THE

NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER"

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, AND ART

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

Signor Mussolini has announced that Italy has adopted the gold standard. There remains now only France to complete the gold standardisation of Europe. There is at least this consolation for those who regard with apprehension this international unification of unsound monetary policy and practice; namely that when a sound policy is adopted (as it will have to be) there will be so much the less difficulty in working out and applying the necessary uniform administrative changes. Moreover, to the extent that financial power is being withdrawn from the many and concentrated in the few, the defence of that power is ceasing to be an interest of the many, and is left to the few. It remains for the world to realise how few these few really are, and to learn the main secrets of their apparent omnipotence. These oligarchs must make finance safe for the world if they would make the world safe for finance. They cannot do it by their present methods. They will have to choose the Social Credit alternative, or the world will choose it for them.

* * *

In Parliament last Thursday week it was generally agreed that the South Wales mining area was bankrupt, and its inhabitants destitute. But Sir Kingsley Wood announced that he did not think an Exchequer grant would be "appropriate." Was air not appropriate to the suffocating crew of that sunken American submarine? It is the same tale all round. Anything is appropriate to the moneyless—except money. For instance, Sir Kingsley Wood assured the House that the Transference Board was giving the matter attention. In a phrase: eviction is the appropriate remedy for penury. Whether there be any surplus money in the place where the transferred miners are to go the people there will probably inform the Government in due course. Whereupon the Transference Board will justify its name by organising another transfer. Another Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, told a deputation from the district in question that there was no need for a new inquiry, for which they had asked. "The facts of the situation are already adequately known," he declared. Yes; but the causes? But it is no use our arguing: We should probably be dismissed by the final judgment that the investigation of causes is not "appropriate" to handling of consequences. Referring to the question of relief schemes, he objected to them because "any measure which would tend to keep surplus men in the district" was not to the "real advantage of the area." It is a pity that this principle cannot be applied to the case of surplus Ministers in the Government.

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John William Hammond, a Kilburn postman, who was recently convicted of stealing a 10s. Postal Order, thereby lost his right to his retiring gratuity of £390 and pension of £2 15s. a week. Mr. Bernard Shaw wrote a long letter to the *Evening Standard* calling this a monstrous outrage. Hammond had completed thirty-six years' service, and was near the point of retiring. This was his first offence, the magistrate discharging him on that account, remarking that the consequences of his lapse were "appalling." The matter has been taken up in the Commons, and there is to be an enquiry. As the matter stands at present it seems that a small theft is going to be punished by a large one. It is a pity in one sense that the magistrate did not sentence this man to prison, or impose a legal punishment of some sort; because by discharging him he was in effect encouraging the State to impose its own punishment. The delinquent's gratuity and pension are as much his own property as though he had taken out and paid premiums on an endowment policy with some insurance company. There was some disposition on the part of the Government to deny this when the point was raised in the Commons, and to suggest that such money did not represent deductions from earnings but was a non-earned, *ex gratia* allowance. If that is so, then the whole Civil Service is on the dole while

it is in employment, and a strong case is presented either for withdrawing the benefit or for extending it to wage and salary earners everywhere. The utmost which should be exacted from this man is the repayment of what he stole and a reduction of his allowance proportionate to the now shortened term of his active service. That would accord with the moral that Mr. Shaw drew in his letter, namely, that the theft proved that Hammond had become unfit through lapse of years for a position of responsibility and ought to have been retired earlier. The paltry dimensions of the crime pointed to senile disability. There is also the larger economic principle to be considered. To deprive this man of his income is to deprive industry of his orders. The fact that the Post Office "saves" this money does not offset this injury, for it is an established principle that all State windfalls, such as this would be, have to be applied to the reduction of debt. In other words, the punishment of Hammond is an act of deflation; and the whole community suffer under his condemnation, while the financial system transmutes his crime into hidden reserves. It is an ironic circumstance that this system whose restrictive monetary policy provides the dominant incentive to theft should not only punish the theft but fashion that punishment into an instrument for further restriction—and further crime.

* * *

Out of the drab Fleet Street sky "lessons for 1928" are floating down like snowflakes. Except for the serial number of the storm it might belong to the opening of any year since the Armistice. And, as always, the result will be that the public will slide, slither and stumble about on the drifts for a week, whereupon the events of the New Year will thaw the lot down the sewers. New Year Resolutions—a dozen for a penny (ten cents in the *Observer*) "Once more," begins Mr. Garvin, "we attempt to put the world into a walnut-shell, as Sancho Panza might say." We read patiently through his three-column effort—how the nation has lost time and must now make it up, how it has lapsed into misunderstandings and must now pull together, and how this, and that and the other, etc., etc.—until we read his familiar conclusion that the year 1928 "may be the beginning of a period of prosperity such as we have not known since the war."

"The result will be what we make it by vigilant sagacity in our political affairs, by union and vigour in our economic business. A new sense of this truth penetrates the nation, and ——"

behold Mr. Garvin has put the world into a chestnut-shell.

* * *

The one definite idea which this master of incantations picks out for emphasis is that of Lord Cecil, Earl Grey, Lord Rothermere, and others, that we must all keep good friends with Uncle Sam. We notice, by the way, that the frontispiece designed by *Punch* for its last completed volume contains a small vignetted centre drawing showing Uncle Sam ploughing the ocean astride of a dolphin, holding a conical shell to his mouth as a horn with one hand, and holding aloft with the other a trident on which the Stars and Stripes are flapping. This picture reveals more about where the "world" is to be "put" (or, shall we say, where it is hoped to put it?) than all the letterpress of Fleet Street. It was a foregone conclusion that Mr. Garvin would be perturbed about the failure of the Geneva Conference, and would recommend Britain to "continue steadily for a few years" on the course of "quietly" reducing her naval estimates "as America increased hers." The object of this is, he says, to kill any attempt to represent this country as engaged in competitive building against America. We need not discuss this ineptitude at any length after what was said in our issue of last week on Lord Rothermere's naval pronouncement, and the Press extracts that were published in the same issue from American sources on the Americo-European economic situation. Until leader-writers cease endeavouring to dissociate military from economic policy their contributions to political thought will remain valueless. Even granting, for the sake of argument, that Britain should not build against America, a reduction in the British Admiralty's official programme would not of itself evoke the reassurance on the other side of the Atlantic which sponsors of that policy seem to take for granted. Britain's naval fighting strength at any given time is not to be measured merely by the number of vessels being built to the order of the Government, but by the total number being built in this country irrespective of who has ordered them. Everybody knows that at an outbreak of war every warship under construction in our yards would be commandeered by the Admiralty, no matter to whom they "belonged." In this connection it is significant to see—as we did in a technical journal recently—that since the last war Great Britain has fully recovered her share of the whole world's trade both in naval and mercantile shipbuilding, while America has lost ground. What are the advocates of "making the waves safe for the United States" going to do about this? Will they obey their own logic to the extent of pressing the Government to put restrictions on British shipbuilding in general, and diverting the business to America? No; they are not frank enough to do that. Not that it would be of any great moment if they did, for the money interests in America have been doing what they could towards hampering our progress by the indirect method of imposing restrictions on British credits to other nations. What financial power fails to accomplish in this field nothing else can; so we need not be particularly concerned about the exhortations of subsidised journals and dependent politicians.

* * *

A striking example of labour-saving is given in last week's *Nature*. The Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd., has constructed at its works in Manchester a machine which is capable of turning out one million pint bottles a week, and requires only one man to supervise its operation. A full illustrated description of the invention appeared in the *Engineer* of July 1 and 8, 1927. It ought to be comforting to know that a single operator is now able to provide every man, woman and child in this country with a pint bottle a year. It is less comforting to know that the total possible effective demand created in the process of making this huge annual quantity of bottles will be represented by that one operator's annual income. Whether you look backwards and say that employees in glass factories will have received incomes for making the raw glass, or whether you look forward and say that employees in breweries and elsewhere will receive them for filling the bottles, you cannot balance this fundamental disequilibrium. In the end each bottle must be paid for out of some private person's money earnings, and its price will in the main represent an accumulation of costs which have no countervailing monetary existence in consumers' purses. The missing purchasing power will have long since been sucked back into the banking system and destroyed.

* * *

Mr. McKenna, in his address on December 11 at the Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, on the subject of "Banking," stated that you could not have a higher standard of living without an increase in the production of goods and services, and that you could not increase production unless more money were created by the banks. He did not agree that the same quantity of money might be used to carry an increased quantity of goods through the initial device of cheapening prices, because "as prices in any particular commodity fell the prosperity of that particular part of

industry declined." When prices were falling "merchants would not give orders" and manufacturers "would not manufacture stock"; so there was a "decline in demand," resulting in unemployment. . . . He is quite right—on his own premises. So long as it does not "pay" industry to reduce prices, prices will not be reduced, or if they are forced down by external circumstances, industry will lessen its production. The real question is whether there is not a means of effecting a general price reduction compatibly with increased industrial profit. To decide that question involves an analysis of factory costing —an analysis which is never attempted in public by financial spokesmen. By ignoring this vital half of our credit-economy, Mr. McKenna not only fails to establish his case but undermines it. For instance, he states that "continuous" lending by the banks forces up prices, and their "continuous" refusal to lend forces them down. Exactly what his reason is for thus emphasising the element of continuity we cannot divine. Continuity we take for granted, and we must assume him to agree that the banks lend more credit, or less credit, or an unvarying quantity; and that prices rise, fall, or remain stationary accordingly. That is the orthodox case, and we do not remember his having questioned it. How, then, are we any better off for the increased quantity of credit he wishes to have made available? A "remedy" which is designed to raise the standard of living, and results in forcing up prices, is self-invalidated. Again we come round to the costing system; by reference to which it is not difficult to demonstrate that for industry to maintain its general solvency under current accountancy laws it must receive continuously expanding credits. To cause a slump and panic it is not necessary for the banks to "refuse continuously to lend"; it is quite sufficient for them to slacken, by ever so little, a previous rate of credit-expansion. It is therefore of no use to industry for Mr. McKenna to advocate a single increase of so many million pounds of loan-credit, and then no more; for industry will need more, and it will need it precisely because it has already borrowed more. Directly the banks say: "No; no more," the effect will be exactly the same as he described in connection with their hypothetical "continuous refusal to lend." If he begins to feed industry he must go on; and because of that he cannot resist the force of the technical objections which his expert opponents can raise against his programme. We see that in answer to a question he explained that while he agreed that there should be a public inquiry, he did not think it should be so much a "technical inquiry" as one for the "education of the public." There is only one way to educate the public, and that is to debate the *principles* of a new technique against the *principles* of the old. If Mr. McKenna's idea is to chop logic with financiers on how to improve their current technique, a "technical inquiry" is already inevitable, and one in which he seems likely to be worsted.

* * *

Mr. Snowden's resignation from the Independent Labour Party has evoked plenty of comment, but no surprise. The Party, he declares, has now exhausted all its useful functions. This complacent judgment reminds us of the celebrated Andrew Carnegie, who, after making his pile out of protected steel, retired to private life, and then announced that the steel industry no longer required protection. Apparently, after having made a back for Mr. Snowden to achieve his political ambition, the I.L.P. are now welcome to straighten their shoulders and run away and play. The proper lesson for the I.L.P. to apply is to turn and take a good hard look at the men whom it is preparing to help along the same journey. It may have been inevitable in the case of Mr. Snowden that he had to rise to high office before he found out what are the real springs of practical government. But there is no such necessity to-day. It is within the competence of any intelligent man to acquaint himself with the narrow conditions under which political power can be exercised to-day. Such information is not entirely hidden, even by the ordinary newspapers, from those who do their reading carefully; while for those who want to have it selected and collated there are the columns of THE NEW AGE. There is no excuse to-day for a political idealist to get into power before he discovers he has none, and there is less excuse still for the voter who assists him in this cumbrous (and incidentally lucrative—more's the pity) progress to discovery. A thorough grounding in the operative principles of government would enable electorates to size up the qualifications of political aspirants. By judicious examination they could comb out the illusioned and the humbugs. And if they felt constrained to accept one or the other they should plunge for the humbugs, who at least can be guaranteed immune from the sadistic reactions of frustrated idealism. There is no worse tyrant than a disillusioned Utopian. When you come across these deep-eyed, soulful, lachrymose weavers of the world's woes spinning away at your emancipation, have nothing to do with them; they are unhealthy— and when they find their labour in vain they will more than likely turn and strangle you with the very threads they once thought to use for your salvation. "Now, you enjoy yourself," said the father to his son when he took him for an outing, "or I'll give you a good hiding."

* * *

In the hottest days of the feminist agitation there used to be a jibe that when women got votes they would poll unanimously for the best-looking candidates. We wish it were true, if the term best-looking be widened to include the healthiest bodies, the most contented natures, and the best-balanced minds. Such men and women would infuse some pluck and initiative in the spineless House of Commons that we now know. A crying freak is a cringing sneak; and we are interested to see that *John Bull* in its issue of December 31 has published an article advertised by the slogan: "The House of Commons Fraud," in which the writer, Mr. E. Roffe Thomson, "exposes" our "600 M.P.'s" and kicks at their subservience to the Party system. The more of this criticism we see the better. As things are managed now the public ought to put a reserve price on their vote—if they vote at all. A candidate asking to be elected to a salary of £650 per annum and admission to the first club in Europe has to be a fine character to resist the temptation to make Parliament safe for himself instead of making Parliamentary legislation safe for his constituents.

* * *

The democratic political system, too, is one of the methods by which the stock of the ruling classes is prevented from deterioration arising from close in-breeding. From time to time we select a proletarian cock, feed him up and set him to crow on a Ministerial dung-heap for a session or two: whereupon he qualifies for introduction into the High-Society hen-run, of course, with a warning that he is a monogamist in principle. But just take a look at some of the democratic reformist types with whose dynasties we thus risk saddling our innocent selves (the development of the "picture" side of journalism is very useful from this point of view) and reflect whether it would not be better for our voting to be done, if at all, under the direction of professional psychologists, physiognomists, and physiologists, seeing that the women, who are intuitively all three, have failed to use their gift in fulfilment of that flippant forecast? A

good alternative would be the institution of the State Lottery, because the law of chance would occasionally invest sane, healthy men and women with fortunes overnight and send them straight up to invigorate the stock of our ruling classes—not to speak of their influence on ruling policy. But it is just here where one stumbles on the reason for the objection to popular gambles of this sort. A strong, temperate, and gifted believer in the Social Credit theorem might draw a hundred thousand pounds. Then there would be the devil to pay.

* * *

Whatever signs of restiveness are apparent in regard to financial policy are confined to members of the Labour Party. The relations of the Labour Party with the Co-operative Movement have become closer during the past year. The Co-operative Societies have been making a successful bid recently to secure business from the middle-classes in addition to that with the working classes. A growing Co-operative Society could be a more powerful industrial support for a wise policy of consumer finance than the trade unions have been for Labour's wage-policy. For all these reasons it is natural that the "capitalist" multiple-shop organisations should take measures to resist the economic penetration of non-capitalist competition and very probable that they have been instigated thereto by private financial interests. Measures so indicated were announced to be in contemplation by industrialists last week. A multiple shop trust is their objective. If they can work out such a scheme to protect their profits it is not to be doubted that the credit manipulators will be ready with financial accommodation—to safeguard their own monopoly. The Co-operative Movement is, of course, not wide awake enough to realise what a proper system of consumer-finance involves, and it is therefore not an immediate danger to the credit oligarchy. But the money monopoly takes no chances. It makes its umbrella while the sun shines.

* * *

Last month it was stated in the *Evening Standard* that plans for the formation of a European chemical trust had been abandoned. The breakdown in negotiations was on the question of the allotment of production among the member industries. Germany claimed a preponderating share on account of her strong position in regard to dyes, but Britain resisted it on account of her own strong position in regard to heavy chemicals, particularly fertilisers. Since world competition is evolving from the national to the inter-continental structure this failure to combine forces with Germany, France, Belgium and Italy seems a handicap to Europe. But there is the financial aspect of the case. Europe in general, and Germany in particular, is so honeycombed by dollar investments that it is questionable whether a European trust would not quickly become an economic instrument of Wall Street policy. So probably the British representatives have done as rightly to insist on their own programme in regard to chemicals as others of them did at Geneva in regard to cruisers.

"THE NEW AGE" DINNER.

This has been fixed for Saturday, February 4. Particulars will appear later.

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Current Political Economy.

The illusion that time can be cut off in lengths of a century or a year might be a source of benefit if it were seriously believed. That on a certain day, the start of an untarnished year, a man might re-survey his life, put his old failures behind him and his new hopes before—a man or a nation—would be a healthful myth if it led to practical application in conduct or policy. Actually the idea, except for very young people, is only a sentimental pretence, and for nations it is a sentimental pretence encouraged by Governments through the persons of their agents in fear of anything more real. At the beginning of the last five New Years, in spite of conduct and policy continually driving Great Britain and Europe towards depression both of standards of life and of spirits, the Press has discharged the poison-gas of false optimism broadcast. The year 1928 has been no exception. Nothing was written in the Sunday leaders' "conscience-stirring" addresses to their flocks on New Year's Day which did not render them even more than usually sure soporifics for an undisturbed Sunday afternoon nap. This New Year's indulgence in sentimental and false optimism has apparently become an annual orgy.

* * *

The largest measure of New Year congratulations has been showered on Italy for her triumphant return to the gold-standard just early enough for her to enter the New Year without a stain on her character. Indeed the congratulation was so excessive that had Italy been a free-agent in her return to the financial fold she would surely re-consider it. No doubt the uneasiness of "those shrewd questioners in Italy who want to know what conditions London and New York have imposed in return for their credit" will be dissipated in the atmosphere of New Year benevolence. Acceptance of the gold standard has not revived prosperity in other countries; the gradual movement towards the gold standard has produced much distress and a lower standard of life in Italy. Somewhere, for somebody, at some time, however, all the sacrifices will be justified. When once more the whole world accepts the gold-standard its consequent poverty will be compensated by the pride stimulated in its heart and the flags shoved into its hand in celebration of an achievement.

* * *

France now stands alone, the last flouter of the standard of financial respectability to carry her sinfulness over into a new year. But this is the season of good-will to all men. Instead, therefore, of speaking to France as she deserves, and thus spoiling the peace, the New Year prophets congratulate her in anticipation of her conversion to the strait and narrow way in a very short time. Thus, with the absolute dominance of orthodox finance in immediate prospect, the future looks rosy for those who have neither eyes nor minds to see where the dominance of orthodox finance must lead them; who have merely learned that the gold standard is an all-sufficient regulator of exchange, and have never thought about suiting the productive capacity of mankind to its consumer-needs. In the midst of their jubilation over this achievement they peer out with confidence over the tasks of the coming year. Now that the gold standard is once more supreme, all that the world requires for Paradise, they say, is peace in industry and disarmament. These are actually regarded as compatible with the gold-standard!

* * *

Not a word appears in all these prospects and retrospects on the interaction of the productive and financial systems; as for the interaction between these and the mechanism of distribution, not a sign that any doubt of existing perfection has

so much as been raised. Several hundred professors are engaged in economic research; several thousand publicists, whose duty is to link the expert with the people as a necessary condition of democracy, are fully occupied stock-taking the nation's ideas for the future. And among them not one appears to have heard of an analysis, positive action upon which is capable of rendering the other desirable things at least possible. This nation of inventors and discoverers is afraid. At a crisis in its economic history it is unmistakably shirking the task of contemplating a novel step. Its faith in the universal acceptance of the gold standard as capable of doing anything to renew the prosperity of England, or to ensure peace on earth, is pathetically reminiscent of the oriental attitude of fatalism. It is not now Asia, but Europe, which fears progress. The restoration of the gold standard is definitely a retrograde step. All the forces tending to international strife that existed in 1914 are automatically set to work again the instant the world imagines that its necessary division of functions can be regulated on the basis of gold adjustments.

* * *

It has been shown in THE NEW AGE more than once that the gold-standard, applied as it is intended to be applied, places the monopoly of credit and the control of currency in the hands of a few people whose concern is solely with their currency reserves and debt solvency. It is no longer a question, but a demonstrated proposition, accepted by bankers, that the financial necessity to conserve currency may entail a contraction of credit that, in its turn, inevitably disorganises and depresses industry. In such industry there can be no peace. The present peace is merely the mutual consolation of employers and employed with both in distress—reminiscent of the British and German wounded sharing their drinking-water. From the point of view of the employed, also, it is a peace of defeat, and from the point of view of the employer a peace of victory that has brought no triumph. All said and done, it was the employer who, after the deflation policy was put into operation, declared war; not because he wanted war, but because he was so hard-pressed from the financial side that he had to requisition reserves, if need be by force, from the industrial side. The conditions of peace in industry are not under the control of either employers or employed—nor of both together. Whoever advises them to cheer—or even cheer up—at the stabilisation of finance on gold misleads them. Where the gold is rests also the power to decide on peace or war in industry.

* * *

With peace abroad it is much the same as with peace in industry. This whole policy of "peace" is no better than a continuance of the late Mr. Bonar Law's "tranquillity." The export trade situation is such that for nations the decision must be made to starve or to fight. It is significant indeed that no writer can now speak of peace without speaking in more detail, and at no farther remove than the next paragraph, of the United States of America. In the world-position which the gold-standard will merely hasten, the prosperity of America can be maintained only at the expense of the impoverishment of Europe; without a complete reorganisation of the money system and an entirely changed attitude towards the inter-relation of consumption and production, war with America will be the only alternative to submission to America. For some time the policy has been submission, on questions of debt and finance especially. Where Britain has held out, as on the disarmament question, in effect she has finally submitted. Mr. Baldwin's decision to abandon the construction of two cruisers has produced no reciprocal action on America's part. Let sentimentalists say what they will, America realises that she has reached a position in world finance which can be secure only provided that it can be maintained by force. The gesture of British Imperial disarmament would at present be very like the surrender of the German navy. For true peace there is no option but to create the prior conditions of peace by installing a credit system that will enable all countries to share the world's resources to the full. Although none of the New Year stock-takers mentions these aspects of the financial situation, one hesitates to assume that all of them live in the fool's paradise into which they are anxious to attract others.

N.

"The steady rise in the tide of advances, the average of which in September reached £935,047,000 (a new high '£ record'—representing 54.8 per cent. of the deposits) and the increase in the average of bills (in September £213,352,000—more than £6,000,000 above the August total) lead up to the question, Where are all these advances going? . . . This country compares very unfavourably in its rate of industrial expansion since the war with the U.S.A., France, Germany, or Belgium, and what one would like to know is why, seeing that the bank advances have crept up to 54.8 per cent. of the deposits, they are not reflected on our industrial expansion and the unemployment figures remain constant or increase. It looks as if the depositors' money is being used for backing up industrial enterprise abroad, for which Great Britain gets no return in the shape of orders, because this course is found to be more profitable from the point of view of the earning capacity of high finance. Perhaps some of our banking authorities will inform us what proportion of the deposits is being lent abroad and what proportion is advanced to industrial undertakings in this country. The answer could not fail to be instructive as well as interesting."—Letter to the *Times*, October 25, from J. A. Corcoran, Director, National Union of Manufacturers, 6, Holborn Viaduct, E.C.1.

"The part played by the Bank of France in stabilising French finances has been very important. By the law of August 6, 1926, the Bank of France was authorised to purchase gold, silver, and foreign exchange at current rates of exchange against the issue of new bank notes outside the legal limit. The Bank stimulated an advance of the franc by raising its discount rate from 6 per cent. to 7½ per cent. and its rate for loans on collateral from 8 to 9½ per cent. This helped to check the movement of capital from the country, for the tightening of credit compelled French business to call upon its foreign balance, which brought considerable amounts of foreign exchange to the Bank of France. This resulted in a rise of the franc from slightly over 2 cents to slightly over 4 cents in the period July-December, 1926, and placed the Bank of France in a controlling position in the foreign exchange market. In order to prevent a business depression as a result of the rapid rise of the franc the Bank exercised its power as controller of the foreign exchange market by keeping the value of the franc at approximately 3.92 cents, where it has remained since. This policy of maintaining the franc at a fixed rate and of adjusting the money rate from time to time has contributed largely to the economic stability of France during 1927."—*The Index*, published by the New York Trust Co., New York, October, 1927.

"To-day, more than ever in the past, the financial future of this country is influenced by events in the United States. . . . For two years past there have been two outstanding facts; the almost unbroken upward movement of American production and the gradual downward movement of the level of dollar prices. Recently there has been a change. There is a lull in American production and the downward trend of dollar prices has been arrested. . . . The factor which has given an upward thrust to prices can be found in the recent credit policy of the Federal Reserve authorities. Ever since the all-round reduction in Federal Reserve rediscount rates in August, bank credit in the United States has expanded. . . . Even at the risk of encouraging Stock Market speculation, American monetary policy has recently been aimed at lowering the value of the dollar through the expansion of bank credit, in order to relieve the pressure on European credit. Already some of the benefits of such a policy have been revealed. The dangerous upward movement of money rates in Europe has been checked; Europe has been placed in a more favourable position as a purchaser of America's autumn exports; while the constant gold suction into the U.S. has been, at any rate, temporarily arrested."—*Financial News*, November 2, 1927.

Medicine, Myth, and the Mass.

A useful synopsis of researches into the subject of vitamins appears in *Nature* of December 31. The most important of these substances is vitamin D, whose presence appears necessary to the animal body to preserve the balance of phosphorus or calcium (or both) in the blood. Upon the adequate provision of these two elements depends the full formation of bones and teeth. Investigators have caused rickets in rats by feeding them on food deprived of vitamin D, and have cured them by subsequently restoring it. Vitamin D is derived from a substance called ergosterol, which is found chiefly in fungi—in ergot of rye and in yeast. The process is one of irradiation; that is, the ergosterol is exposed to sunlight or to the radiation from a mercury-vapour lamp. The change is brought about by a particular part of the light—the ultra-violet rays. Under the influence of the ultra-violet light the ergosterol turns from a crystalline into a resinous mass. Vitamin D is formed naturally, in animals rather than plants, chiefly by solar irradiation.

It is known that certain glands of animals contain sterols, and there is good evidence for believing that it is from this source that they derive their supply of vitamin D. In the absence of sunlight there is naturally a depression in the quantity so derived. Ergosterol is present in practically all fats of animal origin, and, less so, in those of vegetable origin. Dentists throughout England, says the writer, can point to innumerable examples of dental caries traceable to the substitution of margarine for butter during the war. In growing children bone formation may use up calcium at the expense of the teeth unless sufficient vitamin D is present to maintain the supply. In childbirth the drain on the mother is well known to result in dental caries, and there is strong reason for supposing that this could be prevented by the administration of more vitamin D. Cod-liver oil provides another source of this vitamin, but irradiated ergosterol has the great advantage of being practically tasteless. It is less expensive, and being of standard purity the amount administered can be adjusted accurately. The manufacture of ergosterol from yeast has been set up in Great Britain, and it is being irradiated under proper scientific control with animal tests. Consequently, the writer says, vitamin D can be provided sufficient to meet the world's requirements. It can be obtained commercially in pellets or capsules and in oily solution, also in combination with malt extract.

* * *

The above information is intrinsically valuable, but it also induces many intriguing reflections. The idea, for instance, of an invisible light-ray building up a tooth would have been laughed at as a superstition only a generation ago. The only way in which an idea of that kind would have been tolerated as credible would have been by postulating that sunlight had a warming and cheering effect on the human body and mind, and that this engendered the better functioning of all the glands and organs, by which teeth (among other things) would benefit. Now let us turn from "science" to listen to an "old wives' tale." During a conversation with "R. R.," whose contributions in this journal on rural life are causing so much interest, he told me the following:—

"I had an uncle called Robert Hancock. He lived at a place called Hoyles Farm, near Combemartin, not far from Ilfracombe. He died about six years ago. He was a member of the Wesleyan Church. He became well known by being able to cure a skin disease called the King's Evil—a rash something like a birth mark, but not so dark—more like a fresh scald. Whatever it was it gave the doctors a lot of trouble, and they could not cure it. But he did: and how he used to do it was by reciting some verses out of the Bible. People used to come to him from all over that part of the country. He did not make any charge, and there was no such a thing as advertisement. The people who came were sent to him by their friends. I don't know what he recited, but his sons might. They are living there. The only thing I ever heard about the cause of this complaint was a saying among us boys that if you stole any robin's eggs out of her nest you would get the King's Evil. Other eggs didn't matter, but robin's eggs 'you dursn't take,' as they said."

Light is a vibration. Sound is a vibration. The two are interconvertible. Therefore it is possible to conceive it true that an incantation can effect a physical change just as does a light—especially an invisible ray. That the "irradiation" of oratory can turn men red or pale is a matter of common observation. There is also the irradiation proceeding from mental concentration, which effects the condition of hypnotism in the subject.

* * *

And, to sublimate speculation, there may be a principle of irradiation to which the Catholics ascribe the power of Transubstantiation. The irradiation of the wafer by consecration, and the creation of a Vitamin Dei.

Just as there is room for alternative beliefs about how the light of the sun confers bodily health, so there seems to be room for alternative beliefs about how the sacraments of the Church confer spiritual health. Protestant and Catholic are, so to speak, both sun-worshippers. The first regards the substances partaken of as *inert catalysts in the presence of which* the healing power of the sun is quickened. The second regards these substances as *activated agents through which* the quickening takes place. But since the natural sun heals in both ways, may not the supernatural Sun do likewise. As below, so above.

This is an argument and a plea for peace in the Anglican Church.

BETHESDA.

PALINGENESIS.

From the Demiurge to its Masters, Time and Eternity,
I turn—to crave the single boon that they could give to me:
To grant me another encasement where the flesh shall
be the soul,
Where good shall be as evil and pole as anti-pole.

SAMUEL F. DARWIN FOX.

TO AN AESTHETIC WRITER.

But I grow drowsy in the candlelight,
And scarcely heed your chanting any more.
I am pale, I am enervated and polite,
I observe the silken hanging on your door,
Embroidered by a cloistered Carmelite;
The violet bowls cast shadows across the floor.

'Midst a whirl of words, rose-coloured and opaque,
My weary mind sinks furtively to rest.
Against two cushions of yellow and crimson-lake,
I stifle a yawn while you chant your loveliest.
If I fell asleep, I should never, never wake;
Already cobwebs are fastened above my breast.

Finish your recitation, and I will go
Out from this silken tomb into the sun,
See life again, and see the bright blood flow
Where heroes fight and victories are won,
Forget the frail songs and the aesthetic woe,
And the proud immunity of the skeleton.

HELENE MULLINS.

Views and Reviews.

SACREDNESS.

Of the three books which form Messrs. Benn's *What I Believe* series, Profesor Huxley's "Religion Without Revelation"* is considerably the biggest. It is natural that he should also be the least sure of himself of the three writers. The book is not the biggest because a scientist cannot write about anything without embracing everything. But it is certainly true that nobody can have a religion without revelation except he prepare the ground by *knowing* everything; nor can he justify such a religion without also teaching all he knows. For religion is almost the way by which a person may live and act where he knows nothing—although he may learn something later—and cannot therefore be anything but revealed or inspired. The quantity of clearly stated facts on biology, anthropology, psychology, and other sciences contained in some of Professor Huxley's chapters leads the reader to enjoy them purely as a review of ideology and history. If the reader should give undue importance to that aspect of the work, however, he would do the author serious injustice. In other chapters the work is an enthralling search and confession. Here, more frankly and more earnestly expressed than in any religious work of this generation, are the difficulties of the religious temperament in the present nadir of religion.

* * *

So courageous and sincere is the writer that one wishes he had presented a shorter work, confined entirely to the religious outlook of the author, and free from very much of the scientific expansion. Indeed, the publishers might consider the suggestion of obliging any future contributors to the series to begin or end with a creed of not more than two pages—a religious declaration. They might insist also that any future contributor include a chapter of *personalia* as bravely and freely confessed as Professor Huxley's. In this age of psycho-analysis a statement of this kind is a religious act of a positive nature; in it confession in secret to a priest is surpassed by confession in public to mankind. After it, let none doubt that the writer is a humanist. Professor Huxley's story of his religious progress is not, of course, unique. Many children growing to manhood have lived through a closely similar chain of experiences and conflicts. Maybe if children are ever preserved from such suffering, or if it is at least shortened and illuminated, science will contribute its share of help, and if religion fails to direct that contribution, humanism will do so in religion's default.

* * *

A temptation that must be resisted in criticising Professor Huxley's work is to take unfair advantage of his confession. Perhaps we may agree that in his particular circumstances his development was inevitable; from his early alternating confidence and distrust to his nervous breakdown, with his visions, his calls to serve humanity, and his gospel of work. Letting pass any deductions that suggest themselves, it nevertheless emerges that we live in a civilisation in which the most sensitive and most socially valuable youth have to endure unnecessary torture of spirit in the wilderness of doubt. Perhaps they would have to traverse this wilderness in any civilisation. Now, however, they do so without guide. There is no teaching given to children of their place in the universe that has the confidence of their elders, or progresses as rapidly as the child grows in perceptive and intellectual faculties. The grown-up, the teacher—the religious teacher, often enough—has not a sufficiently organic knowledge of his own religion, nor the power to impart it well enough, not to offend the intelligence of any child who has courage to think; who does not merely wish for the shelter of being like his fellows. The fault actually is not the decay of religion. It is rather that men have forgotten it.

* * *

Professor Huxley regards the central fact of religion as the distribution of sacredness. He looks forward to a new distribution of sacredness "in common things, in events of human life, in the gradually-comprehended whole *revealed* to human desire for knowledge" (italics ours), though his particular antipathy is the fundamental of revelation. This is very close to a wish for revival of taboo along with a refusal to believe in anything that cannot be tested, a paradox that corresponds with that other paradox apparent in the writer of believing in science for science' sake while not believing in experience for experience' sake. Professor Huxley's necessity to accept these paradoxes is the source of everything in his book that produces a feeling of dissatisfaction in the reader. Allowing his objection to the use of debased words in which, without their being renewed, religion has become a false currency, one witnesses the author moving again and again towards re-affirmation of the oldest of known revelations. On every occasion, however, he suddenly leaves off writing in the manner of an intuition open for inspiration—which would find itself receiving principles as old as the hills—and begins again to write as one thinking empirically, in the scientist and humanist way.

* * *

Mystical description is as true as psychological description. Both may be convenient myths, as nobody would deny in the case of the spatialisation of the psyche for descriptive purposes. Of his visions Professor Huxley writes:—

"How, precisely, these experiences are generated psychology and nerve-physiology must learn and tell us. I can vouch for the fact that the experience is felt as intensely real and valuable. It is, I suppose, a realisation by means of the intuitive faculty, of a great deal which the conscious mind had been striving towards but had never yet held all at one time, an individual whole, in its grasp."

It is strange that a mind of this high quality, discussing visions which arise in an acute mental conflict, and which almost picture the course to be taken for health—salvation is a tempting word—should be so apologetic regarding them. The quotation is from Professor Huxley's *personalia*, and is followed by the question as to whether such experiences are pathological. Must we fall back again on psychology, by asking whether what the introvert such as Nietzsche would call "inspiration," is not "revelation," so called, to the extravert? Whatever physiology may discover, the result can be no more than the mere translation of what is already known from one system of terms to another. The truth comes when needed and waited for—I wrote "prayed for," and amended it—and it comes whole. Science dissects and supports it, and keeps the parts in proportion when they are set to work. The coming of the vision, however, is outside the control of science. It was due —which you will—to inspiration or revelation. Such visions do not come "by a purely intellectual process," however much that may embrace of *past* revelations. The purely intellectual process could no more than perpetuate the conflict in which it is already involved. Actually it is in the vision that points to health that religion consists. Although in our personal religious views and in those of others we

* "Religion Without Revelation." Professor Julian Huxley. (Benn. 7s. 6d.)

can invariably detect ideas corresponding to our psychic deficiencies, yet there is a norm of teaching and of ideas corresponding to a vision of health—within the particular culture and civilisation inhabited. The vision of that norm cannot be arrived at by any process of reasoning or experiment. It is the fundamental human fact. It is pure intuition, and has to be affirmed without reasoning as the basis of all politics, psycho-pathology, medicine, and all other arts and practices.

R.M.

Rural Life and Lore.

X.—THE SALMON.

Once I was walking through the fields with a gentleman from London. It was a still afternoon. Nothing was moving, except the river some twenty yards away. After a while he halted, and began to ask me something about a distant hill which he pointed out, when suddenly there was a noise like one loud clap of a man's hands. He started, and turned round facing the river, where the sound came from; and he was very surprised, for there was nobody in sight anywhere.

"Whatever's that?" he said to me.

I smiled. "If you don't know, sir, you would never guess," I replied. "That was the wedding of a king and a queen salmon."

So then I explained to him that salmon are different from all other fish, because they mate in the air. If you were to see such a thing happen you would not forget it. When the natural moment arrives, the king and queen swim side by side a few feet apart and gather speed exactly together. Then suddenly they leap, both at the very instant, and up they flash through the air, rising eight feet above the water in a beautiful curved flight. Then they turn in towards each other on their downward flight and come together: and in that instant the king has the queen.

The gentleman was very impressed when he heard this, especially when I had explained that it was not enough for these fish just to come together anyhow, but that they must do so in the exact position, because their sex organs had to join as truly as it might be with any animals or human beings.

When the king salmon has fertilised the queen he swims up stream until he finds a sandy patch in the bank. Here he takes out the sand and drives in a sort of cave. For this purpose nature has given him a hooked nose—which is one way in which you can tell the male from the female. When the cave is large enough the queen swims up and goes in; and there she lays her spawn. When she has finished she comes out and swims round idly, recovering her strength, while the king noses the sand back to cover up the spawn. For some time after that he mounts guard, facing up stream, and holding himself without motion in the moving water. After he has waited long enough to make sure, so I suppose, that the spawn is safe, and will not be washed out, he and the queen swim away together.

It is at this breeding time when salmon poachers get busy. They take advantage of the king's mounting guard. There are two ways in which they catch him. The first is a favourite with poachers. They cut a pole from the woods and suspend from it a piece of wire with a loop at the end. One of them peeps over the edge of the bank where he can see the salmon, and the other, who holds the pole, stands back. The loop of wire is now gently lowered in front of the motionless fish, and then brought very slowly towards him until at last it circles him round just behind his front fins. This has to be done carefully, because if the wire touches the salmon too soon he is off like a flash. When the loop is in the right position the man on the watch signals the other, and he suddenly swings up the pole and runs backwards with it, whirling the salmon out on to the grass.

Another way is to get a pole—something like a broomstick, only longer. The poacher tapers the end so that it fits loosely into an iron ring. On this ring a hook is welded, so that when everything is in proper position he has something that looks like an ordinary fish-hook with a very long shank—the shank being the pole. Before he puts the ring in position he ties a long piece of conger line to it. Then he puts the ring on, and keeps it there by winding the line spirally down the pole for a few turns, keeping his hand on it to prevent slipping. He now puts his pole gently down in the water until the hook is pointing upwards underneath the salmon. Then he suddenly pulls, dragging the point into it. Immediately he has struck the salmon he loosens the coil of line, while his mate quickly draws the pole out of the ring and throws it down on the grass, leaving him now with a hook and line to play his fish and land it.

A third way can be mentioned, but it is not so often used, because the poachers must be undisturbed for a longer time. They generally choose a night when the moon is up. One of them goes up stream for about fifty yards and throws in a bag of hot lime. This will kill all the fish that happen to be below that place, and they will float down, belly upwards, to where the other poachers are waiting with a net thrown right across the stream.

The law about salmon is like the law about beer and spirits. Besides a penalty for catching salmon without a licence there is a penalty for selling it without a licence. In my time the poachers would often sell their salmon to a woman who walked in from their village, South Moulton, to the market in Barnstaple, with a basket on each arm containing eggs and poultry. The distance was between nine and ten miles. She might give them five shillings for a forty-pound salmon, which she would conceal at the bottom of one of her baskets; and she would make nothing of trudging all that way with it. She would very likely get ten shillings for it in Barnstaple.

There were three public-houses at South Moulton. One day two villagers came into one of them and showed a beautiful salmon they had just caught. The landlord and the customers laid it on an oak table. They were all admiring it when suddenly it gave a great leap and hit the ceiling with a loud smack. It was a low ceiling, and a good-sized man would have to bend so as not to hit his head against it. They got the fish back on the table; and just at that moment someone ran in to say that the water-policeman was on his way there with the salmon bailiff. There was a scramble, and the salmon was sneaked out of the back door, while the customers wiped the table and floor clean of all traces. In came the bailiff and policeman. Some poaching had been going on: did anybody know anything? No; none of them knew. But the two visitors thought they would take a look round, all the same. So they commenced searching for a clue. All of a sudden one of the customers nudged his neighbour and nodded upwards. This secret sign went round the company, and as they looked up, there, on the whitewashed ceiling was the most beautiful clear print of a salmon you ever saw in your life, exact down to the smallest scale. They all held their breaths, watching the policeman and bailiff move about, their heads often almost brushing that picture. But they never saw it; and at last they went.

Ever afterwards in my time the landlord refused to let the whitewashers paint over that place when they did the bar up; and if any visitor to South Moulton were to go to that house to-day I wouldn't mind betting that they would show him the picture on the ceiling just as the salmon printed it—ah, a good twenty-six years ago.

R. R.

Music.

Berlin Philharmonic: December 4.

This orchestra was even better at its second than at its first appearance, in spite of having the vast size of the Albert Hall to cope with. I am profoundly glad for the visit of this body, for it was necessary in order to prove to our concert goers that an orchestra does not exist in London at the present time. On the other hand, I am intensely ashamed on account of the impression that the Berliners must have formed of some London concert goers, who broke in with applause in the last movement of the Tchaikovsky Fifth Symphony at a pause in the dominant chord. The *Meistersinger* overture was magnificently played; and such string playing as we heard in the admirable Vaughan Williams' *Tallis Variations* is unknown among us here. Furtwängler is a very sound and accomplished conductor and musician, but to place him above Beecham, as some people are attempting to do, is ignorant impertinence. Put him in command of the sort of orchestra Beecham has habitually to work with, and his deficiencies in sensitiveness, fire, and subtlety would quickly be made manifest.

Royal Philharmonic, December 8.

I had difficulty in accepting even the customary lack of sufficient rehearsal as excuse for the scandalously bad playing on this occasion—playing which, after the Berlin Philharmonic, was more intolerable than usual. That the masterly and enchanting "Tanz Walzer" of Busoni so triumphantly withstood its maltreatment is testimony of its quality. It is the apotheosis of the waltz—richly imaginative, subtle, and finely coloured, with all that intellectual certainty of style and polish of manner which delight us in the Busoni of the less "serious" works. The programme note states that the work is "on Viennese Waltz themes." This is nonsense. The themes are original, but written in the manner of the Viennese Waltz—which is very different. The other first performance was the seventh symphony of Sibelius, a work unique among his compositions for its stark laconic qualities, its freedom from frills, and its aloofness from all the fashionable jargon of the day. It has a quality which, apart from its deep brooding seriousness and quiet impressiveness, endears it to those who are sickened unto death of the products of modern France, Russia, and their apes in Spain, Italy, and elsewhere. From first to last there is not a single "unusual" or complex harmony in the symphony. It is very short, and yet its intense individuality is such that one finds difficulty in describing his reactions to it after only one hearing. The contrast between the aphoristic laconism of this sympathy and the garrulity of the Dvorák 'cello concerto could scarcely be exceeded; and in spite of Casals—who did not seem to be in quite his usual form—the latter work was of almost unbearable tediousness.

Imperial League of Opera. Meeting, December 9.

A number of speakers, including Sir Thomas Beecham (who got up from a sick-bed to attend) made remarks, some apropos, and some not at all apropos. No purpose is served by trotting out, as did one speaker, hoary nonsense about the universal and innate love of music that is supposed to exist in the hearts of the islanders of these parts, and adducing in support of such an assertion the fact that there is scarcely a cottage but has some sort of musical instrument: for every informed person knows that this phenomenon is all part of a rigid convention, having no more to do with music than church-going has to do with religion. Moreover, to address only 150,000 people out of 40,000,000 in pursuance of this scheme is to thunder out the refutation of such a comfortable thesis. Its exponents stand exposed as ludicrous hypocrites. Sir Thomas Beecham effectively shattered this nonsense with his few trenchant remarks, which were infinitely more salutary than hundredweights of merely flattering unction. He stated that, as a result of the deputy system, or not one of four consecutive occasions when he had conducted a leading London "orchestra" (I misuse the word with due apologies, and a full sense of the outrage I am doing it) did he have the same four horn players! Speech fails before such a monstrous state of affairs. As Sir Thomas rightly said, it is no good blaming the players: the fault lies with the system which makes it impossible for an orchestral player to earn sufficient to keep him as a member of an orchestra devoted to music of the highest type. At present he must dash off here and there, where there is a chance of a good fee, sending a deputy to his seat in the orchestra. I, myself, have even heard of these deputies sending other deputies—if not unto the third and fourth generation, at least something very like it—so that, given two rehearsals (this miserable amount is the maximum of what our "orchestras" play on) and a concert, it is quite within the bounds of probability for a conductor to see a different face on all three occasions! These are the facts; and if only 150,000 just men can be found to give but ten shillings a year each to support the new scheme, music will be saved; or rather, not saved, but made possible. Otherwise, let the English people for ever hold their peace about their "love of music," as Mr. Newman has so well told them.

Philharmonic Choir, December 14.

This choir gave the first London performance of the *Psalms Hungaricus* of Kodály. It is a profound, poignant work, written with conviction and power. It deserves to be put in the class with that other great *Psalm* 100 of Reger. It is a work of bold directness, simplicity and singleness of purpose that makes it spiritually akin to the seventh symphony of Sibelius. But for the mischoice of a lamentable soloist the performance was admirable: the Philharmonic Choir, together with their conductor, are improving enormously. Dame Ethel Smyth's *Sleepless Dreams* and *Hey Nonny No* ought not, and indeed would not, have missed fire so badly had it not been for her completely incompetent conducting. That they sounded so well as they did was a marvel. The Vaughan Williams *Antiphon*, with which the concert began, is a pleasant piece of bold, clean work in contrasted masses, as its name implies.

Sophie Wyss. Aeolian, December 14.

If she will overcome a tendency to tremolo she will be an admirable artist. She is a clever and accomplished singer, has a keen and lively imagination, and the power to project the emotional and spiritual *aura* of the songs she sings, which are not at all common. Her modern French group was a delight, and I do not know when I have heard *Mondolme* and *Fantocha* better sung, or a more vivid appreciation of their *fantaisiste* quality. An artist to remember.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

LAST LOVE.

Somewhere is told how once a traveller
Questing to westward o'er the dreary seas came
To coasts at happy last, and deemed they were
The golden Ind, and named them by that name.
And turned his prow towards the rising sun
Unknowing, hasty pioneer, that he
Not yet the utmost wonderment had won.
Content o'er-soon with fair discovery.

So till this hour, such as that man was I. . .
They were but islands that I came unto;
Crumbs from the spreaded table that lay nigh,
And lesser candles to the torch of you.
They were but islands that I journeyed past
To haven. O Heart's Mainland! here at last.

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.

The Last Trousers of the Romanoffs.*

It will always be a matter for debate amongst us lesser breeds who can never hope to be Emperors, or even Comptrollers, Governors-General, *maîtres d'hôtel*, film stars, or anything high and mighty, as to whether the game is worth the candle. There is evidence to show that large numbers of Emperors and imperious personages whose heels and hands have oppressed the world, enjoyed life, while at the same time they complained loudly that it was all very difficult and disappointing, and that they only stuck to it from a sense of duty and the feeling that if it were not for their presence, the little world would crumble into pieces around them. But the world did not crumble in the holocaust of the high and mighty which raged after the war. It is true that there are now in Europe and Asia some dozen dictators whose behaviour in their various *genres* is far worse than that of any of the old true-blue monopolists of the life and hope of mankind. But that is probably on account of the instinct in human nature to gravitate towards everything cheap and easy in facing the complicated problems of human association. It takes rather more than average manhood to accept the effects of defeat or victory after a war, and if a dictator is kind enough to express a willingness to shoulder the business, and if it is possible by leaving him alone to enjoy a measure of private repose at the expense of one's immortal soul, why then, people will vote for the Mussolinis, and wait to call their soul their own in Kingdom Come.

Nicholas II. of Russia was very much like Louis XVI., save that Louis was at least a competent watchmaker, while Nicholas was no good at anything. However, he was willing, and since fate made him an autocrat, he obediently took on the job of autocracy. Whether he would have been worse as a bachelor autocrat than he was as a married man, rising to spurts of self-assertion after each loving curtain-lecture from his wife and Empress, it is not easy to say. But the facts about the last Romanoff trousers are that they were worn by her, as she says in plain terms in one of her affectionate letters to him. And since, being herself the poor puppet of tragedy, she sought refuge from the cruelties of her fate in the counsel of Grigory the Scoundrel, it was a Rasputin-ruled Russia which imposed its terror upon the world in the few years preceding the war, and thereafter until Kerensky paved the way for the dominion of Nikolai Lenin, the true Nicholas II.

The Empress was indeed a tragic bride. Royal lovers, whether they love by convention and for convenience, or as in this case with all the pathetic, sloppy sentimentality of the *Family Herald Supplement*, are not permitted to consider, when the needs of a Dynasty confront them, such possibilities as the revenge eugenics may take upon them. Mother Nature does not like consanguineous marriages, and visits them with the very appropriate punishment of haemophilia. "Bleeders" are rare in humbler walks of life, though they do occur. But then, business and shop assistants seldom marry their cousins for more than one generation. Alix found, when it was all too late, that she was transmitting to the lovely little son for whom she would cheerfully have sacrificed all her big daughters, the terrible disease which made his life and hers and the Emperor's a constant terror, stultified the efforts of all the surgeons and physicians—as if they could do anything when Nature had passed sentence—and threw her into the arms of the first really powerful charlatan who imposed upon her. The common talk, especially in the latter stages of the war, marked down the "German woman" as Rasputin's secret paramour. But this, though at times it galled her into vain appeals to the manhood of her spineless husband, she generally disregarded in her frantic concentration on the future of little Alexis. Nicholas, whom she loved but did not respect, had failed her. But, God willing, she would make a real autocrat of her son and save Russia. God was not willing; and Russia has yet to be saved. The autocracy for which Alix felt that a Romanoff was divinely designed to be the head, was usurped by hands more real and more Russian, which will only yield to hands as rough and as Russian, but stronger.

Rasputin is dead, Nicholas and Alix and Alexis and the girls are all no more than a tragic memory. And now we can read, in these foolish love letters, written in English, and sprinkled with the most foolish and suburban terms of English endearment, how it is possible for two very commonplace and gullible people, who might have done very well in a six-roomed house in Pinner with the assistance of a building society, to plunge millions into misery, and light a torch whose flames may not be quenched for generations.

LEOPOLD SPERO.

* "The Tragic Bride." By Vladimir Poliakoff. (Appleton, 15s.)

Chinese Art.*

This book should do something to correct the common belief that Chinese art is confined to china. The introduction, by the Keeper of the Department of Ceramics and Ethnography at the British Museum, is useful and authoritative, though it exemplifies the cardinal virtue of brevity to excess. But the beautiful plates give as complete an impression of Chinese art as is possible without reference to the actual objects.

The Chinese have expressed themselves in almost every artistic medium: pottery, sculpture, painting, architecture, textiles, jade, lacquer. In this book architecture is unfortunately neglected, and sculpture is inadequately represented. But there are excellent examples of all the others. Nor is there only variety of medium. There is a variety of style, ranging from almost primitive simplicity to delicate grotesquerie and sophisticated formalisation. Here, for instance (Plate 19), is a box of stone-grey paste. The design is simple, utilitarian, and there is no attempt at decoration. But the delicacy of colouring and the grace of form are such as our modern potters (though the work is based on the same principles) rarely attain. The man who fashioned this box, we feel sure, knew of no distinction between artist and craftsman, and was unconsciously both. Intellectual distinctions and intellectual convictions play too great a part in modern art. That is why it appeals to the intellect first, and often to the intellect alone. Here, on the other hand, is a work which satisfies every canon, utilitarian, aesthetic, intellectual; universal in its appeal. This virtue of simplicity in form and colour applies also to a beautiful wine-cup of porcelain (Plate 15) and a brush-pot in jadeite (Plate 82). We must confess, however, lest we be taken for a mere "laudator temporis acti," that there are works here which would have delighted the heart of a Victorian artist. Such is the stoneware vase (Plate 41), with its bulging form and realistic relief decoration. Such also is the ceremonial ewer (Plate 85) of pewter with black lacquer and shell incrustations. This latter, like so much Victorian work, has beautiful details, but no relation between the detail and the whole.

The painting of the Ch'ang Lo Palace (Plate 46), the original of which is in the British Museum, is a good example of that "Chinoiserie" which is much the best known form of Chinese art. It is a "landscape with figures," in which the meticulous attention to detail, in both form and colour, is saved by a dainty formalisation from photographic realism. For that matter even the more realistic forms of Chinese art have a charm of their own, especially in paintings of flowers and birds. Plate 62 shows a porcelain bowl, painted with an intricate design including birds and flowers, which might be termed realistic. But there is a brightness in the colours, a delicacy in their arrangement and a neatness in execution, which make the whole rather feminine, but leave it attractive. The same delicacy of colouring, combined with a skill in composition, may be seen in some of the lacquer and jade work; a delicacy which is the more remarkable when we remember how crudely meretricious lacquer work can be. It is in jade work that the skill of the Chinese artist is most clearly shown. In the sacrificial vessel in the form of a toad (Plate 78) the artist has contrived to unite both purposes—the fashioning of a sacrificial vessel and the representation of a toad—without sacrificing anything of either. Another jade figure, that of a courtier (Plate 75), which gives the whole character of the man with a marvellous economy of detail, shows the same skilful adaptation of the means to the end, and indicates what we have lost by the omission of Chinese sculpture.

These are but a few of the riches stored in this book. There are beautiful bronzes such as the mirror-back with designs in low relief (Plate 74); a painting of Ucchushma recalling Hindu work; an opulent throne in elaborately carved red lacquer (Plate 91), worthy of Lyons restaurants; and a beautiful wool carpet (Plate 99), of which the original is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

WILFRID HOPE.

* "Chinese Art." By R. L. Hobson. (Benn. 30s.)

Reviews.

The Judgement of Dr. Johnson. By G. K. Chesterton. (Sheed and Ward. 2s. 6d. and 3s. 6d.)

Mr. Chesterton does not plead that his three-act comedy will resist higher historical criticism. Bearing in mind the different degree of interest and illumination between the work of Mr. Chesterton and that of either the higher historical critics or the higher historical dramatists, we back Mr. Chesterton heartily in ignoring them. For two whole acts we revel in the magnificent dialogue that he has drawn from Dr. Johnson and the characters created about him, including two Hebrideans.

"When strangers come it is a good man's duty to feast them. But if they said their names it might be a good man's duty to kill them."

Thus Mr. Chesterton takes a commonplace, and out of it strikes a light that reveals a great background of philosophy, religion, and, in particular, Scottish history, while using scarcely more words than would have been necessary to quote the commonplace. As long as Mr. Chesterton allows the characters to talk for themselves, adding only his art to render them vocal, the delight and brilliance continue. In all Mr. Chesterton's work of biography—and in that field there are few alive to compare with him: witness his Watts, Blake, Dickens, Cobbett, Shaw, and others—there is the same joy. He reveals people as they were incapable of revealing themselves. But he cannot resist the temptation to deliver a sermon. In the third act of this comedy he manipulates Dr. Johnson into a situation solely that he may deliver a sermon for Mr. Chesterton. Nobody can object to a play being written to show what a fine thing is loyalty between a husband and wife. But Mr. Chesterton strains our loyalty even to him when he succumbs to preaching it as the climax of a play. If and when the play is produced this last act will have to be remoulded or the audience will yawn. In spite of Mr. Chesterton's views on property he has no right to spoil a work of art in this manner, though it be his own.

The Hepzibah Hen Book. By Olwen Bowen; illustrated by L. R. Brightwell. (Benn. 3s. 6d.)

As soon as children become old enough to read comfortably by themselves they are a problem to the poor author. For if he makes a fool of himself, how shall he hope for forgiveness? And if he writes a book to please little girls what will their virile small brothers think? As a matter of fact, he need not worry over that, because boys are given to secret perusal of books which they would never confess to reading lest their lives at school be merged into a never-ending whirl of torment. But to sit down and deliberately write a book for children is a horribly cold-blooded occupation, to which few are called, though many volunteer. Children do not mind the costume of laboured unreality in their story, but heaven help the writer who fails to put a real-life figure inside it. This is not such a bad effort. The tales of which it is made up are composed with some sense of a child's dignity, and the pictures are serious efforts at illustration. And if the magic of Lear is absent—well, we cannot all be magicians.

Verse.

By D. R. Guttery.

RENAISSANCE.

See this bright flower
  Whose beauty can
But one short hour
  Give joy to man
Ere Time's swift doom
  In death descend
And hue, perfume
  And all have end.

Have end awhile—
  Yet but till Spring
Again shall smile
  And hither wing
To make anew
  A flower more fair
Of scent and hue
  Than erst was there.

When icy breath
  My soul shall free,
Maybe not death
  Its destiny,
But here to mould
  Some worthier clay
Than was its cold
  Cell yesterday.

THE GLEANERS.

With pick and bag, they trapse towards the tip,
  Unbreakfasted, mouthing some brazen song,
Aping school-teachers' antics; cold winds nip
  Their peeping toes as time drives them along.

Day's gledes to pick before importunate
  Dull school's bright bell scatters them stumbling home:
In dust they scramble, scratch, and cursing rate
  The happy ones who on rare coal have come.

Home then: the one worn bucket takes the toll;
  The mother scolds, whose heart is kindly just
Despite her biting threats; each dusty poll
  Scant combing gets, each mouth its thick, jammed crust.

The ashy glades build up the kitchen fire
  That must, ere school disgorge its clamorous throng,
Dry clothes, cook dinner, be dull funeral pyre
  Of the day's rubbish, dank and smelling strong.

Some day, maybe, these children's hands will build
  A noble flame to light a golden world;
Maybe, by their wroth hands, some fate has willed
  Their crazy life to some hot hell be hurled.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

"AN OPEN LETTER TO LABOUR LEADERS."

Sir,—I feel that Mr. Symon's analysis on p. 79 of the objections of the different classes to Social Credit can be elaborated with advantage. While the Communist sees in it no revenge, the Conservative, for the most part, sees no safeguard against the revenge, whether this be actual violence, or merely loss of comfort. The number of *Conservatives* who consciously regard it as loss of power is, I think, small, and consists chiefly of the new rich (if they can be called Conservatives and not reactionaries). This small band who consciously cling to power is I feel a third class (even if it upsets Adler's theses). The actual importance of their method of division lies in the fact that the *real* Conservative is, probably, the most likely person to bring the Social Credit scheme through, for he has, as neither of the others has, a sense of Duty as well as Right.

M.B., OXON.

EMPTY LORRIES.

Sir,—It is astonishing to note how on any of our great highways the great number of motor lorries travelling *unloaded* form the majority of traffic.

To make up for expense of upkeep one would think commercial cars would require a load every mile they run; for the taxes, etc., are always there. Is there no cheaper way of carrying goods?

DAVID CAMERON.

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The Social Credit Movement.

Supporters of the Social Credit Movement contend that under present conditions the purchasing power in the hands of the community is chronically insufficient to buy the whole product of industry. This is because the money required to finance capital production, and created by the banks for that purpose, is regarded as borrowed from them, and, therefore, in order that it may be repaid, is charged into the price of consumers' goods. It is a vital fallacy to treat new money thus created by the banks as a repayable loan, without crediting the community, on the strength of whose resources the money was created, with the value of the resulting new capital resources. This has given rise to a defective system of national loan accountancy, resulting in the reduction of the community to a condition of perpetual scarcity, and bringing them face to face with the alternatives of widespread unemployment of men and machines, as at present, or of international complications arising from the struggle for foreign markets.

The Douglas Social Credit Proposals would remedy this defect by increasing the purchasing power in the hands of the community to an amount sufficient to provide effective demand for the whole product of industry. This, of course, cannot be done by the orthodox method of creating new money, prevalent during the war, which necessarily gives rise to the "vicious spiral" of increased currency, higher prices, higher wages, higher costs, still higher prices, and so on. The essentials of the scheme are the simultaneous creation of new money and the regulation of the price of consumers' goods at their real cost of production (as distinct from their apparent financial cost under the present system). The technique for effecting this is fully described in Major Douglas's books.

The adoption of this scheme would result in an unprecedented improvement in the standard of living of the population by the absorption at home of the present unsaleable output, and would, therefore, eliminate the dangerous struggle for foreign markets. Unlike other suggested remedies, these proposals do not call for financial sacrifice on the part of any section of the community, while, on the other hand, they widen the scope for individual enterprise.

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