THE

# NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER."

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

No. 1902] NEW SERIES Vol. XLIV. No. 17. THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1929. [Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.] SEVENPENCE

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

The most significant event recorded during the last week has been the rejection of the Mond-Turner Report by the employers' organisations. It marks the fact that industrialists in general are getting sick to death of these grandiose schemes for thawing out concrete problems with moralistic hot air. They believe less and less in the promises of restored prosperity indicated in the speeches of high-political constructors of permanent councils and pacts, who seem to think that all that has to be done to get the master and man to shake down comfortably together is to get some super-bureaucrats to shake hands together. The impasse was foreshadowed at the beginning of the month when the Engineers' Association issued its hostile manifesto. On February 3 the *Observer* devoted a leading article to a heated indictment of what it looked upon as the worst sort of reactionism. It is significant to notice the tenour of the article. It amounted to this: These people [the Engineers' Association] are living a century behind and talking a dead language—they do not realise that the workers demand something more than mere adjustments of wages and conditions—Labour will not be satisfied until its status has been recognised by Capital—and so forth and so on. And in last Sunday's *Observer* another leading article chants the same anthem.

> "The modern citizen regards the employer as the trustee for a portion of the nation's prosperity. He holds that the workman has not merely a claim but a right to such a *share in that trusteeship* as his sense of responsibility bids him demand. The facts will certainly follow thought and if individuals prove obstinate, a Socialist Government lies within the call of a disgusted electorate."

We are unable to emulate the facile credulity with which the *Observer* persuades itself of the existence of the typical workman who would rather share the trusteeship of a general prosperity than be the sole trustee of his own. We have heard of such a type but have noticed that he has been so far from typical that, in America, a special name was invented to denominate him. The name was Henry Dubb, the good young man from the Sunday School who had soaked his conscience to saturation with the exhortation: "Take no thought what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed . . . ." and was then invested with a certificate from the Sunday School Union and sent out into his job before he had learned the rest of the text: ". . . . for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." The *Observer* apparently knows better.

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But though the name, Henry Dubb, may be well enough in a country where Fundamentalism is rampant, it is not consonant with the higher criticism of Europe. Accordingly he has been baptized again in England; for in many of the largest industrial concerns in this country the walls are being plastered with good-will posters in ordered sequence, of which miniature replicas are inserted exactly like cigarette-pictures in the men's pay-envelopes, and the central figure of the series is a happy-looking personage whose name is Bob Briton. If these pictures were run through a cinematograph projector you would see Bob on the screen exhorting his fellows: "Come on boys, let's pull together—let's help each other—don't let's grumble at the foreman, who has a hundred jobs to your one—remember there are forty-three million people depending upon us—smile all the time: and if you don't smile because you're full of joy, smile for the work's sake like a *fille de joie*." What a cunning idea to sow in the soil of a culture which created Mark Tapley. Dickens's creation was a man who accepted misfortune cheerfully when he recognised that it was unavoidable. This new adaptation by American efficiency-publicists is diabolically successful in suggesting the inevitability of everything that irritates a workman's temper and saddens his soul. "You don't like this?—well, that proves that it inheres in the nature of things, and must be borne with fortitude." This is the doctrine. Mr.

Winston Churchill enunciated it identically when he said in the House of Commons that the final test of the soundness of a financial proposition was the amount of irritation it caused. By all means let us have cheerfulness of demeanour in industrial relationships, and let us have the sense of responsibility in the workman, but let the workman make quite sure where this responsibility begins and ends. When Mark Tapley accompanied young Martin Chuzzlewit to the real-estate agent's office, he did not conceive that his loyalty absolved him from the responsibility of trying to save his master from being swindled by a rogue. Mark looked at the map and asked awkward questions. And when he failed, and young Martin found at the end of a long, long journey to the "town" where he was going to set up as an architect, that he had lost all his money on an acre of swamp in an uninhabited region, and got fever thrown into the bargain, Mark did not lie down beside him to die with a "Bob-Briton" grin on his mouth. What he did do is in the story, and we will not spoil it for the workman who has not yet read *Martin Chuzzlewit*. But we will reveal the parable: the Mond-Turner Report is a proposition that employers and employees shall accept the bankers' bargain and travel as comrades to the swamp of disillusionment.

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The difference between the Mond-Turner policy and what we may call the Federation of British Industries' attitude consists generally in this; that the first is political, quasi-religious, and idealistic, whereas the second is economic, scientific, and pragmatic. The first puts honour before income. The second may like the sound of this, but can't see the sense. The Mond-Turner map bears the vague tint of prosperity, but contains no delineations of markets. The F.B.I. does not take much stock in the map: it realises instinctively that prosperity is a matter, not of amicable co-operation, but of marketing products. In the absence of consumption, prosperity is only an affair of honour. Under the Mond-Turner policy your Bob Britons would go home to their wives saying: "My dear; I have not received any wages this week, but I have received a Knighthood: so now you're a Lady." She would instantly prove that she wasn't: and in so doing she would be affirming the broad truth that when human beings are deprived of essential necessities there are no ladies and no gentlemen—society reverts to animalism.

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It would be going too far to say that the attitude of the F.B.I. expresses an intelligent appreciation of the issues. All we can say is that it is subconsciously wise in its hostility. It is, on the surface, no nearer a comprehension than Lord Melchett that the key to prosperity lies in the direct, independent financing of consumer markets—i.e., the accrediting of these markets with money otherwise than through the industrial accountancy system. Nevertheless, under the surface, it harbours a miscellaneous fleet of "craft-consciousnesses" in terms of bread and butter. These the *Observer* would condemn as agglomerations of individualistic selfishnesses: but, all the same, the consumer will come into his own through the clash of frank hard-faced demands for concrete supplies from industry, and not through elusive soft-faced yearnings after righteousness. The insistence on getting a good wage or a good dividend is a consumer-insistence at bottom; and it only needs a little more secular knowledge (i.e., instruction about the credit system) for these insistences, now so hopelessly antagonistic, to coalesce in a single manifest and universal consumer policy.

There is no doubt whatever that the stiffening of the employers' attitude against these high-political manœuvres is due to the awakening of their technicians. The technicians stand in the same relation to industrial capitalism as do bank-officers to finance-capitalism; and both these bodies are equivalent to what we know as the Civil Service. Not one of them formally creates a policy, but all of them can practically decide it in the end. It becomes therefore of extreme importance to note how the disquietude among the Government's Civil Servants (which began at the Albert Hall a year or two ago) has spilled over, more recently, into the Bank Officers' Guild: for it is hardly to be supposed that what has happened to these more closely organised bodies has not extended to the more loosely organised body which is responsible for the engineering of production. The engineers are, so to speak, the high permanent officials of the industrial Civil Service. Just as Treasury officials teach Chancellors of the Exchequer their jobs and prompt their policies, so do the engineers function towards their nominal chiefs. Officials do this because whereas it is their chief's duty to say what objective he wants to reach, it is theirs to devise the best technique, if any is possible, or to advise him if none is possible. Whatever may be the conditions in politics, the engineer and the director understand each other very well. They both suffer under the same condemnation in that the bugbear of them both when planning anything useful is *financial limitation*. It is true to say that there is hardly such a thing in industry as an example of engineering skill at anywhere near its best: what we see are pseudo-engineering jobs, because both as regards material and manner of construction the engineer can never have exactly what he wants, but always some substitute which will bring the job within some rigid *limit of cost*. The engineering student spends hundreds of pounds to learn the right things to use and to do to derive the highest efficiency out of energy, and afterwards spends the rest of his life learning how to do without them. No wonder that a service which could be a fascinating hobby becomes a distasteful task.

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Again, how can there be cheerful co-operation between the technician and the workman when all the time this infernal "limit of cost" impels the first to devise means of dispensing with the second? As for the consumer, how he gets on was evidenced during the frost last week when a young wife of twenty-three was killed, and her two-months-old child seriously injured, by the explosion of a domestic boiler. She "carelessly" (ha, ha!) lit the kitchen fire without making sure if there was water in the boiler. We would like to know (after a close scrutiny of our own boiler equipment—no water gauge in the upper tank, and the boiler out of sight behind the fire below) how she could have told without a divining rod. It seems as though consumers have to be amateur engineers to use in safety the equipment that the professional engineers are compelled to make for them. Summing everything up it is incredible that the Mond-Turner report should have hidden its futility from the scrutiny of the technicians. "Piffle," we can hear them advising their respective Employers Associations; "Turn it down." Instead of a permanent Council the employers have chosen to suggest a meeting between themselves and the Trade Union interests. Present indications point to a purposeless conference, but happily it will not be perpetual. It will also enable the employers to get Turner away from Mond for a few days. If Turner can produce a definite plan, *with working drawings*, well and good. But we imagine nobody expects it from that quarter.



In its international aspect, too, Lord Melchett's project is objectionable. His associate Lord Birkenhead has been appointed chairman of the Corporation which is to control the electrification of Britain. The finance for this Corporation is now, by admission and official justification, coming from the United States. It is true that the last time Lord Melchett made a public reference to America it was to tell her to mind her own business and not interfere in Europe: but, as we remarked at the time, this outburst was probably evoked by his failure to carry through a plan in New York with reference to the Chemical Combine. In any case it must not be construed as a principle that dollars are not welcome on this side of the Atlantic. Lord Melchett's idea of visiting the Trades Union Congress Executive to choose out from them a sort of Second Chamber of the Movement would be bound to be incorporated in a larger idea still, an idea which would embrace the Electrical Trust's policy, its commitments and its foreign affiliations—an idea which would ultimately express itself as a centralised world-control of economic activities by Second Chambers of bankers, employers and work-people. In this visionary scheme the bankers are to mobilise money, the Church of Rome is to mobilise conscience, and the Jews are to mobilise assets. And this Great Trinity is to be one Unity.

* * *

At one time we were all in danger of confusing the power of conceiving this gigantic enterprise with the power of putting it across administratively. But to-day some of the administrative instruments have become refractory, as witness the competition of the central banks to snatch at each other's gold, to which we referred last week. To this difficulty must be added that which we have just been discussing, the growing implacability of the "civil-services" in this key-country. The "Irresistible Force" of megalomaniacs at the top is finding that it has to meet the "Immovable Body" at the bottom—that is to say the majestic inertia of populations commanded or exhorted to act against their basic natural impulses. Physicists used to teach us that the outcome of such an impact would be "Equilibrium." Probably they would now say Atomic Disruption—discreation—nothingness. For this reason we look on the situation optimistically. In the developments in question the opposing elements are sentient; and it is a property of sentience to see results before they happen. The immovable body in this connection cannot change its instincts—or, if it can, not in a thousand times the period in which it seems logically to be required to do so. But the irresistible force is the aggressor, and can change its mind without testing its power. The prospects of successful subjugation of peoples by organised finance are growing perceptibly smaller, and though we see the financiers still busier than ever with their preparations for the struggle, these seem to be becoming automatic through long exercise, and are appearances, rather than expressions, of purpose. The bankers are like a motorist going into the third speed and jamming the brakes on at the same time; and if they are not careful they will turn a somersault before they can ride us down.

* * *

Signor Mussolini's drive for "a million more babies" is a curious commentary on his complaint that Italy lacks room for expansion. He may be preparing for war, but if so he is gambling on the war not beginning until the babies grow up. If he had shown any sign of comprehending the realities of economics so well as he has those of politics, his attempt to stimulate the birth-rate would have been understandable as an attempt to provide Italian industries with more customers. But such an interpretation is ruled out, if only by the ceremonial burning of currency-notes which he authorised some time ago. More babies and less money is not an inspiring slogan for lazy parents. His methods of inducement are laughable. Who on earth are going to commence or resume marital intercourse for the sake of a few pounds gratuity, free rides in tramcars, free seats at cinemas, and, when it's twins, a brass band playing beneath the window of the accouchement chamber? So far as these little presents are concerned they will be regarded in practice as nothing more than compensations for accidents, welcome enough but not struggled for. It is tantalising to think that if Mussolini's opportunity had come perhaps only a few months later he might easily have encountered the Social Credit theorem in time to try out its teachings. But it was not to be: and once in power he had to drop new theories—he was too busy on consolidation. Even so, the incidents that immediately preceded his campaign against the Communists ought to have given him a hint. For it was the bankers who broke their shock tactics, and Mussolini's task was the comparatively simple one of dispersing a dispirited organisation. The Communists occupied the Fiat factories all right; and no doubt would have got on making cars all right; they had got the material and mechanical power and the technical skill. But one thing they overlooked: when they wanted to draw cheques they could not produce anybody whose signature the bankers would honour. That was a shock to them, but it had been foreseen by the bankers, who now launched Mussolini at them before they had recovered sufficiently to discover a reply. We do not know whether Mussolini was astute enough to see beforehand that the financial methods employed to smash Communism could be employed to smash Fascism. There were hints at one time that he had learned the lesson and was double-crossing the bankers. It may be that he began to, and if so the time can be fixed by reference to the numerous rumours of his assassination that were distributed to news agencies, often by the publicity departments of some of the banks. In this connection it is significant that since then, although he has tightened up his dictatorship more and more rigidly, threats against his life have become less and less frequent. It is as though no sinister influence can cross the charmed circle of confidence drawn round him by his original financial backer, Signor Pirelli. Through this association it is probable that Italy has entered the orbit of American policy. Mussolini has hitched his Roman chariots to the Stars and Stripes. We must attribute his call for babies as a gesture of loyalty to the ideals of the Roman Church as they concern marital life, and possibly as an attempt to uphold the relative power of the Church in the Great Trinity by instrumenting the slogan: "For every new Jew a new Catholic."

* * *

In the *Bank Officer* for February appears an article, entitled "The Guild and Credit Reform," under the signature of "Corin." The writer mentions THE NEW AGE by name, and quotes from our issue of December 27 where, referring to a manifesto of the Bank Officers' Guild, we say that banking directorates are not driven by economic pressure towards salary reductions. He enlarges upon this truth, and later on quotes our advice to the Guild that while insisting on adequate salaries it should "get itself right with the public," meaning that the public must be taught that high salaries in banks need not impose sacrifices outside the banks. The writer underlines this advice by quoting figures expressing the difference between his condition and that of a friend of the same age. The writer, a bank official, says he is aged 26; his salary is £280; his hours are 9 to 4.30; his income-tax is *nil*; his annual holiday 3 weeks; his residence is free (as a married man). The corresponding particulars of his friend, aged 25 are,

salary £182 (highest limit); hours 9 to 5.30; holidays 2 weeks; rent, rates and taxes a charge on his salary. He comments:

"Place these two sets of particulars before the average man in the street. Would he admit that we, as bankmen, had anything to grumble at? Of course not."

He concludes with the moral that bankmen should place themselves behind the movement into an inquiry into the nature and function of credit. The Editor of the *Bank Officer*, as is quite proper in view of his position, states in a footnote that this article must not be taken to represent the opinions of the Bank Officers' Guild. We should like it to do so, but are quite content, and appreciate the independence both he and the author have shown in writing and publishing sentiments and references which both must have known could not be palatable to the Directorates under whom they have to earn their living and promotion. When will Fleet Street emulate this constructive courage?

* * *

Mr. H. G. Wells's new book, *The King Who Was a King*, is an attempt to provide a working drawing for the no-more-war movement. The key to peace is to be a World Economic Directorate to which shall be given the control of raw materials, food supplies, population and migration. He spins a yarn about a little country which possesses the sole supply outside British territory of an indispensable mineral called "calcomite," and shows how some American financiers inspire other countries to plot war in order to exploit this material. The danger is averted by a young idealist King (an American citizen) of one of these countries who agrees with the President of the threatened country to make a joint appeal for a world control of calcomite. But since he pictures Britain and America as the prime protagonists behind this struggle, it is not clear how he thinks that the quarrel will be ended by referring the issue to a world-body on which Britain and America would have a dominant influence. You do not settle even small legal disputes by putting the litigants on the Bench. Mr. Wells's story is first-rate League-of-Nations propaganda; indeed, Mr. Horace Thorogood in the *Evening Standard* explicitly declares that the League "should make it their own." If the League does so we suggest that it complete the good work by showing the public how Mr. Wells's remedy for the fictional calcomite-quarrel can be applied to the actual quarrel now proceeding between Britain and America over petroleum.

* * *

The *Sunday Dispatch* of February 10 contains an unsigned contribution which takes the form of an attack on the Kibbo Kift and an announcement that trouble is brewing within that body.

"The trouble, which will come to a head at the assembly of the various tribes shortly under the presidency of White Fox, arises from an attempt by one section of the tribesmen to secure the insertion of certain quasi-Socialistic economic doctrines in the constitution.

"These doctrines, which centre upon what is known as the 'Social Credit' theory, virtually call for the nationalisation of the banking system and the control of the issue of credit by a social council instead of by the Governor of the Bank of England and the big heads of the banking houses.

"Ranged against the 'Social Credit' school of tribesmen is a large batch of the membership which desires to leave such controversial political topics alone.

"Among the advisory council are Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. Norman Angell, Professor Julian Huxley, and Professor Patrick Geddes."

The concluding part of the report is directed to insinuating that the members of the Kibbo Kift, men and women, go into camp together insufficiently clothed.

The first point in this obvious attempt to split the Kibbo Kift that concerns us is the anonymous contributor's description of what the Social Credit theory is, and what it means in practice. Public control of the nation's credit policy has no relation to "nationalisation" of the banking system. Nor does the Social Credit scheme require a "social council" (whatever irresponsible form of administration the writer seeks to suggest by the term) to run it. A most casual acquaintance with the Notes in this journal would have shown him that we are in direct opposition to nationalisation. The second point is that the appearance of this article justifies our policy of caution in matters concerning what may be called "concerted action." While we have wished to get as many people as possible to accept the Social Credit analysis, we have declined to take responsibility for what they afterwards decided to do to bring about the adoption of the Proposals. Much less could we formally endorse their other interests in cultural or social life. There are courses of action open to every type of mind which accepts the Social Credit Theorem; and as a matter of fact, minds of all types have accepted it. That is a mark of its truth and strength. But our job is to stick to the task of teaching our economic policy because then the only reply open to critics is to attack us directly and upon our own ground—they must disprove the Theorem by mathematical reasoning of the same nature as that by which we propound it. Give them a fraction of a chance, and they will get round behind us by oblique methods such as the present article exemplifies. We need not say much more at the moment. Our readers are as capable as we are of drawing the necessary inferences from the *Sunday Dispatch's* insidious methods, and of revising their own policy accordingly if they think it advisable.

## Feminism.

### II.

Reviewing modern feminism, Dr. Knudsen* refuses to subscribe to the view that the cause of the great emancipation movement was economic. It sprang, he says, as can be seen by reference to its earliest pioneers, from the doctrine of liberalism which the French Revolution spread over the world. There are economic historians who would not be satisfied with Dr. Knudsen's objection. The doctrine of liberalism is older, not merely academically but practically as well, than the French Revolution. The American Declaration of Independence is still regarded as an almost up-to-date expression of the principles of liberalism, and no doubt remains as to the economic stimulus in the minds of the American independents. The right to happiness was froth on the right to own property on a *laisser-faire* basis. If liberalism itself is the gospel of the economic man, as it is, in origin and in growth, no issue is clarified by setting feminism to the account of liberalism while denying that feminism was in motive economic.

* * *

Beginning with the discovery of America in 1492, a ferment in Europe gained direction. Continuing with the development of world-trade and mechanical invention, possible opportunities were enlarged, but realisation was confined to a few. Whatever the spring which released the demand made by all classes for the right to share these opportunities, it was natural that the demand should accompany their creation. As Matthew Arnold wrote, in his diary, the problem of the artist is daily bread. The problem standing in the way of every individual's desire to express his reactions to the universe in a

* "Feminism." By Dr. K. A. Wieth-Knudsen. (Constable. 12s.)



personal style—which is art—is the easy access to bread and butter, with all these connote. What the feminists promised in return for economic independence and political recognition was a better world. It is much the same world except that both sexes are now bound up in the work-state. Woman's problem is no longer what to do with her time. It is to earn a living. Instead of mending the topsy-turvy world, she has merely reduced its elbow-room. She has gained a degree of social, moral, and political emancipation, without awaking to the fact that she is fast in the only net that really limits freedom, the economic. She is so pleased by a trifling novelty that she fails to see that gyration round father or husband was no worse than gyration round the business-manager.

* * *

Everything said or written about feminism, of course, concerns mostly the middle and lower middle classes. It concerns the upper classes less and the lower classes not at all. The right of a woman to sit in the House of Lords scarcely mattered until commercial success and financial party support became the accepted avenue to the aristocracy. When middle-class women did the same things by which middle-class men entered the Lords, they demanded coronets on equal terms. The born aristocratic woman never seemed so fast what to do with her time once she had fortified her self-esteem by governing her country behind her curtains. As for the working classes, their whole outlook, moral and social, is governed by necessity, which admits no question of emancipation. Modern, middle-class feminists foolishly regard the mirage in which they foresee themselves equal in all respects with the *men-folk of their own social rank* as emancipation. Granted the right to go anywhere their menfolk go, prize-fight, pub, or club, to sleep with any man who fancies them without being morally disgraced, and to have as much—which means as little—spare cash as their men have, they imagine the world would be set free. It becomes seriously necessary for the middle-class woman to contemplate her future and that of civilisation as a whole.

* * *

First, the sexual independence of woman, so strongly insisted upon of recent years, ignores certain principles on which the continuance of mankind depends. As long as it is regarded as of importance to establish individual paternity, there cannot be the same standard of fidelity for men and women. If a man has to maintain his children, and live in the same house with them, he will demand to be fairly sure that they are not the offspring of some fellow he possibly dislikes, and whose physique and mentality he possibly despises. The children of the "free" woman, if she has any, should become the wards of chancery. This, in a society governed by feminist politicians, may be regarded as ideal; out of the present ferment, however, in which men have abandoned the hope of personal immortality, there rapidly grows the idea that a person gains everlasting life through his offspring. It is an idea as old as the hills, of course, but it is now cropping up in all sorts of places, as though destined to become part of the common, taken-for-granted, notions of mankind. If it is women will have to choose between monogamy and courtesanship. They will, in short, have to choose whether to stay outside, or come definitely inside, the discipline which individual continuity for men demands. They will have to settle whether, in the interests of civilisation, sacrifice of licence is necessary and worth while. They may even have to recognise the differences between the mentality and consequent morality of the two sexes.

The one reform which could test the fundamental sincerity of "free-woman" propagandists is the distribution of the socially earned income in such a way as to make both women and men as financially independent as they wish to be. If as a social right women had a dividend from the, as yet, only potential wealth of Europe and America, it would soon be obvious whether she is in earnest in wanting to be a man. With money in her bag she might well be content with the instinctive nature with which her parents endowed her. In the long run she will find it more satisfying to live according to feminine rather than masculine standards. It is an illuminating paradox that the women who proclaim that their sex could run the world without men wish they were men, and betray a grudge against Nature because they are women. Released from the necessity of fighting the men of their own social level for a living limited mainly by arbitrary factors, they would probably recognise that it takes both sorts to make a world. With economic life shorn of the tub-rolling jobs, of which there are millions, and which would cease to be even of individual service in a truly open market, the question could be disinterestedly examined for the first time as to what jobs were most appropriate to the sexes without racial damage. At present there are many women engaged in routine office work, for example, which could be much reduced both by abolishing uneconomic tasks, and by introducing machinery. It is alleged that women enjoy this routine work; that they protest against any change calling for more thought; that all they ask for besides what they have is men's pay. They also take, without knowing why they want it, compensatory off-duty excitement. It is likely that with a social dividend and the abolition of their jobs they would want to become monogamous women.

* * *

If a prostitute be asked what she would like most in the world she may reply, like the one in the story, to sleep alone for a month free from worry about funds. Caught in a less cynical mood, she would reply, in the vast majority of cases, a home with children about her, a husband to expect, and the hostess role of dispensing tea to her social visitors without wanting to sell them anything. It can be asserted confidently that the present economic war falsely called the machine-age is an outrage on the women it entraps. Put an end to the fight for incomes, and to the standard of pre-eminence set by relative size of incomes, economic feminism would collapse. With the abolition of the cause of economic war between the sexes would probably go the central motive for woman's fanatic persistence to demonstrate herself the superior of man on any possible ground. A natural division of functions in economic life would accompany the cultural co-operation of the sexes in leisure life. The work-state overthrown, men and women could listen to their instincts, which the work-state destroys.

R. M.

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## THE "NEW AGE" DINNER.

The date of our Dinner, March 23, is Boat Race night, so we hope to meet a good many of our readers from the Universities who have not been able to come in previous years.

Another advantage of the later date is that it will be within two months of the General Election. We may expect that the policies of the "Three Oppositions" will be taking definite shape by that time, and this will afford extra material for an interesting review of the general situation.

The price of the tickets is higher than the price charged for the Dinner by the Criterion Restaurant. This, as last year, is done to provide a margin to enable us to act as hosts to people who, as valuable contributors to THE NEW AGE, ought to be present.

# The Radiographer of Shams.

## DR. JOHNSON AND SOCIAL CREDIT.

No reader of this journal should neglect to pay a visit to the *Mitre*, whenever he is in Fleet Street, and raise a glass to the memory of the great Panjandrum of English Literature. One reason is general: the Doctor's remarks in that historic house were always stamped with that rare quality, *brilliant commonsense*, which has distinguished THE NEW AGE since Mr. Orage made such an objective his conscious aim upon becoming editor. Another reason is more specific. I shall show in this article that the Doctor's comments on public affairs unmistakably reveal a Social Credit philosophy.

One of his finest speeches was on the subject of the relative advantages of riches and poverty. Boswell, who often exhibits the qualities of mind of leader-writers on *The Times*, began talking the usual cant about poor little rich men, how unhappy they often were, whereas the poor man, with a merry heart. . . . etc. Johnson blew up this sort of nonsense immediately.

> Sir, perhaps he who has a large fortune may not be so happy as he who has a small one; but that must proceed from other causes than from his having a large fortune: for, coeteris paribus, he who is rich in a civilised society must be happier than he who is poor; as riches, if properly used (and it is a man's own fault if they are not) must be productive of the highest advantages. Money, to be sure, of itself is of no use; for its only use is to part with it. . . . When I was running about this town a very poor fellow, I was a great arguer for the advantages of poverty; but I was at the same time very sorry to be poor. Sir, all the arguments which are brought to represent poverty as no evil show it evidently to be a very great evil. You never find people labouring to convince you that you may live very happily upon a plentiful fortune.

The Doctor's attitude to Republicanism loses nothing by being considered in association with present-day Socialistic sentiment:—

> Sir, there is one Mrs. Macaulay in this town, a great republican. One day when I was at her house I put on a very grave countenance and said to her, "Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are on an equal footing; and to give you an unquestionable proof, Madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow-citizen, your footman; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us." . . . Sir, she has never liked me since. Sir, your levellers wish to level *down* as far as themselves; but they cannot bear levelling *up* to themselves.

Boswell having mentioned that a woman had recently preached a sermon, as an astonishing fact, Johnson said: "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on its hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all". Later on, however, he took the other side of the feminine question and said, very seriously, "Men know that women are an overmatch for them, and therefore they choose [for marriage] the weakest and most ignorant. If they did not think so, they never could be afraid of women knowing as much as themselves."

The following passage would have made a typical comment of THE NEW AGE on the Gladstone libel action.

> "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "it is of so much more consequence that truth should be told than that individuals should not be made uneasy, that it is much better that the law does not restrain writing freely concerning the characters of the dead. Damages will be given to a man who is calumniated in his lifetime because he may be hurt in his worldly interest or at least hurt in his mind; but the law does not regard that uneasiness which a man feels on having his ancestor calumniated. That is too nice."

Talking of Government systems, Johnson said, "The more contracted power is, the more easily it is destroyed." And referring to people in power and their intentness on furthering their own interests rather than the interests of those they govern, he said, "Sir, though we cannot out-vote them [those in power] we will out-argue them. They shall not do wrong without its being shown both to themselves and to the world."

On the question of going into Parliament, the following conversation is recorded:—

> Boswell: "Perhaps, sir, I should be the less happy for being in Parliament. . . I should be vexed if things went wrong."
>
> Johnson: "That's cant, sir. It would not vex you more in the House than in the Gallery: public affairs vex no man."
>
> Boswell: "It was perhaps cant; for I own I neither ate less nor slept less (over some political question)."
>
> Johnson: "My dear friend, clear your mind of cant: you may talk as other people do: you may say to a man, 'Sir, I am your most humble servant.' You are not his most humble servant. . . . You may *talk* in this manner: it is a mode of talking in Society: but don't *think* foolishly."

Talking of trade, Johnson made a very remarkable observation:—

> Land may always be improved to a certain degree. I would never have any man sell land to throw money into the Funds. . . . Depend upon it, this rage for trade will destroy itself. You and I shall not see it; but the time will come when there will be an end of it. Trade is like gaming. If a whole company are gamesters, play must cease, for there is nothing to be won. When all nations are traders, there is nothing to be gained by trade, and it will stop first where it is brought to the greatest perfection . . . It is a mistaken notion that a vast deal of money is brought into a nation by trade. It is not so. Commodities come from commodities; but trade produces no capital accession of wealth. However, though there should be little profit in money, there is considerable profit in pleasure, as trade gives to one nation the productions of another. . . .

Here Boswell came in, with a platitude very worthy of insertion in *The Times*. "Yes, sir," he said, "and there is a profit in pleasure, by its furnishing occupation to such numbers of mankind."

> Johnson: "Why, sir, you cannot call that pleasure to which all are averse, and which none begin but with the hope of leaving off; a thing which men dislike before they have tried it, and when they have tried it."

Boswell, still platitudinous: "But, sir, the mind must be employed, and we grow weary when idle."

> Johnson: "That is, sir, because others being busy, we want company; but if we were all idle there would be no growing weary; we should all entertain one another."

The conversation naturally turned on to the subject of Social Reform, Johnson had the last word. "Sir," he said, "let fanciful men do as they will, depend upon it, it is difficult to disturb the system of life" . . . Boswell: "So, sir, you laugh at schemes of political improvement?" Johnson: "Why, sir, most schemes of political improvement are very laughable things."

* * *

One could go on and on quoting similar examples of the Doctor's matchless sagacity; but these must suffice. The rest are all stored up for the delectation of the wise of this generation in the journals of the indefatigable Boswell.

JOHN SHAND.

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[From a financial circular received through a reader in California.]



# America in Forty Days.

By Maurice B. Reckitt.

## II.

"What were the first things that struck you in New York?" The answer, I am afraid, must be as inevitable as the question—the same three things that presumably strike every visiting European, the traffic, the architecture, and the prices. And the effect of each is the same—it is slightly dizzying. The matter of prices leads to discussion of the real cost of living, and so to relative wages, and so to the analysis of that "prosperity," the true nature of which forms the starting point (and often also the end) of all American sociological discussion. All that the traveller immediately grasps, however, is the rather alarming fact that everything is roughly eighty per cent. dearer than in England. To this rule I only discovered three exceptions—oysters, cigars, and fruit (notably the ubiquitous, diversified, and always admirable melons)—and as I am a devotee of all these things I found them highly consoling. But when within an hour of arrival a third-rate hairdresser on an obscure avenue charged me the equivalent of four shillings and three pence for a shave and a shampoo, I registered surprise, shaken temporarily out of that role of sophisticated plutocrat that the nervous traveller is accustomed to assume.

But the traffic of Manhattan! We hear not a little of traffic problems in our metropolis, but my impression of the London streets on my return was that they were as universally deserted as in fact the City actually is on a bank-holiday. Everyone is familiar with the facts and figures of American motor-production (as for instance that every living being in the States could be packed into its automobiles at one time), but the implications of these statistics have to be visualised before they can become real. It is true that the configuration of Manhattan Island and the mistaken assumption on which its streets were planned accentuate the problem so far as New York is concerned. There is probably no traffic jam anywhere in the world to compare with that which recurs each evening on Fifth Avenue between Thirty-third Street and Central Park. A 'bus in such circumstances becomes merely an opportunity for purchasing a rather expensive seat on which to rest and shelter; it almost ceases to be a means of transport at all. Ten "blocks" in half an hour is good going. Naturally everyone travels by subway, which is cheap—and excessively nasty. Yet millionaires from Wall Street squeeze and jostle their way up-town each evening in its dirty, clattering and sardine-packed cars, rather than endure the tedium involved in even the most luxurious travel conditions on the surface.

But New York is only the culmination of a process by which means of transport are multiplying to make transport increasingly difficult. An enduring memory of every American town I visited, small as well as large, is that of interminable avenues of closely-parked—and generally very dirty—cars. An American may take a pride in his car's performance, he takes none in its appearance. In England the humblest motor still preserves the air of being in some measure a luxury, and is cared for accordingly; in America it is taken for granted and forgotten. As for American driving, it is as syncopated as its music. The car bounds forward like a war horse as the traffic signal flashes to green, thrusts its way into a maelstrom of swirling competitors, and pulls up on its haunches with a jerk that may well throw the unwary European to the floor in a heap. This may, of course, occur occasionally anywhere; it is the normal method of progression in an American street. The perpetual piercing shriek of grinding brakes is the street song of every American city, and remains unsilenced even in the dead of night.

If there is one sound sufficient to drown the myriad motors of New York, it is that of the pneumatic drill. The building activity of Manhattan is prodigious. One has the impression that the entire city is really being "made over," as its inhabitants would say, and on the whole certainly with advantage. The skyscrapers of New York have inspired much dithyrambic writing (some of the most effective of which is to be found in an English novel, Mary Borden's "Flamingo," which, for all its extravagance, does succeed in conveying something authentic of the spirit of contemporary America). Generalisation on the subject is not of much value. Some of these mountainous structures are plainly bad—glaringly utilitarian or vulgarly pretentious. Others, when one can get back to obtain a clear sight of them, are convincing in themselves, but too seldom have any relation to their surroundings. In general the great "towers"—and the highest buildings are really towers—are satisfying; the larger areas of masonry seen in the flat are not. The "zoning" principle, by which the building, after a certain number of storeys is reached, is progressively set back—a principle, I was told, forced upon the reluctant architects by the city authorities—has vastly improved the character of this sort of building. Where the "tower" is built with some clear relation to its site, as in the case of the new Grand Central Building that bisects Park Avenue, the effect is genuinely impressive. Park Avenue above Grand Central is perhaps the most architecturally satisfying thing in New York. Here the great hotels and the vast apartment houses of the plutocracy are rearing themselves with a sort of informal relation to one another, are approximating to a moderate height (some sixteen storeys), and are valid in the quality of their response to the new notions of metropolitan living prevailing among those for whom American prosperity is a substantial and undeniable reality. Riverside Drive, potentially a finer site, has not yet made up its mind to accept the apartment house: by tolerating their occasional intrusion into its self-sufficient domesticities it falls between two stools and fails.

New York is a city of violent transitions; one turns the sleek corner of a luxurious apartment house and, in less than two minutes, is plunged into the mud and thunder of a sordid avenue. The "Elevated" rushes on its clangourous way over hideous iron stanchions down the middle of the tumultuous thoroughfare; beneath it the surface cars emulate it valiantly in the matter of noise; each side the huge vehicles of commerce and the restless taxis (as many empty as occupied—for in New York no taxi-driver can endure the tedium of a rank for long) clatter over a surface often cobbled. And on the broad sidewalks blow discarded newspapers and refuse of all sorts past the delicatessen shops, the drug stores (in which most things but drugs are easily to be bought), and those countless doors from which blare out the incessant cacophonies of loudspeaker and gramophone. New York, indeed, once away from the few trim preserves of the opulent, is most distressingly untidy. Beneath it tips its rubbish into open dust-carts, above it litters its skyline with hideous iron water towers, which only in the last year or so is it beginning to enclose. Neither hygienic nor aesthetic considerations have won the victories one might have anticipated for them in the streets of the Capital of Modern Progress.

But one consolation is always open to the New Yorker—and his guests—in search of something to satisfy the eye and restore the sense of civic dignity. He can retire to a railroad station. Safe within the tremendous halls of the Pennsylvania or the Grand Central, even scurrying humanity cannot extinguish a certain feeling of repose. For these

great stations are truly majestic in their scale and magnificent in their execution. Almost everything incidental to the life of metropolitan man is to be found there—except the trains, which are discreetly packed away out of sight—yet their great spaces seem somehow undisturbed. To the visitor from overseas, condemned to recurring odysseys of transit, these terminuses, in their amplitude and generosity of proportion, seem to signalise that all-embracing hospitality which is among the finest qualities of the American soul.

## The Screen Play.

**"Wild Cat Hetty."**

This film (Tussaud's Kinema) is good entertainment, and is of psychological interest as illustrating the mentality of British producers. It is essentially English, both in atmosphere and as a film, is well directed by Harry Hughes, and all the minor parts are well cast. Mabel Poulton is excellent, and it is refreshing to see her exploited under capable direction. Compared with her Tessa in "The Constant Nymph," her other roles have been insipid. So much for the good side. On the bad is the acting of Eric Bransby Williams in the principal male part. He is the Eton and Oxford strong, silent man, of incredible staginess, and his love-making, in the immortal phrase of Swift, is as that of an elderly oyster. Here is an actor who has never learnt the difference between stage and screen technique. The film has some curious production errors. All the rooms in a Hampstead flat, including what is apparently a spare bedroom, are as spacious as the Hollywood conception of the stately homes of England. On the other hand, the library of a man of science in the same flat consists of a collection of books which look as though they had been bought from a purveyor of second-hand fiction in a third-rate seaside town, and the shelves are so flimsy that they collapse when an incredibly "comic" and Hollywoodesque butler stumbles against them. The director has been unable to rid himself of the film convention that Englishwomen of breeding invariably behave as cads completely devoid of reserve when in the presence of females of a lower social status. I have thus dealt at some length with what is not a very distinguished film because it appears so typical of the lines on which British production is developing.

**"Man, Woman, and Sin."**

An interesting contrast was provided by the inclusion in the same programme of this American film, the title of which has apparently aroused no objection in the chaste breasts of exhibitors. It has obviously cost very much more to make than "Wild Cat Hetty"—a ballroom scene was an exact replica of an Embassy Ball in Washington last year—and it "features" that popular actor John Gilbert. Yet the British film, undistinguished as it is, is better entertainment. Gilbert appeared to me somewhat wooden and not excessively interested in his role, but his appearance without a moustache and in the ordinary clothes of an American after so many robustious or romantic cloak-and-sword parts, perhaps helped to make him seem unconvincing. Jeanne Eagles, who is well known on the American stage, and made her screen debut in this film, is capable, but the part calls for a greater emotional range than she displays. The ending is unusual; instead of the lovers being reconciled when the young man is reprieved from the scaffold, they part at the prison gates, and the young man goes home with his Mammy without even a backward glance. That Hollywood should deliberately have thrown away a perfectly good happy ending is a portent. Indeed, I am not sure whether it does not represent what the theologians call a change of heart.

DAVID OCKHAM.

## Drama.

**The Mock Emperor: Queen's.**

Henry IV., presented under the excellent title of "The Mock Emperor," is the most theatre-like Pirandello work produced in this country, and fully worthy the present revival. It differs from "Six Characters," "Naked," and other Pirandello plays, in demanding little solipsist and no ectoplasmic assumptions. Once it gets under way it requires only that the audience be ready to follow logically those doubts as to the difference between sanity and insanity which at one time or another assail everybody. That the play is in the theatre, and not, like most of Pirandello's work, in a Socratic group in Hyde Park, rendered it disappointing that only a handful of enthusiasts were present, especially in view of the fine performances given by several actors. For some time after Mr. Ernest Milton's entrance as the mock-emperor I questioned myself as to whether the feminine note was warranted. The more I reflected on it, however, the more just it seemed. As for the rest of Mr. Milton's interpretation, his understanding was at times awe-inspiring. He brought the play out of Pirandello's meta-psychological hinterland, out of the philosophical academy, into the world. He displayed the mind of the madman with such power and nuance that he set the audience the problem not of diagnosing insanity, but of living with it.

Fifteen years before the play opens, a young nobleman, masquerading at a pageant as the eleventh century Henry IV. of Germany, had been thrown from his horse. On recovering from concussion he believed himself really Henry IV. Had his relations put him away there would have been news, but no play. So they humoured his delusion. They encouraged him to do the worst thing in the world for anyone but ambitious office-boys, namely, to take himself seriously. He was installed in an old castle, and surrounded with medieval furnishings and retainers in medieval livery. When his relations visited him, which seems to have been as rarely as if he had been in a pauper lunatic-asylum, they played the parts, in costume, of the personages who came across the real emperor's path during his quarrels with the Pope. Thus anyone who would approach the demented tyrant had to pass in the history of Henry IV. so much above B.A. standard as to be able to live in the period. In his times of lucidity, however, the mock-emperor saw that his disease purchased both security and power. From behind ramparts of pity built about him by friends and relatives, he was free to tell them with impunity what everybody does tell, but about friends only in their absence, and to relations only at the cost of reprisals. Like the village idiot, the mock emperor could throw pieces of his mind in all directions, his victims lying quiet in fear of one another. Caught out at last by the specialist's trick to prove him sane, he proves his insanity again by murdering, while appearing to run amok, the man who pricked his horse when he was thrown, and who married his beloved. Thereupon the mock-emperor retires into lunacy without hope of reprieve.

For this drama, played on the infinitesimal screen between sanity and insanity, sometimes on the front of it, others on the back, Pirandello takes too long in preparation, and fails to restrict himself to the matter in hand. How vaguely and unreally the sanest remembers anything; how eye-witnesses falsify what they see, and contradict one another as to what happened; how the expert in lunacy describes the "Victim's" condition in a jargon which the clever lunatic knows to be childish and superficial—all this was, of course, necessary. But a more economical dramatist would have staked out the ground



more quickly, and without making the audience apprehensive of a play all chorus. The illustrations of the insanities labelled sanity by familiarity are laboured and excessive, as though Pirandello were unsure of his audience's capacity to grasp the idea. In the second act, however, the play grows wings. The mock-emperor divulges to his retainers that he exults in the power of lunacy, that he has also the power to choose whether to be mad or sane. He gloats over the people he humiliates. At the pageant where he was injured he was acknowledged to be an actor, and now he pours contempt on the masqueraders about him for the wretched show they give. Seated before him round the council board, his chamberlain, instead of discussing mock foreign affairs with mock gravity, voices his lament that their "play" suffers from the lack of a producer. When the monk who comes daily to read to the king knocks, the council unanimously agrees not to spoil his performance by admitting him to the convention of sanity for the time being in vogue. There, more than in any other of his plays, Pirandello takes hold of me. His work rises to superb irony. The wounded snake which dragged its slow length along throughout the first act has manœuvred me into seeing life as bad acting, like an improvised melodrama in a barn.

That the partition dividing the world projected by the mind from the actual world which impinges on the mind cannot be mapped out is a conception neither novel nor recondite. What was a miracle for the idealists of the past to plumb is now a commonplace for psychologists to correct. What Pirandello sets great store upon is probably not the demonstration that this partition does not exist, but that, although it does not exist, he can write a play on it. It seems to me that he solves the problem of demarcation in the second act, and retains it for ends far removed from those of truth or truthfulness. The murder in the third act is committed by a sane man. It, and the exposure of the villain who had irritated the horse, are so surprisingly out of tune with the second act as to register the breakdown of a psychological play into melodrama. It is as though Pirandello involuntarily follows the line of thought that all problems of "pairs of opposites" can be solved by action alone. According to Bacon, Pilate did not wait for an answer to the question, what is truth? Jesting Pirandello runs away from the answer after getting it. The mock emperor certainly furnishes a revenge motive for the murder; but his subsequent behaviour indicates that his motive was at bottom to excuse himself for perpetual retirement into lunacy. He wanted his problem back. Pirandello's conduct of the play at this point resembles that of a man who would rub out the solution of a cross-word puzzle to do it again. The rich pleasure which "The Mock Emperor" gives does not spring from Pirandello's rubbing out the film that separates insanity from sanity. It springs from the rightness with which he exposes the motives and reasoning, and constructs the fictive world, of the lunatic.

Besides Mr. Milton's great performance, two excellent ones were given by Mr. Brember Wills as the mental expert, and Mr. Colin Keith-Johnston as "Landolph," the emperor's chamberlain. It is a pleasure to hear Mr. Johnston speak. It is no pleasure to hear Mr. Eric Portman insert *r* between vowels as a sort of vaulting horse, and I pray he may never do it again. Mr. Geoffrey Dunlop was excellent as the monk. As the Marchesa Miss Dorothy Dix was delightful in coquetry, but in serious mood she showed a proneness to recite rather than act. Gillian Lind gave a live piece of work as the Marchesa's daughter. May the public conscience be roused to support an intelligent production before neglect causes withdrawal.

PAUL BANKS.

## Verse.

**By Andrew Bonella.**

"There has seldom," we read in the first editorial of "Poetry: Past and Present,"* "been a period in our literary history when so much *verse* and so little *poetry* was written." One of the aims of this quarterly magazine is to make "a conscious exploration into the poetry of the past, and more especially of the Caroline period, with the object of discovering where we are placed from a technical point of view and on what lines we may create poetry." Good luck to them! The study of form does not of itself create poetry, but it is something to be able to spot a winner. A wealth of effort has been spent in recent years on such conscious exploration; only inspiration has been lacking for this to have been a great age of poetry. What I mean by inspiration is best expressed by what I once heard a lay preacher say about "Moodie and Sankey." The men that wrote those hymns, he said, were like boilers with a good head of steam; they had to write, or they'd have bust. The Georgian poetry books show that the machinery is still in working order, but that unfortunately the fires have gone out.

We may take the disease for granted, but its causes are debatable. We may say with the plausible Spengler that Western art has said all that it had to say and is therefore in decline. Can we imagine a new poet writing a greater poetic drama than "Lear," a greater epic than "Paradise Lost," a better ode than "To a Nightingale," or achieving a finer frenzy than "Kubla Khan"? Is there anything for the poet to say which has not been said better before? I am not sure, neither are some of our most capable writers of verse, whose work is consequently a kind of poetic journalism, as interesting to their contemporary readers as Mr. Aldous Huxley's latest novel. But how will their smart new paint stand the wear of fifty years? Again, I am not sure; but I shall not be surprised if I am spared long enough to see the most indecent products of Bloomsbury taking the place in the two-penny trays occupied now by nineteenth century poets, pious but obscure. Let us be thankful that Mr. A. E. Housman, Mr. de la Mare, and the late Flecker, to name three of the few, have believed that poetry is still to be written, and that their faith has been justified by their works.

The title of Miss Mair's little book† tempts one to say that when she aims at the stars she hits the street lamps, and vice versa; but the truth is she never hits the stars at all. Never mind; there are times when the homely street lamp is more welcome than all the heavenly host. Let us drop the metaphor, for which we are not altogether to blame, and consider whether these verses are competently written.

> Like (a sweet) balm upon my troubled soul,
> The (peaceful) silence lay;
> My chafing man-made cloak of doubt and woe
> (Slipped backward)—fell away.
> The city's roar was hushed; the street-lamp's glare
> Faded (from thought and sight);
> I stood alone with God and with the Dead
> By (quiet) candlelight.

I suggest that the words I have bracketed are superfluous; and the superfluous word, in verse even more than in prose, weakens the structure as well as adds to the weight. "Silence" is a strong word; there are times when it needs such qualification as "oppressive," "ominous," or even "heavy," which add something to the thought; but in this line "peaceful" only deadens the impact of "silence" on the reader's mind. The use of "quiet" in the second stanza might be defended as pointing the

* "Poetry: Past and Present." Vol. I., No. 1.
† "Stars and Street Lamps." By Mary Mair. (Fowler Wright. 2s. 6d.)

contrast between the roar of the city and the ensuing calm, but again it weakens the thought as well as the rhythm. "It does not need," said Emerson, "that a poem should be long. Every word was once a poem." It is one of the marks of good verse that each word stands out again as the poem it used to be.

> I stood alone with God and with the Dead.
> By candlelight.

"Candlelight" is a beautiful word with overtones which might possibly be emphasised by a felicitous adjective, but which are only blurred by such an unhappy choice as "quiet."

> Did (Julius) Caesar sail beneath the sky?
> Did Christ (command) the waters (to be) still?
> Yet drowned men's (whitened) bones (in millions) lie
> Under the waves that take their fill
> Of human lives through countless (stormy) years,
> And feed upon the salt of (human) tears.

Read this aloud, first with and then without the bracketed words, and see whether it is not a better poem in the shorter form, even without filing away the rough edges that remain. This is more like marking the fifth form's exercises than criticism, but the blue pencil must follow the pen in the craft of verse: somebody must use it if the craftsman himself is too fond of the pretty words to strike them out. There is not much to be said about the matter of these verses. The thought is often pleasant but never arresting. Miss Mair's attempts at irony are not successful, least of all in the verses about animals, where it is mixed with the humane hysteria of Mr. Ralph Hodgson. She finds better footing on the natural feelings of her sex, for instance, when she speaks of her dreams, the last of which is of

> The hour when I rise
> From pain's dark pit, to hear a small new cry,
> And gather to my heart
> My son, my Torch of Life—my Immortality.

Mr. Stuart-Young's studies† of nine poets of the nineteenth century present no new facts or ideas. They are full of windy rhetoric. But for all that the book is not a bad book; at least, it is readable because the author is evidently one of those boilers mentioned above. The reader can't help reading because the writer couldn't help writing.

## The History of Hospitality.*

When the student of Social Credit has mastered the ins and outs of A + B, he may pass on to C. Under this heading would fall the study of the history of laws concerning property and wealth. Edward I. with his "Quo Warranto" and "De Donis Conditionalibus" is more toothsome and solid fare than Alfred's cakes. No less interesting and important is the opposite side of the picture, the laws concerning those whose only wealth is in their muscles. It is a drama one is tempted to call "from Dole to Dividend," but for the fact that the last act has not yet been played. For an interesting work on this aspect of social history, Dr. Chalmers' would be hard to beat. At a medical man he is chiefly interested in hospitals and their history, but the history of the Poor Law and of charity generally is as closely bound up with the growth of the Hospital System as is poverty with disease.

Dr. Chalmers' main contention is that throughout history, while the initiative in amelioration has usually come from private and voluntary philanthropy, the practical efficacy of this has always been woefully inadequate in the face of complex and changing social conditions, so that it has required a continually increasing interference by the State to instrument its policy. Unfortunately, such intervention has rarely been brought about by foresight in the face of impending disaster, but in a manner at once tardy and hasty; in a desperate attempt to prop the already collapsing social structure. The evolution of charity and hospitality is therefore traced from the Dark Ages to the present day. Dr. Chalmers tells his story graphically and well. He points to the progressive supersession of the Voluntary Hospital by the State institution and of the private doctor by the State official, and asks us to bow to the inevitable by willingly co-operating in the process. Those who have had experience of the shortcomings of the Insurance Act will take some convincing of this, when they remember the resulting frivolous medication and equally frivolous complaints, and, worse still, the suspicion (not altogether groundless) among panel patients that they receive treatment inferior to that given to private patients. Readers of this journal will be aware of the fundamental flaw in the panel system, viz., that it aims at regimenting both patients and doctors for the sake of economy in treatment, whereas it would be much simpler and more satisfactory to provide private individuals with the money to spend on such medical treatment as they happen to fancy.

This has naturally not occurred to Dr. Chalmers, but it is this very absence of bias in the Social Credit direction which makes his historical survey the more valuable, though it may detract from the value of his conclusions. But Social Credit or not, the problem still remains as between the Voluntary Hospitals and those under the State or Municipal Authority. The balance would be largely in favour of the latter were it not for the bureaucracy and red tape which hamper all State departments. The Voluntary Hospital is increasingly hampered by lack of funds. Spectacular demonstrations, such as the annual efforts of the Glasgow and London students, are hopelessly inadequate. Moreover, the more charity becomes organised, the more suspect it grows. We become daily more sceptical of

> "That organised charity, skimped and iced
> In the name of a cautious statistical Christ,"

as Dr. Chalmers quotes from John Boyle O'Reilly.

In short, even if the Voluntary Hospital system could tap sufficient contributions, it would still be under the necessity of organising its finances so as to be entangled in the net of bureaucracy just as hopelessly as the State or Municipal institutions. It would seem, then, that our hope must lie in the certain fact that a saner national outlook on the nature of wealth will maintain that cautious economies in the matter of hospitals are a very false kind of Economy indeed. It is a pity that the publishers have clothed so interesting a book as this in such forbidding and official looking covers.

NEIL MONTGOMERY.

## Mr. Wells on Defeating War.*

Mr. Wells has published a film scenario. The story is as follows:—

The Republic of Agravia, which is cut off from the sea by the Kingdoms of Clavery and of Saevia, contains the only deposits outside the British Empire of calcomite, a rare mineral upon which depend all the metallurgical industries of the earth. Naturally, therefore, British interests wish it to retain its independence and the objection of its peasantry to having their land developed, while American big business wishes it to be conquered by its two more tractable neighbours. A royal marriage is planned to unite the two latter nations, but a bomb flung at the critical moment wipes out the king and the two next claimants to the throne of Clavery. Paul Zelinka, the next in order of succession, is in America, learning business "from the bottom up," and also learning pacifism at the feet of Dr. Harting. He consents to become King, but refuses to allow his country to be plunged into war in order to suit obscure financial interests and the ambition of saturnine Prince Michael. The romantic Helen, Princess of Saevia, whom he loves, strives in vain to induce him to join her in leading the armies to a glorious victory. Then his councillors urge him to war, for behind his state is a "great Power" which has "provided a gas—a new gas—our gas. No other War Office has it." It is a wonderful weapon. "They scream horribly when they get it. It would demoralise any troops in the world. No masks can stop it. And it is QUITE, QUITE cheap." But even this attractive vision fails to rouse Paul to battle. Instead he meets secretly with the President of Agravia, and an understanding is arrived at: "Traitors to our 'foreign policies.' Loyal to Mankind." Prince Michael raises a revolt, but Paul shoots him, and the Princess comes over to his side. The revolt "fizzles out," peace is proclaimed, and the three States demand a World Control of calcomite—the beginnings of the World control of the affairs of Mankind. The reader of THE NEW AGE will regret that Wells, instead of discussing the effects of a restriction of the hypothetical calcomite, did not deal with those of a far-from-hypothetical restriction of credit. However, he has not yet discovered the Credit Theorem—though it is to be hoped he will do so some day, so as to give his magnificent gift for writing an adequate field of activity. Meantime he can hardly be blamed for not putting forward views that he does not hold. His book is at any rate on the right road, for when the reader has learned to look behind patriotic nationalism, he may learn to look still further.

However this may be, Wells has given us a very exciting story. Indeed, it is not only a story but the scenario for a film. The "effects" and even the music are explained in detail. It is prefaced and followed by some illuminating remarks on the probable future of the cinema. This, Wells thinks, is only in its infancy, and its possibilities are not yet realised: what he has written is only a tentative essay towards the development of the new art. It is a film that may leave cold worshippers of he-men like Enrico Malavadetti and of that lingerie mannequin, Miss Shapely Shanks; but it is a film that, if it is ever released, the present writer for one will make a very great effort to see.

I. O. E.

† "The Immortal Nine." By J. M. Stuart-Young. (Fowler Wright. 5s.)

* "Hospitals and the State: A Popular Study of the Principles and Practice of Charity." By R. Westland Chalmers, M.B., Ch.B., D.M.R.E. [John Bale, Sons and Danielsson, Ltd. 7s. 6d.]

* "The King Who Was a King." By H. G. Wells. (Benn. 7s. 6d.)



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

### MADAME BLAVATSKY.

Sir,—I am sorry that M.B., Oxon., cannot agree with me, as I had rather hoped he would. My debt is great to him and to Cosmic Anatomy, which I regard as incomparably superior to such theosophical writings as have come my way.

No doubt it is possible for contradictory facts to be true, but they must also be mutually exclusive on any one plane of thought. Thus either Reincarnation *on this earth* is true, or it is not true. You cannot have it both ways. On the other hand, it is possible that even if Reincarnation on this earth is not true, the idea it embodies may be true in a sense. What that sense is I have tried to show.

In saying that all contact with Eastern thought, "including the Kabbalah," was very superficial and restricted before the appearance of the "Secret Doctrine," M.B., Oxon., has surely overlooked "Paradise Lost," not to mention lesser works.

NEIL MONTGOMERY.

### MR. KENNARD'S FREE CLINIC.

Sir,—May I use your columns to draw attention to the fine work being performed every Friday afternoon by Mr. A. E. Kennard, the celebrated Harley Street bonesetter. Dr. Norwood, the deservedly popular preacher, has kindly placed a small hall in the basement of the City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, at Mr. Kennard's disposal, for use as a free clinic for the poor. The fame of the well-known bonesetter is shown by the hundreds who endeavour to gain admittance to the surgery. All are cripples, of course, and the majority, alas, cannot hide their disabilities. The majority, too, are obviously suffering from poverty, as though disablement were not enough! The strong men of the labour market are there, with limbs broken in industry's mill, and the old mothers, with hopeless eyes, and feet shapeless with rheumatoid arthritis and other legacies of standing at the wash-tub. But it is the children that wring the heart. Tiny little mites, with limbs already a ghastly travesty of human shape. Inside, the laying on of hands goes on apace. But there is no emotion, no religious fervour. Watching Mr. Kennard work, one is fascinated by those hands and the mind that directs them. His decisions have, of course, to be formed quickly and as quickly carried out. The calm atmosphere of Harley Street seems very far away, yet the atmosphere of that clinic in the church seems right. One's mind reacts to this "Temple of Healing" with more kindliness than it does to ordered forms of prayer, litigation, or religious high finance.

WALTER GOLDSBY.


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Published by the Proprietor (ARTHUR BRENTON), 70, High Holborn, London, W.C.1, and printed for him by THE ARGUS PRESS, LIMITED, Temple-avenue and Tudor-street, London, E.C.4.