit at the feet of," but don't know or understand or read their leaders. On the other hand, the leaders themselves see very much as we see. Thus: "Democrats are not yet intelligent enough to run democracy" ("Parliament and Democracy," by Ramsay MacDonald). Again: "Ramsay MacDonald sees the European problem as no mere party question; to him France and Germany [and the rest] are parts of a world scheme and chaos" (the Chief Whip, Mr. Spoor, May 4th). Well, "democrats" here include the rank and file of the I.L.P.; and the "scheme and chaos" referred to are but other and ambiguous terms for "the System" and "reign of unreason" under which we all suffer. Clearly then the Premier and the I.L.P., using and controlling, though not understood by, the individual components of this implement, even perhaps (and this, I think is inevitable) in disagreement with them, are, nevertheless, in principle, in line with us. In these cases the tail is the body, but neither the head nor the thing in itself.

Now, in this connection, most of us forget, like F.H.A., the whole for the part. We forget that our own particular ideas and movements are a part not only of a world movement, but a part as well of one of the two essential conflicting forces of that movement. So we disagree, because we dislike their methods, with others who, in turn, disagree with ours, though in our first principle both alike in harmony, but not yet conscious of this fundamental, as in sanity it would be, bond of union. Unlike, for instance, F. H. A., to my mind the Credit idea, the Guild idea, the Soviet idea, the Sinn Fein idea, the I.L.P. idea, the psycho-analytical idea, the "status and control" idea, the central European peasants idea (e.g., "full social equality"), the idea (above) of a new civilisation, here and elsewhere, based not as hitherto on "duty," but upon "responsibility"—all these are essentially the same, certainly in principle the same. And on this principle we should, without compromise, unite.

A. G. CRAFTS.

[Must the current of economic emancipation really be either all positive or all negative? May not the application to Life of the libertarian idea involve the principle of alternation rather than continuity? A continuous current of Authority means tyranny. But a continuous current of Liberty means anarchy. If, however, they follow each other in a breathless succession of check and counter-check, may they not merge into—what?—the creation of some new principle yet without a name but partaking of the essentials of both concepts? Or, take Kinematography. You want your picture in action. If the light which projects it is continuous, you distinguish nothing. If you substitute darkness you see nothing. But directly you flick darknesses across your light-beam, your picture takes form, it moves. Or, again, in correspondence with theology. The concept of Authority—the Father. The concept of Liberty—the Son. But the experience of Liberty—the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Somewhere in his writings Major Douglas has said (we trust our memory) "In matters of technique—Authority: in matters of policy—Liberty." Shall we say, in respect of the "Flourishing Life" to which we all aspire (wherein must be both technique and policy—the

"what" and the "how"—the "end" and the "means") that it is a majestic atom whose nucleus is Liberty and whose satellites are Authority?—Ed.]

* * *

Bank Amalgamations.

SIR.—It was announced in the financial Press some time ago that, under the present Government the Board of Trade was unlikely to look with favour upon further bank amalgamation schemes. It is now announced that "Treasury sanction has been obtained for the proposed absorption by the Westminster Bank, Ltd., of the Guernsey Commercial Banking Company."

Mr. Snowden was interrogated on the subject of bank amalgamations on February 26th, and in the course of his reply said: "Any proposal for amalgamation was now submitted to the Treasury and Board of Trade, who took the advice of an advisory committee."

Information is now published that the Treasury has sanctioned another amalgamation—the absorption of Messrs. Child and Co., the last but one of the private banks, by Messrs. Glyn, Mills.

In view of the uninterrupted continuance of the policy of concentrating paramount economic power, it would be interesting to know the personnel of the committee whose advice is invariably acted upon.

K. O. G.

The Labour Party.

SIR.—The letter under this title appearing last week provides a most suitable background against which to quote a couple of trenchant Press observations. Thus the "Observer," commenting upon the Government's domestic policy, remarks: "Is it really that Mr. Snowden sits on the cashbox resisting unconventional demands with an orthodox sternness delightful to the more negative type of Treasury official? Or is it the deadly crux of a situation behind the scenes—that these things can only be done on a capitalist basis, and that the Government, through fear of having to confess the truth, shrink from the kind and extent of enterprise vital to the whole future of the nation."

And again, a week later: "It (the Budget) will indeed be a monument of compromise, and some of Mr. Snowden's unusual acerbity of recent weeks may be due to his growing sense of the coils of predestination which envelop every Chancellor of the Exchequer."

That Ministers are not the free agents they are represented to be, and that there is a "Power" with a "pull" somewhere, is becoming increasingly evident. There must be a considerable number of people who are seeking a coherent explanation of the reversal and sidetracking of reiterated policies, and there must be some politicians who are wondering how they are made to look fools and appear liars. Finance is the real Politician. It always carries its policy.

W.

The Single Tax.

SIR.—However unsuccessful my effort, I was not, as "A" seems to think, trying to prove the existence of rent, which is self-evident. I wanted to show that there is a law of rent, and that the difference in site values proves that the law of rent operates.

The statement that it does not matter "whether landlords do extract all the rent," was part of my reply to "A's" contention that the system of leases upset the H. G. Theory of land monopoly. I wish to emphasise that rent is the full price of a certain kind of advantage, and that any neglect, accidental or sentimental, by the landlord to extract the full price does not reduce the value of the advantage itself, which is due either to natural agency or to the increment of association.

I agree that the land monopoly exercises only a cir-

translate any economic theorist into a practical housing circumscribed power, but I suggest, without being dogmatic, that the chief circumscribing influence emanates from the credit monopoly, and therefore that the extinction of the stronger may be followed by an accession of strength to the weaker monopoly.

The institution of land taxes and social credit, either jointly or separately, may have effects calculable with some degree of precision, but further calls on the imagination must be made to envisage the modification of the need for one reform by the institution of the other.

"In a condition of Society in which no one need fear poverty, no one would desire great wealth—at least, no one would take the trouble to strive and to strain for it as men do now. . . . When everyone is sure of being able to get enough, no one will care to make a packhorse of himself."

These words of Henry George are as applicable to the consequences of Social Credit as to those of Socialised Rent.

Jo. S.

Pastiche.

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES.

BY OLD AND CRUSTED.

WHEN THE GODS ARE POWERLESS.

Against dullness and stupidity combined even the Gods fight in vain and when their united efforts result in "another striking article," of which there seems to be an inexhaustible supply, the situation becomes intolerable. The last "Frasorial" offence in this line should bear the superscription, "Bottom on the Budget," or "Well roared Lion," for 'tis the very midsummer madness of mediocrity with a swelled head. But let him speak for himself.

After a little topographical detail anent the Surrey hills and a dissertation on the national income and expenditure, Bully Bottom tells us amongst other fatuous communications that "We are paying more and more wages to the men who punch tickets in tramcars and the dustmen who collect refuse." I am not surprised. However we get men to "punch tickets" for x hours a day at any price passes my comprehension. I must confess I am unable to express an opinion on the activities of dustmen, as the only refuse that accumulates here and clamours for speedy removal issues from Carmelite House—and that only in very limited quantity. The housemaid copes with it quite easily. A little further down the page of this latter day variety of "The Sunday at Home" we meet this little gem:—"No one wants to reduce wages, but the argument is that there must be a readjustment of wages in our different industries." Must there really? And pray what does "readjustment" mean? Are the ticket punchers to hand over a percentage of their princely remuneration to the turners and fitters, or the dustmen to deal out half-crowns to the electricians? Then—and this in italics—"There must be an end of the glorification of the unskilled and the casual labourer."

Which being interpreted, signifieth—what? Hands up, all casual labourers who have been glorified, and tell us all about it. The next pearl of wisdom is a sneer at the Minister of Education, who deserves the thanks of every decent man and woman for advocating "free and compulsory education for all children and young persons of both sexes up to the age of 18 years." Not so, our journalistic weaver, who only foresees an increase of "larrikins and flappers" who will "bring nothing into the home when they are approaching manhood and womanhood." Nothing? "Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee." Hast forgotten the old tag, *mens sana in corpore sano*? which is hardly to be expected of children "bringing something in" at the mature age of 14! Hast never heard "that the true veins of wealth are purple—and not in Rock, but in Flesh—perhaps even that the final outcome and consummation of all wealth is in the producing of as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures." Oh thou dunder-head; that it should be necessary to din such time-worn clichés into thy long ears! Scratch his head, Pease-blossom, and good Monsieur Mustardseed help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch Then he becometh sententious

and opineth that "Britain is in very serious danger of ultimate financial and economic collapse." So it is, Bully, so it is, and thou are doing thy best to hasten the event! But I have had enough of thee for to-day, so get thee gone "and purge thy mortal grossness." Coming, Titania, Coming!

THE NEW ALCHEMY.

My scientific equipment is poor. Take chemistry, for example. All I know is that if you put a spoonful of "fruit salt" into a tumbler of water it fizzes and generally slops over, making a nasty mess; at least, that is the usual result of my experiments. Those who have carried their research work a little further inform me that this bubbly liquid is very refreshing to those who, having returned home in the rosy dawn, with vine leaves in their hair, are being safely brought to the beginning of the day what time the more conventional members of society are contemplating a late lunch or an early cup of afternoon tea. Being of a docile, tractable nature, I have also learned that if you put a drop of something into something else, the result is quite different from either of the component parts, and often very surprising—which is not quite the scientific way of putting it, but you know what I mean.

Now what I am driving at is an analogy of the effect the Douglas theorem has on an inquiring mind. Take my case, for example. After years of desultory reading and much study of different exponents of economic theory, from Adam Smith to Arthur Roberts—especially the latter, whose lectures at the Gaiety Theatre and elsewhere were extremely well attended, and who certainly did not believe in the "scarcity theory," as his celebrated dictum, "quantum suffi, he shall swim in it," amply proves—good fortune led me via Hobson, Penty, Hecht and others to Douglas, from whose books there distilled that little drop of something which made all the difference. My confused ideas began to clarify; all sorts of apparently contradictory propositions sorted themselves out and fell into order. But it took time, and the process is still going on.

Well, "The bearings of this observation lays in the application on it," as the skipper of the "Cautious Clara" said to Florence Dombey and Cap'n Cuttle, and I may be pardoned if I hazard the opinion that the Douglas theorem is a solvent rather than a complete solution. People are in such a hurry nowadays and want a detailed scheme all ready to put into work at 9.15 to-morrow morning. Not so Maj. C. H. Douglas, who assures us that "nothing can be more fatal to a successful issue than the premature publication of cut and dried arrangements which are likely to be completely out of date long before their adoption can be secured." So, if I might offer a word of advice to those who are approaching this fascinating subject for the first time it would be—give the solvent time to work—the solution will follow in due course. It is always as well to bear in mind that a new idea which is immediately understandable to the average intellect and can be grasped in all its bearings by a busy man in the train, between home and office—like a Daily Dope stunt—is not worth much, and is probably fallacious.

HAMPSTEAD SOCIAL CREDIT GROUP.

The Thursday evening meetings are now to be resumed. The first will be held on Thursday evening next, May 15th, at the Holly Hill Shop, 1, Holly Hill, Hampstead, at 8 p.m.—Business: 1, Proposed Whitsun Conference at Christchurch, Hants.; 2, Study Circle; 3, Propaganda.

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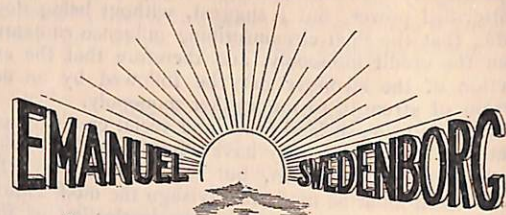
The Social Credit Movement

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 this side at any time.
 CANADA.—The United Farmers of Alberta, of Lougheed
 Building, Calgary, Alberta, are willing to accept subscrip-
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 put inquirers into touch with people interested in the
 Social Credit Proposals. In this last connection the Editor
 of the Ottawa "Citizen," Ottawa, would doubtless advise
 correspondents.

DIRECTORY

- Names and addresses of Social Credit Advocates or Adherents
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