

# THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER"

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

After the collapse of the Geneva "disarmament" negotiations, both frustrated parties have adopted the social and child-like pose of talking loudly about something else. The opening of the Peace Bridge over the Niagara River, for students of finance almost a celebration of the United States annexation of Canada, provided an opportunity for changing the tone; which was seized, as silently as Wolfe took Quebec, by somebody through the persons of Mr. Baldwin and the more renowned General Dawes, aided by the lackey Press of both countries for reassuring the public that affairs could not be in better hands. The platitudes uttered on that formal occasion were rhetorical and untrue, amounting to no more altogether than "God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world." The task, said Mr. Baldwin in language more nebulous than tobacco-smoke, is "to preserve democracy," and that is possible only "by education not so much in letters as in moral truth." So long as Americans and Englishmen, he said, speak the same speech, obey the same God and the same laws, they will remain one people. What Mr. Baldwin has done to preserve democracy is a question on which debate is hardly possible. Whether Englishmen and Americans speak the same speech is irrelevant, anyhow. Whether they obey the same God provokes an ironical answer. As to law, the present moment is pre-eminently the one at which it is incredibly factless on the part of Mr. Baldwin to mention American law to Americans publicly. More high thinking it may be difficult to pack into two sentences; it would certainly be impossible to write two sentences containing as little relevant common sense.

General Dawes made the kind of speech possible only for a distinguished reparations expert off duty. "The instinct of self-preservation," he said, with an inconsequence worthy of Mr. Lloyd George, "binds us together. That bond will never break"; as though every degree of power-seeking from martyrdom to

world-empire had not been grouped and justified as flowing from "the instinct of self-preservation." Anyhow, General Dawes congratulated us, it was now unthinkable that the burden of competitive naval building should again be placed on the peoples. It is not only not unthinkable, but there are many influential publicists in America besides Congressman Loring Black of New York, who anticipate such a competition. America was represented at Geneva to limit the British navy; Britain to limit the American. Neither country met to limit its own, except as finance had already decided that it should be limited. America is prosperous, she has an "excess" of capital over available labour. One of the main groups of influence in America is becoming unhappy about the very quantity of her foreign investments, since she does not wish to receive payment of the interest, except as a handicap to the other nations, either in goods or in gold, having more of the latter, and being able to produce more of the former than she knows what to do with, as was recently stated with much concern, by Mr. Charles E. Mitchell, president of the National City Bank. America is far from keen financially on battleship building just at the moment, one of the reasons being simply that her advisers are more than uneasy about the trade depression which threatens to follow her present boom, a depression which battleship building would at present intensify without contributing towards a solution of the aftermath.

Britain's motives for desiring disarmament, and at the same time for rearing to disarm, are equally financial. Hardly a commentary on Geneva has attached to its emphasis of American misunderstanding a fair statement of the case as Americans have presented it; or has not acknowledged unguardedly that, while Britain must maintain a navy with full power of attack or defence against the American navy, she has equal necessity for relief from taxation. "Both Great Britain and Japan," the *Spectator* writes, "being heavily burdened with taxation, saw in the Conference a means of effecting sub-



stantial economies." The more the discussion is meditated on, the clearer it becomes that, while some mighty power in each country will agree to the diversion of only a limited amount of credit to cruiser-building, these powers will not consent to that limited credit producing less than the maximum prospective fighting efficiency. Great Britain, then, desires the limitation of American armaments, in actual fact, as one of the steps which will enable her to postpone either adjusting the war-debt within the credit-system or—and this is the only course that could endure—reforming the credit-system. Her desperate straining after recapturing—the very word is significant—the market of the world for coal, cotton, and other commodities, renders her, whether she knows it or not, an aggressor nation. *The Spectator* announces that wars "do not always or even generally, arise out of confident calculations of strength, but out of anger, resentment, and impatience." Diplomats are not noted for any of these emotions; but that is the sort of comment to be expected from a writer who considers that the "memorable speeches" at the Peace Bridge proved something before which Geneva dwindles to infinitely smaller proportions than we had any right to expect."

Mr. Baldwin's flourish about the Americans and the British obeying one God and one law refuses to be banished from a note on the Sacco and Vanzetti trial, which appears not to have been referred to at the Peace Bridge outside this unfortunate remark. Without fear of Pharisaism, it may be claimed that neither English law nor English procedure has quite touched such depths of anomaly as this case reflects. But for the consequences to the two men the proceedings have been a farce impossible in the trial of a defaulting member of a boys' cricket club. Evidence for the defence was far stronger than evidence for the prosecution, which depended on faith in such problematical powers as the recognition of Sacco from a window at twenty yards distance in a motor-car passing at fifteen miles an hour, also to be identified, by a woman who failed to distinguish him at the identification until she had been helped by additional particulars, and by seeing him alone. Testimony as to the identification of the bullet found in one of the murdered men's bodies was interpreted by the judge in a manner that the witness subsequently repudiated by affidavit. Although the men were supposed to have committed an act of brigandage which cleared fifteen thousand dollars, they were not seen to spend any more money than before. Credible witnesses swore an alibi for the two prisoners. A well-known brigand has confessed to the murder, and asserted that Sacco and Vanzetti had no part in it. The foreman of the jury was heard to refer to the political views of the prisoners, and to say "they ought to hang anyway." The appeal was set down to be heard by the judge who first tried the case, who naturally found that he had not misdirected the jury. Finally, the men are on hunger-strike, because the inquiries on which their reprieve depends have been conducted *in camera*.

The case has been dealt with by the British Press with a fairness that should stand it in good stead as exercise when political bias again threatens to enter its comment on English legal questions. What the Press has not done, however, is either to say how characteristic in all but extremity the case is of much done in the name of law in democratic America, or to draw any significance. A bookstore man has just been arrested for selling a copy of Upton Sinclair's latest novel "Oil," although the police refuse to arrest Upton Sinclair, who deliberately sold a copy himself. The world-renowned Judge Lindsey has been turned out of his office as head of the Denver Juvenile Court, as the result of

fraud and conspiracy. "The State Supreme Court confirmed Lindsey's charge of corruption in the election, by ruling that there was so much fraud in Precinct 6, District J, that it should be ruled out from the result." This gave his opponent the verdict! America is the country in which monetary values are at their highest. The rule of money is more open and acknowledged. Although naked, however, finance is not unashamed. It has a shame in which its bad conscience and its frantic struggle to suppress all that arouses that conscience are evident to the world. It is this bad conscience which stimulates the rounding up of "reds," the deportation of Communists, Socialists, and Tolstoyans, the formation of Ku Klux Klans for the rooting out of everything which either frees conscience or tends towards self-knowledge. The most frequent American excuse for damning the true—the excuse advanced in the case of Upton Sinclair's "Oil"—is that the *child* must be protected. It is this same conscience which has kept Sacco and Vanzetti alive for six years, during the whole of which time they have been under sentence of death. America, then, is the place where the counter-revolution continually precedes the revolution in a form of government which is the archetype of Sir William Joynson-Hicks's general strike gestures of Fascismo.

Slight improvements in the unemployment statistics are welcomed by Press and Parliament with the brass band and firework show due only to the celebration of a successful remedy. For the last five years, at intervals whose brevity offers a measure for public memory, some person of repute whose utterances would be likely of acceptance by the electorate as responsible, has rushed into the place where the market ought to be to spread the glad tidings of coming prosperity. Lord Beaverbrook's Press has not been the least of the falsely optimistic bell-men. Its chant of triumph has inaugurated every disappointing industrial fair and exhibition. Last week the *Daily Express* devoted its columns of maximum publicity to singing the psalm again, voting in all nearly three columns to the variations. It is true that unemployment—1,119,800 were on the books on August 1, 1927—is less than on the same date in 1926, as Lord Beaverbrook says, but August, 1926, was an advanced stage of the miners' dispute. It is true, however, that on August 1, 1927, unemployment statistics showed an improvement on September, 1925, but the position compared with September, 1924, was practically unchanged. Moreover, the downward tendency of consumer incomes during the past year compels the measurement of trade by exports, which were over a million less in July, 1927, than in July, 1926. Allowing for the fact that prices are somewhat lower in July, 1927, and that July, 1926, contained a working day more, these facts are more than offset by the effect of the coal-stoppage, which not only brought coal exports to nil in July, 1926, but affected other industries.

If, for the sake of hope, however, the *Daily Express* contentions were accepted in the light in which they were presented, they would still be the occasion for concern rather than triumph. That the shipments of electrical goods during the first five months of 1927 increased by 11.5 per cent. as compared with the first five months of 1926, while the exports of France and Germany decreased by 27 per cent., instead of arousing pride in recovered world leadership, merely indicates that the trouble is not confined to one country. It also provokes the question, who arranged the variation, and why? For this is an industry in which finance is markedly international. That over a million more men are at work in Great Britain than during 1922; especially that many of them are, as Lord Beaverbrook does not

mention, working more hours in the day, far from being the sign of salvation, shows how disastrous a policy caused the disorder of 1922, and what a criminal waste of labour ensues from the necessity for everyone to roll a tub somewhere as the absolute condition of getting a "moral" income. If, finally, it were a fact that the English standard of living is higher to-day than at any time except in 1920, it is a fact not for jubilation, but for shame, since the power of neither England nor the world to produce any nameable commodity has declined since 1920.

The infection of Lord Beaverbrook's cheerfulness did not spread as far as Lord Astor. *The Times* is almost bored by the monotony with which the Board of Trade Returns confirm the depression of industry. "The country is still waiting for a brighter day to dawn," says *The Times*, which draws the obvious remark that while it will wait it must. To pass the time away while waiting, *The Times* considers it "the safest course to recall the reasons for the present state of affairs and to base predictions on the prospect of their gradual disappearance." It is no longer even jam to-morrow, and we may only survey the prospects of jam the day after. The reasons given for depression are the high cost of production, falling prices, stabilisation, and the movement towards "self-containment" by other countries. On the question of cost of production, apparently *The Times* thinkers do not avail themselves of the Cotton Yarn Association had to fine one of its members £300 for selling at less than the agreed price. In the financially most important and internationally most dangerous industries, rubber, oil, and cotton, for example, as newspapers and economists have announced for years, world organisation is in operation which prevents the cost of production coming down as an incident in preventing the price being taken to market. What applies to raw materials largely applies to food, fruit and fish being obvious instances. Almost every commodity, both of necessity and of luxury life, has been cheapened in potential cost by the accumulated labour and invention of a century and a half of high-speed development, and by ten thousand years of slower development. Cost, will *The Times* ever learn, is not a problem.

So far as falling prices are concerned *The Times*, although it notes that rising prices stimulate industry and falling prices depress it, makes no reference whatever to the underlying credit conditions beyond the reference to "our progress towards stabilisation," which is simply another way of saying our advance to where we started. If stabilisation means depression, as it has proved to do, it is amazing that nobody outside a few cranks suggest expansion. When it is realised, as it should be, that we may choose between stabilisation and prosperity, though we may not have heroism that is not magnificent, but does mean war. "The movement towards self-containment in many countries has a restrictive effect on the British export trade; to overcome these barriers to trade it is clearly necessary to quote competitive prices for delivery inside the foreign tariff walls." Thus *The Times* proposes in its diplomatic way a policy of economic aggression that must produce war abroad or revolution at home according to its success or failure. The economic academies of orthodox finance need to be reformed. Their diplomas are granted to persons who give their case away. This very "movement"—note that the word progress was reserved for another occasion—towards alleged "self-containment"

is in hard fact usually a movement towards industrialisation and world-market competition. This movement is unavoidable as long as credit solvency depends on the principle of getting back the whole pound of cost; machinery is compelled to follow the cheapest labour as the only way of postponing the manufacture of bombs. This never satisfied demand for the reduction of costs, in the absence of proposals for distributing consumer-incomes, amounts in practice to telling everybody engaged in production that the instinct of self-preservation commands him to starve himself.

It is obvious that the students of orthodox economics and finance are uncomfortable. Unacquainted with proposals for controlling prices, they nevertheless perceive that the degree of prosperity has varied directly with the price index in startling fashion. Inflation, they see, makes the individual while it ruins the nation; deflation makes the nation while it ruins the citizen; while stabilisation, which ought to be the happy medium, has proved to exhibit the worst of both tendencies. Students dare not, however, connect this with finance, which they are directed to regard as a constant that must not be varied, and they dare not see any way to the renewal of prosperity but a further fall in prices, which they realise must intensify depression somewhere. In desperation to find a bright spot in the twisted tunnel of their making they pretend that the candle in their hands is the light ahead. *The Times* notes that Labour is co-operating with capital more readily; but, it adds, in a tone to arouse expectation, there are not two partners in industry, but three, and the greatest of these is—not credit; it is, since expectations are created in a Puritan world in order to be disappointed, *direction*, as though direction had not been the major active personal partner in industry since engineering became the key. In the end *The Times* has nothing more novel to suggest than combination, elimination of waste, greater productive efficiency, wide vision, research, better transport, new methods, and new markets. Is it not common property in knowledge that all these things except the last-named new markets, must simply make the situation worse? And the only new market, if we do not learn to consume more goods for ourselves, is the old market of Mars.

In any orthodox survey of the causes of British trade depression and prospects of revival the omission to mention taxation and the war debt is inexcusable. The *Round Table* contributor quoted in these Notes last week was at least wiser in this respect than *The Times*. The fall in prices over the last two years, together with the corresponding decrease in producer-incomes, has in effect added more to the war debt than all the repayments have deducted from it. As long as the present financial mechanism lasts, every fall in prices increases the burden of the interest on the war debt, which is a vastly greater proportion of the total national income now than it was in 1920. If costs in industry as a whole could be reduced to three hundred and fifty millions a year, the whole of the national income would belong to the controllers of the war debt, failing, of course, to the producers of the goods which would exceed production. Though production might exceed demand, clearance of the goods would depend absolutely on the wish of the debt-holders to consume them all, or on their ability to force the goods on the foreigner as debt. At present, interest on the war debt is as much a drag on industry as if the holding were wholly foreign. It is a definite addition to cost which orthodox writers may mention on any occasion *except when they are discussing costs*. Whether the course to be adopted shall be reduction of the rate of interest with or with-



out revolution, or the further disorganisation of industry and increased empowering of finance which would follow a capital levy, or, to name the third course, such an expansion of purchasing-power and production as will enable debt holders to receive their quota without anybody missing it, ought to be a plain choice involving no hesitation. The policy followed for so long, while financier incomes and funds have remained unaltered, of contracting working credit, and with credit, producer and therefore consumer incomes, amounts to something very like national lunacy.

One thing acknowledged with unanimity except by the few advocates of the simple life—and some of these recognise its necessity as a condition of making the simple life possible—is development. The Australian Government and the Empire Marketing Board have just agreed jointly to finance an investigation into methods of surveying for oils and minerals. The Technical Committee set up by the Ministry of Commerce in Paris to furnish recommendations for reducing the cost of living, has almost confined its positive suggestions to hints of directions in which development should be initiated. Major Theodore Rich, in a speech last week at the 1912 Club, groaned under the obstacles to the development of Britain's electricity services. It is an exception to open a news journal without meeting this agitation for more thorough—and incidentally more civilised—exploitation of the world's known resources. Yet developmentists appear to be bursting their hearts in an effort to break free from invisible chains. They so rarely mention the financial freedom required for development that they must be unconscious of what binds them. They are masters in their own field, and the publicists, who have accepted the duty of uniting the fields in their effect on society, do not enlighten them. Only by accident does it come out that anywhere, outside the reformers crying in the wilderness, a relationship between credit and industry is even guessed at—as when the joyful *Daily Express* naively remarked that "some of the increase in bank deposits as compared with a year ago"—it is very slight—"is due to an expansion of bank advances which are now going to fructify trade and produce a harvest in due season." The sentence should be italicised in evidence against somebody at that financial inquiry fixed for the Judgment.

Major Rich certainly did not see the obstacles to electricity development in the lack of industrial direction, since English firms have constructed excellent systems in many foreign countries; he saw them in cost, in the machinations of trusts, and in our lack of water power. That an electricity service could, with our unemployed labour and a little credit re-organisation—granted that the only object in view were an electricity service—be obtained without ultimate cost, may sound far-fetched to Major Rich, as may the suggestion that we have a good deal of water in the sea, and magnificent tidal estuaries. As for the trusts, it is all a question of whether they are directed, to greater production on the one hand, or market monopoly by means of minimum production on the other. They are the biggest two-edged sword in producer organisations. A trust, given credit facilities, resembles a trade union given plenty of employment; it can either promise "to deliver the goods," as the unions did in 1916, or it can utilise its power to make better terms for delivering some of the goods, even to the extent of fining its members for reducing the price. The problem is to create conditions, financial and economic, in which it is to the mutual advantage of both labour and capital trusts to deliver the goods,

a problem whose difficulty resides wholly in the unwillingness of the financiers in power to allow any alteration in the mechanism which apparently serves them, if nobody else, well. Whatever their motive, they fear to put their faith in invention in one branch of technology, and consequently refuse to reorganise the system for distributing purchasing power in the light of knowledge largely contributed to, as knowledge has a way of being, by the experience of war.

Reduction of costs would be a splendid thing if consumers had any other means of buying the product than obtaining a share of costs. Messrs. Tootal, Broadhurst, Lee announced at their annual meeting a scheme for cutting out the middleman. Whatever additions to costs the firm may incur by building warehouses of its own, it intends finally to reduce costs. It must obviously at the same time deprive certain people of incomes. When these have done what they can in the way of self-help by spending their savings, thus converting a little investment credit to consumer credit, their failure to continue this course will force the firm to meet the further necessary fall in prices by a further reduction in costs. Once again, reduce the costs to nothing, except, of course, depreciation of the old plant and new warehouses, and there is no consumer income anywhere from which to recover them. Without the devices of international loans, and credit for future production, the consumption of present production cannot so much as begin. Further, the moment it begins, and further production is stimulated by the rising market, far more is extracted from the consumer in price than is distributed to him against the proportion of the product he consumes. Without price regulation there is no third course to successive inflation and deflation, each indulged in to escape from the consequences of the other. There is at the present time no means by which the world consumer can demand the goods which existing plant is capable of turning out.

Considerable pleasure was expressed by financial correspondents at the week-end at the news of a small flow of gold to the Bank of England from abroad, for it is well-known that with gold in South Africa we can only fold our arms and smoke, whereas with gold in the vaults of the Bank we are permitted to go to work, the superstition with least in all folk-lore and experience to excuse it. We might just as well agree that pictures should be made artificially scarce and that nobody should have chairs unless he got pictures. While we are unhappy because gold is scarce, the United States is unhappy because it is plentiful; but instead of agreeing to exchange it with men whose business it is to arrange the proceedings of secret and kept very quiet about the matter met in their conclave. Mr. Norman, Herr Schacht of the *Reichsbank*, Herr Rist of the *Banque de France*, and Governor Strong of the Federal Reserve Bank, were discussing the problem in New York, probably successively, while the admirals and diplomats were wasting their time at Geneva. The reduction of the New York Bank rate was probably the outcome, among other events which have doubtless not yet matured or are not manifest of their meeting. For some time the Federal Reserve Bank has been engaged in preventing the issue of the full amount of credit which bankers' custom and politicians' religion agree the quantity of gold held would support. Gold basis for credit in America is believed by many economists to exceed the quantity required for all the real credit which may politically be set free. So far from the gold reserve being a guarantee against inflation, America's gold reserve is a definite

stimulus to inflation. From this it follows that America, which recognises that it cannot afford to receive goods in liquidation of the debts abroad because of the effect on American industry, now perceives that it cannot afford to accept gold. In short, it cannot afford that its debtors should pay at all.

If America, by a price-control system, were rendered able to improve even America's standard of living by taking foods and using them in discharge of her foreign credits, American finance could not agree. One of the reasons why the flow of gold into the United States must be slowed down is impressive. The Federal Reserve Bank fears that the unavoidable overflow of gold to the local banks will render them independent of the Reserve, in that they will be able to issue their own credit instead of borrowing from the central pool. This is the only possible home reason for the discouragement of the inflationary instrument of gold by the inflationary instrument of a reduction in the Bank-rate. The moral of this is that if gold were to become extremely plentiful in England, it would not, under the existing price and credit system, be allowed to justify the issue of credit which all orthodox students would calculate. The control of credit would be preserved for the central bank artificially, whatever industry might suffer in consequence. For all students who will examine the facts, America has rendered it evident that the gold-standard is entirely adventitious to the relation between financial and real credit, which could be preserved only by the regulation of prices through the appropriate issue of credit to the consumer.

N.

## The Midland Bank and a Financial Inquiry.

By C. H. Douglas.

V.

One of the many intriguing aspects of the struggle which appears to be going on between the Midland Bank, the Bank of England, and those of the great joint stock banks which appear to sympathise with the parent institution, is concerned with the substitution of the £1 Treasury Note by a £1 note issued by the Bank of England. We have been informed publicly on several occasions that such a change was imminent; we have even been informed that quantities of costly machinery have been installed by the Bank of England for the purpose of printing the notes; but the notes have not appeared, and in place of their appearance we have recently had a change in the design of the Treasury Note to accord with the new style and title of the King, which change in design would appear to be somewhat unnecessary if the notes are immediately to be superseded by Bank Notes, in whose superscription the name and title of the King play no part.

It is not difficult to recognise in what appears to be a somewhat trivial matter, a parallel to a "flag" controversy, and at first sight the Midland Bank would appear to have no part in it. But I think that to conclude this would be premature. Which brings us to the "chequelet."

At first sight the imposition of a twopenny stamp on every cheque drawn would appear to be, and from one point of view, undoubtedly is, an irritating extortion. It is not without significance that cheques in, for instance, the United States, do not bear a stamp. But when we look a little deeper, it will be realised that the stamp upon a cheque represents two matters

of importance. The first of these is the claim of the Crown to countersign or otherwise, bank credit. The second is to make bank credit rather more expensive than State credit, as represented by the Treasury Note, which passes from hand to hand without cost to the user. It is true enough that, as usual, the individual bears the expense of the battle between these two principles, and it ought therefore to be a matter of some consolation to him that neither of his two oppressors, the State or the financial system, is entirely having its own way.

Now the chequelet was an ingenious device to eliminate both of the State privileges which are mentioned above. Incidentally, if successful, it would have been a complete defeat for the Bank of England note. So that if we are to credit the Midland Bank with having a consistent and conscious grasp of the implications of its own actions, it is fair to deduce that its policy is somewhat as follows.

It is just as much a believer in the control of industry, and ultimately humanity, by finance as are any of the other banks. It does not show any very obvious signs of an identification of interests with, in the larger sense of the word, Parliamentary politics, although I am not sure that it does not show more signs of an appreciation of the importance of racial characteristics, and of an identification of itself with British racial characteristics, than does any other large financial institution, although its orientation to New York finance is obscure. It appears to be working for the increasing substitution of a pure credit instrument like the cheque, in place of the clumsy monetary token divided into rigid denominations. In this, I have no doubt at all that it is sound, and that if our money system persists at all, it will persist in the form of written orders of the nature of cheques, and that the use of what is called cash will be more and more confined to the smallest of payments, and will ultimately disappear altogether. In a community such as existed amongst the British population in India up to a few years ago, in which every individual was a marked man whose credit was perfectly well known, it was no uncommon thing to go for months at a time without using legal tender in any form, and it is a confession of incompetence in any banking system that it should require a dual mechanism of credit.

Having said this, I am very much afraid that we have said most of the complimentary things that can be said about the Midland Bank's policy, as far as it is at present either disclosed or deducible from its actions and utterances. There is no evidence, at any rate visible to me, of a grasp of the new factors introduced into the economic system, and therefore imposed upon the financial system, which are involved in the transfer of the labour of production from human to solar energy. There is no recognition of what seems to me, and has always seemed to me, to be of much greater importance than any mere question of credit policy. I mean the arithmetical fallacy involved in our present method of producing factory cost prices. And certainly there are no visible signs of a recognition of the fact on which the world situation may be said to turn, that Bank credit is public property, not Bank property.

Under these circumstances, it seems fair to conclude that the Midland Bank occupies the position in this country of being the most progressive, and very probably the best run of the institutions which carry on an essentially unound business. If its essential unsoundness is, as I believe it is, fatal to the existing economic and social order, none of its proposals so far adumbrated will sensibly modify the disease. If I am not correct in my view on the general situation, then I should imagine that the remaining joint stock banks will ultimately follow the lead which has been given to them through Mr. McKenna.

(Conclusion.)



### Fianna Fail and the Oath.

"... we should deplore the absence from Irish counsels of the only element which shows evidence of knowing what is fundamentally the matter with Ireland. Those Fianna Fail members who know something of the New Economic analysis will recognise that there is a tremendous scope for really good work for Ireland open to them within the wide limitation of the Oath itself." ... "if our armed forces in Ireland had only worn the Bank of England's livery instead of the King's uniform, the Irish people might have conceded His Majesty the purely formal courtesy about which the Government pretends he is so sensitive."—THE NEW AGE, June 23, 1927.

The decision of Mr. de Valera's party to take the Oath and sit in the Dail has evoked derisive comment throughout the British Press. The derision, however, to the instructed observer, is something analogous to whistling in the graveyard. Mr. Garvin, in the *Observer*, ostensibly expects Fianna Fail to be discomfited when it comes "in contact with responsibility" and has to exchange "long-range polemics for close discussion." But there are reasons why that need not necessarily happen—reasons which no newspaper seems anxious to advertise. The Press is pretending that, apart from the issue of allegiance to the King, Fianna Fail has no policy, and that its participation in future debates will demonstrate the fact. Yet there is plenty of evidence that Mr. de Valera is a realist, no matter how much sentiment surrounded his election campaign. We have on occasions quoted from his speeches in Ireland and America to show that his views on Irish finance and economics tend to open up some inconvenient questions from the point of view of the interests which dominate Press criticism. In the meantime the newspapers maintain what looks like concerted silence about this aspect of the new situation.

Even here, however, they have no case. As soon as Mr. Cosgrave passed his Act disqualifying persons from becoming candidates for the Dail unless they took the Oath the whole situation was changed. No longer was it possible for Fianna Fail to force the Dail to sit with one-third of its elected strength absent; and the only alternatives left to the leaders of that party were to forswear their repudiation of violence or else to withdraw from public affairs completely. And to forestall their contingent, though unlikely, reversion to direct action, Mr. Cosgrave has introduced a measure giving him special powers to deal with "underground organisation" against the "security of life and of the State." So Fianna Fail has been obliged to carry on its campaign against the Oath by first taking it. If this be casuistry then every politician in history has been a casuist.

But let us come to facts. The terms of the Oath are as follows:

"I... do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State as by law established, and that I will be faithful to H.M. King George V., his heirs and successors by law, in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations."

These terms Fianna Fail now says are an "empty political formula" which deputies can "conscientiously sign without becoming involved or without involving their nation in obligations of loyalty to the English Crown." They do not imply, it asserts, any "contractual obligation," and it has accordingly given public notice to "all whom it may concern" that it proposes to interpret the Oath in that way.

In justification of this attitude it must be conceded that the very terms of the formula exclude the idea that it is a contract in a legal sense, for nowhere does it define any specific obligation. It does not let a hint escape as to what actions are loyal or disloyal. Nor are British newspapers showing any desire to supply the missing information. The rea-

son is perfectly intelligible to those who remember what ensued on Mr. Asquith's Irish legislation just before the war, when British statesmen were openly threatening and preparing armed resistance to an Act of Parliament which had received Royal assent, and when influential officers of H.M. Forces interviewed Major Seeley and attempted to bargain as to the conditions on which they would assist in enforcing the Act by military measures against these revolters. It is a most significant fact that in the face of Fianna Fail's open repudiation of their signatures to the Oath, *its members are allowed to take their seats and legislate.*

The reason is that nobody can stop them without stating what the Oath implies; and nobody dares attempt such interpretation because either it must be wide enough to allow Irish statesmen the benefit of the above British precedent, or else it must be narrowed, in which case it would revive a charge of treason against highly placed statesmen in this country.

But no purpose will be served by raking up these forgotten matters. The present duty of Fianna Fail is to pursue its declared policy of *economic allegiance to Irish consumers.* No doubt the apparent pedantry of the British Government in insisting on the Oath of Allegiance conceals high-financial policy in sharp conflict with Mr. de Valera's. If this is so, his best tactic is to press forward with his own policy, taking all advantage of the New Economic researches into Credit and Cost. Let him strive to bring into political consciousness the unrealised *potential affinities of all Irish citizens considered as consumers.* Let him show that a consuming Ireland is a contented Ireland.

We have little information about Mr. Thomas Johnson, the leader of the Irish Labour Party, with whom Mr. de Valera may co-operate. If he becomes the new President, he will be forced to do something for the Shannon workers, whose need for an increase in wages he has publicly recognised. On this problem Mr. Stephen Gwynn writes in the *Observer*:

"And if Mr. Johnson goes to float a new National Loan to pay for these things, will he get the money on terms at all resembling those which Mr. Cosgrave's Government secured?"

Quite so. But it all depends upon whether Mr. Johnson accepts the assumptions underlying this complacent challenge. It is just possible that Fianna Fail and Labour together may be preparing for such an eventuality with other ideas in mind. If so, the bankers will already be on the move to stop them. We fancy we see some indications of their activities in the sudden news that there has been a rift in the Redmond party, and that consequently Mr. Cosgrave's resignation, assured last Saturday, was not assured on the Sunday. If he holds on it will clearly not be with the object of doing anything (he will not be in power with his few followers); so it must be regarded as a piece of strategy designed to keep the initiation and subjects of debate in the Dail in "safe" hands.

"Never in this world," declares Mr. Garvin, "shall separatism and union meet." Separatism is doomed for all time to carry partition on its back. "But union and the sense of free partnership are still inseparable from any conception worth holding of Ireland's future." We will take Mr. Garvin's word for the principle, but prefer to give it an application of our own. The real separatists are not groups of politicians who want to be independent of other groups, but are groups of private citizens who insist on being independent of all politicians—above all Governments. It is the separatism between the artificial laws of finance and the natural laws of production and consumption which carries partition on its back. It is for Ireland to comprehend this fundamental truth; and a name honoured in history awaits the man who shall announce and expound it to her.

### Views and Reviews.

#### NOTES ON MECHANISM.—I

Throughout empirical philosophy the idea of the universe—including man—as mechanism has exercised almost a compulsion over the thinker. Even to find a satisfactory word for the alternative to mechanism has exceeded man's philosophical power. Free-will or freedom, the moment the honest thinker begins to justify the terms by reasoning, gradually leave him with the alternative of regarding a man as an unrelated point in a vacuum, or as a ball whose movements are entirely controlled by the boots that propel it. The case for free-will or freedom has invariably had considerable support from religious authority, and a good deal from the desire of the individual to be somebody on his own account rather than an electrical marionette stimulated only by his environment. Although there appears to be no reconciliation possible between the concepts of freedom and determinism in rational philosophy there is possibly a pragmatic reconciliation to be made in psychology. One may even be able to show why man is under the *necessity* to choose the idea of freedom as authority contends, and why, perhaps, he often chooses voluntarily the idea of determinism.

Part of the aim affirmed by enlightened moderns is that the individual human being should become able increasingly to control his own destiny. Much of the opposition to that aim springs from a very old and hard-set belief that man is laden with an heredity so much against him that the one thing he cannot be trusted with is control over his own destiny, wherefore he must be surrounded, for his soul's sake, by trials and obstacles, including the necessity to work hard and long, for fear the devil find employment for his idle hands. It is an amusing paradox that the advocates of endowing a man with control over his own destiny, who are ready to take the risk of his thwarting all his possibilities for good, are the more ready as a general rule to accept the concept of determinism, while those who would have man externally disciplined for his soul's sake are the more insistent on the concept of free-will. It is a commonplace of modern political thought that the advocates of freedom accept determinism while the advocates of authority rule and precedent accept free-will. Perhaps the two concepts exist in every mind, in such a manner that no matter which of the two be consciously expressed, the other is expressed with lower conscious emphasis. If this be true there must exist some organic link between them, except in the minds which are so split that they adopt determinism on this occasion, and on another occasion as tacitly assume free-will *without knowing what they do.*

Nietzsche, plying language on behalf of the crystallisation of feeling in the form of thought with a mastery attained by few artists in the history of civilisation, more than once demonstrated the utter inadequacy of language to express anything. In his criticism of Kant's claim that every phenomenon implied the existence of a noumenon, that there could be no appearance without a corresponding reality which, whatever it might produce besides, must at least have contributed to the production of that appearance. Nietzsche demonstrated how gratuitous an assumption it was; what a phenomenon proves, said Nietzsche, is a phenomenon. Tracing how appearances differ according to the vital needs of the person communicating his record of them, Nietzsche concluded that all so-called knowledge amounted to nothing more than *useful falsifications* of reality from a taken-for-granted point of view. It may be useful to inquire whether the whole of empirical philosophy's researches into the problems of determinism and free-will are not also attempts to justify two opposed falsifications, each useful to different people,

or for different purposes, by reference to a *single* faculty of the mind, namely, reason, which, perhaps, for the sake of a similar useful falsification, has been separated from other faculties equally vital; and to the prejudice of one of the two falsifications.

To diagrammatise the mind is itself a falsification. Yet it is a useful falsification, nothing superior to the conversion of the mind into rooms, boxes, regions, and branches, having yet been discovered. For a psychoanalyst the mind is regarded at times as a group of related rooms rather like a house; to Freud it is rather like a house with an attic, in whose airy height all the ideas and wishes which inhabit the place want to live, and in which the less socially respectable are kept in the cellar, except when the doctor procures them an airing. In Jung's system, again, the mind is not altogether unlike a house, though it has more rooms, and the occupants of the various floors are expected to live at peace with one another, even to marry, and not to despise the hints for general happiness to be obtained from the frogs that jump about in the cellar, or sometimes, in the night, about the stairs. Kant, inquiring into the mind from another angle, concluded that its activities could hardly be reduced to fewer than three, knowing, feeling, and willing. This, although scarcely a conversion of what appears to go on in a very complex structure of brain, senses, and nervous system, into a *spatial* diagram, may also have been a convenient falsification useful to get Kant over a stile; nevertheless, it is a conclusion that nobody has yet been able to dispense with.

It is of interest that individuals in society are called upon to use, in varying degree at different times, will, feeling, and knowing, because it is according to the degree to which one or other of these functions dominates their activity that they appear to believe in determinism or in free-will. A life occupied with cognition produces a devotee of free-will, and in their efforts to establish either as a final concept both beg the question. To take the instance of psychology, Freud is practically a mechanist, and Jung a denier of mechanism. Nobody would oppose the statement that the psycho-analysis of Freud is dominated by cognition. His followers explicitly claim that his is the only *science* of psycho-analysis. That the Freudian system could be formulated the concept of free-will had to be denied. It may be that the Freudian system is so supremely useful that the repudiation of freedom is justified; it may, on the other hand, be that the concept of free-will is so supremely useful that repudiation of the Freudian system is justified. The rational ramifications of either concept being unpursuable to their limits, life itself in this matter is the blind force which must choose according to its instinctive needs, in faith that whatever enriches life will prove true.

The term mechanism is one which avoids the question rather than answers it, precisely as does free-will. In anxiety to arrive at a valid concept efforts have been made to substitute for free-will the concept of "purposiveness." The term mechanism is just as unsatisfactory, since nobody has ever seen a mechanism that was only a mechanism. There is no machine which can be regarded as an isolated creature repeating its own movements to no end. Invariably it has a purpose, though its purpose is not its own; and the purpose was put there by a man. To get work (itself a purpose term) out of a machine, energy in the form of steam, electricity or petrol, or even a foot on a pedal, must be introduced from outside, while the union between energy and mechanism has to be regulated and directed so that the process ascends



even beyond what is called dynamic; the very agent that the concept was wholly designed to keep out forces itself in before the machine, accepted for what it is, can fulfil any function. Possibly there are no mechanisms in the universe in this sense; for an organism contains not only all that is essential to the machine, but in addition, the power of transmuting its own energy and of furnishing its own direction. An organism is the mechanism plus the machine-tenter plus the inventor, plus the perceiver of the need, purpose, and use of the mechanism. The advocate of determinism—or mechanism—is in an amusing situation when he has to choose his term not from the inorganic, but from an extension of the object under consideration.

R. M.

## The Prophets.

I.—BERNARD SHAW.

By Hugh Ross.

The patriarchal beard of Bernard Shaw has graced the illustrated pages of so many newspapers that his features are as well known as his name. (There is indeed a story that he once walked unrecognised down the Strand carrying a bag of bananas, but one is forced to believe that he himself originated that myth to prove his modesty.) We of the younger generation are told that once that beard was red, and that its owner resembled Mephistopheles; but to us it recalls only Moses. Bernard Shaw, the contemporary, is an eminently respectable prophet, and we cannot understand how people at this time of day can maintain that he is a revolutionary.

I do not mean to imply that Shaw has changed. "Saint Joan" is not a recantation. Eminent divines apparently crowd to see it in the belief that it is a slightly intellectualised "Sign of the Cross." It does not occur to them that the very title is ironical. The last play is of a piece with all the others; it preaches the same uncompromising doctrine. But the author is older and the audiences are wiser. That is the only difference.

So much has been written on the subject of "G. B. S.," that it may seem both impertinent and impossible to attempt to analyse his achievement in a short article. Yet, in spite of his apparent complexity, the clue is simple. It is contained in the Mephistopheles-Moses transition. How did the rebel of one generation become the reactionary of the next while remaining essentially the same?

Victorianism has come to mean a corrupt puritanism. It is a commonplace to say that the Victorian age could produce no genuine art because it could think only in terms of conventional morality. Its typical creation was the nonconformist conscience—an automatic veto on everything vital. Its crowning achievement was the Great War, waged to make the world safe for commerce. The present age has so stressed this aspect of its predecessor that it has forgotten that there is a puritanism which is not hypocritical and a nonconformity which is not negative. The rebels were so busy attacking Victorianism from without that they misinterpreted the attack that came from within. "The Nineties" waged war on false puritanism because it was puritanism; Bernard Shaw, because it was false.

Consequently, at the outset, his intention was mistaken by both parties. If he wrote "Three Plays for Puritans," the title was taken as evidence of his malicious irony. Neither friend nor foe accepted it as the sober truth. If "Mrs. Warren's Profession" was banned, it was assumed that it was banned for the same reason as, for instance, "Salome." It never occurred to the puritans that it was prohibited because it was too moral. If he remarked that "when Jesus called Peter from his boat he spoiled an

honest fisherman and made nothing better out of the wreck than a salvation monger," it was taken as proof of his anti-Christian tendencies by the outraged nonconformists. Only the Catholics saw in it the unmistakable signs of his puritanism. The Catholics were right. The famous preface to "Androcles and the Lion" remains the greatest popular exposition of true puritanism that this generation has seen.

Shaw might be disowned by his fellow-believers, but the discerning among their opponents soon realised that he was still their prophet. Against the doctrine that the essence of the thing done is the manner of doing it he waged uncompromising war and proclaimed that "he who has nothing to assert has no style, and can have none." In the preface to "Man and Superman" he demolished "l'art pour l'art" group. In the preface to "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets" he showed signs of his inherent respectability by denying the obvious because he thought it was scandalous. Indeed, he never disguised the fact that he believed in sermons rather than in sonnets, and he manifested that belief by putting most of his best work into his prefaces instead of into his plays. He made the stage a pulpit, yet saved it for its proper function despite himself.

Now, after the wreckage of the war, Shaw is revealed in his true colours. He emerges as the great puritan. He can no longer be mistaken for a rebel; he is seen to be a reactionary. It may be objected that all rebels become reactionaries in the process of time, and that Shaw has merely shared the common lot. But there is a difference. Nobody ever thinks of Tennyson or Browning as a reactionary. Neither is more than a manifestation of his age. Both could have existed without Victorianism. They are mere providers of academic discussions or æsthetic pleasures. But Shaw is vital. He is independent of time. He utters a message that has rung down the ages, calling to men to repent and take hold of life. If all his work were lost but the third act of "Man and Superman," it would not matter greatly. The essence of him is there. He has never surpassed, perhaps never equalled, that expression of it. It is there that occurs his description of Heaven: "In Heaven, as I picture it, you live and work instead of playing and pretending. You face things as they are; you escape nothing but glamour; and your steadfastness and your peril are your glory." His message is the need to establish that Heaven on earth.

So he becomes, judged by the spirit of this age, a reactionary. He stands, a lonely giant, in a world of Cowards. Having destroyed the false puritanism, he had hoped for the dawn of the true. Instead he has found only the tedious vulgarity of a Restoration. And he has expressed his disillusionment in the devastating cynicism of the epilogue of "Saint Joan."

I have purposely taken no account of his dramatic technique, his humour, his alleged paradoxes. His service to the stage is recorded in every text-book. Even the man who knows little and cares less for the theatre knows that Shaw and Shakespeare wrote plays. His humour is incidental; he is too earnest for it to be fundamental; and his paradoxes exist only in the minds of the unintelligent. He is a dramatist only by accident. It would not be difficult to imagine the tall, spare figure standing at a street corner conducting a revival meeting, and lustily singing: "Work, for the night is coming." Only, because he is a religious genius, he has made the world his street corner and written his own hymns.

It is his religion, too, that explains his socialism. The one is the political expression of the other. His vegetarianism, on the other hand, seems an uncon-

nected fad. If it could be established, however, that it was not altogether unconnected with longevity, the Shavians might elevate it into a doctrine. This would be the more regrettable since, already, they seem bent on popularising their master's asides on longevity at the expense of his teaching on life.

## Bismarck—The Man.

J. S. Kirkbride.

A heterogeneous mass of glorious blame,  
Half virtues and whole vices being combined;  
Faults which attract because they are not tame;  
Follies trick'd out so brightly that they blind.  
(Don Juan. Canto XV.)

If the latest biography of Bismarck does not add much to our knowledge of the statesman, Emil Ludwig's fascinating book leaves us in no doubt as to the manner of man "The Iron Chancellor" was. After all, it may be that it was the very human Bismarck who left an indelible impress on the history of Europe, rather than the subtleties of the super-diplomat or the ruthlessness of the man of "blood and iron." Von Treitschke, who was no mean judge, held that it was personalities who made history, citing in the same breath Luther, Frederick the Great, and Bismarck in proof of his assertion. The right man, he said, "always appears at the right time," and added that why this is so "will always remain a riddle to us mortals." "The age develops genius, but does not evolve it." It is a comforting theory, but one cannot help wondering what went wrong with the automatic supply of "right men" in August, 1914! Perhaps it was the age that was "out of joint," but the greatest crisis in modern history had to be met by men who, at their best, were only well-meaning mediocrities.

As an introduction to the study of the man, it would be difficult to improve on Emil Ludwig's own words:—

"A shadowy panoplied figure, glimmering in the twilight.—For eighty years the lightning of party hatred has flickered round him; in his lifetime he won but little affection, for he bestowed little. . . . It is the task of this book to draw the picture of a victorious and erring fighter. . . . A character whose fundamental traits were pride, courage, and hatred.

As the man Bismarck was Germany's fate, it is meet that the nation should know him as he was, not as distorted by adoration and hatred."

Now, it would be no exaggeration to say that if pride and courage constituted the driving forces of Bismarck's character and made him the most powerful statesman of his day, hatred was the cause of more than one deplorable mistake in the career of this "victorious and erring fighter." But it was the hatred of a large mind, of one who loathed meanness and treachery. It was the natural expression of what Treitschke called his "massive frankness," and wrung from Favre the half-reluctant admission:—

"He never deceived me. He often hurt and enraged me by his hardness, but in small things and in great I have always found him upright and precise."

One is tempted to ask whether Bismarck read Swift, for his knowledge of English literature was more than respectable; his early letters to Johanna von Puttkamer are liberally sprinkled with quotations from English classics. There is the same contempt, yea hatred, in the outbursts of the German aristocrat against politicians and courtiers that we meet in the writings of the sardonic Dean. When Gulliver at Lafuta exclaims,

"How low an opinion I had of human wisdom and integrity, when I was truly informed of the springs and motives of great enterprises and revolutions in the world, and of the contemptible accidents to which they owned their success,"

it might be Bismarck giving vent to his wrath and disdain in '48 after his stormy interview with Augusta, and his refusal to further her ambitions on behalf of her son at the expense of her husband and brother-in-law. Truly, on that occasion Bismarck was more royalist than the King; and the Prussian Junker's rigid sense of duty settled for good or ill the future of Germany.

The constant outbursts of irritation, culminating at times in veritable brain-storms, of which Dr. Ludwig gives us many instances, may have their origin in a trait of Bismarck's character which seems to have been overlooked by his biographers. He had a keen sense of humour—of the sardonic kind, it is true—and, with all deference to the land that gave us Heine, humour is not the German's strong point, and was certainly not conspicuous either in his friend and colleague, von Roon, or in his royal master, William I. Small wonder if he once complained to his doctor that he "could not stand the ceremoniousness of court-speech," and bemoaned that he could not say outright, "Your Majesty is talking rot," or "Your Majesty has the political insight of a fourth-form schoolboy." He also once said that when serving on committees he preferred to sit amongst his opponents—"his friends were so dull!"

This may account, in part, for his curious intimacy, one might say friendship, with the brilliant Lasalle, which had a common basis in their mutual contempt for "das Bürgertum." Bourgeois liberalism was anathema to both. Had Lasalle lived another ten years, Bismarck might have come to that understanding of the people which he only attained at the end of his career—when it was too late. Speaking years after in the Reichstag, this super-junker said:—

"Lasalle had something about him that attracted me as a private individual; he was one of the most talented and amiable men I ever met; he was ambitious in the grand style. . . . Our interviews lasted for hours, and I was always sorry when they were over. . . . I also believe he carried away with him the impression that I was an intelligent and willing listener."

It was his subtle sense of humour that endowed him with his extraordinary breadth of view in world politics. He was a "good European," free from the more vulgar form of patriotism, and never held that his own folk were the chosen people. Did he not belong to that aristocratic caste which constitutes the nearest approach we have to an international sodality and may even yet give us real "democratic control" based on the good manners so obviously lacking in the plutocracy of to-day? After all, gentlefolk and peasants are much the same the world over; they have this in common—they are in closest touch with the land and all that its cultivation and enjoyment imply. Life in the open is a great leveller; it matters little who beats or who shoots. It is the middle-classes of England and France, the urban industrialists, who have given us Manchester Economics, wars for markets, and all the doubtful blessings of high finance.

It is as an out-of-door man, a lover of horses and the dogs who were his constant companions, the mighty hunter before the Lord, that Bismarck should appeal to Englishmen. The latent poet slumbering in all of us awoke in his as he listened to the secular trees in the woods of Saxony chanting their old sagas, and the pines of Pomerania whispering their ancient runes. "I love the great trees," he said. "They are ancestors." He fought with his head forester for the life of every decaying monarch of the woods. "What? The top rotten? Why my own poll is withered," he retorted, baring his head. And then would he and his sons—this man before whom his colleagues trembled—go out with their guns to blow away



the dead branches from the tree-tops, so that the ruthless forester might be hoodwinked into sparing them for yet one more spring.

In his beloved woods the lord of Friedrichsruh became another man; a simple, straight-dealing human being. On one occasion, having in the presence of guests accused a tenant, an old miller, of poaching, he learned, on returning home, that the accusation was groundless—the old man had not even a gun. Climbing back into his carriage, he said, "Gentlemen, dinner must wait; you must do me the pleasure of accompanying me back to the mill." On arriving there the justly offended miller ignored a call to come out of his lair, so the Chancellor of the Reich got out of his carriage and, accompanied by his friends, entered the mill and tendered a humble apology. And that is how he who "consorted with kings" did not "lose the common touch."

No attempt to delineate the man Bismarck would be complete without a passing reference to his mighty powers as a trencherman. Once, when Prince Hohenlohe was his guest the Prince kept a record of the dishes his host tackled at dinner. They included soup, eels, cold meat, prawns, lobster, smoked meat, raw ham, hot roast, and pudding!—and he was an old man when he consumed that modest collation. As for liquor, not even Falstaff could have given him points. "To every man—he said—a certain quantity of wine and tobacco is allotted. Mine is 100,000 cigars and 5,000 bottles of champagne." Spread over a long life that may be a not too excessive allowance, but when we add to it the vast quantities of beer, burgundy, and hock wherewith he washed down his gargantuan repasts and moistened the eternal long pipe, the companion of his evenings, what a robust contrast he affords to a whisky-and-soda sipping, cigarette-puffing generation! During the strenuous days of the Berlin Congress he suffered from persistent insomnia, seldom getting any sleep before six, or even eight, in the morning. To brace himself for the daily combat of wits he drank "two or three beer-glasses of the heaviest port" "to set his blood circulating properly"; without it he could "not have carried on." And yet he lived to die of a broken heart at eighty-three!

It is just possible that Bismarck's rather medieval conception of social relaxation, which smacks somewhat of his forefathers' carousals on mead and horseflesh, may have contributed to his detachment from the intellectual life of his time. During his last twenty years of office there is no record that any of the men who dominated Berlin society—Heyse, Storm, Brandes, Ibsen, Bjornson, and many others—ever crossed his threshold. Moreover, as Emil Ludwig tersely remarks, he who reads nothing for thirty years except an odd poem by Heine, Byron, Uhland, or Rickert is asking for trouble when it comes to dealing with the great European movements—world-economics, the Church, and Socialism.

Thus the elements of the tragedy that culminated in his dismissal in 1890 worked out to the inevitable end—to the joy of those meaner souls who had cringed to him for a generation past. It is a significant fact that when he left Berlin the last person whose hand he pressed was no Secretary of State, Ambassador, or Prince, but a man of the people. Three hours before his departure his messenger, Leverström, who had entered his service on the day of the foundation of the Reich, took his courage in both hands and asked permission to bid farewell to his old master. He was admitted without delay. Of the many interviews in those last days, amongst the endless official leave-takings, this was the one occasion on which the man of "blood and iron" showed any emotion. After

thanking the man for his loyal services, he seized the nearest of his many valued cups—a silver-gilt "pokal"—and handed it to him with these words: "Dass Sie mich nicht vergessen."

And that is why Bismarck's work endures. He had builded better than he knew. His foundations were well and truly laid in the hearts of the German people. In the closing words of Dr. Ludwig's masterly book:—

"Germany lives. Her princes abandoned her in her hour of need—but the people whom he knew too late, held on, and saved Bismarck's work."  
Bismarck. By von Emil Ludwig. (Ernst Rowohlt Verlag, Berlin.)

## Forgotten.

SCENE: A Library-Studio anywhere. Very clever people up to a dozen or so all talking more or less. Speech is conducted in a breathless hurry as though the speaker was in a slowly moving train from a station, and the spoken-to was standing on the platform. When the spoken-to responds the train and platform change places.

PETER: Yes, I liked your old shepherd in "Song of the Breeze." I can see him now sitting in his chair with his gnarled hands on his walking-stick. It was very well done—very well done.

PAUL (looking dazed and almost oblivious whether his shepherd sat in a chair or stood on his head on Wiltshire Downs): Do you think so? I had almost forgotten him. Eh—yes, I remember in Chapter V.—where he recounts his experience in the storm.

PETER (hoping that Paul won't go into details as he himself is not sure): Er—wasn't it in the public-house as the old shepherd came in at the door and stood silent for five minutes? You remember—the scene where the ram buckled off his hat and made an elegant puddle round the spittoon?

PAUL (without conviction): Yes—so you did like the character—I had almost forgotten him.

BLAGDON D. BLAGDON (author of "The Obscurity of Obscurity," "Filed Smoke and the Esoteric Meaning," "The Percolations of Water Through Pumice Stone"): Your Felise was a charming creature. So blythe, so spontaneous, so artless.

CLAUDE (aghast that he is the author of a character named Felise, but with no such qualities): Er—not quite—she was a trifle wicked, but I had forgotten her. You remember that lecture of yours, where you stated that all flesh was brass. You converted me straight away.

BLAGDON D. BLAGDON (utterly oblivious of making such a statement, but determined to keep it up, smiling): Yes—and I drew over to my side the great physician, Ostler T. Brake—but I had almost forgotten. (Sighs and lifts his hand to his head as though he was responsible for the Solar System.)

D. P. BLITHERS: You managed that seduction scene very well in "Broken Furniture"; it was as impressive as a scene from "Salammbô." How do you think of all the vivid details?

ERNEST FRY (not remembering that he wrote such a book, but determined to deserve the compliment): Oh, yes, I remember; she had green eyes—or were they blue? You know all my characters appear to melt into each other—I had almost forgotten.

BARGOLD STUMER: The way you described Arthur Strong biting the antimacassar in rage was great; I quite enjoyed it. JOHN TRUSTWORTHY (remembering that his hero was living in the sixteenth century, but having almost forgotten him): Yes—he was rather an impressive beast.

This kind of thing may be multiplied by the rod, pole or perch. Man is an animal with an infinite capacity for forgetting. He has, by a wise arrangement of Providence, two ears for the entrance and exit of oral vibration. He can create characters and forget them. By certain vibrations of the vocal chords he can stir up strife, nail anyone's ears to his own will, or create peace. This is the explanation that in the beginning was the word; as the final stroke to the picture, woman has the last. That there is a traffic problem in the world of imagination is a certainty: the white lines are disregarded, the policemen cannot move their arms. The foot of Falstaff treads on the face of the ethereal singer. The whimper of Little Nell is mixed with the melody sung by Trilby, and her bare feet touch the boards on which the sound of a hammer has never been heard. Is literature the rocking of a cradle for grown-ups? Or is it something to be weighed out by the pound by academic shop-keepers like cheese and tripe, for, according to statute, tripe may be lawfully sold by grocers? Create and forget, created and for-

gotten—the little authors, the big authors by the demon of creation are driven to work overtime. How can they remember? The population of the world in 1911 was 1,623,000,000, and there is abundant reason to think that they are forgotten by the author, and the responsibility was passed on and accepted by those who rock the great cradle. Now I want to finish this story with some sort of a moral. Will you help me, reader? Whilst I have been writing, a mosquito has settled on the knee of my trouser-leg, and by a vigorous corkscrew movement, I can tell he has a grudge against me, but this does not help me how to tell you the profound meaning of my meaning so that you will say, "That's good—I see—that chap Repton is beginning to improve, but he has a long way to go." The chaps who rock the great cradle walk in front—are you listening? In this position they are more likely to receive a blow on the forehead. Those who follow only run the risk of getting a kick in a soft place. This is the Divine Comedy in a few words. Maxim Gorki, wherever you are, accept my salutations. And as for you, reader, I leave you a problem in metaphysics. A bandage round the head cannot be concealed, but with a few dots I show you the reverse side of the picture.

WILLIAM REPTON.

## Verse.

### PRAY CHRIST WE BE FREE!

Sad is a tower taken  
A city stript of gold;  
A desolate proud doom fulfilled  
On some rare prince of old;  
But the good red heart's betrayal  
How shall such be told?

And the man that gives his sworn friend  
Into a foeman's hand,  
When Honour comes sweet-smelling  
To walk the shining land  
And would have her own about her,  
How shall that man stand?

Saul's son strips him naked  
For sake of Jesse's son,  
And better he die beloved,  
Gilboa! with a kingdom won  
In the breast of the friend he loveth  
Than tarry till love be done.

Sad is the lot of women  
Kissed for expediency  
But a kiss more bitter remaineth . . . .  
Pray Christ we be free!  
Pray by the kiss He suffered  
Under the olive tree

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

### A CRITICAL COINCIDENCE.

Sir,—If the intention of Mr. M'Diarmid's letter in your issue of August 4 were simply to register an interesting coincidence, there would be no call for a reply. But, since he has seen fit to insinuate that my review of Mr. Wolfe's poem was plagiarised from his own, I must be allowed to make it clear that my article was in the hands of the editor of *The Scots Observer* on July 1, in the appointed date. Since I doubt whether my mere statement will carry weight with one who is unfortunately so suspicious, I invite him to confirm it by communicating with the editor of *The Scots Observer*.

J. MIDDLETON MURRY.

### ON THE FICKLENESS OF FORTUNE.

Sir,—Wilfrid Thorley, following Vauquelin de la Fresnoye, makes a pretty set of verses on this theme. Yet I still think it was best done in its first appearance in the Greek Anthology, where brevity adds so much to its point. I will not trouble your readers with the original, but quote an admirable rendering of the nineteenth century:

A, finding some gold, left a rope on the ground:  
B, missing his gold, used the rope which he found.

—Yours obediently,  
S. GASELEE.

The Athenaeum, Pall Mall, S.W.1.  
August 10, 1927.

## "THE LAW OF SIMILARS."

Sir,—My article, "The Law of Similars," in the previous issue contains an unfinished sentence for which I must apologise. The second paragraph should conclude: "Such stimuli Dr. Bier found to produce the same results whether administered internally or by injection in some instances, while in others the results were dissimilar, thus necessitating provings by both methods to ascertain the full range of action of any particular stimulus." A minor misprint in the footnote may also be corrected. The publishers are Messrs. Boericke and Tafel.

J. W. GIBBON.

## WILLIAM BLAKE AND ANTISEMITISM.

Sir,—In the kind and appreciative review of my small book, "William Blake on the Lord's Prayer," which appeared in your issue of July 14, the writer says that "it invites the charge of being anti-Semitic propaganda." But the anti-semitism of my book is Blake's, and does not originate with me.

"Antisemitism" is a word which I never employ, because it means totally different things in the mouths of different persons, and I rather opine that the genius who invented it, whoever he may have been, intended that it should.

The best account of the Gentile reaction against Jewry, and the best explanation of the term known to me, is to be found in the work of that brilliant Jew, Bernard Lazare—*L'Antisemitisme, son Histoire et ses Causes* (Paris, Léon Chaillet, 1894). Jews are fond of putting on Christianity the onus of their persecutions, but Lazare shows that anti-semitism long antedated the Christian era. Thus, in his preface, he says:—

"It seemed to me that an opinion so universal as anti-semitism, which has flourished in all places and at all times, before and after the Christian era, in Alexandria, in Rome, in Antioch, in Arabia, in Persia, in Europe of the Middle Ages, and in modern Europe, in a word, in all parts of the world where there are or have been Jews—it seemed to me that such an opinion could not be the result of a fantasy or of a perpetual caprice, and it must have profound and serious reasons for its outburst and permanence.

On page 41 of his book Lazare gives utterance to a truth of deep significance which at once links him with Blake. He writes: "*L'Eglise est fille de la Synagogue.*" Of course, Lazare means the external Visible Church with all its numerous progeny of sects. Now it is precisely against this close relationship—which does actually exist—between Church and Judaism that Blake's whole life, whether as poet, artist, or philosopher, was one unbroken passionate protest. Why should the churches, he asks, raise on their altars the prohibitions, accusations, and menaces of Jewish law when they have the Everlasting Gospel of Forgiveness to live upon? Christianity never did and never could hate, hurt, or persecute anybody, because Christianity is the continual forgiveness of the sins of others. In taking to itself the Jewish deity of accusations, of prohibitions, curses, and negations, the Church Spiritual played the harlot with temporalities and materialities. That is why the External Church is symbolised by Blake as being "in the State called Rahab." It was this harlotry, this dallying with temporal power, which in due course carried Rahab to the throne of the Caesars. In Blake's vision Rahab will "in a Last Judgment" be restored to her virginity, for "every harlot was a virgin once," and "everything that lives is holy." But this restoration will only take place by the recognition and casting out of her error—in exactly the same way as regeneration, redemption, and restoration take place with every one.

But as long as the Church Visible prefers with Dr. Thornton to worship a magnified Augustus Caesar for its god, living far away in a "telescopic" heaven, so long as it asks him to give it temporal and material things such as bread, which can be bought with money and taxed, so long will it remain in "the State called Rahab." If this is "Semitism"—and that is what Bernard Lazare implies by saying that the Church is the daughter of the Synagogue—then Blake was indeed the greatest antisemite born since the Christian era.—  
Yours truly,  
JOHN HENRY CLARKE.

R. M. replies: Vernacular develops ahead of dictionaries. The word anti-Semite, no more defying its etymology than many other words, has taken its place in speech to mark a person who chooses, from a multitude behaving and thinking alike, to focus his antipathy to that behaviour and thought on the persons of the Jews. Blake certainly did not like the Judaism of the Christian churches; but he directed his antipathy towards the Christian churches.



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