

# THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER."

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

The most explosive element in the domestic situation is the state of the miners. The chief stimulus which has made the authorities arrange with the Lord Mayor to open a Mansion House fund, and arrange with the Prince of Wales to visit one or two of the stricken areas, has been the incipient success of the Communists in inciting the miners to set out on marches towards the Metropolis. No alternative hypothesis, based on the assumption of commiseration is tenable. The facts about the miners' conditions have been known to the authorities for two years, and could have been put before the Prince at any time during that period. The reason why they were not was that the Government had no reason to be nervous. What other interpretation is possible when one sees a paragraph in the *Observer* as follows:—

"Further tours by the Prince of Wales in the distressed areas of the coalfields in South Wales are under consideration. . . . It is pointed out that it is too early yet to judge of the effects of his tour in the Northumberland and Durham districts, and some days at least must elapse before it can be seen whether another tour shall be made." (Our italics.)

What "effects"? We do not live in the magic darkness of the Arabian Nights, when every hand shaken by a Prince might find a job to go to, and every stone touched by him might turn into bread. The Prince of Wales is a man like ourselves, and has been impotent to do more than impart spiritual comfort to those whom he has met. The amount of available work, clothes, food and shelter remains the same as though he had never made his journey. It is true that a secondary effect may be to bring in subscriptions all the faster to the Mansion House fund. But the same result could have been accomplished by calling the fund the Prince of Wales's Fund in the first place. The real objective in sending him in person was to exploit the innate loyalty of the miners to the Royal House for the benefit of the interests behind the Mansion House.

We do not know what subscribers to the Fund think about it, but the administrators have got the economy complex badly. Batches of boots have been sent into some districts, and of these boots experts have declared that they will not hold a single nail or a peg after one wetting. A clergyman has testified that he has handled a pair of them after a few days' wear, and that the heel had gone, and that as for the rest of the boots he could pick the material apart with his fingers. It has transpired that the price paid for them was 4s. 9d. per pair. This would represent a high grade of boot under a Social Credit system, but as things are to-day—well, as the Cockney would say, "I arks yer!" Some newspapers are mentioning that the names of the manufacturers who have supplied the articles have not been revealed, and are doing so in such wise as to suggest that they ought to be pilloried. Nonsense. Whoever they were they probably supplied the best they could within the limit of cost imposed by the administrators of the Fund. The pillory ought to be locked round the necks and wrists of these.

Colonel Rutherford was released from Broadmoor Asylum last week after a detention of nine years following his shooting of Major Seton. Presumably he is cured. At the time of the tragedy Mrs. Rutherford endeavoured to get a divorce, but was unsuccessful, as the Court did not uphold her charge of infidelity against him. Lord Birkenhead on that occasion declared his regret at having to confirm the decision, saying that it condemned the lady to a "life of loneliness," for it was quite possible at the time that Colonel Rutherford might end his days in Broadmoor. To-day, as usual, the Press is busy running yet another we-must-change-the-law stunt on the basis of this hardship. Mrs. Rutherford ought to have got a divorce as an automatic consequence of her husband's act, so they say—the suggestion being that the law ought to allow it in all similar cases. We are by no means convinced by this. In the case under discussion, a divorce granted

to Mrs. Rutherford would have entailed the freedom of Colonel Rutherford as well as herself to marry again. Of course, if he had not been released he could not have exercised the right; but now he is free he could have done so. In his case, probably there would have been grave impediment. But if the law permitted this freedom in all cases, nobody could guarantee that there would be no relapses among the discharged patients. Again, even in cases where the detention of the man lasts his lifetime, we cannot find it in ourselves to weep tears about the "loneliness" of his wife—especially a wife with four children. Further, supposing a childless wife, she has at any rate had her marital experience; and since there is at all times a preponderance of marriageable virgins who have had none, and hope to, and ought to, we are not enthusiastic about a law which would let loose a body of demi-widows, competing for second husbands against women who have yet to find their first. Fair's fair within the sex as much as between the sexes.

Mr. Justice Avory's opening to his summing-up in the Goddard case is not above criticism. He is reported in the *Evening News* as follows:—

"In this particular case the alleged corruption is in relation to what are called minor offences, which are dealt with by a magistrate summarily.

"It is obvious that if corruption of this nature is allowed to exist or to go unpunished it can equally extend to cases of more serious offences.

"In fact, the more serious the offence, the greater the temptation to the offender to corrupt the police, to induce them to shut their eyes to it."

This doctrine: "As with minor offences so with major offences," is fallacious. It is logically impeccable so far as it goes, but it ignores factors which invalidate it. Postulating that corruption is the evil to be guarded against, it must be pointed out that there can be no corruption unless the corruptor possesses the means of corruption. Hence the delinquencies which can be protected by bribery are limited to those which yield a monetary return to the delinquent; that is to say, revenue-earning crimes. While it is true that the "more serious the offence the greater the temptation" to the offender to corrupt the police, the argument is practically worthless for the reason that the power of a temptation has not the slightest relation to the means of corruption. A criminal cannot manufacture currency out of fear. Further, even supposing he could, Mr. Justice Avory seems to cast an unmerited slur on the police by suggesting that they would shut their eyes to any crime irrespective of its nature if only the proper price were offered to corrupt them. The poor police catch it both ways. When they arrest notabilities in Hyde Park they are called liars, and when they neglect to arrest club proprietors in Gerrard Street they are called criminals. It appears that they are faced with the problem of discovering that magic *via media* which, in another plane, troubles the bankers in their search for a policy that is "neither inflation nor deflation, but something in between."

If anyone should argue that because police officers, for a certain price, have given Mrs. Meyrick and Mr. Ribuffi their heads they would spare the necks of murderers for any price at all, he would be written down an ass. If corruption is to be eliminated its predisposing cause must be removed. That cause is nothing else than the fussy, anti-popular legislation that the police are called upon to administer. The particular legislation here in point has its origin in an attempt to ration revenue between various traders. It represents virtually enactments of business pacts designed to apportion them all an income of sorts from a market in which purchasing power is

notoriously deficient. Not the slightest regard is paid to how, when, and where the consuming public wish to spend their money. The ironic feature about this situation is that the irritating regimentation of the public's expenditure is a consequence of their not having enough money to make trading safe for all those who cater for them. Listen to this short example from last Saturday's newspapers:—

"Herman Siegel, of Praed Street, was fined £5 at Marylebone Police Court for selling two pennyworth of cough-drops after 8 p.m."

Why on earth? The answer is very simple. A Mr. Syrup, in the same line of business up the street, has missed this twopence by closing at eight, and cannot afford to. So the law says that in fairness the customer must cough till the morning so that Mr. Siegel and Mr. Syrup shall compete for his twopence on equal terms. We take the responsibility of suggesting that most people, though they might not condone the taking of a bribe from Mr. Siegel, would do no more than shrug their shoulders if they heard of such "corruption." They would not care a rap into which till the pennies dropped; they would think of the cough-drops going into the right stomach at the right moment.

Now, Mrs. Meyrick broke exactly the same law as did her humble analogue, Mr. Siegel. Instead of selling cough-drops after 8 she sold whisky after 12. She prescribed for a thirst while he prescribed for a cough. But her customers, unlike Mr. Siegel's, knew that she was breaking the law. They knew also that in the prices they paid her they were providing her with a reserve so that if caught she would still retain a good profit after paying her fines. If the premises were closed they were ready to follow her to other premises. And Goddard knew it. He knew also that these people, or a good number of them, belonged to those high circles of society that dine and wine with His Majesty's judges. When the class that inspires legislation treads its own law under foot is it any wonder that a police officer's conscience shuts its mouth when he holds out his hand? Mr. Justice Avory's scaremongering will not do. The contagion of corruption is confined within fairly definite limits; and all men of the world know pretty well what those limits are. Moreover, as we had occasion to say a little while ago, the blind eye of the delinquent constable is much more of a protection than a menace to the liberty and security of an omnibus citizen. We had a conversation with an omnibus driver the other day. His recreation is to study the law as applied to transport. He stated that if the police strictly carried out their official instructions the whole motor traffic of London would come to a standstill.

It has verged on the ludicrous to listen to the public's obstinate misunderstanding of the intended moral of the Goddard case. In not one instance in dozens of discussions in our hearing has anybody expressed any other view than this: "What a fool the fellow was to keep his money like that"—and on the other hand everybody has competed to put forward the best suggestion for covering up tracks in such cases. Nobody has said: "I wouldn't have done such a thing," but a great many have boasted: "They wouldn't have caught me." And the fertility of resource manifested in some of the constructive proposals discussed must have been extremely useful to listeners who had opportunities of collecting bribes. As a side issue, it appears that Bank of England notes will fall into disrepute as financial media of "corruption," even the £1 and 10s. denominations being out of favour for the purpose. One working jeweller preached his own leather-

gold. If you do take notes, he said, you ought to buy gold with them, and put *that* in your safe-deposit box.

The case has been a windfall for the lawyers. The cost of the prosecution has been put at £6,000. Presumably this does not include the cost of the three defences, which ought to total to nearly as much. The Press has spared no superlatives in describing Mr. Justice Avory's "masterly," "devastating," "ruthless," and all-the-rest-of-it summing-up. But after all, on cool reflection, was it not too easy on the evidence for the prosecution? We heard a solicitor's clerk say the other day that if he had been Goddard's legal adviser he would have found it worth his while to pay him a good sum to plead not guilty—to be a sport and let others finger some of the "doings" in an honourable way of business. The classic instance will be remembered where an eminent Queen's Counsel looked through a selection of alternative alibis prepared by a prisoner's solicitor, and at last picked one out, saying: "Yes; this is the one I like best." The chief interest now centres round what is to happen to the "doings." The Home Office, the Treasury, Goddard, and the lawyers are all after the money. A good sporting bet would be that interlocutory corrosives will eat it all away as in the immortal case of *Jarndyce v. Jarndyce*.

Mr. Beaumont Pease, at the annual meeting of Lloyds Bank, speaking about credit advances for trade purposes, said:—

"This record does not show any sign of poverty, but a less pleasing factor connected with these issues is that a considerable portion was destined for luxury trades, and in some instances for the exploitation of patents of a speculative character. In this connection I should like to remark that considerable responsibility rests on bankers in deciding whether they are justified in lending their names to prospectuses of a certain class. The decision is not always an easy one. When a person of repute comes to his banker with a bona fide issue, even though it may seem highly speculative, it is difficult to refuse to have anything to do with it, though, of course, the mere appearance of a bank's name on a prospectus is no guarantee as to the prospects of the venture.

The late Dr. Leaf said once that the bankers were arbiters of commerce. The favouring or disfavouring of prospectuses is no small feature of their influence in directing the flow of private investments. And when the Central Banks come on the scene they can strangle any Government financial issues they like.

Sir Harry Goschen, addressing the shareholders of the National Provincial Bank of England, referred to the discovery that the ground had shifted beneath the foundations of the premises at the corner of Princes Street, leaving cavities which were dangerous to the stability of the building. The trouble could have been dealt with by the process of filling in below, and strengthening above; but the Directors decided that instalment repairs were not the thing—that the thorough method of demolishing and rebuilding of the premises should be proceeded with. The work, said Sir Harry Goschen, was, of course, put in hand at once. Exactly. It's slickness as does it. The Directors had no more hesitation than a navy contemplating the purchase of a packet of Woodbines. It was easier for them to create and lend themselves a few hundred thousands of the public's credit than for a workman to earn twopence. One day, perhaps, the industrial capitalist may inquire why he too cannot solve his dilapidation problems with so little trouble—upon which the whole banking system may discover cavities of another nature and magnitude beneath its structure.

## Social Credit in America.

Soon after Major Douglas's first book, *Economic Democracy*, was published in England, an edition was published in New York. Not long afterwards American supporters of the Social Credit Movement were sending orders to London for copies, saying that they were unable to procure them in their own country. Eventually it was reported by the American publishers that the edition was exhausted and the plates destroyed: there would not be any further editions. On this side we had the choice of two hypotheses. One was that the exhaustion of the first edition was due to quick popular demand. But if so, why not a second edition? The cost of producing it would have been a mere fraction of the previous expenditure. The second hypothesis was that somebody had cut in and bought the edition up in bulk, probably paying a substantial premium above the published price on condition that no further copies were printed. That seemed much the more likely explanation. And many facts since that time have fitted it. We have frequently adduced them in these pages; and the sum of their import is best indicated by the statement that the avenues of publicity have been denied to Major Douglas and his Theorem even more rigorously than they are denied to writers and writings on what are called obscene subjects. Take the recent case of the suppression of Miss Raddlyffe Hall's Book, *The Well of Loneliness*. She has at least had the consolation of getting a personal advertisement as a by-product of the proceedings taken to "protect" the public from this book. But there has been no similar by-product of publicity in the case of Major Douglas's economic "obscenities," because the proceedings against him and them have been private. He has, as it were, been hurried by night to the bankers' Bastille, and been left the last resource of scratching his thesis on the walls of his dungeon in the faint hope that when the storming parties of the next world-war break in they may discover how the catastrophe could have been avoided.

Two or three years ago it looked as though the seed of the Social Credit Theorem, sown on this side of the Atlantic, was going to sprout first on the other. Messrs. Foster and Catchings published their analysis, *Profits*, and afterwards their popular version of that book, *Business Without a Buyer*. Their analysis re-affirmed and confirmed "beyond a peradventure" one of the major truths of the Social Credit Analysis, that investments made out of personal income comes created a shortage of consumer-demand in the retail market. They were committed by their own logic to propose a remedy which would obviate the necessity for new production to be financed by private investors, or else would reduce retail prices by the amount which investors had subscribed. But when their remedy was published, nothing of either sort was proposed; but, instead, merely that mouldering old corpse, loan-credit regulation, which Major Douglas had buried some years previously. It should have been obvious to them that neither an increase nor a decrease in the rate of loan-credit issues could of itself eliminate the investment-habit or prevent its proven consequences. If anyone has seen a cat rush like a hurricane straight for a ditch, pull itself up in its own length, and sit down to lick itself an inch from the edge, he has seen Messrs. Foster and Catchings. There sits this cat, on the statesmanlike side of the ditch of price-regulation, a pet of Wall Street's and an exhibit of Washington's. To-day these heavenly twins are big noises in the

United States, the Government having accepted their proposals as a basis of its new policy of accumulating a dollar-reserve to tide over an approaching trade slump.

In Canada, after Major Douglas had given his evidence at the Governmental Inquiry at Ottawa, Mr. Charles F. Bowman, the editor of the Ottawa Citizen, was heard shouting up Social Credit vociferously. The shouting has died down recently, and Mr. Bowman is now in England, having been honoured by the Canadian Government with an appointment on a Commission sent here to investigate wireless communication. He may have become hoarse and decided to visit London for some more of our throat pastilles. If so we presume we shall hear from him. We have plenty in stock and can make immediate delivery.

Some year or two previously Major Douglas had been invited to the United States to consult with the Locomotive Engineers' Brotherhood. Out of that consultation was born the first Trade Union bank. In a short time there was a chain of them in the States. We, on this side, waited to see how these instruments of economic freedom would be used, knowing how tremendous were their potentialities if directed conformably with the principles on which Major Douglas recommended them. But only too soon we saw them don Wall Street uniforms and parade as recruiting sergeants for the army of the Federal Reserve Board. At this day they are doing nothing more than enlist their members' savings and mobilising reserves.

We are not complaining about these things. We respect the integrity of the people concerned. We recognise that in every case they have specialised responsibilities and functions to fulfil. If, then, they have convinced themselves, or have been persuaded, that an uncompromising demand on their part for the complete policy of Social Credit, and nothing less, will involve risks to the immediate policies which they have been appointed to administer, who are we to insist that they must make this sacrifice for our ideas? Rather should we pay our tribute to them for what they started out to do. We have consistently warned members of the Social Credit Movement itself that whatever they decided to do in support of the Social Credit policy they must not do anything to prejudice their economic security. It is a hard thing for anyone who has realised the immensity of the issues involved, and the comparatively trivial adjustment in book-keeping that will resolve them for ever, to speak and act temperately with reference to the subject. But he must discipline himself to play for safety. He may call it cowardice. It is really purposeful self-control.

The digressions in objectives and programmes to which we have alluded are no cause for despondency. In hardly a single instance have they reflected a change of conviction as to the soundness of the Social Credit analysis. On the contrary, it is most probable that everyone who has decided to "go slow" or to make a detour, has done so in circumstances which have deepened the conviction. That is to say, he has been conscious of yielding to force majeure. Being men of at least ordinary intelligence, their experience of knowing that the financial government, with its monopoly of the public's ear, prefers privily to warn them off the Douglas Scheme rather than risk an open attempt to expose its imputed fallacies, must naturally drive them to the same inference as would be drawn by any judge and jury when a defendant declined to go into the witness box. Finance cannot help but fertilise a belief by rendering it inarticulate.

At the same time it is necessary for the Social Credit Movement, through THE NEW AGE and the Age of Plenty, to insist upon the essential unity of

the Douglas Proposals, and to point out that the acceptance of only one half of them is equivalent to the rejection of them as a whole. If the present demand for an expansion of credit, and nothing else, is satisfied, let it be; but it is our business to declare beforehand that such a policy is not a Social Credit policy. It is not even an instalment. If, as many people of a "practical" turn of mind are prone to argue, society is not yet ripe for Social Credit, our answer must be that in such case it is not ripe for any reform at all. In view of all the foregoing circumstances we are glad to see that a new book on Social Credit has recently been published in New York. Its author is Mr. Maurice Colbourne. A review of it appears below. As will be seen, it is a full and faithful re-expression of the Douglas Analysis, and comes at a most opportune moment in the United States, where the truth about the economic impasse has been obscured by incomplete expression. We hope that the enterprise of Messrs. Coward McCann in publishing it will earn its proper reward.

### Take Care of the Costs.

MR. COLBOURNE'S BOOK.\*

I like Mr. Colbourne. He is a refreshing contrast to the many writers and speakers who have said to me apropos of their propaganda: "You see, there is no mention of Douglas or of Social Credit anywhere; but it is all there." The claim deserved retort: "That's more than you are." For consider: there is hardly a passage in any newspaper attacking any feature of the economic situation, of which a student of Social Credit cannot say that it is full of Social Credit implications. Propaganda by implication is not propaganda at all. It corresponds with the Methodist Love Feast where the elect of God give thanks and edify each other. It is a conversation of saints—a useful enough service to celebrate, only it is not a means of converting sinners. The policy of winking to each other with pens and tongues is all right if you want to hug a mystery to yourselves, but it will not enlighten the uninitiated. "Behold, I shew you a mystery," was the method of the Founder of the Christian faith.

Mr. Colbourne makes no mystery about what he is after. Major Douglas, THE NEW AGE, and the names of several contributors to THE NEW AGE, are all mentioned with more or less frequency during his argument. Most important of all, he spends no less than twenty-three pages on a closely-reasoned affirmation of the truth of the A + B Theorem, with its implications in regard to the current system of costing.

Again he devotes fifty pages to an exposition of the "main proposals of the New Economics," He tabulates sixteen at the commencement of the chapter, dividing them in three categories, Price, The National Dividend, and The Gradual Supersession of Wages by Dividends. Mr. Colbourne omits nothing, nor tones anything down for fear of creating misunderstandings or provoking hostility. He has the sagacity to realise that in the end you can do more with a listener who begins by interrupting hotly: "This is all tommy rot!" than with one who coos: "Yes, there is a good deal of truth in what you say."

Whenever I open a book running to three hundred pages on economics, I prepare to yawn. And I certainly read it on the instalment system. But in this case I found myself gathering momentum as I travelled along, and when I had to break off I did so unwillingly. The reason is because Mr. Colbourne

\* "Unemployment or War." By Maurice Colbourne. (Coward-McCann, 425, Fourth-avenue, New York. \$3.00.)

writes in a direct, lucid, temperate and persuasive manner; he has arranged his matter in orderly sequence; he frequently coins an arresting aphorism; and, perhaps most important of all, wherever possible his argument is highly embossed by facts selected from contemporary newspapers and books. (For this relief much thanks.) Mr. Colbourne has made good use of the Press extracts that have appeared in THE NEW AGE, and it is encouraging to realise what power of conviction he has generated in his handling of this material. There are, of course, extracts of his own discovery as well. In particular his facts relative to productive capacity are remarkably numerous and well chosen. It is worth mentioning that all this information is included in the text, and not dropped as footnotes—a fact that explains why the book is not tedious.

I like his section on the war problem. Speaking of the functioning of the Press as an inspirer of patriotism whenever economic pressure forces Governments to resort to war, he says:—

"Without some such artificial manure it is ridiculous to suppose that the murder of a single archduke could burgeon into so red a blossom as the licensed murder and maiming of millions of men who had never so much as had the pleasure or otherwise of his acquaintance."

In most of Mr. Colbourne's moral asides, and there are not many of them, he contrives to give them a sardonic tint which entertains the reader, while adding to their effect. After a passage expounding the real reason why ordinary people find themselves better off when the guns go off, he concludes: *For peace is economic war, and war economic peace.* A quotation from Upton Sinclair with which Mr. Colbourne opens the third section of his book is worth recording:—

"We go to work to get the cash to buy the food to get the strength to go to work to get the cash to buy the food to get the strength to go to work to . . ."

Reverting to the A + B Theorem, Mr. Colbourne faces up to the inevitable criticism, and, in my judgment, has made some effective points. One section of his argument amounts to this: It is all very well to say that the expenditure of a firm on the products of a second firm in a given period may provide people with incomes at a later period, and to argue that therefore "things pan out squarely in the end"; but when does any period arrive when one can say "this is the end"? Where is that later period when the admitted fact that A + B is greater than A shall have been compensated for by a distribution of A which is greater than A + B? For that is the reciprocal magic necessary to make things "pan out squarely." This very compressed summary does Mr. Colbourne some injustice, because in arguing the Theorem from this, its most intricate angle, he has to rely upon an extended context to which space denies reproduction here.

This book is a valuable contribution to Social Credit literature. It is a pity that it is priced so high, but that is inevitable. To simplify a subject like this requires room, and rooms costs money. I think Messrs. McCann might sell it on the instalment system, at least to citizens of this impoverished country.

JOHN GRIMM.

The M.M. Club meets on Wednesday, February 6th, at 5 o'clock. Discussion at 6.15.

Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed and made payable to "THE NEW AGE PRESS."

"Letters to the Editor" should arrive not later than the first post on Saturday morning if intended for publication in the following week's issue.

### Twelve o'Clock.

"Shakespeare strikes twelve every time."—Emerson.  
EXTRACTS FROM "THE NEW AGE."  
(Edited by Sagittarius.)

"When going in the wrong direction it is better to walk with the Protectionist than run with the Free Trader."—Notes of the Week.

"The position is just the same with regard to free-thought in economics. Social Credit is rigorously boycotted, while the Bishop of Chester is allowed to recite the creed of the gold standard to an awestricken audience who are constrained to believe what he says because he says it so beautifully."—Notes of the Week.

"It is useful, in counting up the chances of Scotland's showing enterprise in this vital direction, to remember that, among all the reviews of Major Douglas's first book, the one which revealed the deepest insight into his analysis and gave the most decisive backing to his proposals, appeared under the auspices of the Scottish Bankers' Association."—Notes of the Week.

"Poets would entertain and spiritualise the world more by showing how two people could get a cottage than by singing about love."—Current Political Economy.

"In short, modern business is a race to the market among a mass of competitors who are tied both to one another and to the starting-post; and the bonds are in the bank."—Current Political Economy.

"The Stranger introduced by Jerome would not be crucified; but he would certainly be told to chuck his nonsense, and to look at things through spectacles not cleaned by a private income."—Drama.

"And the more we can eliminate baneful toil and really dirty or disgusting 'jobs,' and the more we can attain the ideal of every man's finding joy in his daily work, the more will this that is true of the artist and philosopher be true of the typical 'worker.'"—Aspects of Leisure. N. E. Egerton Swann.

"The American delegates to the Experts Committee on Reparations, Mr. Owen D. Young and Mr. J. P. Morgan, sailed to-day in the Aquitania en route for Paris. He said: 'Mr. Young made a statement before leaving. He said: 'I regard the questions to be settled by our Committee as business questions only. I hope they will be approached that spirit and with the determination to get a constructive answer speedily.'"

"Mr. Thomas Lamont travelled in the same ship. Accompanying him was Mr. Jeremiah Smith, who acted as special agent of the League of Nations in rehabilitating the finances of Hungary, and also Mr. Ferdinand Eberstadt, formerly a partner in the banking firm of Dillon, Read and Co."—Reuter, February 2, 1929.

"In the U.S. Senate debate on the 15-Cruiser Bill, Senator Reed said:—

'Tell me why Bermuda should be fortified.  
'Why should Britain cling to a ring of islands which command the Panama Canal?

'From Jamaica, Britain could destroy the Panama Canal with her aeroplanes in 5½ hours.  
'If our fleet should be divided between the Atlantic and the Pacific it would be helpless.

'Why does England have a fortress near Cape Horn? So that we cannot sail round South America?  
'I do not say Britain is preparing for war with the U.S., but I do say that her statesmen have enough sense to protect their country.

'An American statesman who does not take a lesson from this fact is not fit to represent the American people.  
'I am in favour of a Navy equal to any on earth, and I favour a Navy so strong that no two navies on earth could attack it.

'The interest on our War Debt could pay for it. It behooves us to look after our own household.'"—Ex. Tel. Co., January 31.

## The League of Nations and the Schools.

By Muriel Hill.

Much has been written, and more said, with regard to teaching children about the League of Nations, but a question that arises in the minds of many thoughtful people is whether there is any benefit in teaching children anything at all about it.

If we wish to do so, we must have some idea in our minds as to why we wish it, and which of its many activities we would bring to their notice.

It will be generally admitted that the idea at the back of all this advocacy of "peace talk" in the schools is the prevention of another war, but it is futile to imagine that hatred of a bad thing is going to do away with that thing. To cultivate, in our children, a hatred of war and a determination that when they grow up they will have nothing to do with it will not, surely, prevent other nations from making war if they want to.

At present no nation is anxious to make war, for the simple reason that no nation quite knows who is its enemy and who its friend, and because no nation has yet recovered from, or forgotten, the last ghastly war.

But do we know what France, Germany, Russia and Italy are teaching their children in the schools? They will be grown up at just about the same time as our children. Now let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that Italy is teaching the little Italians that Italy must be paramount among all nations at all costs. Suppose that France is saying, "Never again! You must all be prepared to stand by your country if ever anybody attacks you again." Suppose Germany is saying to the little Germans, "Yes, we lost the war, but wait—Germany is a great nation, she must have colonies, and if anybody tries to stop her . . . we will work and grow strong again, and then . . ."

Then suppose that, one day, when these children of all the nations are grown up, the crash comes—crashes come very suddenly, and very small accidents can lead to very big wars—what would happen?

Are our young men and women, as they would then be, to sit down quietly, fold their hands and say, "No! We hate war, we believe in peace and love. Go away. Do not bombard our ports or drop poison gas on our cities or blow up our schools and hospitals with bombs. We wish you well, we cannot fight?"

Such a position would mean annihilation for the people who stood for peace, while the warring nations would become supreme, and such a position as this would be proved impossible. Primitive instincts would become all powerful as of old, and men and women would fight, as of old, for their young, for their homes, their property, and each other. League of Nations teaching would have become so much vapour, blown away and forgotten in real and more terrible calamities than we have yet known. The older folk would be glibly or haltingly chanting, "We don't want to lose you, but we think you ought to go."

We may talk peace, and avoid war, but we are not yet the controlling force of the world. We cannot say to China, America, Russia, or any other nation, "Let there be peace because we hate war,"—and have it so. Other nations are responsible also.

Sometimes, perhaps, one may be permitted to ask whether this "peace talk" propaganda should be only for our schools and our children. Possibly this is a case of charity beginning abroad! If we could get hold of the children of other nations and teach them peace—

Leaving the question of war and peace as a reason for teaching children about the League of Nations,

can we teach them about the social work of the League—one of its biggest achievements? For children, this question does not and should not exist. The drug traffic can merely be mentioned as a current fact.

One may take it that the League of Nations does not wish the children to be taught the cowardly and foolish maxim, "Peace at any price." They themselves would wish to be a force, the force to maintain peace if any recalcitrant nation should decide to upset it. But where can they draw the line? The probability is that if one of the powerful nations now in the League—or out of it—were to make war on any other nation, there would be a rapid "taking sides," and we should have a new "Balance of Nations." The League would be split up and, consequently, powerless. This, of course, is not peace talk, but when we note, as we cannot fail to do, only a few of the grim facts recorded in the newspapers, the possibilities of another war seem to be anything but remote.

Italy is drilling her whole nation. Why? France has a large standing army. Why? Germany—what do we know of her? Certainly we know that she has not paid her war debts, and that one of Ludendorff's late Generals has gone to train the Chinese armies. Why?

England and America are building up their navies, and all the countries are experimenting with poison gas. Why? Why? Why?

No! We had better teach our children to love peace—and be prepared. And this brings us back once more to the question, "What can we teach our children about the League?" Well, not much. We can cease to glorify war in their minds. We can let them exchange holidays, where possible, with the children of other nations. The encouragement of foreign correspondence in schools is also good, and travelling abroad is as valuable as it is rare, the lack of money being, of course, with most folks, the chief obstacle to this excellent form of education. We can try to teach them to settle their quarrels peaceably, without the aid of fists, though the wisdom of that might sometimes be doubted. After all, if "the child is the epitome of the race," he is only being true to type. We can stop bullying, and that is true League of Nations teaching after all.

But may we long be spared from the general cultivation in our schools of selfish impulsiveness, commonly called "self-development," and license which very frequently flourishes under the misnomer "free discipline"—under the delusion that we are teaching children to love peace and hate war.

"The Lancashire banks, in agreeing to support the Lancashire Textile Corporation, have tacitly agreed, if necessary, to go outside the bounds of English banking precedents and to undertake relationships with industry which they have previously sedulously avoided. So far, so good; but it appears that the London banks, to whom Lancashire's difficulties are, perhaps, not quite clear or so pressing, have not yet been persuaded to depart from banking tradition to the extent of accepting a charge upon which interest shall only be payable when it has been earned, and which shall not give the right of foreclosure."—*Manchester Guardian Commercial*, December 27, 1928.

"At a meeting of the Taylor Society on December 7 in New York, Dr. H. S. Peron, managing director of the Society, placed before a group of students the following specific propositions for discussion in a symposium:—

(1) The standard length of the work period (day or week) should be governed primarily by the maximum amount of work, scientifically determined, that workers can and do thrive under, proper allowance being made for adult education, recreation, and other cultural factors.

(2) A substantial portion of the larger social income which results from marked increase in technological efficiency should be handled as a credit which shall be drawn upon by workers after middle age."—*Commerce and Finance*, December 26, 1928.

## Madame Blavatsky and Theosophy.

It is only thirty-eight years since the death of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, yet she is as much the subject of doubt and conjecture as the authorship of the Casket Letters or the identity of the man in the iron mask. Was she demented or inspired? Fraud or genius? Or, which would be still more interesting, was she a complex mixture of many personalities? Mr. Kingsland, setting out to answer these questions, is hampered by no doubts, and, if a passionate statement and restatement of his belief in Mme. Blavatsky could prove his case, he would leave none to his reader. Yet at the end of the book\* one is still dubious. When a person attains the public prominence of Mme. Blavatsky there are always spiteful and malicious people anxious to spread scurrilous gossip about her, and the wise will treat the statements of such people with at least as much suspicion as they would those of their victim. There is no need, however, to concern ourselves here about them, since Mr. Kingsland deals faithfully with them in his appended critique of the report of the Society for Psychical Research upon the evidence of the Coulobes and others. The causes of my uncertainty are the admissions of the author himself. Take a small example, unimportant except as a straw in the wind. In one of Mme. Blavatsky's scrap-books occurs the following note:—

"Nuit memorable. Certainne nuit par un clair de lune qui se couchait à—Ramsgate, 12 Août 1851—lorsque je rencontrais le Maître de mes rêves."

This meeting took place in London according to Mme. Blavatsky's own statement, but she substituted Ramsgate,

"so that anyone casually taking up the book would not know where she had met her master."

If then she was capable of such a silly and needless deception in so trifling a matter, why should we trust her implicitly in greater issues? Mr. Kingsland explains that this and other deceptions were "blinds" which were meant to test the intuition of her followers, and he also says that there are many mysteries which must not be divulged to the uninitiated. Now this will not do at all, for, in the first place, no amount of "intuition" will teach a person that Ramsgate means London, and, in the second, while there may be excellent reasons for keeping silence on certain matters before the vulgar, there can be none at all for deliberately lying about these secrets. What this explanation means, if it means anything, is that Mme. Blavatsky demanded from her followers an infinite capacity for going on believing in her, no matter how often she might be caught out. This alone ought to arouse our suspicions, since it is an all too common capacity upon which all charlatans trade. Some of the theosophists, however (notably A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume), seem to have been somewhat deficient in the faculty and, in consequence, bring on their heads the recriminations both of Mr. Kingsland and of the "Mahatmas." Indeed—and this is rather typical—the only person who is all-charitable towards them is Mme. Blavatsky herself.

But one must agree, I think, that the author has given us a very fair sample of the real H. P. Blavatsky, though perhaps his emphasis falls in the wrong places. The picture that finally crystallises out is that of an intensely living, vivid, personality, emotional, impulsive, and unstable, but buoyed up by great hopes and dreams, ready at all times to sacrifice herself for an idea, and showing indomitable courage in the face of her sicknesses of body and of

\* "The Real H.P. Blavatsky," by William Kingsland (John M. Watkins, London, 16s.)

mind. Like many people who have combined bodily sickness with exuberant mental vitality, she got through an immense amount of work which often threatened to overwhelm her weak constitution, so that, not unnaturally, both she and her followers adopted the explanation that the Mahatmas were miraculously keeping her alive. She is the sort of woman who always has a large circle of true friends and sincere admirers, though the wise among them must have taken her statements (especially those relating to her psychic experiences) with more than the traditional grain of salt. But woe betide the wight she caught with the salt-cellar! This lovable impulsive type of woman is always like that. She is so assured that she *knows*, that she is only concerned to convert others to her view by hook or by crook, and cares little about meticulous and nig-gardly accuracy of detail. She behaves, in fact, as if she were beyond truth and falsehood in the ordinary sense, and thus often gives the impression to an unsympathetic observer of downright lying and fraud. If Mme. Blavatsky was a deceiver, I am convinced that she was her first and greatest dupe. Mr. Kingsland is fond of repeating that her personality is ephemeral and unimportant compared with her teaching. My own impression is quite the reverse. Her teaching seems to me to partake greatly of the nature of Maya, part truth and part illusion, while her personality is a living thing which I can well believe immortal.

For her "Adepts," or "Masters," however, whether they are real or fictitious, I have much less sympathy. Frankly they "absented me from felicity" every time they appeared. They are something between the Arabian Nights and a schoolboy's idea of a secret society. They are mysterious, sententious, and very touchy about their dignity. They are pleased to overlook the mistakes of their "poor old shell" (Mme. Blavatsky) but one wonders why they could not publish their own books, and give to the world of the uninitiate, exactly such pabulum as would be fit for it. Who shall initiate the initiates? Yet these "pampered jades of Asia" have much to learn. Otherwise they would surely know that to requite the arrogance and ignorance of Europe with similar stupidities is neither wise nor helpful, and one would think that it must be sad for their "Karmic heirlooms." In any case it should be obvious that even Europe is necessary. For the Lords of Life have not entrusted their whole secret to Asia, but only half—and the other half is in Europe. I am not referring merely to aeroplanes and "wireless."

This is the fundamental weakness of Theosophy as a system, that it is too much a reaction to European materialism and the shallow pride of intellect. Its doctrines, which provide a goal to strive for, which transcends mere mortality, hold much that is salutary, but it too easily degenerates into Religion for Nice Young People. To withdraw from the world may be all very well when one is working at some inner task, but it may also form an excellent excuse for a flight from reality, and for fantasy-building on Adlerian lines. Mme. Blavatsky must have played Fairy Godmother to a good many Cinderellas.

This, perhaps, explains the feeling one has about Theosophy that it is not so much a new religion as a hotch-potch of the old ones—a sort of Esperanto, rather than a fresh expression of the Living Word.

It is significant that while the Theosophists accord to Buddha their unalloyed adoration, Christ is accepted with a certain reserve, and an implied suggestion that He is more or less on probation. No doubt the hollowness of Christian Institutions is largely to blame for this attitude, but one cannot help feeling also that He had none of the esoteric dilettantism necessary to make Him at home in theosophical circles. In short, this attitude symbolises that capitulation of Europe before the forces

of Asia—a species of cowardice for which their Karma will certainly call the Theosophists to account.

From this point of view it is worth while to examine the central doctrine of Theosophy in some detail. The doctrine of Reincarnation was not new even to Europe when Mme. Blavatsky first promulgated it. Among other sources the Jewish system of Theosophy known as the Kabbalah plainly taught it. Of the three great moderns who drank deep of the Kabbalist spring (viz., Milton, Blake, and Hugo) only the last, and least, accepted Reincarnation. (Vide Prof. D. Saurat's "Milton, Man and Thinker," "Milton et le Matérialisme Chrétien en Angleterre," and articles in Marsyas entitled, respectively, "Victor Hugo et la Cabale" and "William Blake.") Milton took almost every other idea of importance from the Kabbalah, yet in eschatology became a Mortalist, or, as we should now say, a Christadelphian. Blake had a whole pantheon of gods and goddesses of his own invention, who told him much more interesting and original things than any apparently imparted to Mme. Blavatsky by her adepts, yet seems never to have heard anything from them anent Reincarnation. Both these thinkers seem to have found insuperable theoretic difficulty with the doctrine as it is usually understood. And the more one looks at it the greater the difficulty grows. It is perhaps most evident from the angle of Prof. Saurat's own philosophy, in which it appears to demand a complete breakdown of Cosmic Economy.

The only reason for a man's death which the mind can accept is that his physical desires are completely and forever exhausted or satisfied. Else, why did he die? If he were only temporarily satisfied with the physical universe he would not have died, but merely fallen asleep. For this is the real and only difference between sleep and death. As Saurat says in his "Principia Metaphysica," "There are two kinds of fall: sleep and death. In sleep a desire comes back as desire, in the same expression; in death a desire gives up its former expression, and comes back on the next plane subdivided into ideas."

Thus at death a man's personality as a whole is dissolved into nothingness, and falls out of existence. Nevertheless, following the course of all desire it will reappear in its own good time, in the "World of Ideas," which will be founded after the death of this physical universe. Meanwhile, what is left of him on this earth is simply such shreds and patches of his desire as have made physical connections for themselves outside his body. These pass on in the heredity stream, and mingle with others to produce fresh individuals. This is perhaps the meaning of the ancient doctrine of the "Reawakening of the Skandhas," mentioned by M.B., Oxon, in "Cosmic Anatomy."

Reincarnation, then, on this earth is confined to the everyday, but none the less mysterious phenomena, of waking from sleep, and inheritance. But with regard to the latter, since these remnants of desire are still portions of the dead man's personality, he becomes one of their possibilities which they must eventually realise. Thus we have an external cause for the reappearance of the lapsed personality as well as the internal cause already discussed. These two will ultimately merge at the moment when the personality re-enters existence. This, however, cannot occur in the present world, for reasons of internal economy, but must be deferred till the foundation of the Ideal Convention after the death of this universe. The individual will then reappear, only to fall again, and so to pursue the infinite series of falls and resurrections which is the destiny of all desire.

It follows, then, that the western idea of "going to Heaven" and the eastern one of "Reincarnation" are complementary aspects of the same pro-

found truth, which in both cases has suffered from the distortion and popularisation which have debased the currency of all religious myths.

Naturally I do not expect this view to appeal greatly to Theosophists. I have no occult authority for it whatsoever. Prof. Saurat lives in an ordinary house, and neither in a Buddhist monastery nor on the Astral Plane, and when he corresponds his letters come through the post, not through the ceiling.

NEIL MONTGOMERY.

## The Screen Play.

"Show People."

British film producers will be nearer artistic salvation when, as a change from complacently congratulating themselves on an unbroken sequence of masterpieces, they follow the example of Hollywood and occasionally laugh at themselves. Hollywood laughs at itself without restraint in "Show People" (Empire), a most amusing film about the film world. Its star is the delicious Marion Davies, a great comedienne and a finished actress, whose delightful court must be seen to be believed. If I liked her better in "The Politic Flapper" it is because I prefer her as a *gamine*. She is ably supported by William Haines and by the most remarkable cast of supers that has ever been seen in a single film, including King Vidor, who directed it, Douglas Fairbanks, John Gilbert, Norma Talmadge, William Hart, Karl Dane, Mae Murray, Leatrice Joy, Rod la Roque, Dorothy Sebastian, Elinor Glyn, and Charlie Chaplin. The last, I am told, solemnly insisted on drawing his fifteen dollars as the day's pay of an "extra." This delightful film has a pleasing story, which is largely based on the real story of one of Hollywood's uncrowned queens. But I wish that it had not been synchronised. A good orchestra, and that at the Empire is excellent, is so much preferable to even the most perfected mechanical device for the rendering of canned music.

"Piccadilly."

E. A. Dupont and Erich Pommer were associated in "Vaudeville," that really great film, and it is to this day a problem to the outside world as to whom the major credit really belongs. Since "Vaudeville" Dupont has made "Moulin Rouge," which was not a great picture, and he has now followed this with "Piccadilly," which is equally removed from the "Vaudeville" class. On the face of it, it would therefore seem that Pommer was the greater man of the two, save on the assumption that either the English climate or the miasma of the British film industry has caused a sea change to come over Dupont. "Piccadilly" (Carlton), despite the collaboration of Arnold Bennett, who wrote the story, which is Bennett at his most exasperating, is certainly not the "Great British Super-Film" that its sponsors claim. It is amorphous, it is tedious, especially in the first half, and its theme is that of the "Family Herald." I award Mr. Dupont an especially bad mark for casting Gilda Gray for one of the principal feminine parts; and Jameson Thomas's fatal fascination for women seems to come over more ardour in his love-making, while Charles King Ho-Chang, and Hannah Jones are excellent. The last as a C.O. scullerymaid, gives a perfect study of a tiny part. Indeed, and this is where I give Mr. Dupont full marks, all the small parts are perfectly cast; in particular I single out a remarkable impersonation of a drunken drab by an actress

whose name does not appear on the programme, but who should be given the chance to play a much bigger part. It is difficult for the critic to do justice to such a salad of good, bad, and just mediocre. Obviously an immense amount of work has been put in on the production, the most ambitious yet undertaken in a British studio, but it lacks grip and is devoid of that unity which is one of the hall-marks of a good film. Incidentally, I wish that Arnold Bennett, who *can* write English, had been asked to translate the synopsis from the Wardour Street. Such phrases as "lovely women, beautifully gowned to gladden the eye of the connoisseur," "all the tempting fascinations of this perfect pleasure business," and "the next morning the papers are alight with the success," suggest a romantically-minded butcher boy's attempt at a penny novelette. I am not sure whether the fact that such sorry stuff can be used in connection with a costly production is not symptomatic of the British film industry, which finds it difficult to resist spoiling an Aquitania for lack of a ha'porth of tar.

DAVID OCKHAM.

## Drama.

"Living Together": Wyndham's.

Mr. Alfred Sutro has performed the immense task of bringing himself up to date, and has presented the results in a modern comedy of free-love. It may be assumed that he is not enamoured of free-love. Unfortunately his comedy demonstrates not only the superiority of marriage over what young America calls companionate marriage as a social institution, but as a source of comedy in addition. The unescapable implication of "Living Together" is that the abolition of marriage would entail the atrophy of the comic faculty. Possibly the fact is that Mr. Sutro has brought himself up to date only in theory; and that the conduct of the characters in his play is merely the result of logic applied to hypothetical cases, not of imagination applied to real cases. The only character, indeed, who professes to be "the real thing," Julia Bailey, is carried by the author to the triumph she deserves for it, with the audience heartily approving the masculine virtues with which she disposes of a "cad."

In the first scene Mr. Ambersham calls on Lady Belting to protest, in the interest of the financial and social prospects of his daughters, against the seduction of his son, Tony, by the daughter of Lady Belting. But Lady Belting's husband, an F.R.S., at twenty-seven, had married Lady Belting out of a *boutique fantasque* and his family that marriage was a fraud. Lady Belting knuckled under. She allowed her son and daughter to practise their father's theories, and just watched. In the next scene Mr. Ambersham and Lady Belting visit Tony and Barbara in their palatial flat in Bloomsbury to appeal to Barbara "to make a respectable man of Tony." There also Roland Belting, brilliant son of a brilliant father, and Julia Bailey, a common little film actress with sex-appeal, are also discovered. In the whole of this scene the characters have to make up in kissing for the complete lack of action. Julia has repeatedly to roll over the end of the sofa to display her goods, and the audience has nothing to pass the time with between whiles except judging the kisses by the strength of their report and the ensemble of their execution.

By the time that Barbara has to choose whether she will give up her college appointment, or give up or marry Tony, this gentleman has been seduced, rather willingly, by Julia. After that Barbara turns out anything but the rationalist advocate of free union with determination by either party without

notice. She turns out, in fact, the ordinary jealous, man-eating, monopolist, to deal with whom the angels taught man the art of dissimulation. Tony's anxiety to do the peaceful thing, to the extent of giving up the warm Julia, and marrying the frigid Barbara, was merely revolting to Barbara's girlish purity. She wanted a virgin. Tony then very naturally returned to Julia, who had boasted so often of being the real thing, with a proposition. But Julia had developed into something even more real, so that she countered with a proposal. When Tony refused her, and she prepared to depart for Canada, the audience was ready to jeer him.

It is as necessary in comedy as in tragedy that characters should take life seriously. What is the matter with this comedy is typified by the ease with which Barbara Belting was brought to accept marriage when her job was at stake. Everybody in the play takes the obvious line of least resistance, from the children's attempt to practise the father's code to Tony's seduction in the country lane. Granted that the behaviour of the characters indicates that their manners are no better than their morals, no standard is expressed against which to contrast them. There is no evidence of any conflict in the hearts, minds, or consciences, of the free-love parties, either about trying free-love or about giving it up in despair. Ethel Irving's performance as Lady Belting was very fine. The actress revealed the whole life history of that oppressed mother, whose brilliant family had never allowed her an opinion on any subject. Nevertheless, Lady Belting was no more a recommendation for marriage than her son was a recommendation for free-love. Indeed, Mr. Sutro displays no enthusiasm for either. He shows no case for either trying free-love or giving marriage another trial. The one person besides Lady Belting who had tried marriage, Ambersham senior, had never escaped from the shadow of his own father. In a comedy somebody has got to kick against the pricks. Otherwise it is lifeless.

Again, the behaviour and speech of the characters belied what was said about them, with the pitiable exception of Lady Belting. Roland Belting, alleged brilliant, gave no impression of brains. He gave the unpalatable impression of having heard somebody quote Shaw, and of being unable to forget or to let anyone else forget. There was no pathos in Julia's decision to leave him, nor in his sister's concern for him. The amazing thing was that his mother did not claw his eyes out, and that Julia had ever gone home with him. Similarly with his sister, only her references to her career suggested that she had one. It was in no sense part of her. The only thing about her that Alison Leggett could render in any degree convincing was her hysterical passion at the infidelity of Tony, and even that was hollow through lack of shadows before. Owen Nares did his best for Tony. Wherever the dramatist gave him half a chance to show that Tony sportingly followed the rules of the new order, and was upset that others wanted to change them during the game, Owen Nares made Tony as decent a product of his society as possible. The actor knew that without some good qualities Tony could not be put over even as a live cad. Modern youth may not appear to modern age as all it could be. This comedy, for all I know, may be a reply to Mr. Malleson's "Fanatics." But fanatics, although a nuisance, and prone to educate their grandmothers in sucking eggs, are at least alive. Not one person in Mr. Sutro's play is really alive, although Lady Belting is true to life. The nearest to being alive is Julia Bailey, whom Phyllis Konstam did wonders with; even Julia, however, was a stage convention, for her earlier commonsense would never have permitted the idea of marriage between herself and Tony.

PAUL BANKS.

Music.

"La Traviata." Teatro Reale dell' Opera. Rome. January 26.

As in "Carmen," one was continually delighted and entranced with the completeness, beauty, and skill of the production; the intelligence and design of the movements of supernumeraries, chorus, and so on, the care and thought on the smallest detail of staging, adjuvatoria, the admirably decorative stage pictures, those dreadful old flat "wings" which make the Covent Garden "productions" (one apologises for the misapplication of the word) look like a Brobdignag child's toy theatre in cardboard, having long since disappeared from any reasonably self-respecting theatre, are naturally not to be found in Rome's Opera House. A staircase balustrade instead of being a palpable and very bad essay in rococo trick perspective on a flat bit of canvas, presents the actual substance of a balustrade; an equal care for the properties of common sense prevents the Roman House's stage direction from using up the whole towering weight and width of an opera house proscenium when showing a hall and staircase in a moderate-sized country house. It would doubtless seem to the Romans rather surprising that their opera house should be praised for keeping to the canons of good sense, but only those who realise what it is to suffer from the astonishing vagaries of an establishment like Covent Garden, where almost every trace of intelligence and good taste in staging and production, not to say common sense, is invariably lacking, can also realise what it means to watch a performance that is so aesthetically satisfying and gratifying as the two I have so far seen at the Teatro Reale. The standard of acting of all the protagonists, principals included, was extraordinarily high, and it is plain that no singing into or at the house is tolerated by the producers of either "Carmen" or "Traviata." As before, the fly, the bluebottle, in the ointment. is the singing. There was no trace of anything that deserves to be called great singing in this performance. We had musicianly and intelligent conceptions well carried out up to a point, but of the singing that should lift a performance of this kind, so brilliant in all other respects, to the heights of supremacy we heard none. Claudia Muzio, who looked and acted beautifully, sang a great deal less beautifully as Violetta, there was far too much reliance upon a few vocal tricks of sudden exaggerated *svorzandi*, and upon a little thin harmonic head-voice that had no connection with the natural voice, the high notes thin and wiry, and much too much aspirates in runs and roulades to take the place of clear *fioritura*. The voice is naturally a beautiful one, and ought to be better used and produced, seeing how well its owner can do certain things, but not of a certainty, a prolonged stretch of pure singing with even, unvarying quality. The Alfredo of Minghetti was an attractive youthful and natural figure with a pleasant voice passably well used, capable of much more, however. The owner very wisely does not give way to the prevalent vice of present-day Italian tenors of singing at a uniform *fortissimo*, and hanging on to high notes, and never allowed himself to be enticed into trying conclusions with a sometimes too strepitous orchestra. The best all-round performance was the old *Germon* of Riccardo Stracciani, a name well known in the larger world outside Italy. A fine artist, an accomplished actor, with a distinguished and polished style of singing, spoilt, however by a certain obstructed choked quality, and lack of that clear bright ringing tone that is the essence of fine singing. The smaller parts all very competently done. The orchestral part of the proceedings, as before, was consummate. Even the desolating trash and trumpy of much of "Traviata" was rendered pleasant to the ear by the exquisite playing, although the conductor, Marinuzzi, thinks too much of the

orchestra and not enough of the singers, these being frequently drowned and not too sympathetically, or flexibly accompanied. In opera of this type the singers are the pre-eminently important protagonists, and to import into the performance of such works ideas based on a misunderstanding of the problems of the immensely more complex fabric of a Wagner score is a lamentable error of judgment.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

The Philosophy of Social Credit.

[Compiled from the writings of Major Douglas.]

III. The industrial revolution . . . was largely marked in principle by the separation of the workman from his tools and the control of his business policy. There was (previously) within the craft guilds no involuntary poverty or unemployment at all comparable to that with which we are too familiar, and . . . material comfort rose directly in proportion to total production, while . . . the craftsman maintained a pride in his work and considerable independence.

Behind all effort lies the active or passive acquiescence of the human will. By the separation of large classes into mere agents of a function, engaged in never-ending toil of which the prime inducement is money, co-operation of large numbers of individuals (has been attained) in aims of which they . . . would have completely disapproved—whilst Education and Ecclesiasticism have combined to foster the idea, that, so long as the orders of a superior were obeyed, no responsibility rested on the individual.

The whole process is . . . without a single redeeming feature, and is rendered inherently vicious by the conditions which operate during the selective process (of the individuals who control it). (The system) quite inevitably forces them to consider the individual as mere material for a policy—cannon-fodder, whether of politics or industry.

Along with this has gone a parallel change in (social) status of the individual . . . and this has led reformers of the type of William Morris and John Ruskin to idealise the pre-industrial period, and place (all) to the debit of machinery . . . confusion between cause and effect; there is no virtue in taking ten hours to produce in ten seconds, necessary which a machine will produce in ten seconds, thereby releasing a human being to that extent for other aims, but it is essential that the individual should be released.

How, then, are we to deal with this dilemma. . . . It is most important to recognise that there are two distinct problems involved; one technical, the other psychological, and it is just because the psychological aspect of industry has been confused with and subordinated to the technical aspect that we are confronted with so grave a situation at this time. . . .

Review.

Shiva or the Future of India. By R. J. Minney. (Kegan Paul. 2s. 6d. net.)

The author lacks neither courage, pungency, nor sense. He gives a damning indictment of the horrible social conditions in India, and lays the blame partly on the religious taboos of the native population, and partly on the weak-kneed ineffectiveness of British rule. His remedy is the Big Thick Stick applied with a will to the backs both of the natives and of the white population. The former must be frightened into civilisation, and the latter must find necessary cash. India will thus develop her material resources, become Westernised, and join the rest of us in the delightful parlour game of "Hunt the Market." Poor old India! "Out of the frying-pan into the bed-pan," as the Babu said.

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O you who are my world of bright or solemn Are letters, ciphers, nothing in a column: I took a handbook down and searched your name, Half-doubting; and yet found hundreds of the same Profession, starkly skeletoned in print, Tomb-like and cold. O not a soul had hint That there epitomised for me As Mr. Robert Graves would say, Life is godawful enough with the complication of godawful science of this stamp.

GEOFFREY JOHNSON.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

THE TRUST ERA.

Sir,—It would appear from *The Times* of January 25 that the trustification of the Lancashire mills is proceeding according to plan. Fixed assets will be valued "on a reasonably low basis" varying from ten shillings to thirty-five shillings a mule, and 5½ debentures will be issued "to shareholders, or, where debts exceed the assets, to secured creditors."

Since this valuation of the fixed assets, if correctly reported, would appear to be a small fraction of their purchase price, it would seem improbable that there would be any individual mills in which the debts would not exceed the assets. The creditors, are, of course, as usual, the banks, and the original shareholders are to a large extent working operatives in the mills and small business men in the district, who will thus be more or less painlessly relieved, both of the original money they paid for the shares, the shares themselves, and the capital assets.

It is written that he who is diligent in banking shall stand before Kings, but it would appear that he who produces the goods will stand anything.

C. H. DOUGLAS.

GODAWFUL SCIENCE.

Sir,—A correspondent in *THE NEW AGE* has commented adversely on the concluding chapter, "Zoology and the Citizen," in Mr. Graham Kerr's pamphlet, "An Introduction to Zoology." Mr. Kerr's generalisation can be taken as light comedy, but his conclusions at the end of the preceding chapter, "The Animal Kingdom," are appalling.

A comment in the final chapter runs, "And so it remains to-day [the literary type of education which had existed in the monasteries], education is mainly literary rather than scientific and ethical. . . . And the ignorance of these (zoological) principles leads necessarily to an immense amount of discontent."

Certainly it does, and rightly so. The discontent is a reaction to a given state of affairs (environment); and the literary education is an instinctive clinging to a higher culture, which culture science (so-called) is doing its best to undermine and depreciate.

The first part of Mr. Kerr's pamphlet is all that it should be, but when he does begin to generalise one is inclined to doubt whether he has even understood what he has read. He gives a summary of natural selection and then spoils it by crediting certain creatures with a capacity to create (italics mine) the means whereby they delude a possible enemy, "coping with the greatest exactitude the appearance of some other insect." But natural selection, if it is to mean anything, means that certain creatures have inherited (italics mine) these factors which enable them to pass themselves off as something or somebody.

On page 69 he writes, "This principle (protective colouration) does not by any means cover all cases of conspicuous colouring, but it has to be remembered that the pigments of animals are usually waste products deposited on the surface of the body—such as salts of uric acid—and that these often happen (his italics) to be of bright colours, as is the case with so many other chemical salts, so that we are quite justified in attributing the bright colour of some animals to pure chance, without any special biological significance. (Italics mine.)"

Unfortunately, it has been shown (and I regret that I cannot remember the name of the other scientist) that this bright colouring, especially in male birds, is an indication of fighting qualities. But mark that by bringing in "pure chance," Mr. Kerr has nearly thrown natural selection overboard. And these "fighting qualities" quite dispose of that hoary gag "that bright colouring is appreciated and admired by the females, and is thus a feature of selective value which natural selection (of the type to which Darwin applied the term 'sexual selection') will tend to maintain and increase." Which, as I said, shows that Mr. Kerr has read this and has not realised what nonsense it is. The idea that "mating," generally is done on the lines of a penny novellette is a howler that will take some beating.

When a scientist comes along with brains enough to put warm blood and flesh on the bare bones of fact and give us the gist of the art of living, and the means to worship that art, then we should be tempted to pay attention. But until then, and until these scientific Johnnies step off their steel towers, or come out of their watertight compartments, we shall be perfectly justified in ignoring them, and deriding them, whenever we get the chance.

As Mr. Robert Graves would say, Life is godawful enough with the complication of godawful science of this stamp.

H. LISTER.

THE COINAGE.

Proofs of the crown piece.—"One of them [proofs submitted to the Mint] was 'Britannia Pacifera,' a seated figure of Britannia holding out an olive branch to the world, with around 'Give Peace in Our Time, O Lord'; her helm is by her side and her shield laid down."

Half-crown.—"There is no crown above the coat of arms. . . . The broad spaces in the field on either side of the main design have been filled up by two crossed capital G's, back to back, an ornament copied from the two crossed C's which Briot introduced when he struck his beautiful pattern-set for Charles I."

Shilling.—"The lion and the crown are not enclosed in a ring-border, and that beast is not of the Zoological Gardens or naturalistic type, as on the 'lion' shillings of George IV. and Edward VII., but of the purely heraldic type, with a three-forked tail exceeding all natural dimensions."

"But, alas! their metal is of the same 50 per cent. alloyed mixture which Sir Austen Chamberlain introduced after silver had reached a temporary maximum of 88 pence per ounce in 1920. . . . It is much to be desired that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should undo the evil work of six years back, and restore the old standard. With silver at 25d. an ounce, or thereabouts, there is already such a splendid gain of 'seigniorage' on every coin issued that there seems to be little necessity for making a very small extra profit on the alloy."

The New Coinage of 1927. By Sir Charles Oman, M.P. In *The Banker*, January, 1928.

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