

THE NEW AGE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

Before the opening of the debate on the Currency and Bank Notes Bill, Mr. Maxton asked the Speaker whether this Bill did not come under the description of a private Bill—whether it did not come into the same category as his (Mr. Maxton's) own Bill, to nationalise the Bank of England. It will be remembered that when Mr. Maxton's Bill was submitted to the Speaker's ruling some months ago, it was held to be a private Bill—that is a Bill "to confer rights on, or relieve from liability, some particular person or body of persons"—and on that ground Mr. Maxton was refused sanction to introduce it. In his present statement he pointed out that the Bank Notes Bill proposed to confer rights on the Bank, whereas his proposed to take them away (another way of saying "relieve from liability"), so that the ruling should apply equally in both cases. The Speaker replied that he did not think the present Bill came into the category of private Bills, but as he had not received notice of the question he would look into the matter further. Mr. Maxton referred to the procedure taken with private Bills, namely that they had to be referred to a Select Committee, and also advertised in the Press with the object of explaining their objects and summoning witnesses for examination. It will be seen that if the Speaker were to give the ruling Mr. Maxton invited, it would have the effect of setting up a sort of Financial Inquiry—of course, on a very narrow scale, but still wide enough to let in some independent criticism. We shall be surprised if such ruling is given. It is all well and good that Gas and Railway Companies should go through this hindering, disciplinary routine; but the Bank of England—!

* * *
So the Debate proceeded according to plan, and the speakers were selected according to plan, and they spoke according to plan (and were allotted space in Parliamentary reports according to plan) and the

Bill passed its Second Reading according to plan. *The Times* rationed its publicity as follows:—

	Inches.
Speakers, in order.	27
Mr. A. M. Samuel (U.)	24½
Mr. Snowden (Lab.)	12
Sir E. Hilton Young (U.)	2
Mr. Strauss (L.)	6
Mr. E. Grenfell (U.)	4½
Mr. Pethick Lawrence (Lab.)	19
Sir L. Worthington Evans (U.)	1
Mr. Gillett (Lab.)	½
Sir F. Nelson (U.)	0
Mr. Wallhead (Lab.)	0
Mr. Dalton (Lab.)	0
Mr. Hammersley (U.)	0

The last three speakers were simply mentioned as having supported or opposed the Labour Amendment to the Bill. Mr. A. M. Samuel, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, opened; then Mr. Snowden, the "Bankers' Minister," moved his Amendment. Sir Hilton Young, who travels the world like a judge on circuit trying foreign statesmen for financial offences, thought Mr. Snowden was wrong in suggesting that Britain's gold reserve was unnecessarily high; Mr. Strauss took a parallel line, he did not want any future Chancellor to be able to balance his Budget by inflation (but did not seem to mind the opposite contingency of a future Governor of the Bank unbalancing a Budget by deflation). Mr. E. Grenfell, the American alien who has contracted a Pierpont-Morganatic marriage with the City, thought that the British working man who was "lucky enough" to get hold of a £1 note would not trouble himself whose signature was on it; he deprecated the "bandying about" in the Press of a subject of so much "complexity" because this tended to "bring contempt on the banking system." Mr. Pethick Lawrence, collector of miscellaneous fragments of financial lore, thought that the proposed note issue of £260,000,000 was insufficient to provide the slack necessary for a trade revival. Sir L. Worthington Evans, replying for the Government, examined Mr. Snowden's Amendment. The Amendment demanded that the Genoa Resolutions should

be adopted before Parliament sanctioned the note-fusion. Sir L. Worthington Evans fixed on this objection, and did every credit-student a good service by summarising the Genoa Resolutions. Briefly, they were as follows:—

- (1) Stability of currency values in every country.
- (2) Central banks to be free of political pressure.
- (3) There should be a common standard for every currency; the standard should be gold.
- (4) Every Budget must be balanced.
- (5) Every country should fix a gold value for its monetary unit.

There were three other resolutions of a minor character, and a ninth which said there should be an international convention. Sir Laming showed that all the resolutions but the ninth had been carried out by the Government. As for the ninth, the Genoa Conference, did not, he claimed, envisage an immediate holding of the convention until after other countries had carried out the other eight Resolutions.

Our readers will not require us to waste much space in pointing out where the Labour Party stands under Mr. Snowden's leadership. To strain at a gnat after swallowing eight camels is an exhibition either of conscious deception or of unconscious ignorance. In any event it gives the whole case to the Ministerialists, who urge that there is no reason for delaying the passage of the Bill. Again, in another part of his speech Mr. Snowden said that the Bank of England ought to be free from political control, but ought to be reconstituted as a "public corporation."

"Composed of the very best men, representative of finance and industry, and on which the Board of Trade should be represented, together with the great co-operative movement and representatives of Labour. A body so constituted would command universal public confidence and support."

Would like to ask: What sort of animal is a *public* corporation free from *political* control? Have the people nothing to do with politics? Mr. Snowden appears to be a Fascist. And if this corporation is to be placed out of reach of the electors it means that the parties to its administration must not be controlled. That is to say, that the bankers, Board of Trade and Co-operative Movement (i.e. Capital) and Labour, shall combine to rule England. In brief, that Producers shall be invested with supreme power over Consumers. Mr. Snowden appears to be a Bolshevik. But if you blink again he appears to be a Capitalist. We had better call him a chameleon, and pass on.

Students of Social Credit will realise that this policy is an inversion of the policy they support. Granted the principle that any interest at all should be more powerful than Parliament it should be the Consumer interest. Bolshevism had (in intention at any rate) at least this one merit, that it sought to put supreme power in the hands of the workers, for this was the nearest approach to putting it into the hands of consumers, because of all classes in the community the workers are the biggest spenders and smallest savers in proportion to their incomes. As we now know, the original Soviet policy has failed; it has been obliged to concede some of the workers' power to capitalists. It is approximating to a fifty-fifty per cent. Worker-Capitalist dictatorship, with the banks dominating the dictators. (The bankers' domination has been there all the time, but was too subtly exercised to be detected.) Now notice that this hybrid producer-dominion is identical with Mr. Snowden's objective. The only difference is that whereas Bolshevism is reaching it by raising the status of Capitalism towards equality with that of Labour, Mr. Snowden is reaching it by raising the status of Labour towards equality with that of Capital. Mr. Snowden does not want to break the

dominion of the bankers; he wants to share in it. Under his leadership the Labour Party is committed to that trick, so familiar in commerce, of running an "independent" concern in order to sell it at last to the trust-mongers. There is, too, no doubt that he has something to sell that is worth their buying. To adopt Thomas Paine's graphic phrase once more, the credit of the banking system, which has depended on *suspicion being asleep*, is now in jeopardy. Suspicion is awakening everywhere outside banking circles. And now comes Mr. Snowden offering to help put it to sleep again. "A body so constituted" [i.e., his Finance-Capital-Labour dictatorship] "would command universal public confidence." Quite so: it would be a perfect soporific.

There were two interesting circumstances about the Debate. Neither Mr. Lloyd George nor Sir Alfred Mond took part; in fact, Mr. Strauss was the only Liberal who spoke. This is partly understandable by reason of the fact that the Debate was on a Labour Amendment. Yet there was no reason why the Liberals should not have tabled one as well. We shall have to wait and see what they are after. The other circumstance was that Mr. Oswald Mosley and Mr. Wheatley took no part. The probable explanation is that they were not allowed an opportunity, for we noticed that some days before the Debate the newspapers were able to give the names of the speakers. Somebody had handed them the list.

Mr. Baldwin went to Manchester to address the Cotton-Growing Association last week. He said that bad as their situation was, the steel industry was as bad. For every shilling he possessed when he took office he had less than a penny now. He did not tell the other foxes how nice he felt without his tail, but he told them how ill they would be while they kept theirs. "In steel, as in other industries, there would have to be radical reconstruction of capital" before better times would come. All parties would have to make sacrifices—"and even, it might be, the banks." This last reference has some interest which we will notice in a moment. But what is more interesting is that directly he made it he had to pause while the audience laughed. Some of the London editors cut out the bracketed word "(laughter)" from their reports; others left it in. The *Evening Standard* cut it out, but since its report went on immediately to Mr. Baldwin's following sentence:—

"Well," added Mr. Baldwin laughingly, "even for banks it is better to have living customers on the books than corpses."

It is evident that the audience had indicated its incredulity, jocularly or otherwise; so the excision of the fact fails of its purpose.

It is a significant index to the political temperature in general that Mr. Baldwin should be able to say "banks" without a stutter, and that his mention of the banks sacrificing anything should disclose a jeering reflex in an audience of responsible business men. Things move. But it is not people like Mr. Baldwin who have been moving them, nor will move them. His mere use of the term "sacrifices" delays the recognition of the main obstacle to economic progress. Sacrifice is not necessary on anybody's part in the sense of either a corporate or personal sacrifice of money—visible financial credit. Given a limited total quantity of credit, and a sacrifice made by one section of the community is ultimately diffused among the entire community as a general sacrifice. You might just as well talk of curing an anaemic girl by redistributing her blood. (Our readers will follow our meaning when we point out that the doctors who prescribe the redistribution begin the cure by tapping her blood, and end it by forgetting to put it

back.) "Capital will have to come down until it represents live assets," was one of Mr. Baldwin's declarations. What he means is that prices must be written down until they represent consumers' income. Shareholders must renounce their claim to financial credit which they are entitled to recover from consumers; and the reason advanced is that the consumers have not got it. But since financial credit costs nothing to create, what is wrong with writing up consumers' incomes? The method does not matter, for the moment; the point is the principle. Suppose we have an installation of factories and equipment valued at the token figure of say £1,000, necessitating earnings of say £100 a year to defray capital charges. And suppose consumers have no money to meet them—that all their income is being absorbed in meeting direct charges. We assert that the £100 a year can be and should be issued to consumers as a free gift of new credit. It does not matter that the capitalised £1,000 represents assets that originally cost say £100 to construct (which is an exaggerated description of cotton-mill finance). Leaving the bankers' manipulation of credit on one side for the moment—if "profiteers" got away with £900, the people who bought the (say) mills from them are still entitled to get their money back. Now, the profiteers either received the £900 as money, or they did not. If they did, it was available as consumer demand, if they wished to apply it to consumption. It was in the general pool, and should have been recoverable from the general pool without any writing down. If they no longer hold the £900 it must be in existence in someone else's possession. If they have spent it already in consumption, the £1,000 capital must have been recovered to the extent of £900. If on receipt they invested the £900 in already existing assets, the holders of the assets got hold of the money and then became potential consumers. If the profiteers used the £900 to construct new assets, the money passed over to the people who constructed them, and these, then, now became potential consumers. To sum up: once accept the orthodox contention that nothing happens to alter the quantity of circulating money, that it simply changes hands, then this token £900 should be traceable to some banking accounts as a banker's deposit. To give this truth its current application, if the people who floated cotton mills received actual money for them, every penny of it ought to be still on deposit somewhere. Profiteering does not destroy money, no matter whether it takes place in respect of shares or goods. All it does is to redistribute the money in existence. We can briefly consider the alternative case where the owners of an asset over-value it without selling it at the over-valued price. In that case, if they find they cannot sell their production at prices commensurate with their inflated hypothetical capital, and have to write the valuation down again, nobody is hurt; they have simply been cheated of the realisation of getting something for nothing. But this is academic: the position in the cotton industry to-day is that you have on the one side a group of people who, if their shares are written down in value, will have lost money in retrospect (if their shares were fully paid) or in prospect (if they were partly paid); and on the other side you have the consuming public who are without the means of putting back the subscribed or risked money. And the cotton industry is typical of all industry. Now we come to the reason. *The banks have been intercepting money and cancelling it.* Lancashire has, so it is asserted, "lost" millions of money through the cotton boom. So it has. The banks have torn it up. Therefore, whatever is the amount of "excessive" capital attributed to Lancashire mill-property, the excess is a *bankers' debt to the community*, and not, as Mr. Baldwin is implying, a shareholders' debt to their customers. The "sacrifice" which should be demanded of the bankers is

that they should create financial credit equal to the so-called excess capital. As the act of creating it is costless, the sacrifice is nothing. The sort of sacrifice Mr. Baldwin has in mind could only mean in practice a reduction in bank dividends. But the total dividends of the banking system would go nowhere towards establishing the required equilibrium. His Lancashire audience jeered at the idea of the bankers assenting. They were wrong. The bankers do not mind reducing dividends. They would make a fuss about it; but the fuss would only be made to divert attention from the fact that what they are guarding is their power to govern the nation by maintaining a general credit-scarcity.

Mr. Hugh Dalton wrote an article in the *Daily Herald* in anticipation of the Currency Bill debate. In it he said:—

"Some may think that I have exaggerated the menace of this Bill. Views may differ, even within our own movement, as to the urgency of the danger and as to the best alternative policy. But we are all agreed on the need for delay and for inquiry and for international co-operation on lines laid down in 1922."

After ten years of constantly increasing public interest in finance the Labour Party is barren of any financial policy. It is agreed that something ought to be done, some time, and by somebody; but it is not agreed on what, when, and by whom. Well; a party, or a Government, which does not know what to do will have to administer the policy of those who do. In the humblest affairs of life the minority which has made up its mind gets its way. Mr. Dalton may whirl his club at the Bank, but he is as much an aider and abettor of its policy as is Mr. Snowden. We all know that the Bank is a semi-private, privileged, secretive, affluent and exclusive institution, but Mr. Dalton's indictment on these grounds only is no more than a plea for Labour partnership on Snowden lines. And his reference to the Genoa Resolutions of 1922 confirms that interpretation. He says that the Bank must be made to "face the limelight." But just look at the Labour limelight! Against the glare of the Bank's own footlights it would cast a shadow on the stage.

Young ladies and gentlemen at Oxford, Cambridge, Girton, and elsewhere, should prepare for their entry into Society by making sure of the spelling of the name Savidge. Not S-a-v-a-g-e but S-a-v-i-d-g-e. We have this on the authority of the *Daily News* reporter, who paid a visit to her after her examination at Scotland Yard. And he got it from her own lips; so the authenticity of the fact is based on unassailable foundations, to the vast discomfiture of the *Daily Mail*, which has been adopting the adjectival spelling. It is true that during the interview Miss Savidge's mother, who was present, continually referred to her as "Irene" to the reporter; but while that may be a tolerable precedent in the state to which God has called her, it would be a *faux pas* to rely on it in the state to which the Oppositions may whirl her in their hopeful rush for office. So soon after her alleged ordeal, it was a sign of both grace and courage for her to grant an interview to Press men at all. Miss Savidge betrays two of the qualities which are requisite for a stage or film career, and we fully expect that if her tastes lie in that direction the opportunities will present themselves in abundance a little later on. There is some suggestion that she has a sense of the dramatic in her account of her favourite authors—Ethel M. Dell and the writer of a book called "The Sheik." It will be reassuring to the public to reflect that her familiarity with the cave-men of fiction, which both these writers have familiarised to their readers, must have forewarned, and thus forearmed, her against the methods of any cave-men of fact whom she might

unhappily encounter. We hope that this will partially allay such agitation as Sir John Simon evoked in the breasts of all England's parents by his spontaneous reaction to the alleged facts—"Ah, if this had been my daughter!" No, it is too harrowing. We must all try to force ourselves to the belief that if our daughters had suffered the indignity of public arrest in Hyde Park (ah, if these had been our daughters!) they would have borne any subsequent private indignities with equal fortitude.

* * *

Miss Josephine Wilson's name must be taken as spelt correctly. W-i-l-s-o-n. We cannot verify it, for she is dead and cannot be interviewed. She walked into a little restaurant the other day, ordered a cup of coffee, put in some poison, and drank it. Probably by reason of the accident of birth she was not qualified to be a valve-inspector, so she had to be content to serve society as a waitress. For this her remuneration was 24s. per week. Out of it she had to pay 12s. 6d. per week rent, and one penny per day for a morning cup of tea. She had lunch and tea gratis at her place of business. Out of her 11s. per week she paid for insurance, fares, and other such necessities, after which she was at liberty to dally with clothes, recreations, culture and other extravagances. Yet she lost interest in life and left it. We offer our condolences to Mr. Snowden, whose admiration of working-class heroism will suffer a set-back. But in mitigation of her cowardice it must be mentioned that she had been looking forward to marriage, but lost her sweetheart in January. True, she was only twenty-two, and could have got another. But by some curious kink to be found occasionally in human nature, she wanted that one. The moral of this story is confoundedly mixed. It would be silly to hold a public inquiry about it. It is nobody's fault. Even if one excludes the tragedy of the personal loss and multiplies the remaining typical element of penury by thousands, it would still appear pedantic to make a fuss and exclaim, "Ah, if this were my daughter!" Yet somehow the principle of the Liberty of the Subject seems to hang round the story like musk—or shall we say tuber-roses? Perhaps, after all, Miss Wilson was a little deficient in moral courage. Let us hope that if our daughters are ever faced with the prospect of a life-time's incessant examination at the hands of ten-shillings-a-week they will bear themselves with greater fortitude.

Mr. H. G. Wells and Credit.

By C. H. Douglas.

II.

Then this question of making a financial system act as a "security against war." As I believe I have said elsewhere, the average man, while not perhaps representing the pure and undiluted light of wisdom, is not such a natural born fool that, having been maimed, blinded, killed, or impoverished in the last war, he requires restraining from war as an amusement. Just as Mr. Wells fundamentally mistakes the nature of money, so also he mistakes the causes and the nature of war.

The technical definition of war accepted by those whose business it is to understand war is that it is action taken for the purpose of imposing your will upon your adversary, or to prevent him from imposing his will upon you. Mr. Wells' contribution to the consideration of the problem of preventing war as thus defined is to make such suggestions as he can, to assist in the imposition of some unspecified will upon, *inter alia*, the unhappy British public, and to prevent them in the last resort, which is war, from resisting that imposition. If his words do not mean

this, they do not mean anything. Like other Socialists, such as Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Philip Snowden, and Mr. Otto Kahn, Mr. Wells is an advocate of wars of aggression directed against the individual.

Of course, it is easy to see where the divergence arises between Mr. Wells, the orthodox banker, and, let us say, Sir Herbert Samuel, on the one hand, and a large number of people, of whom I am one, on the other hand. Mr. Wells feels that whatever Johnny is doing at the moment, someone ought to run and tell him he mustn't. I am with him to the extent that I think Johnny is very likely to be up to a certain amount of mischief, but as a purely practical proposition, he will get over it quicker and grow up sooner by burning his fingers than by Mr. Wells or anybody else persistently running and taking away the pretty matches. Of course, if, like the would-be Napoleons of finance, he plays with high explosive, he will be blown up, but that may be all for the best. To relinquish the language of metaphor, it appears to me that there are nearly always two methods of dealing with any situation. One is to force the community to accept the situation whether it likes it or not, and the other is to ameliorate the situation. I am not so impressed by the intrinsic superiority of those who fill the positions of power that I want to make it simple for them to adopt the first method.

While I should be the last to minimise the existence or the extent of the economic distress in Great Britain, for instance, at the present time, there is a sense in which that is not so important, even to those in distress, as certain other and more intangible conditions which exist, and are growing. Believing, as I do, that economic independence, security, and what is called a high standard of living, are the basis on which a satisfactory civilisation can alone be reared, it seems very clear to me that a general and well-founded *belief* that no artificial restrictions are placed in the way of any individual in attaining these things is vital. It seems to be a very grave matter, then, that there is a growing disbelief in the natural sequence of cause and effect. By way of illustration a strong trade union has come to be considered the better way of getting a high wage than is an increase in economic efficiency. Taxation, amounting to legalised robbery, is an easy and effective substitute for genuine statesmanship. It is demonstrably far easier to make money by manipulating share-counters than by starting a business, or by working with the object of achieving physical results, and easiest of all to make it by lending it. In general there is a rapidly growing feeling that the whole financial and industrial system is what is popularly called "a wangle," and that the only sound thing to do with it is either to break it or treat it as a game. If that feeling grows, a situation may arise in which the psychology of credit has been destroyed. No credit system would work then.

Therefore I do not think that any of Mr. Wells' desiderata are worthy of serious consideration. What is required of the money system, at any rate, in my opinion, is not that it shall be twisted still further into a mechanism for imposing anyone's set of ideas upon the world, even to please Jehovah, but that it shall form a faithful reflection of physical facts, without, if it pleases you to put it that way, having any philosophy behind it at all. It does so happen that a money system which would reflect the physical facts of the productive system would coincide with an extraordinarily far-reaching philosophy, but that is, as one might say, by the way. It is very much better that philosophies should follow facts than that facts should be constrained in accordance with philosophies.

When and if such modifications to the money system as are necessary to meet this requirement are made, one of the first results would be that the sense

of frustration, which is so much resented at the present time, would be relieved, and we should have a restoration of the belief in the efficacy of vigorous effort, which I think we are losing very rapidly. Perhaps Mr. Wells will think it over.

(Conclusion.)

Current Political Economy.

Unless the debate on the Currency and Bank Notes Bill included speeches which *The Times* did not see its way to print, the opposition was hopelessly incompetent. Mr. Maxton, in spite of his unquestionable intelligence, made a point which he could scarcely have expected to be taken seriously, since he apparently meant it ironically. Mr. Snowden made a speech for which his constituents ought to demand a reckoning. First, he did not oppose the measure. He merely made his support conditional on certain things which have been promised, and on an inquiry into the "constitution, powers, and policy of the Bank of England in the light of modern developments in finance and industry," which might be a good move if Mr. Snowden had not shown so many signs of not wanting such an inquiry. For example, he frittered away much of his time eulogising the directors of the Bank of England—when he might have said vastly more about them by simply telling their names. Secondly, he almost restricted his criticism to technical details of the transfer without attacking it on a single principle. The whole of his speech for the Opposition suggested a certain amount of study of Mr. McKenna's point of view without mastery of it.

There was ample opportunity for the Opposition to be primed as to the arguments the Government would use, all of which were stated by *The Times* in a leader of nearly a column in length before the Bill was brought in, a leader which began as though the Bill were already an Act. All the arguments were of one character. They were designed to lull suspicion to sleep. That the transfer is a mere technicality, that the public will not notice any difference except the signature on the notes, and that the ultimate transfer of currency note issue to the Bank of England "was always contemplated" form the whole case for the Bill in principle. The implications of these arguments were not put under the limelight by any speaker in the House. Everybody seems to have been completely hypnotised by the re-iterated fact that currency notes are notes, and nobody has kept his wits about him enough to realise that they are currency. The transfer of the issue of currency to any corporation except the State is a revolutionary act of the first magnitude. Whenever a principle is to be sacrificed, it is described as a mere matter of form. The picture of the Bank of England—signature or picture is all the same—on a currency note, requires as its logical corollary the head of Sir Montagu Norman on every coin from the penny to the sovereign. If the transfer of the currency issue to the Bank of England were so far from a "mere technical operation" that it foreshadowed an increase in general prosperity, it would still be alarming that a British Parliament should be so ignorant of what it is doing as to deal with currency notes as though they were not currency.

Emerson wrote that the Englishman could not read a principle except by a faggot of burning towns. The Englishman can no longer read a principle by any light. During the war he gave up almost every liberty that had been gained by his ancestors, without realising what he did. In the Currency Bill he looks like giving away the one power by which he could hope to recover and extend his liberties. By this Bill the Bank of England would become the

absolute monopolist of currency and credit, and possessor of the entire initiative over currency and credit policy. It is true, of course, that the State did not make any scientific use of its sacred monopoly of the power to issue currency, but it possessed therein a power—if only a latent one—capable of altering the face of economic England. In the Currency and Bank Notes Bill it proposes to renounce, as a technical detail, the whole dominion of Caesar. In *The Times* leader before the debate there was one fact dropped inadvertently which entirely demolished the one argument for transfer not already mentioned.

"Owing to the emergency (*sic*) of the need for additional currency in August, 1914, and to the necessity for instant action, the Treasury was compelled to become the issuing authority for the currency notes when they were first put into circulation."

The argument that it is undesirable for currency to be a matter of political controversy is swept away by that admission. At a crisis when an act entirely without precedent is imperatively necessary the responsibility and initiative for it devolve upon the State inevitably. Throughout the history of the Bank of England its reserves have proved inadequate at crises, and have had to be supplemented by drafts on the faith of the people. What would happen in a future crisis with the United States, having regard to the peculiar relations of England, the Bank of England, and the United States if the entire initiative and control of currency were vested in the Bank of England, is difficult to foretell. One thing, however, is obvious. The responsibility and power at a crisis hitherto taken by Parliament will pass, if this measure becomes law, to the Bank.

Nothing written above criticises any member of Parliament for ignorance of the relations between credit control and the two functions of production and distribution. What is brought out is that Parliament is ignorant of—for one cannot believe that it has deliberately sacrificed them—the political principles on which it has been brought up. The Bank of England is an institution which, if it were run to-day with sublime patriotism, will certainly not be run for ever by the same men, nor of necessity by the same principles. Politically, the decision that it is better able to control the volume of credit, and hence the volume of production and poverty, than the elected Parliament of the people, amounts to a repudiation of democracy and citizenship. In one sense the transfer of the currency issue—there is no need to include the misleading word *note*—is a matter of form; it is the formal registration of Britain as a plutocracy. Up to this measure we could plead on behalf of Parliament that it was merely uninformed, as to how currency and credit could be regulated, and as to what effects regulation could bring about. After this measure Parliament will have resigned to the Bank of England, formally and ceremonially, the right and power to decide to what purposes England may direct its energies, and how poor it may be kept.

"An innovation in the selling of anthracite coal is being talked about by one of the big syndicates. It is suggested that customers should be supplied with a certain number of bags and that the roundsman should make a regular call, mark off how much has been consumed, just as the gas inspector does, and then fill up the bags again. This refers only to domestic supplies."—*Morning Post*, May 9.

"It is here that a rather startling development may be coming. Inquiries are being made by Americans about these closed pits—their production before the strike, the number of men employed, and so forth—just the kind of inquiry that seems to foreshadow some attempt to put new capital into them and make them profitable."—*Morning Post* on English collieries, May 9.

Views and Reviews.

CHRISTIAN POLITICS.

By N. E. Egerton Swann.

The acute secularisation of the State is either the characteristic achievement or the mortal disease (according as each of us may view it) of modern times. So deeply has it sunk into the unconscious presuppositions of the ordinary modern that to the immense majority it must come as a startling shock when a learned and intellectual lecturer lays down at the outset that we cannot fruitfully consider "the foundations of society and the nature of the State" unless we "also have in our mind the utterly fundamental realities—God and immortality." It is the Bishop of Manchester's principal object in his recent Scott-Holland lectures* to fling this challenge in the face of a Machiavellian or Benthamite generation.

The modern world as a whole no doubt does not believe in God (in any real sense, for what sort of a "God" is it that one hesitates to describe as "personal"?) or immortality. But it must make up its mind to accept the fact that there are thousands of people (and those not the least well-educated or thoughtful) who do believe in both with passionate conviction. And one cannot be in earnest about either of these beliefs without being driven on to see that it must profoundly colour one's entire view of politics. To the agnostic or the materialist the State is too apt to become an earthly god.

Dr. Temple's thesis is, of course, a frank reaffirmation of the fundamental position of the medieval thinkers. He rightly indeed insists "that our effort to see the problem of politics in the light of our faith in God must not consist in a mere return . . . to the thought of the Middle Ages." But, true as this is, one may well feel that the Bishop has not quarried as richly as he might from the medieval pit, and seems rather anxious to minimise the amount of common ground which we can and should share with the great Catholic ages, whose heir after all he avows himself to be on the main issue. He magnifies, as his chief guides, thinkers of other times and other traditions. One of those is naturally Plato. He of course cannot be neglected by any speculator upon the *republica*. And, after all, he, in important respects, stands in the line of Christianity, and much of what was best in him had passed into the great stream of Catholic tradition. Dr. Temple's other guide is Spinoza. This may well seem strange indeed, for some of his deepest and most characteristic thoughts are in the highest degree alien to the Christian outlook.

However, his principal guidance Dr. Temple seeks to derive directly from the actual history of the State. This he assumes, of course, to have been, in a general way, shaped by the will of God; but he refuses to regard it as directly expressing that will in all its details. Fact, he holds, we must constantly criticise in the light of Value—and the true standard of Value he finds in "the Eternal Word of God which was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." But why, on such general principles, should he say: "I do not regard the State as in any sense supernatural—a word which, though often misleading and always full of difficulty, I should not hesitate to apply to the Church"? "Supernatural" can only be for us, though an indispensable, yet a relative or comparative, epithet. We do not, in the phenomenal world, anywhere get the nakedly super-

natural laid side by side with the merely natural in the manner conceived by the older theologians. If the State has the kind and measure of Divine sanction claimed for it by the Bishop, then we certainly cannot deny that it is "in any sense" supernatural. And it is only in *some* sense that we can assert that the Church is so; it is certainly not so in the sense in which St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, would have affirmed this. If we were to set out to trace the Divine will and activity in the actual history of the Church, we should needs pursue the very method which our lecturer applies to the State, and we should find the results every bit as mixed. Between Church and State, on this particular head, there is but a difference of degree.

Dr. Temple pilots us with splendid grip and real knowledge through the mazes of the Social Contract, the Divine Right of Kings, the General Will, Austinian Sovereignty, and what not. He well points out that throughout the history of political thought two conceptions have contended for the mastery—that of Society and Government as inherently natural to man, and that of them as being somewhat artificially forced on human nature. Glauco and Socrates, Locke and Montesquieu, Rousseau and Burke, are types of the two streams of thought. It is an issue between the Social Contract on the one side and history and anthropology on the other. Coming down to our modern struggles, the Bishop picks out Mazzini for commendation, as against Marx and other revolutionary leaders, in that he always insisted rather on Duties than on Rights. The same claim, it may be noted, has been made for the guilds of recent years, as against all previous organisations thrown up by the revolt against nineteenth-century industrialism.

Not that the Bishop fails to recognise the existence of valid rights and the necessity, on occasion, of vindicating them. It is a question of the end from which public questions are normally approached, and of the aspect that is to be made the *basis* of any movement of reconstruction. But he himself, in discussing property, insists that there are not merely "Rights of Property," in the sense of rights of existing property owners, but a "Right to Property." In this connection, he admirably says that "a Christian sociology will lay great stress on the right to property. It will not convert into a basis for legislation the sound moral principle that if a man will not work neither should he eat. . . . Rather it will desire that every citizen should possess enough property to support bare life even though he does no stroke of work for it; for so his work and service will be more nearly free, and personality will have a fuller scope."

There are many other issues on which Dr. Temple has much of value to say, even when many of us would strongly disagree with him. Particularly worthy of study are his discussions of the relation of the State to Law and to Force, and of the relations between Church and State. Naturally he devotes considerable space to international issues. Here it is perhaps most difficult of all to follow him uncritically. He proposes to invest the League of Nations with coercive authority. But so long as the state of international society is so far from being Christian, as Dr. Temple is the first to insist that it is, we cannot trust any kind of assembly or council at Geneva with any such powers. We might unwittingly but be enthroning over the world the most sinister forces of high finance. If, on the other hand, the world should have become effectively Christian, "among nations that were Christian in all their dealings there could be no thought of war." Just so; arbitration, when negotiation reached a deadlock, would be voluntarily and gladly accepted. No international government would be necessary; nations need merely to co-operate in such ways as they could freely agree on from time to time.

* "Christianity and the State." By William Temple, Bishop of Manchester. Scott-Holland Memorial Lectures. (Macmillan and Co. 4s. 6d. net.)

Drama.

Twenty Below: Gate.

The title of "Twenty Below," a drama of the road, signifies the temperature of the physical atmosphere in which Mr. Robert Nichols and Mr. Jim Tully have set their play. Their scene is a small town jail in the Middle West of the U.S.A., a jail which, with Chinese logic, serves besides as model-lodging-house and casual ward combined. The only warder apparently necessary for keeping the prisoners inside is the one that drives the casuals in, namely, the unpleasantness of being outside. From the beginning, however, the temperature of the action is high enough, since the play treats, in the starkest manner possible on a stage, with the conflict between angel and devil in man. It differs from the fashion of the period in that this conflict is worked out apart from civilisation, among pariahs in fact, and, more importantly still, in that the angel triumphs. Possibly the most damning count in the indictment against modern civilisation is that artists are more and more driven among the pariahs to justify the ways of man to God, or of God to man. Civilisation seems to have nothing for the artist but gentlemen and neurotics, and he cannot make tragedy out of either.

The curtain rises on five men of various ages huddled round a small stove in a sort of common-room in the jail. In a futile effort to add to their warmth they talk, as starving men talk of the Lord Mayor's banquet, of sex. They boast, as compensation for their present poverty, of the women they once possessed, in and among calling one another liars. Their authors are naturalistic to the extreme point of including a "tup-man" among them—a philosopher who, realising the inaccessibility of any desirable woman to such as he, tries to impress his fellows with the uniqueness of the pleasure to be had from sheep. In short, the attitude of these men to sex indicates the degree of decadence to the animal arrived at by—to use the vivid slang of the competitive-work-State—"these left-overs." While these men, as under such conditions men do, incessantly seek a psychic voluptuousness with nearly every word, suddenly the warder bundles another prisoner into the room, an urchin of, say, twenty, and in the sadistic teasing which inevitably follows the arrival of a new object of interest, the newcomer is discovered to be a girl.

One portion of manna falling among five starving animals inaugurates the order of civilisation only slowly. Dino Gibbons was the one person present with enough of the vice of pride for the makings of a man. He was a cracksmen whose identity was unknown to the local police, and who was merely sheltering for the night. To give his profession and pride in it in his own words, he was "a yegg—and a damned good yegg." Dino Gibbons drove the tribal law by suggesting that they should draw lots for her, the winner's title to be respected. With all the fairness of a new Government he arranged that the girl also should draw for the right to choose. Thus law is established by the powerful who could take what they want so that they obtain it by law without fighting. The girl, helped to the right to choose by Gibbons' cleverness, chose, as she must if she chose at all from such a gathering, Dino himself. Turmoil breaking out again, Dino could quell it with a good conscience, since throwing the animals out now was merely suppressing a rebellion.

Once Dino and the girl, who is known as "Blazes" for an appropriate reason, are alone, the respect they have already conceived for one another, together with their weariness—a state in which soul-hunger supersedes body-hunger—gradu-

ally puts love where lust reigned and trust where fear was. In the morning, however, Dino's dalliance costs him his life. Police aware of his identity have arrived, and while facing them he is shot through the back by the competitor of the night before whom Dino had most humiliated. Thus the first god-like action of Dino's anti-social career had entailed death—which is, to extend Mr. Nichols' claims, good theology, good tragedy, and good life.

Mr. Nichols and Mr. Tully have composed a play which must absorb everyone who can bear its first act, which illustrates that the so-called frankness of our generation is rather less than skin-deep. They have composed a very nearly great play. Certainly they have found a great theme, some great characters, and, in the town-jail, a first-class setting. Would that they had spent more trouble—however much they have spent—on the writing. The style gives one the impression of a conflict to throw off sentimentality which does not quite succeed. Some of the metaphors, for example, appear too literary for the mouths in which they originate. When the dying Gibbons groans at the cold, "Blazes" has no artistic business to take her coat off and put it over him. It is a preposterously small coat for the job and the action is too weak for her words. If there cannot be canvas or a blanket about, the incident should be cut out. Dino, again, is too slow dying. Death is not an act to be hurried, perhaps, in the mundanity of everyday life, since morality decrees that all the consideration shall be shown by those who are staying to the one going. On the stage, and especially in tragedy, however, dying should not be prolonged beyond its artistic duration.

The first act raises once more the problem of naturalistic limits. Allowing the authors to introduce the sheep-fancier if they can justify him, I question his necessity. The evolution of the angel from the devil in spite of Fate is the goat-song, and the presence of the goat man is only prose for it. If the object of the authors were to throw angels grown too vain from their thrones the presence of the actual goat would be appropriate, but their explicit and manifest object is the reverse. For their purpose the male human being seems to be stripped sufficiently of egotism and vanity by the acute descriptions of him given by "Blazes" to Dino, which are magnificent. One simple illustration shows that the sheep dialogue cannot be justified for realism's sake alone. In the first act one of the characters describes the place as "cold enough to freeze the tail of a brass monkey." Everybody acquainted with the language of men under animal conditions will agree that the line should be cut as merely drawing attention to the narrowness of the limits within which realism is thinkable to-day in the freest theatre. There are, besides, one or two improbabilities in the plot, after the major one on which the drama depends which has been allowed. It was not easy to believe that "The Duke" could have so easily persuaded the police, though they may have been both Middle West and country-police to let him have the gun with which he shot Dino. Indeed, there are mythological reasons—and Mr. Nichols is not insensible to mythological reasons—why the police should have shot him.

All this criticism, let it be reiterated, does not mean that the play is a minor one. It is far from a minor play. It is very nearly a play to rank among the greatest. But the blemishes I have indicated show an extremity of realism in one place trying to make up for a failure to be true to imagination in another. All the acting is good. Give actors costume and character, they have a chance to show what they can do. Dennis Wyndham's Dino Gibbons is magnificent, and Beatrix Lehmann's "Blazes," a performance that earns the highest praise. When she enters at first, however, she ought

not to hold herself so very aloof from the rest, a line of conduct leading to suspicion, and one which her experience in masquerading must have eradicated from her. Robert Speaight, Alexander Sarnier, Bruno Barnabe, and Patrick Gover were all of them good in parts that encouraged character-study by their scope and contrasts.

PAUL BANKS.

Music.

Since my reference to Dame Ethel Smyth's last book a week or two ago, I have become more closely acquainted with the work in question, "A Final Burning of Boats," which I earnestly commend to those who would know more of the sinister activities of those whom Dame Ethel well calls "the Gang." As a tale of the blind obscurantism and tyrannous bigotry and subterranean influence of these people against those whom they dislike it would be difficult to surpass, but I take leave to doubt if the incredibly unscrupulous opposition and persistently relentless efforts to down her that Dame Ethel encountered in England are due quite as much as she thinks to the working of sex prejudice. As I have said before, I know how people without what I have called the correct background, no matter what their gifts and accomplishment, are pushed on one side, passed over, ignored in favour of nonentities who possess the "background." This affects men just as much as women. I, too, can speak from personal experience. I remember some years ago calling, at the instance of a distinguished critic and musician, upon a friend of his, also a leading critic, armed with his recommendation, and being met with an unconditional refusal either to look at or listen to my work. Also after being urgently requested by the head of an organisation for the performance of new music for a copy of a work of mine for performance in New York, and receiving glowing messages from him and from the leader of the quintet engaged to work upon it as to their admiration, I discovered that it had been dropped—not at the instance of the performers—on the score of insufficient time for work, but entirely unknown to them as to myself, and without a word of explanation from that day to this. Calumny, too, gets busy. For instance, one person will be heard declaring one has asked them to sing over songs, declaring that one became abusive when they refused. No matter that one had never spoken to them in one's life or even up to the time of the supposed incident ever set eyes on them. Others will declare one cannot play one's own works, and that one writes impossibilities. Luckily this has been said sometimes in front of people who know the contrary, and their lie has been exposed in their faces. Another person will go about declaring that he has done all in his power to help one, when all the time an absolute and total stranger with whom one has never had the least sort of contact or intercourse. Another declares that when one plays one's work the notes played have no connection whatever with what one has written. This remark was made by one "modernistic" musician who was also unable to discover any main theme at all in my first Sonata, a work which is built up around a theme which is enunciated with such clarity and emphasis, and which is woven into almost every single bar of the music with more or less obviousness that a confession of inability to find it is like being unable to find or hear the *Dresden Amen* in "Parsifal." I apologise to my readers for wearying them with these

details of personal adventures, but my intention is to show that men as well as women endure experiences of the type Dame Ethel describes, and to show that the real reason is lack of the correct background. In one's own case there may be the complicating factor of race prejudice, for an organisation that offers awards to composers who are British subjects once had considerable difficulty in making up its mind whether I, though undoubtedly that by birth and parentage, ought to be considered eligible.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

Blue Prints for Pale People.

Mr. Wells suffers from a terror of the moment. Now is never Now—it is always Meanwhile. Nothing much can ever be done now, but Something stupendous is to happen, will certainly happen, later on. The idea of Evolution has been for Mr. Wells a convenient slink-hole in which to hide from—now, this moment. All his life Mr. Wells has been "meanwhileing," and he is still at it.

We appreciate and value a great deal of the thought which Mr. Wells has poured out during these many years, but his mind is not moving in step with the forces which are shaping to-morrow.

Mr. Wells marks time, but he is never "in time." It is curious that a mind which can sweep and soar should be so unable to cast aside the cloud of outworn notions which it has taken over and carried with it from those early Fabian days and the first flirtations with a very vague Socialism. Mr. Wells's familiarity with God is nauseating. However sincere it may be, the ease with which he splatters the page with the word of God makes us feel uncomfortable. It is so very like the local grocer dropping a prayer "straight from the 'eart'" in the Zion chapel.

Chapter two of "The Open Conspiracy" is given the following title: "Subordination of Self the Essence of Religion." Mr. Wells, who is so determined to be Mr. Wells and no one else; Mr. Wells, who so emphatically stands against all the Lenins and the Mussolinis, asks mankind to subordinate self for the sake of the World Revolution, which, of course, is a mental revolution, an urgency, a thing that develops here and there and gathers weight and speed of its own accord, towards the World Community and the World State.

But this world revolution will not happen, if it happens at all, in that way. The book is written as if we were living in that little, comfortable lull before 1908. It is altogether too comfortable; 1908 marked the zenith of that Imperialistic lull. But we are now living in a Revolution Epoch, a period in which patches of people—nations, States, empires—are unsteady and are liable to be thrown into chaos and then shaped and led (by the nose, very often) by types heartily detested by Mr. Wells, but none the less effective so far as the suppression of individual freedom is concerned.

The moment any one of these active types grasps hold of the thread of circumstances Mr. Wells has to rush round inside his mind to see where he stands; and he always stands where he stood—at a place called "Meanwhile."

This is, perhaps, what has been called "the pathos of distance." Mr. Wells's thought-whelming is always being pushed aside by these modern Dictators and mimic-Napoleons who dash in where Open Conspirators fear to tread. Mr. Wells, clearer than anyone else, always sees a moment in time approaching, so to speak. But when that moment is now—when it has actually arrived—Mr. Wells is unable to take hold of it and use it. In fact, he will not let any moment of action arrive. He takes it up and places it at a distance again, so that he may go on playing around it with wider and wider horizons. That is natural to Mr. Wells's type—he is very typical. "If you knew Time as well as I do," said the Mad Hatter. . . .

It may be said that Mr. Wells does not pretend to be, and does not want to be, an active leader of men; that he is an influence shaping the thoughts of a wide public in a certain general direction. That may be so, but Mr. Wells's thought-nebula tends to shape thousands and thousands of little people "in his own image," and in doing this Mr. Wells inoculates these people with his own tentative immensities that flower out of the wider perspectives of "his world," but always sidle past the possibilities of the moment.

* "The Open Conspiracy: Blue Prints for a World Revolution." By H. G. Wells. (Gollancz. 5s.)

This attitude of delay is expressed in the title of his book *The Open Conspiracy*. There can be no such thing as an open conspiracy. The very title makes it unreal, and therefore we shall not have to do anything about it—we can go on playing with it intellectually. Certain minds can be thinking along the lines of a particular group of ideas; along the lines, for instance, of a World Community. But that is not a conspiracy, unless, of course, Mr. Wells is not using words "plainly and clearly," but in some occult or somewhat archaic sense. The usual idea of a conspiracy is that of a combination of men for an evil purpose; an agreement between two or more persons to commit a crime in concert—to plot together. If, however, these men can accomplish their aim openly, then there can be no need for them to conspire together. They may meet together openly in order to formulate a "plan of action," but that can hardly be called an "open conspiracy," or a conspiracy of any sort, except by some Fleet Street journalist who is anxious to give a fantastic twist to a newspaper headline.

Mr. Wells is not alone in exhibiting this desire to delay, this automatic projection forward. It is, one imagines, a well-known psychological state. There is a majority of people in our civilisation who cannot bear anything to happen now. They have the dim outline of, or the vague desire to bring about, some vast scheme—but no part of it can be begun now. It is too vast to begin now; too vast to begin at all. The vast idea

"is astir already in many intelligences and it is an amplifying group of ideas. I am merely the observer who notes his own adhesion and draws attention, eagerly and earnestly, to what is going on and to the quality of our present occasion. . . . I am discussing here the possibility of an immense and hopeful revolution in human affairs and of an enlivening and ennobling change in our lives. . . ."—(Preface.)

Astir, amplifying, adhesion, eagerly and earnestly, quality, possibility, immense, hopeful. . . . it is, as it always was, divorced from actuality? It all strikes a note at once pompous and several times removed from—now. Mr. Wells is partly aware of this. He says in his Preface,

"I pray the reader for a patient reading. . . . My phrasing, my idiom of thought may not be his. Will he forgive me for the sake of the substance I am putting before him?"

Forgive? Forgive? No, we will not forgive. There is no need. We will try not to be "put off" by it. Mr. Wells is fascinated by the so-called "man of action," and that is why he always uses his word-sling and stones to decry the tin-pot Napoleons and Strutting Cock-hatted Swashbucklers. But he must not expect that we shall forbear to note that his idiom is the idiom not merely of an observer but of a leader, who, yet, hopes to succeed without doing anything at all except write another book.

Let us try to examine "the substance" which Mr. Wells is putting before us. There is no substance. There is an immense outpouring of words. Exactly the same outpouring which Mr. Wells has gone on pouring out, and pouring out time and time again. The Open Conspiracy will produce, or foster, or link up with, certain groups of human beings, working in all sorts of directions, but all tending ultimately in the direction of the World Community. These groups will "find themselves developing naturally and progressively" into social association and a loose general organisation with the Open Conspiracy. The Open Conspiracy, understand, is a group of ideas—"an amplifying group of ideas"—it is not to be, quite obviously cannot be, a particular organisation in itself. "The only binding restraint upon independent initiatives in the Open Conspiracy should be its broad essential requirements, namely"—now we come to the substance (our italics): listen—

1. The complete assertion, practical as well as theoretical, of the provisional nature of existing Governments and of our acquiescence in them;
2. The resolve to minimise by all available means the conflicts of these Governments, their militant use of individuals and property, and their interferences with the establishment of a world economic system.
3. The determination to replace private, local or national ownership of at least credit, transport and staple production by a responsible world directorate serving the common ends of the race;
4. The practical recognition of the necessity for world biological controls, for example, of population and disease;

5. The support of a minimum standard of individual freedom and welfare in the world; and
6. The supreme duty of subordinating the personal life to the creation of a world directorate capable of these tasks and to the general advancement of human knowledge, capacity and power.
7. The admission therewith that our immortality is conditional and lies in the race and not in our individual selves."

What does this amount to? Exactly the same series of ideas and assumptions runs through it as is now running through the conceptions and policies of our Baldwins, our Winstons, our "Jixes," our Snowdens, our Cooks, and the rest.

Mr. Wells does not seem to know that there is already a most efficient (for the Few) World Economic System. Certainly he does not suggest any sort of different economic or financial system which could release the man from toil and want. He does not seem to know that the replacement of the private ownership of credit by his particular world directorate would not necessarily make the slightest difference to the wrong functioning of the present faulty financial system. Indeed, there is to-day a World Directorate of International Finance. What more does he want? His world directorate is to serve the common ends of the race. What are these common ends? He does not tell us. He does not even hint that any change is needed in the financial system itself. He does not seem to know that world ownership of credit equals world ownership of everything and everybody (including "transport and staple production"). International finance now "owns" credit, and therefore "owns" (i.e., controls) transport and staple production. It "owns" Mr. Wells and all he has or can have.

He still imagines that existing governments have some real control over their own "conflicts," or that we, the silly voting public, can control their conflicts, and that governments are able to "interfere" with the establishment of a world economic system! We should like to see the British Government, no matter what party is in office (none of them can be in power nowadays), interfering with the existing world economic system. It cannot be done by constitutional means based upon a voting system.

There are to be "biological controls" and a "minimum standard of individual freedom" in the world. A minimum, standard of individual freedom will settle what that mind you! The world directorate will settle what that minimum is to be? On top of this minimum freedom (what minimum is to be? On top of this minimum freedom?) there is to be "the supreme on earth does it really mean?" And, finally, to cap the lot, we have a duty of subordinating the personal life to the creation of a world directorate. . . . And, finally, to cap the lot, we have a duty to make the admission that our "immortality" is conditional and lies in the race and not in our individual selves.

Is it too sweeping to say that Mr. Wells does not keep pace with the modern world? We have no desire to be clever and cocksure, to sweep his Open Conspiracy aside as mere talk. All we suggest is this: that Mr. Wells has for some years gone on putting forward a group of obsolescent ideas, digested and reshaped in other forms. Mr. Wells is weak in his economic foundations and therefore his whole structure is falling to pieces as he builds it up. He cannot escape from the Socialist idiom. He is still a Fabian with all the wide and sounding phrases of Fabianism. And, true to the Fabian complex, he cannot bear anything to "crystallize out," to take shape, because, of course, any such reality in action is sure to be either (a) a feeble futility, a romantic exhibitionism leading to still further confusions and foolishnesses, or (b) something which would give some amount of real power to a dominant individual and/or group, and which would, for a time at any rate, enforce that "minimum freedom" during a crisis, and subordinate Mr. Wells's personal life to a regional directorate, whether Mr. Wells and the rest of us, liked it or not. Examples of this process are to be found in the *Bolsheviki* in Russia and the *Fascist* movement in Italy. We have an idea that Mr. Wells's Open Conspiracy is going to take shape, is now taking shape, through the agency of these curiously "religious" local or regional groups—and a most uncomfortable shaping-out of the World Community it is going to be; most uncomfortable. Mr. Wells will hate it. But "meanwhile" . . . ! . . . ?

J.

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"Gumption."

By Old and Crusted.

They deify as God something which I can only translate by a word as indescribable as God—I mean GUMPTION. But it is part of their religion that there should be no temple to Gumption, nor are there priests or professors of Gumption—Gumption being too ineffable to hit the sense of human definition and analysis.

(Samuel Butler's Note Books.)

—from the very moment the mistress of the house is brought to bed, every female in it, from my lady's gentlewoman down to the cinder-wench, becomes an inch taller for it.

I think rather, replied my uncle Toby, that 'tis we who sink an inch lower.—If I meet but a woman with child—I do it.—'Tis a heavy tax upon that half of our fellow-creatures, brother Shandy, said my uncle Toby.—'Tis a piteous burden upon 'em, continued he, shaking his head—Yes, yes, 'tis a painful thing—said my father, shaking his head too—

God bless 'em all—said my uncle Toby
Deuce take } and my father, each to himself.

"The driven sleet slants upon the orchards in gusts that whistle through the blossomed boughs." Thus the *Daily Mail*, diffusing its more dulcet dope for the benefit of urban readers, but we in the more prosaic North Midlands call it "blackthorn winter." We get it every spring after the lambing storms are over and Easter has made an April fool of us. This year's effort will be memorable for concentrated beastliness and wrecked hopes amongst "the blossomed boughs"—to say nothing of the havoc wrought by the gales in the orchards where many a fine tree has become premature firewood for next Christmas.

The only consolation is that the land is drying and work getting forward, yea, even the work of destruction in the interest of prices and common sense—and this is where the grouse comes in.

When young Phil, who is learning the practical side of horticulture on the local nurseries, was asked what he had been doing all day, he replied "grubbin' up black currant bushes and burnin' 'em." Now the aforesaid Phil will, one of these days, be either a farmer, a fruit grower, or a developer of new lands in the Dominions, and the lesson that is being literally burnt into him at an impressionable age is, that it is not the supply of currant bushes that matters, but the recovery of the costs of production in the wholesale markets—which gives one furiously to think.

To suggest to his employer that the men on the nurseries would gladly have accepted the gift of half a dozen each of the doomed bushes, and that the rest of the surplus stock could have found comfortable homes in the cottage gardens of the neighbouring villages, would have been received by the eminent horticulturist who owns the nurseries with much scoffing and rotund references to my lack of common sense—for I know my man. We have had sundry bickerings from time to time on the price question and the nett result so far is that, he, being a county J.P., would willingly sign an order for my committal to the asylum if a plausible pretext could be advanced by the village doctor—who is also a "Common-Sensian."

Time there was when C. S. and S. C. were, to me, interchangeable terms; it was so obvious; but, whether it be that common sense keeps such questionable company nowadays, or else, like patriotism, it is not enough, the fact remains that somehow or other the analogy has gone wrong—it is incomplete. However, an afternoon's browsing in Samuel Butler's Note Books brought consolation, created the right atmosphere, and provided the exact definition for the philosophy of Social Credit in one word—"Gumption."

Now, in spite of Samuel Butler's protest that this same "Gumption" is "ineffable," I would venture to describe it as the happy offspring of tradition and humour, and also to assert that it is often to be found where least expected—in the House of Commons, for example.

When Mr. Baldwin, reviewing his conversion to women's suffrage, said that—

"to build up the broken world half the human race is not enough,"

he gave evidence of possessing gumption and something of the spirit of "my Uncle Toby"; he came very near coining as great a phrase as Canning did when he—

"called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the old."

It is perhaps something more than a happy coincidence that the two most interesting questions of the day—the future of South America, and "what she will do with it," are summed up in these two phrases which sound like paraphrases of each other.

One wonders what was the deciding factor in Mr. Baldwin's rally to the side of the angels; was he thinking of Disraeli or was the motive purely domestic? In the great days on the border, when the butcher's visit was liable to disastrous interruption by some hungry, predatory Douglas, it was customary for the lady of the house, when provisions ran short, to serve up a pair of cold spurs on a platter for her lord's none-meat as a prickly hint that if he wanted a hot supper he had better go out and get something to roast or boil. Can it be that similar pressure has been brought to bear on the Prime Minister or is there, perchance, amongst his younger relations a bright young niece, who, on being reminded by her banker that she was overdrawn, promptly sent him a cheque on her own account—and then laid her grievance before Uncle Stanley? One never knows what it is that sets the dormant seeds of Gumption germinating in a man's soul—but it is quite certain that after the next general election many an honest John will find spurs on his platter, and may be, in the ranks of the newly enfranchised there will be found a fair daughter of Herodeas who will dance before—or with—the Prime Minister of the day, and having pleased him mightily will demand as her guerdon the head of John the Bankist on a charger.

But if there be some saving grace of gumption in Mr. Baldwin there is no sign of it in "that man Smith." "Political wisdom," says Lord Birkenhead, in "Good Housekeeping," of all papers, "has not, I gather, been justified of its women. . . . The incursion of women into industry and politics has failed, is failing, and must of necessity fail." May be; but wait until the extra five million amazons are mobilised and we shall see. In the meantime let me recall to his Lordship's memory the deeds of two ladies who made quite a stir in their day and displayed much gumption in the handling of men—Gloriana the Gallant and Victoria the Virtuosa.

Did not Gloriana play a lone hand against half Europe, and with the cards against her win the odd trick and the rubber? Did she not "carry on" outrageously, yet keep her figure to the end (and she had some enterprising gentlemen to deal with); finally going down to posterity in a blaze of glory as the "Virgin Queen?"

As for Queen Victoria she had, in her way, an even tougher task, for she lived in the age when "common sense" was supreme, and with the exception of Lord Melbourne in her early years, and Disraeli in her later prime, what a succession of dreary windbags she had to handle—but she did it all the same, and amongst other merits had the gumption to weigh up the People's William and find him wanting.

Time brings its revenges. Whose stock stands highest to-day—The Grand Old Woman's or the Grand Old Man's? Well, well, John may be a good common-sense sort of fellow, and capable of doing great things on occasion, but when it comes to settling questions of currants or currency by the aid of "Gumption"—give me Mary, every time.

Reviews.

The Golem. By Gustav Meyrink. Translated by Madge Pemberton. (Gollancz, 7s. 6d. net.)

The Golem is an evil spirit which haunts the Ghetto in Prague every thirty-three years. Nearly a quarter of a million copies of this novel have been sold in the German original. It is worth reading. The publisher says on the wrapper that it is "full of weird excitement, which is also quite definitely literature as Poe is literature." Quite definitely literature! *The Golem* has style and imagination. It is weird, and there are some excitements. Chaotic, all of it. (E. McKnight Kauffer has come an awful "mucker" on the designing of the wrapper. Never mind.)

Four One-Act Plays. By St. John G. Ervine. (George Allen and Unwin.)

Mr. St. John G. Ervine is a good critic. If the expression of his hatred of cant were tempered by a little urbanity, he would be a great critic. There is no nonsense about his prejudices, and he has an eye for economy in craftsmanship. As a dramatist he can write crisp vernacular dialogue that goes with a snap all the way. But he still remains a critic when he has become a dramatist. Among the characters of these four one-act plays it is obvious which people Mr. Ervine likes and which he dislikes. When he likes people he protects them, when he dislikes people he shows it—a sincerity excellent in critics, and, despite the conventions of polite society, which enact that the reverse attitude shall control behaviour, an admirable and worthy attitude in men. It is a more doubtful attitude, however, in artists. Take, for example, "The Magnanimous Lover," which, although it is the first play Mr. Ervine wrote—perhaps because it is—displays rather than indicates the reason why he is not in

the first rank of play-writers. In this piece Henry Hinde has come back to make Maggie Cather a respectable woman ten years after running away and leaving her alone to face Northern Irish public opinion against the mothers of bastards. His motive is neither love of Maggie nor a desire to make amends to her. Having become fanatically religious, he is anxious to get an adjusting entry for his offence against God in the books of the Recording Angel. Naturally his father is proud that the boy, having repented his evil ways, is about to do the right thing, better late than never. Maggie's mother is relieved. Maggie's father is ready to leave it to Maggie. But Maggie sees through Henry Hinde. The first ten years were the worst, both for her and her illegitimate child. Those are over, and Henry Hinde may go to the Lord with his will to marry her serving for the deed. It is a good theme, but Mr. Ervine allowed his liking for Maggie to take the drama out of it. He sympathised with her to such a degree that he did not let her run the risk of succumbing to respectability and Henry Hinde's belated repentance. Mr. Ervine quite justifiably disliked Henry Hinde, and gave him no chance of messing up what was left of Maggie's life. Similarly in "Progress," a post-war play, which Lewis Casson and Sybil Thorndike did in their Grand Guignol days, the scientist is drawn so unsympathetically and the mother of the soldier who was killed so sympathetically, that when she sticks a knife into the research-fiend's back, and smashes his poison gas outfit, the audience reckons him well out of the way. Justice, by certain ethical standards which any audience worth its salt will agree with, has been done. But Mr. Ervine makes so sure of the justice that the full possibilities of the drama are not drawn upon. "Ole George Comes to Tea" is Mr. Ervine at his most humane. He dislikes the home of Mr. and Mrs. 'Eneyr Parsons; he dislikes the neighbourhood in which it is situated, their cockney speech, and their mean outlook on life: and he does not conceal his dislike. But he has a warm corner somewhere in his heart for the three people concerned, inasmuch as they are at least free from pretensions, and he makes a good actable playlet without being more sentimental than the circumstances justify. "She's No Lady" is an amusing trifle, whose moral appears to be that for a person who has once lived in 'Uddersfield, Paradise is a place much like it.

The Pacific: A Forecast. By Lieut.-Col. P. T. Etherton and H. Hessel Tiltman. (Benn. 12s. 6d.)

Colonel Etherton and Mr. Tiltman, the one a distinguished ex-official and a traveller with a bright eye, the other an extremely capable and knowledgeable journalist, must have met in a solemn and Novemberish hour when they projected this book. It is well argued, well documented, well got up and its conclusions are helpful and not mischievous. For they look forward to a day when the atmosphere of jealousy and suspicion which envelops world politics in the Pacific shall have given way to the clearer air of understanding, and the realisation that Japan, with all her wrongdoings and shortcomings, is destined to play a friendly part in what the authors regard as the ultimate arena of world history. But unfortunately we look in vain throughout these pages for any of the liveliness, the brightness, the humour, and picturesqueness of attitude and phrase which we have a right to expect from such a combination of talents. We would like to see this book rewritten, on a warm sunny day, pre-ferably in the porch of some pleasant public-house overlooking the South Downs. Not that it would affect its conclusions. But it would make their text ever so much more readable. After all, the picture which might have been drawn of the industrialised East of the future, with Japan, the United States, Great Britain, and Australia all sitting politely at a well-spread Chinese dinner-table, while the host looks on, saying nothing, thinking a lot, should have emanated and largely exercised a pencil of rare comedy. After all, the people who envisage the gloomy dangers of a war between the United States and Japan, in which the British Empire might have to cut a very uneasy figure even as a threat of Japanese jingoes as to what they will do in five minutes to the Hawaiian and Philippine Islands are just as idle and pointless as the screaming of the eagle over the latest potentialities of its flapping pinions. Japan is much too poor to tackle America, and much too full of guts to be licked by America. There are plenty of maniacs on both sides who are spoiling for a fight. But there is really no available battle-ground that matters. The only pity is that the talk of friendship and co-operation between these two entirely dissimilar and mutually contemptuous peoples rings so hollow that only missionaries can give it a semblance of harmony. America has already made colossal but not universal conquests in the Far East. She still finds it intolerable that Chinese merchants, even when they are selling direct to American customers, should demand London in-

stead of New York bills. For thus she learns, unwillingly and sulkily, that the pound sterling still keeps more respectable company than the almighty dollar ever minted. As for our good selves, damnably as we have annoyed them, we shall still not undermine the faith of the Chinese in the essential integrity of the huckster John Bull. While that remains, our position in the Far East is secure. As for Japan, she is beginning to discover that mere force counts for nothing with the Chinese; and she has also learnt that she will have to bring into her business methods a little of the honour and integrity of her domestic patriotism if she is to make any headway at all in the trade of the East. So we all have our lessons to learn, chief of them being the need for working out our destiny in the Pacific on the lines we have already laid, ourselves improving our intelligence, America her manners, Japan her commercial morality (if any). By the time China wakes from the nightmare of disunion into the dawn of peace and prosperity, there will be room for all of us to trade with her for her own benefit and our own. When the authors of this book say, on page 183, that the Chinese are not possessed, either by training or tradition, of the requisite ability to construct unaided, and that they lack not only technical education and experience, but also the constructive genius essential for undertakings on an extensive scale, they are taking only a partial and contemporary view of the facts. The modern history of the Far East, which will in effect be the history of the new China, is only at its beginning. China, which has taught the world so much, can learn all there is to be learnt, once she makes up her amazing mind to do so.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

RECREANT BOILS.

Sir,—

If this bloke who complains of a perfervid boil
Will permit me to proffer advice,
He will find "The New Ages"
(As outlined by sages)
Recover their usual spice.

If he hies to the brewery at dawning of day
With a hop, and a skip, and a jump,
And in lieu of a feast,
Take his portion of yeast,
He will find it will leaven the lump.

The taste is disgusting! The cure is complete!
It is well worth a guinea an ounce
If it checks this wild wailing,
And restores to the ailing,
His health and superlative bounce.

C. V.

THE BANKERS' UNDERWORLD.

Sir,—Yours comments in last week's issue on the (unofficially published) description of the underground defences. recently installed at the Bank of England, remind me of an episode which occurred during the general strike in 1926. At open-air meetings on that Sunday in May I pointed out that, while its morality was clear, there was no possibility of such a strike succeeding, seeing that it amounted to an attack on policy initiated by the Bank.

The next evening I was approached by a striker, who, after expressing interest in my address, informed me that, when he "downed tools," he was actually engaged on subterranean work beneath the new Bank of England. Among other statements he volunteered was one to the effect that much tunnelling had been carried out beneath London streets. When I casually enquired how far the works extended and their object, he said that the tunnels are more than half a mile in length, and that they run in the direction of the head offices of the other banks. I give this statement just as it was told me.

ERNEST A. DOWSON.

"TWELVE O'CLOCK."

Sir,—What about a "12 o'Clock" half-column for general Press announcements?

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J. A. S.

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