

# THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER."

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

H. E. B. L., in this month's *Age of Plenty*, has done opportune service in reviving the disclosures of bankers' political intrigues in the United States published in Mr. Pettigrew's *Imperial Washington*. We quote three extracts from the article:

Further evidence as to the supreme power of the controllers of the financial system is contained in a book entitled *Imperial Washington*, written by Mr. R. F. Pettigrew, formerly United States Senator from South Dakota. He discloses that in 1862 the creditors of the United States, the Bank of England, sent the following circular to every bank in New York and New England:

"Slavery is likely to be abolished by the war power, and chattel slavery destroyed. This, I and my European friends are in favour of, for slavery is but the owning of labour and carries with it the care of the labourer, while the European plan, led on by England, is for capital to control labour by controlling the wages. This can be done by controlling the money. The great debt that capitalists will see to it is made out of the war must be used as a means to control the volume of money. To accomplish this, the bonds must be used as a banking basis. We are now waiting for the Secretary of the Treasury to make the recommendation to Congress. It will not do to allow the greenback, as it is called, to circulate as money any length of time, as we cannot control that."

Let us see how the American bankers, in 1872, worked to get rid of Government money. Ex-Senator Pettigrew, in the book above mentioned, informs us that in 1872 the ring of bankers in New York sent the following circular to every bank in the United States:

"Dear Sir,—It is advisable to do all in your power to sustain such prominent and daily newspapers, especially the agricultural and religious press, as will oppose the issuing of greenback paper money, and that you also withhold patronage or favours from all applicants who are not willing to oppose the Government issue of money. Let the Government issue the coin and the banks issue the paper money of the country, for then we can better protect each other. To repeal the law creating National Bank notes, or to restore to circulation the Government issue of money, will be to provide the people with money, and will therefore seriously affect your individual profit as bankers and leaders. See your Congressman at once, and engage him to support our interests that we may control legislation."

An instance as to how the Credit Monopoly can engineer and bring about a national crisis when it suits their interests is afforded by the reading of a circular sent out by New York bankers. Mr. Pettigrew writes that the financial panic in America in 1893 was a bankers' panic. In their interest the ring of gambling bankers in New York sent out the following circular to every bank in the United States:

"Dear Sir,—The interests of national bankers require immediately financial legislation by Congress. Silver, silver certificates, and Treasury notes must be retired and National Bank Notes upon a gold basis made the only money. This will require the authorisation of from \$500,000,000 to \$1,000,000,000 of new bonds as a basis of circulation. You will at once retire one-third of your circulation and call in one-half of your loans. Be careful to make a money stringency felt among your patrons, especially among influential business men. Advocate an extra session of Congress for the repeal of the purchasing clause of the Sherman law, and act with the other banks of your city in securing a large petition to Congress for its unconditional repeal, per accompanying form. Use your personal influence with Congressmen and particularly let the National Banks as fixed and safe investments depends upon immediate action, as there is an increasing sentiment in favour of Government legal tender notes and silver coinage."

Let us quote the following extract from the *Morning Post* of January 23. It occurs in a report of the Midland Bank's recent Exhibition in the City:

"In view of the Committee on Banking at present sitting, the following remarks by the Directors of the Birmingham and Midland Bank in their report of 1837, referring to a similar committee then projected, are peculiarly apposite:

"Your directors cannot permit themselves to believe that it is the intention, as it is assuredly not the interest, of the Government to intermeddle with Joint Stock Banking in any manner which shall impair their utility, or shake the public confidence in them."

All these quotations can be used effectively to drive home the moral that any challenge to the bankers' monopoly of power will have to be delivered otherwise than through the Parliamentary system. Investors in stocks are only a degree less superstitious than people who back horses. All that the

master-bankers would have to do, if publicly challenged by any statesman or party or inter-party group which relied on the electorate to empower them to "intermeddle with joint-stock banking," would be to retire credits privately. This would precipitate a visible crisis; whereupon the financial press would insinuate that the crisis was the automatic result of the challengers' unsound policy or programme. Everybody with any savings (and in these days practically everybody comes under laws compelling him to save—e.g., insurance) would get a shock, and the odium for it would fall, not on the bankers, but on the bankers' enemies, notwithstanding that the latter's objectives (if they had a sound plan) would include that of taking away the power of the banks to administer such shocks. Practically the whole electorate would become infected with *fear* of the new programme and its sponsors, for no other reason (and a convincing one to them in their unsophisticated condition) than that a decline in the value of their savings had followed quickly upon the publication of the financial reforms in question. It is no use reasoning with people in a panic—which is another way of saying it is no use expecting to poll votes against the bankers.

The tribute to the late Lord Balfour which was broadcast by Mr. Baldwin last Thursday evening could have been compressed into the one statement that Lord Balfour found politics an amusing hobby. The keynote of his attitude to all theories was one of benevolent incredulity. His mind lived on enquiring into things, and it was conjoined with a spirit indifferent to the results—in fact it is easy to believe that the one thing that could distress his spirit was a definite conclusion. If perchance anybody could have solved one of his conundrums the only use he would have had for the solution would have been to consider whether it could be shown to have created a new conundrum. In the days of the Chamberlain régime we can imagine his secret delight, in spite of his being bound in political honour to support the Unionist policy of Protection, at watching the Cobden Club attacking that policy with arguments which incidentally proved that Free Trade was a system of Protection. "Beautiful!" he must have said—"both sides right and both sides wrong." And when we consider the multitude of other controversies where the same deadlock exists, it is a wonder that Lord Balfour has been able to tear himself away from it all. His well-wishers must hope for him that the New Life to which he has gone will reserve for him at least one mystery susceptible of explanation by mutually destructive hypotheses.

With reference to our comments on Mr. Holsinger's book last week a correspondent sends us a cutting from the *Manchester Guardian* of March 17 in which its Financial Editor devotes nearly a column to quoting from and commenting on a letter sent by Mr. Holsinger on the Free Trade controversy. Prefacing the quotations is the following passage:

"The correspondent who writes to us in this vein is Mr. Frederick Holsinger, who recently in his book, *The Mystery of the Trade Depression*, mingled a thread of sound and vital argument with so much bitter raillery against economists in general that these sensible folk have replied by ignoring him."

By an interesting coincidence the morning on which this appeared was the same morning on which our Notes about Mr. Holsinger were being set up. As we said in so many words, Mr. Holsinger assembles so many "economists," names them, quotes assertions and arguments from their writings, analyses the latter, and shows that these experts contradict each other, and even contradict themselves, on the fundamentals of what they talk about. There is "raillery" in his writing, but we have seen no

evidence of "bitterness." Supposing, however, that there had been bitter raillery; this would have been a thin excuse for ignoring the attack. It would only be valid in cases where the elimination of the raillery would leave nothing requiring an answer. But in the present case the whole book could be rewritten in the extremist of polite styles without losing a fraction of its force. If you can show that anybody has worked a sum out wrong, you can say "this gentleman" has made such and such a mistake, or, if you are impatient, "look what this silly fool has done." But what does it matter how you say it if the mistake is there? If it is true that the people whom Mr. Holsinger has pilloried feel that he should be ignored for his rudeness, this need not prevent their dealing with the arguments he uses.

Not merely Mr. Holsinger, but several other writers, have made the same criticisms, and done so in dispassionate language. So the silence of the economists whose theories are challenged cannot be explained away by reference to his style of attack. The *Manchester Guardian* concludes its article as follows:

"Mr. Holsinger has argued along these lines in the book mentioned above. His analysis of what is amiss is very clear, and to remedy it, he says, 'should present no difficulties.' He finds the solution in a very simple radical programme whereby persons with over £10,000 of income would have to surrender it to the State, and the State would thus acquire a mass of claims upon the produce of debtor countries, which it could distribute by means of 'Annual Benefit Bonds' among the mass of the needy population. Mr. Holsinger, with a manly determination, now promises us four further volumes, of which the last is to be entitled 'America on the Road to Ruin.' As he is a person of energy, application, and courage, we should be very glad to see him abandon these attempts to rewrite economics from top to bottom, and, rather, to trust the limited vision he has already acquired, and to apply himself to the study of practical possibilities. But we are glad to pass on his views to our readers, even in a not fully baked condition."

The reason why the *Manchester Guardian* has given Mr. Holsinger a column of advertisement is because his letter supports the Free Trade case, and several of his points will be useful to Free Traders in the controversy which has been precipitated by Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook. The synopsis of Mr. Holsinger's remedy, as presented here, will of course make ordinary people regard him as something like a Communist. This is an injustice, because he insists as strongly as any Capitalist on the right of people to engage in private enterprise for profit. All the same, some good may come out of the *Manchester Guardian's* article. It suggests to Mr. Holsinger that he should apply himself to practical possibilities. This is good advice, and we hope he will act on it. The great difficulty is not to detect and expose anomalies in the present system, nor is it to present a picture of a new system based upon correct principles; but it is to devise a workable scheme for effecting the change from the old to the new without friction. The most practical scheme is that which involves the least interference with the habits and prejudices of the community. Mr. Holsinger's scheme, though it might have a chance of acceptance if it were thoroughly explained, is not nearly the most practical one for fulfilling his object, namely that of getting a maximum rate of production and getting it all absorbed as private consumption.

We have just said that it might be accepted if thoroughly explained. But much the same thing might be said of any scheme with a good objective. What is really wanted is a scheme which does not require to be popularly explained. Explanations take time: they nearly all involve attempts to argue

with prejudices. This can be done successfully enough if you can monopolise the chief channels of publicity. But your power to do that presupposes your power to impose your policy without argument and in spite of prejudices—which is what the credit-monopolists are doing to-day. The difficulties which the latter are now experiencing arise less from what people think about the principles and objectives of the present system (so far as they know anything about them) than from what people think of the unpleasant things that the system requires them to do—not to speak of the fact that many of those things are impossible of continuous performance by the community collectively. Schemes succeed or fail in the long run on their administration.

Applying this truth to Mr. Holsinger's £10,000 limit to private incomes, it requires little reflection to see that on its administrative side it would fail. It could be made to succeed if the bankers were to back it; and in truth they would be only too pleased to do so. But their backing would be withdrawn when the second part of Mr. Holsinger's scheme came up, namely, the distribution of the surrendered surplus incomes among the poorer population for the purpose of consuming imports from debtor countries. That would be considered "unsound finance," and the consequence would be that any Government which tried to administer Mr. Holsinger's complete scheme would have the banks as well as the country's richest citizens allied against it. The voting-power of the poorer population (supposing that it had returned a Government pledged to adopt Mr. Holsinger's scheme) would be powerless against the financial and economic obstacles that would be placed in the way of the Government's administrators. Readers of this journal will remember what a lot of trouble Somerset House had with the super-tax payers—and this despite the fact that the banks were behind the Government and its tax-policy. (Really the super-tax was the bankers' own invention: it was one of their devices for imposing deflation.) The method by which the super-tax victims escaped victimisation was to draw comparatively small sums from their businesses as incomes, and to draw any larger sums they wanted in the form of loans.

It is the fact that under the present money-dispensation the private recipients of high incomes get it as a reward for leaving the banks in control of financial capital. That is to say, their margin of income over what they spend on their private consumption (probably averaging less than £10,000) is reinvested; and reinvestment is one of the channels through which the banks are able to retire their loans, cancel deposits, and restrict credit in circulation, with the consequence that industry is always dependent on borrowing fresh credit to maintain and develop itself, and, being in the position of a borrower, has to shape its policy according to the bankers' directions. What Mr. Holsinger is proposing to do is to get the State to intercept this flow of credit and to use it for exactly the opposite purpose to that which the banks have in view by keeping control of it. He wants poor people to get hold of it and spend it: the banks want rich people to get hold of it and save it. He wants to expand contraction in the aggregate: the banks want to contract it. The poor are poor not because the rich are rich, but because it is part of the banks' policy to concentrate the main mass of income into the fewest hands.

Again, the evolution of industrial administration is rapidly assuming the form of virtual bank-directorships. A less and less proportion of the collective personal income of the population will be represented by the direct drawing of profits by independent

business proprietors. The big incomes of the future will be derived as dividends from big corporations. The banks, who are acquiring control of all of them, will dictate the rates of the dividends having regard to the maintenance of what they call a sound reserve. That means that the incomes of investors will be rationed by the bankers just as directly as wages and salaries have been rationed by private employers in the past. When this rationing-power is complete the bankers will no longer need to depend on the flow of the superfluous income-margins of very rich men into the investment market in order to retire and cancel credit as described; for they will be able to deduct these margins at the source by the simple and effortless method of retaining them as reserves. It appears to come to the same thing, does it not?, whether a person draws £50,000 a year in dividends and invests £40,000 a year out of that sum, or whether he draws £10,000 in dividends and leaves the £40,000 a year to accumulate in the business. It is the same so far as such person's command over his personal consumption is concerned, but the difference is that he loses the right to decide where he will invest his £40,000. And so the community in general will have lost the last vestige of control over industry's production-policy, and the bankers will see to it that production only ends in sufficient consumption to keep the population alive and industrious. It should be realised, then, that whatever scheme is formulated to implement Mr. Holsinger's ideas, it should not contain any provision for limiting personal incomes at any figure at all. Its very mention evokes antagonism; its imposition could be resisted; and if the resistance were overcome the bankers would cheat the consumers of the expected benefit.

Few people realise the great debt that the community owe to financial interests for security of person and property. So familiar are the public with their soldiers, sailors, policemen, and detectives for whose services they pay taxes, that they do no justice at all to what may be called the stealthy beneficence voluntarily practised by our patriotic credit-institutions. Some year ago we tried to remedy the injustice in one direction. We pointed out that the great banks of Europe were organising detective-services of their own, with no other object than to protect the innocent public from the risk of having forged currency-notes foisted upon them. In each of the chief capitals of Europe the official forces of law and order are able to call upon these highly trained bank-detectives for support and co-operation in all cases of forgery or suspected forgery. In fact, so solicitous are the banks for the security of the public in this regard that they insist on helping, whether called upon or not—which is a comforting assurance that whatever injuries the public might suffer by reason of the negligence or inefficiency of the official experts as regards the detection of crime in general, no risk of this sort can arise when the crime is that of making and circulating forged currency. In addition to this, the banks have further achieved the discouragement of the forger by securing an international agreement under which he may be tried for his crime before the Courts of any country where he is arrested, no matter in what country he committed it. So efficiently have the bankers worked in this direction that even suppose a bad bold Bolshevik, while in London, forged and uttered Christian sterling notes to the subjects of our Capitalist State, and were able to get away back to Moscow, the Soviet authorities would, in spite of their Atheistic and Communistic principles, go to work wholeheartedly to capture and punish him. It is a marvellous piece of work on the part of the bankers to have secured the universal renunciation of international animosities in respect of the protection of

money. In the presence of the illicit creator of credit, Capitalists, Socialists, Communists, Jews, Catholics, Protestants and Atheists instantly resolve themselves into a world-committee of public safety. To adapt the words of the late Lord Oxford, they will not sheath the sword until the right of small people to be able to trust in the authenticity of their paper-money has been placed on an unassailable foundation.

This week we have the pleasure of paying tribute to the insurance interests for a similar sort of benefaction. They, too, maintain at their own expense a detective service to protect members of the public from having their property destroyed or their lives cut short by avoidable circumstances. The painstaking efforts of their experts in making sure that incendiaries do not pass off their handiwork as accidents is probably fairly widely recognised. But that much more vital service which they render in protecting testators from being hastened out of this world by avaricious legatees deserves higher appreciation than it gets. Happily a dramatic event last week, namely, the trial of Mr. Sidney Fox, and his conviction of murder, provides a compelling object-lesson of the solicitous watchfulness of the insurance interests over insured persons. The facts we wish to record have no relevance to the issue whether Mr. Fox was rightly found guilty—which may be the subject of an appeal—so there is no need for us to delay our comments. The *Evening Standard* of March 21 in its late evening issue recording the verdict and sentence, published a little romance of how the "crime" was discovered,

"But for the astuteness of an insurance official, Sidney Fox would probably have gone through life an unsuspected murderer.

"Mrs. Rosaline Fox was buried, a Margate jury had returned a verdict of Death by Misadventure, and Sidney Fox, her son, had gone off to Norwich last November, satisfied that the fire in Room 66 of a Margate hotel the previous month had accounted to the world for his mother's fate.

"Then an ex-policeman, who had been a detective officer in the Metropolitan force, went down to Margate on behalf of his employers, a City insurance firm, to have a look round.

"What had drawn the ex-police officer to Margate?

"Employed to protect his firm from fraud, his curiosity had been aroused by the policies taken out by one Sidney Fox and by the subsequent death of the insured person, his mother.

"In spite of the inquest verdict the ex-policeman went down and inspected Room 66."

On the face of it this ex-policeman would appear to have gone down on his own responsibility; the report reads as if he did. But this is probably due to the desire of his employers to let him have the credit for the ingenious way in which he investigated the origin of the fire. It is tolerably plain that the directors of the "City insurance firm" had passed some disturbed nights over the death of Mrs. Fox. The reason for this, considering the nature of their business, is easily explained. She was insured for £3,000. Now, the death of any insured person is in itself a matter of suspicion to the insurance interests in the present economic state of society. So short is the provision of purchasing power in general circulation that the death-rate of insured testators could be multiplied many times over without doing more than partially meeting the necessities of the legatees. And since people are being daily exhorted to observe the imperative moral duty of insuring themselves—some insurance directors even declaring that life-assurance should be made compulsory on everybody—it is clear that a heavy responsibility lies on the detective-organisation of the insurance interests. It is a grave reflection that there should be so many millions of impecunious people with no relief to hope for but the early demise of those of whom they cherish what are called "expectations." As we

heard a working-man forcefully (though, we are afraid, speculatively) declaring the other day about the fate of ill people:

"What! Not put 'em away! Rot. It's going on all over the country. They don't have to poison 'em or anything like that. All they've got to do is to give 'em something the doctor says they shouldn't have—or give 'em an over dose of medicine—or forget to give it 'em. It's easy done, and nobody's business to enquire into. And all to get hold of their little bit of money sooner than it was coming to 'em."

Whatever may be thought of this exuberant estimate of the safety of murder-methods in general, one cannot help reflecting that on the showing of the *Evening Standard*, if it should be confirmed on Appeal that Mrs. Fox was murdered, the discovery would not have been made if she had been murdered for property in her own possession. If any woman had taken out an endowment policy which matured and was paid out to her on the due day, and she had died the day after, no insurance directors would have thought it necessary to investigate the matter. And if she had been murdered the murderer would not have been found out through any act of the insurance detective-service. This is a warning to all murderers for gain to practise on uninsured people. It is also a tip to nervous citizens to insure themselves; and for the largest sums they can afford. The reason is that although the insurance companies would like to make their protection universal, limitations of cost impose on them the obligation to presume natural death in the case of persons insured for small amounts. We do not know how the actuaries have discovered the law of diminishing returns to work out in respect of the relation between the cost of this special crime-research and the saving thereby effected by the detection of fraudulent claims; but it would be unreasonable to demand that a person insured for a less sum than, say, £100 should, in the event of his sudden death, receive such benefits as an exhumation and a post-mortem examination. It is possible that research may one day lead to the invention of an automatic device for detecting un-natural death; but in the meantime society must be content to bear the risk of having a certain number of undetected murderers walking about in its midst. Nor must it be overlooked that the integrity of the nation's credit-system is what chiefly concerns the insurance companies in the forming of their policy. Accordingly, murders which give rise to small claims on the companies' funds are negligible. It is murders for high stakes which must be prevented.

The following letter appeared in *The Times* last Saturday, March 22:

Sir,—The last sentence of your leading article on Budget prospects to-day, "The establishment of a strong Estimates Committee, representing all parties and armed with adequate powers, is a reform which has long been overdue," undoubtedly strikes the right note. It is also true that an Estimates Committee comprising members of all parties has been in existence since the early days of the post-War Coalition Government. I have been a member of it since its inception. It has done some good, but the fatal flaw in its constitution, which has prevented it from influencing expenditure and producing economy, is that it has not been armed with adequate powers, and that the divorce of the issue from questions of policy, which you speak of, has not been effected.

It rarely gets an estimate in time to report before that estimate is before the House, and until quite recently has had no expert assistance. Even now that is limited to a member of the Treasury Staff at its meetings. No Government since it has been set up has been willing to extend its terms of reference to expenditure involving policy. As expenditure almost in its entirety depends upon policy and every Government, under what is practically universal suffrage, finds it more paying to give attention to any vague popular clamour for economy, than to some far-reaching change in the entire status of the

Estimates Committee is essential if it is to be the instrument, by its influence upon the actions of the Government and the House of Commons and the support it can elicit from the electorate as a whole, of a real policy of economy.

In 1918 the Committee on National Expenditure said that not for twenty-five years has the House reduced, on financial grounds, by its own direct action any estimate submitted to it. The same thing applies up to date.

The only hope I can see is in the formation of an Estimates Committee, powerful in its personnel and given powers approaching in some degree to those of the Financial Committee of the French Chamber of Deputies, to compel the Government's attention to its findings, with the result of economy being enforced upon, or adopted by, any Government in power.

Yours, etc.,

PHILIP E. PILDITCH.

(Our italics.)

Neither *The Times* nor Mr. Pilditch is explicit about the sort of Estimates Committee that ought to be set up. They agree on its all-party constitution and on the necessity for it to have adequate powers, powers which, in Mr. Pilditch's view would enable the Committee to "enforce" economies on a Government. Since its inception, he says, the Committee has been precluded from reviewing expenditure involving policy, and we are surprised that since he has the wit to see that "expenditure almost in its entirety depends on policy," he has remained a member all the time. It passes our comprehension what the Committee could have found to talk about. Mr. Pilditch complains that it had no expert assistance. But why want it? Presumably all that the Treasury official was present for was to warn the members off the grass on the "policy" taboo. Mr. Pilditch apparently wants a different kind of people on the Committee. He need not have troubled to make the suggestion, because directly any Committee were given powers of the nature indicated in this letter, the "powerful personnel" would be there all right. We are getting more and more puzzled to know what ideas, if any, people like he entertain about the meaning of the term "representative government." He is innocently asking that a small body of individuals should be publicly invested with the power to paralyse the policy of every Minister in the Cabinet, and thus to hold up or destroy a Government, apparently over the heads of the elected members of Parliament. Whatever is Parliament for nowadays? Surely a vote means nothing unless the elected body exercises its responsibilities freely. It is a reflection on Mr. Pilditch's perspicuity that he seems unaware that as a matter of fact his Estimates Committee is in existence for all practical purposes higher up. It does not limit items of expenditure; it limits policies. Let us quote Mr. E. M. Rodocanachi's speech at the half-yearly meeting of the Bank of England on March 21:

"Mr. E. M. Rodocanachi seconded the resolution. He was glad to hear it because so many of the Bank meetings had gone by without the proprietors being able adequately to thank the Governor for his wonderful work and the work the Bank had done. He hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would take advice from him in the same way as, years ago, his predecessor used to consult Lord Rothschild at New Court. As in the olden days City opinion was consulted on the Budget, so he hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would consult the Governor and other members of the Court."

Mr. Montagu Norman's reply was to tell the speaker in a bantering spirit that to impose on him (the Governor) "fiscal duties in addition to those financial burdens which his colleagues and he tried to bear, he must say it was too much." (Both quotations from *The Times*.) Quite so. It is like expecting a commander-in-chief to instruct a private soldier how to put his uniform on. What between the advice of permanent officials of the State Departments and of those of the Treasury, not to speak of the consultation of "City opinion," the Government's financial policy passes through quite enough expert tests of its general soundness and

practicability without Mr. Norman's being called in. A Parliament which, after that, agreed to sit down to a new Budget-censorship would descend still further beneath the contempt in which it is already being held.

It is interesting to notice Mr. Pilditch's reason for a censorship, namely, that Governments based on universal suffrage are liable to resort to sop-giving rather than obey any "vague popular clamour for economy." We have not ourselves noticed any particular increase in generosity on the part of the Government, nor should we call the clamour referred to either vague or popular. But be that as it may, the party system is a sop-giving system or it is nothing at all. Parties represent conflicting interests—which is the reason why they oppose each other, or, at any rate ought to. And the conflict is about sops, or ought to be. The objective of an election is to decide which set of sop-snatchers shall get hold of the basin. Mr. Pilditch does not define the word "sop." If it means a few odd ha'pence here and there the argument is not worth pursuing. But if it means a substantial flow of money diverted from one direction to another in fulfilment of a programme approved by a majority of the electorate, then, under the rules of the party system, the Government is entitled to keep its promise and bestow the benefit. Under a sound financial system there would have been three basins, not one; but as no body seems to want there to be more than one, there must be a quarrel for that. Of course, if sops are ruled out for everybody let each party tell its supporters so. The electors could then decide whether there was any other alternative service which Parliament could render them that was worth the cost of its upkeep.

Mr. Norman's speech at the meeting of the Bank was the first he has made that has travelled outside his technical review of the Bank's business. For this reason we give *The Times* report of it:

"The Governor, in reply, said he was sure his colleagues would agree with him that none of them expected any such kindly remarks as had been made on the one hand by Mr. Hargraves and on the other by Mr. Rodocanachi. They were not accustomed to their labours being recognised in such kindly and encouraging words. For him, self it was quite a new experience. He was more or less accustomed to brickbats, but he was not accustomed to bouquets. (Laughter.)

"As to any particular remarks that had been made, he was glad to note what Mr. Hargraves said about the *hegemonies in one place and another*. He believed it was largely true so far as overseas was concerned, and if it was true, it was largely the result of the work which the Bank had devoted first of all to the stabilisation of Europe some years before and, secondly, to the establishment of those relations between Central Banks which were originally advocated at Genoa and in a large manner had led up to what was called the Bank for International Settlements. Therefore, he agreed with Mr. Hargraves and rejoiced at that gentleman's expectation that it would continue. The benefit of one was the benefit of all. He liked to hope, too, that they might expect and see during the next period of ten years a *similar hegemony in this country in which the Bank of England might play a not inadequate part*. He was less in agreement, if he might say so, with Mr. Rodocanachi. He recognised Mr. Rodocanachi's kindly heart and his kind intentions, but when he wished to impose on him (the Governor) fiscal duties in addition to those financial burdens which his colleagues and he tried to bear, he must say it was too much."

"Mr. Rodocanachi.—'Advice, sir.'

"The Governor.—'I am afraid not even advice.'"

(Our italics.)

Mr. Hargraves's speech was as follows:

"Mr. E. T. Hargraves said that every one present would like to feel that there was a declared expression of thanks from the stockholders of the Bank for the great services which the Governor, the Deputy Governor, and the other members of the Court had rendered to the proprietors during the year under review. (Hear, hear.) He

did not think it could be possible for the business of the country to be run in the way in which it had been run by the Governor and his assistants unless a very great amount of care and trouble had been taken in the matter. *They held the hegemony so far as this country was concerned in finance, and he thought he might say, considering the way in which they were regarded in foreign countries, that they also held the hegemony of the world, and that was largely due to the Governor for the time, care, and attention he had given to the business of the Bank, and also to his very able Deputy Governor and the Court who assisted him.*—(Our italics).

We do not know whether the speakers were to blame or the reporter, but there is something cryptic about the construction of the passages which contain the word hegemony. First we have Mr. Hargraves saying of the Governor and the Court of the Bank:

"They held the hegemony . . . in finance"  
"They also held the hegemony of the world"

Then Mr. Norman:

" . . . about the hegemonies in one place and another"  
"similar hegemony in this country in which the Bank of England might play a . . . part"

It would be interesting to know what sort of hegemony it may be in which the Bank of England aspires only to "play a part" (vide Mr. Norman) when the Bank already "holds the hegemony of the world" (vide Mr. Hargraves). Who will hold the super-hegemony? The first guess is of course the Bank of International Settlements. If one wants to guess who will run that institution we suppose Mr. Pierpont Morgan and some of his associates will be somewhere near the board-room; and that the Federal Reserve Board will be at hand just across the Atlantic in case any advice is wanted.

## The Screen Play.

### The Flame of Love.

It is regrettable to find the British International studios, which have done such good work in "Atlantic" and "Juno and the Paycock," turning out such poor stuff as "The Flame of Love." It is the more regrettable since this film, which has as yet only been privately presented, is, I understand, to be shown abroad in a German version. A thoroughly banal melodrama, with an almost amateurish flavour in the production, it will not enhance the reputation of Richard Eichberg, its director. George Schnell and Percy Standing are good as the Grand Duke and the Commandant—the scene is laid in pre-war Russia—but they are inclined to staginess. Anna May Wong, for whom the film was designed as a "starring vehicle," to use the argot of the trade, fails completely to make the role of the heroine that of a human being. She walks through her part as though she were entirely uninterested in it, for which she has my sympathy, and is so badly directed that we are not even given the chance, as in "Piccadilly," of seeing her dance as she can dance. It is impossible to imagine that such a puppet could inspire devotion. This film, which is remarkable for the fact that the Censor forbade John Longden to kiss Miss Wong, on racial grounds, an omission which hardly adds to the convincing fervour of the love passages, has the redeeming feature that its makers have so far resisted the temptation to call it an epic.

### The Kiss: Empire.

Jacques Feyder, who made that great film "Thou Shalt Not" (Thérèse Raquin), subsequently went to Hollywood, where he was offered the direction of "The Bridge of San Luis Rey." He refused this offer, wishing to study local conditions before he

shot a foot of film. Judging by "The Kiss," America has more to learn from him than it can teach him. This film is, with the reservation I shall make later, admirably directed and edited, and its photography and camera angles are excellent, although too much use is made of the moving camera for its own sake, a characteristic for which Berlin is perhaps more to blame than Hollywood. But, apart from the weak points of the story—which in a screen play it is almost always a waste of time to criticise—this film suffers from the supreme drawback that it is well acted throughout save by the two principal characters, Greta Garbo and Conrad Nagel. Mr. Nagel is wooden, and both he and Miss Garbo pose too obviously for the camera. I have never been an admirer of Miss Garbo, but I have always thought that a really capable director could succeed in making her act. Mr. Feyder seems to have found the task beyond him, but he cannot divest himself entirely from the responsibility of failing to breathe life into her performance. I should add in fairness that "The Kiss," which is a silent film, although with a canned musical accompaniment, is worth seeing as being out of the ordinary, while the title is not so misleading as the habitual filmgoer might be inclined to imagine.

### No, No, Nanette: Alhambra.

Not being violently enamoured of musical comedy, I have no very compelling enthusiasm for talking film adaptations of this form of theatrical art, but "No, No, Nanette" is rather better than the average specimen of its type. It has the benefit of a coherent and not unamusing plot, and is distinctly more cinematic and less of the photo-play than most of its forerunners. It should do well from the box-office standpoint, although I doubt the wisdom of "plugging" such tunes as "I Want To Be Happy"; the dance melodies of two or three years ago sound more old-fashioned than "A Bicycle Made for Two," which is so old as to have the charm of novelty for the post-war generation, and acting is capable without being outstanding, and that finished player Zazu Pitts is again cast as a comic servant maid. Miss Pitts cannot help investing any part she plays with character, but why Hollywood should employ her in one soubrette rôle after another, and never give her a chance to repeat her success in "Greed," is another of the many insoluble mysteries of the film world.

From the technical standpoint, "No, No, Nanette" again demonstrates that the talking colour film has still a long way to go before reaching perfection. Many of the colour sequences are good, and one must admit that the recent improvement in this respect has been remarkable, but no process as yet represents human flesh with fidelity to nature. Lilian Tashman, a very blonde of a mild Havana cigar, colour photography apparently preferring brunettes. The wide screen is used in some scenes, with varying success. In lavish spectacle on a crowded stage the effect is good enough, but the effect of gargantuan close-ups, in colour, is akin to that of a Brobdingnagian nightmare.

DAVID OCKHAM.

"We have improved machines and methods so that the amount of products that can be turned out by each individual is far greater than it was even ten years ago, with the result that now, with all its efforts the world is unable to make consumption keep pace with what it could manufacture did it use to the utmost all its present resources. . . . The question must be examined scientifically, and when the cause has been found it must be treated rationally, however repellant it may be to our established principles and whatever courage an heroic cure may demand."—*The Engineer*, leading article, March 14.

## The Problem of Freewill.

By Dr. Hans Driesch,

Professor at Leipzig University.

Translated from "Action et Pensée (Bulletin de la Société Internationale de Psychologie et de Psychothérapie)."

[The total effect of this thesis is to show by examples that the pros and cons are equally balanced. On the one side the author ranges a number of unanswerable arguments for freewill, on the other a number of unanswerable arguments for determinism. Now this deadlock, this equality of the pros and cons, can be shown to follow à priori from the nature of freewill and determinism. Thus:—

A pre-determined act of will is an act which has a definite cause; that cause has a cause, and so on; there is an infinite chain of causes spreading over time infinitely.

To conceive determinism then implies conceiving infinity.

A free act of will is an act which is spontaneous, it has no cause outside the will. But we cannot conceive an act without a cause; that cause must have a cause, and so on.

In order that the act may be spontaneous then, causes and act must be simultaneous; as with determinism there is an infinity of causes, but compressed into a time infinitely little.

To conceive freewill then implies conceiving infinity.

Thus Determinism and Freewill are alike inconceivable, i.e., the difficulty in the way of accepting either is equally great.—(Translator's Note.)]

### II.

Here it is perhaps not superfluous to bring general ethics into the discussion, at least sufficiently to make clear what is really meant by "second" or moral "nature," or in other words by being-good (and therefore also by becoming—"better"). We may say then, to be as brief as possible: to be good means to be altruistic. But this is to say: to feel the well-being of others as an ultimate end, and since one is a being possessed of will, to strive for it.

The well-known Kantian question arises, how far is striving for "pleasure" or "bliss" involved in acting morally. Fundamentally do I after all will always merely my pleasure or bliss when I will the welfare of another? If one takes the words pleasure and bliss as referring purely to feeling, then it may probably be said that the altruistic act is after all egoism in disguise when its real motive was the attainment of the feeling of pleasure or bliss. But there are certainly acts in which this is not the case, which on the contrary are directed quite objectively towards the "other." But here too surely the object aimed at must be realised as ultimate, as "being in order," and this realisation of the ultimate is altogether proper to the ego, although it is not a feeling: I will to realise what I have found to be the ultimate, my bliss according to Order—if one may be permitted the expression.

Somewhat after this fashion, though in other words, Ruesch in a profound study sums up the apparently altruistic acts. Thus in spite of everything it becomes according to him, egoistic, and he declares plainly for strict determinism, because striving for this kind of bliss is still also striving for bliss in general, and this pertains to the nature of human beings.

The demonstration is attractive. Human beings, all conceived as egoistic, would yet in varying degree be "moral" inasmuch as it is the nature of some, who precisely for this reason are called good, that they attach very strong feelings of finality to imagined outside objects and set their will in the direction of realising these. Morality would realise itself by way of the finest egoism; nature had made some persons, to put it paradoxically, as altruism-egoists.

But the dictum that radical determinism renders the fact of conscious experience superfluous, still stands.

### Ethical Emotion.

We pass on to other arguments for and against freedom of admission.

That all ethical expressions may be merely indications of my firmly determined rôle in a supra-personal

whole, we have shown above. But whence comes their remarkably strong feeling, especially when they are of negative kind, for instance when they occur in the form of remorse? Is this "luxury," inessential to the world?

It will be seen that it is not now a question of conscious experience in general, but of the meaning or lack of meaning of a quite definite form of experience. Consciousness of our own responsibility does in fact exist. Is there any sense in this in face of radical determinism?

One may take refuge in metaphysics and say that certainly the *operari sequitur esse* remains valid, that the act is rigidly determined by the essence of the mind, but that this essence has made itself free at "birth." Then the strong moral feeling would be perhaps a stimulus to the subject of this essence to freely "decide" on another character at the next birth. Here, too, then, the moral emotion would be effective as an experience, and this is all that concerns us. Immediate effectiveness has become remote effectiveness. This seems to be the opinion of our greatest Western ethicist, Schopenhauer; and he even admits an act which transgresses the *operari sequitur esse*: the change of will of the saint in earthly life.

Evidently, in whatever form, the fact of "conscience" seems positively to crave freedom.

### Experiment.

And the like holds in another field. The idea of the experiment has no meaning within the framework of radical determinism, and with it the idea of the law of nature as the invariably valid predicate for "all" cases. For was not the experimenter predetermined as to his conduct? "Free choice," the very import of the experiment, is lacking. Naively expressed, is not this what the experimenter says: I could have worked with that piece of iron, with that electric current, with that egg, and not with "this" particular one. No, according to determinism, he could not have done so.

But here I will carry this no further, as in another place I have already given an extensive elaboration of this thought.

### Prophecy.

But now the counterpart, prophecy. This is the least firmly established of all parapsychological phenomena, but is to-day at least probable, although rare. If it existed it would be a weak reflection of that which the theologian ascribes to God under the name of omniscience. Now of this we have already said that it is not compatible with freedom. Neither is prophecy, and for the preservation of freedom the most one could say would be that not all acts are free, and that prophecy extends, of course, only to the not-free.

But a single free act, be it not forgotten, puts an end to determinism for the whole universe, whose effects of this deed act on them, is not behaviour, in so far as it depends on them, is not predictable. If it is only a question of the motion of a sphere over a certain track; if the origin of this motion was freedom, so that it might have not "been able" to take place then it was certainly not predetermined, and accordingly was not predictable by God; and the like must hold of all its effects. Here it is not only a question of non-predictability for us, as it exists within the framework of vitalism, because "we" may indeed know material constellations, but not entelechy "in the abstract"; it is a question of non-predictability in its essence.

Prophecy would then really annihilate freedom.

### "Who" would be free?

But let us return to our argument that Freedom must at least be admitted as possible because without it consciousness in general and the strong emotional

tone of ethical experience in particular becomes a world-luxury.

Here we are met by a new and very great difficulty.

We spoke of the feeling of responsibility and in particular we said that the pain caused by the pangs of conscience would be incomprehensible without freedom. This was the responsibility of the actor in relation to himself. And we "make" others also "responsible" for their acts, and many persons base hereon the justification for punishment. So that it sounds quite right to say: "How could I make myself or you responsible if we are not free," and to see herein an argument for freedom. But—and precisely here occurs the new difficulty which was mentioned: who is really "he" who is made responsible? On the basis of the doctrine of freedom he has really no essence: at any rate in so far as he is free. Otherwise his freedom, even if only freedom of admission be meant, is nothing but accord with his essence. But if he has no essence he is by no means *such a one*. What, nay who is he really then, the essence-less who is made responsible? We cannot grasp him; he incessantly escapes us. And if we could grasp him as *this such a one*, then—he would not be he whom we sought! For then he would have essence, so he would not be free!

The subject of the free act is then, as essence-less, indefinable, at least so far as he is free. Fundamentally, *freedom* of the act means only that the act is there, that it is there without cause, ay, without "basis" altogether. For so far as a cause, a basis existed there would be no freedom.

Let us beware then of a reckless use of the phrase "make responsible."

How then shall we decide? Shall we set the "for" higher or the "against"?

## Drama.

### Fire in the Opera House: Everyman.

Expressionist plays hitherto have mainly dramatized the masses in relation to their overpowering environment, or typical representatives of the masses and "emergent deliverers" in relation to "slavery." The traditional dramatic issue, that of individual character trapped by unforeseeable circumstances, and failing as life without failing as character, was replaced by the unconscious revolt of human instincts against mechanical civilisation; mechanical in its authority, order, and routine as in its productive instruments; and a mechanism in which the conscious personality of the individual abdicated in favour of destructive instincts because of the despair induced by impotence. In thus bringing into consciousness forces which had hitherto worked only unconsciously, and had as a consequence invariably laid mass-movements open to exploitation by unscrupulous minorities for their own special interests, the content of expressionism (for which alone the technique was necessary) gave genuine direction from art to human development. Throughout the work of Kaiser, however, there runs also another current, that of the characteristically German metaphysical attitude. The "Fire in the Opera House" is an historical incident which occurred in Paris in 1763, the scene of the play being a room in a nobleman's house nearby. Nevertheless, the psychological undercurrent of the theme is the German uneasiness about delusion, the same uneasiness which is, incidentally, the biological basis of the philosophy of Kant. Expressed philosophically, it amounts to this, that in spite of its being incredible that so good a fellow as God would deceive us about the universe, it is painful that He gives us so little assurance that we are not deceived. The greatest fear of a German is not to lose his life, but to lose his reason; as the Englishman, less ambitious mentally, but more ambitious as regards

character, fears most of all to be exposed as a double-dealer. The same idea that insanity is the direst of all tragedy runs through other German expressionist works, for example, the war-play, "Douaumont," and Toller's "Hoppla!" It differs from Pirandello's metaphysical games in that for the Germans it is serious: Pirandello cannot leave go the idea that insanity is a form of power over others, whereas for the Germans it is the pitiable brand of the outcast.

"Fire In The Opera House" opens in the manner traditional since Ibsen. As Ibsen set the master of the maid informing the butler of things he had known for years, mixed with instructions which cast shadows of coming events, Kaiser introduces a guest into the nobleman's house, and, in the reasons furnished by the nobleman for turning the guest out of the house and out of the play, tells the audience what is necessary of the characters' past lives and present mode of living. Kaiser hides this fairly cleverly between the lines of anecdotes told by the visitor, but he takes too long about it. The nobleman, in whose day the aristocracy appeared as much at its wits' end for relief against boredom as it is to-day, had been invited to a mystery-banquet at which all the feminine company turned out to be girls from an orphanage. One of them, if not beautiful, at least a chaste stranger to the sort of life in his set, he had taken to wife. She was at this moment, he said, sleeping innocently in her bed, and his house, now and henceforth, was a sanctuary against all things evil. When the fire broke out, however, the innocent lady, after being announced by a breathless usher from the Opera House, entered in the Chinese costume prescribed by the King for the ball. With the memory of her terror and of the corpses in the burning Opera House, she expected her husband to be transported with joy for her safety. Instead, he pretended not to know her, causing the audience to wonder whether he had lost his reason or was only pretending madness. What the husband, weary of the fast life, had wanted to put behind him was for the orphan-girl life itself. She had not only been to the ball secretly; she had a love-affair with the Opera-singer. After his humiliation the nobleman goes to the blazing building and returns with a body, which he asserts to be that of his wife. When the Opera-singer arrives to praise the deed of heroism, and to confess himself as the wife's lover, the husband and wife engage one another in a battle for supremacy. The corpse is the King's mistress, for whose recovery a reward has been offered, and the wife goes to the husband to fury by putting the identifying royal ring on her own hand. In the end she leaves the house, ostensibly to take the ring to the King, and the husband, knowing that it must come back, and his heroism be recognised, gloats over his victory. His wife, instead of going to the King, throws herself into the fire, leaving the husband utterly defeated, with only an unrecognisable corpse in his house, and his wife's remains in the fire to be identified as the royal mistress.

Technically the play is thus an attempt at historical three-act costume drama in a manner verging on expressionism. Such a play sets a task for a producer. In this particular production the expressionist aspect is not sufficiently brought out. Indeed, some of the actors deliver their lines as if to make the work of Kaiser look and sound as nearly as possible like a parody of Shakespeare. In spite of the excellent way in which the fire-light is presented on the stage, with vari-coloured lights and moving shadows, the setting is much more appropriate to traditional costume-drama. While the work is primarily an experiment in two dramatic qualities, irony and suspense, part of the effect is necessarily lost if the audience is allowed to become acutely aware of these qualities. Possibly this

awakening of the audience with hunger for enlightenment again and again before the author is prepared to divulge his meaning might be overcome by swifter movement. The translation, also, by whomsoever done, appears at times not a rendering into English, but into English cliché, and an effort to turn this work of ironic realism into a romance. Mr. J. Leslie Frith's performance as the Old Gentleman, the nobleman's guest, and encyclopædia of scandalous anecdotes, with or without names, was excellent except that during the first five minutes his speaking was hardly addressed to the auditorium, with the result that many of his words were lost. The nobleman, by Mr. Vernon Sylvaïne, was an attempt to attain emotional power over the audience, but it is questionable whether Mr. Sylvaïne had himself reached a clear idea of Kaiser's intentions. In the small part of the usher who brought news of the fire in the Opera House, Mr. Emlyn Williams gave an excellent performance. I found it impossible to believe either in the emotions of Miss Sybil Thorndike as the wife of the nobleman, or in the capacity of Mr. Deering Wells to sweep the ladies of the Opera House audiences off their feet.

### Misalliance: Court.

In a programme note Shaw trusts that the production of this twenty-year-old play will not prove a miscarriage at its second birth, and begs indulgence for it on the ground that much water and much blood has flowed through the bridges since it was a more or less topical play. Shaw's uneasiness about Mr. MacDona's revival is easy to understand. When he wrote the play he regarded death as a device of the life-force for clearing ashes out of the grate and allowing fresh fuel to be put on. He was younger then. Now that he is old he no longer holds the same philosophy. The old are alleged to be more worth preserving than the young, since they are more level-headed and have more experience. It has become the duty of the old to live for ever, and cast their ancient shadows of prudence over every joy and every spring. At the time "Misalliance" was written the Shaw godhead was a consulate of life-force and technique. With the vice is still paid to the sacred memory of the life-force, technique has become a dictator. When Shaw was young it did not matter if youth and love were blind; the life-force would muddle through and come out right in spite of a thousand blunders. Now it has to economise.

It matters little that Shaw, as if he were an ordinary mortal, changes his standpoint with his years. Nobody attaches any importance to what he has to say, but only to the sparkle and efficiency with which he says it. The wit that shocked Europe into painful wakefulness twenty to thirty years ago has become a delightful soporific in which the present condition of the world can be temporarily forgotten before the irrelevant spectacle of intellectual fireworks. It is a soporific which London takes in increasing doses. As the epigrammatic pyrotechnics of Shaw far surpass the Crystal Palace variety, and most other shows of the theatre, may they continue until a younger genius arrives.

Mr. Wilfrid Lawson's John Tarleton is a very fine piece of broad comedy. He did not give the impression of having made a fortune out of either his underwear or his ideas, if the present-day American standards of publicity are the final achievement for money-making. But his jovial humanity made him likable and even lovable, his tabloid philosophy and unphilosophical amours notwithstanding. As Hypatia, Miss Rosalinde Fuller acted with such vitality as really to convince one that the life-force was in her. It was indeed she who contributed most to the brilliance of the fireworks. As the Polish acrobat, tight-rope walker,

and juggler, representing the Shavian gospel of efficiency, Miss Irene Vanbrugh was convincing, but Mr. Esmé Percy as Tarleton's illegitimate son was unable to confine himself to the sphere set for him, and at first presented this worm of the proletariat as if he had the makings of a Labour Cabinet Minister. Subsequently, Mr. Percy settled down to give a very comic caricature of Shaw's illiterate clerk. As Tarleton, Junior, Mr. George E. Bancroft was so intent on representing the son's lack of his father's brains that he did not draw what was to be drawn from many of his exquisitely ironical lines, so that such a remark as "Drawing a line and making other chaps toe it, that's what I call morality," did not raise a single chuckle from the audience. Mr. Hedley Briggs, as the spoiled Bentley Summerhayes, played that blunder of heredity and upbringing with delightful comedy.

PAUL BANKS.

## Verse.

By Andrew Bonella.

How long will our intellectuals inflict upon us their discovery that harlotry stands a better chance of Heaven than virtue? There is, of course, an element of truth in the paradox; but a paradox soon becomes a commonplace, and this one has been worn threadbare by the sentimental insistence of several generations. Mr. Powys (1) is the latest to weep over a dead prostitute:

Oh, she was beautiful! "A dirty whore,  
She lived for human lewdness!" She is dead,  
Her trampled body safe for evermore;  
Shunned by the men who oftentimes shared her bed.  
He goes on to denounce the Village Elders:  
Punish them, Lord, punish them!  
For they are as sure of Heaven  
As they are of Earth  
And have just rejoiced over a harlot's burial.  
Punish them, punish them in thine own way,  
Lord, if not in mine.  
Punish them, Lord, Punish them, but Her forgive.

No doubt a harlot is as good as her neighbour—I will not argue the point, not knowing Mr. Powys's qualification to judge—but the sin is she necessarily so much better? The sin of the Elders is, I suppose, despising her; but surely she despises them just as much. Need we tilt at such a battered windmill? If Mr. Powys must champion the poor streetwalker his generous indignation would be better directed against the system which allows the plain-clothes man to tax her earnings and run her in if she refuses to pay. The trouble is, of course, Mr. Powys's conventional contempt for other people's conventions. He does not like respectability. He says:

But thank God I am not  
Respectable too!  
The wheel has come full circle when our Bohemians use the language of the Pharisee! Some of these poems are intelligent and neatly turned, but none of them is free from the self-consciousness that bars true poetry.

Mr. Rold White's love-sequence (2) is a pleasant piece of work which rings true after the modern conventionalities of the harlot's burial. The thought is at least the poet's own, something he has worked for, and the expression, naive at times, is always adequate to the thought. The word "naive" is not used offensively; naiveté mostly goes with sincerity. One small point: the word "real" is rarely satisfactory as a dissyllable. Good precedent can be cited for its use, but in the following lines it certainly weakens the rhythm:

And staying steal my real sense away,  
Leave only dreams, leave only this one dream,  
That dreaming love may ever real seem.  
In the first line quoted the weakness is particularly noticeable after the use of such a similar word as

"steal" as a monosyllable; and in the third line the slight stress of such a word as "ever" demands more support than it gets.

Some ingenious person has printed a number of nursery rhymes (3) censored, thus:

Three wise men of Goshen  
Went to — in a bowl.

His idea is to expose the folly of censorship, which, he says, teaches us to read all kinds of meanings into harmless words. As a serious argument the book is not very impressive; but some of the effects gave me a lot of quiet fun.

The last book on my list is arranged in three sections. The first consists of French poems: I enjoyed some of these, but am not qualified to give a critical estimate of their worth. The next consists of poems on Provençal, with a parallel version in French, of which I can only say that I wish I knew Provençal. In the last section are English poems with a page-for-page and line-for-line version in French. Some of the English poems are good, and the parallel arrangement is interesting and instructive. This instance will do as well as any:

If Love now came, soft-sandalled, calm and sweet,  
How tenderly thou wouldst receive the feet,  
The lips, the brow serene,  
Which thou hadst seen,  
As a mirage in the years,  
Through rarest tears.

Si l'Amour maintenant venait, en souples sandales, calme  
et doux,  
combien tendrement recevrais-tu les pieds,  
les lèvres, le front serein,  
que tu avais vus,  
comme un mirage dans les ans,  
à travers les plus rares larmes.

I sometimes wonder how many people trouble to read this column. It is rightly headed Verse, for the proportion of Poetry in the matter for review is naturally small. I see that one of my colleagues discovered a probable major poet a week or two back. Good luck to him! It is more than I have ever done. A major poet, meaning, I suppose, one to be named in a breath with Milton, Keats, Wordsworth or Dryden, is not to be found under every gooseberry bush. But if this column were justly headed Poetry, I believe that every Social Creditor would read it, for social credit itself is a poetical idea if ever there was one.

"Give me leave," wrote Allen Upward in that great book "The New Word," "to sow my seed under the base of Khufu's pyramid, and have patience. We shall untighten it." That seed may be called, as Upward called it, idealism; it may be called Poetry; but the image might just as well have referred to Social Credit. "Poetry," said Hazlitt, "is not a branch of authorship: it is 'the stuff of which our life is made.' . . . Man is a poetical animal; and those of us who do not study the principles of poetry, act on them all our lives, like Molière's Bourgeois Gentilhomme. The following passage, written by Shelley in 1821, may serve to clinch the argument:

"There is no want of knowledge respecting what is wisest and best in morals, government, and political economy, or at least what is wiser and better than what men now practise and endure. But we let 'I dare not wait upon I would, like the poor cat in the adage.' We want the creative faculty to imagine that which we know; we want the generous impulse to act that which we imagine; we want the poetry of life: our calculations have outrun conception; we have eaten more than we can digest. The cultivation of those sciences which have enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world, has, for want of the poetic faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world; and man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave. To what but a cultivation of the mechanical arts in a degree disproportioned to the presence of the creative faculty, which is the basis of all knowledge, is to be attri-

buted the abuse of all invention for abridging and combining labour, to the exasperation and inequality of mankind? From what other cause has it arisen that the discoveries which should have lightened, have added a weight to the curse imposed on Adam? Poetry, and the principle of Self, of which money is the visible incarnation, are the God and Mammon of the world."

(1) "At the Harlot's Burial." Poems by Laurence Powys. (E. Lahr, 68, Red Lion Street, W.C.1.)

(2) "Twain One." By Rold White. (The Vine Press. 3s. 6d.)

(3) "Mother Goose Rhymes" (Censored). (Knopf. 2s.)

(4) "Choix de Poèmes." By Sully-André Peyre Marsyas. (Le Cailar, Gard. 12 frs.)

## The Works of Tourneur.

The contents of this new book\* from the Fanfrolico Press are summed up by the editor, Professor Allardyce Nichol. "Hitherto Tourneur's extant works have been recognised as five in number—

'The transformed Metamorphosis,' 'The Revengers Tragedie,' the Elegy on Vere, 'The Atheist's Tragedie,' and the Elegy on Prince Henry. Thomas Seccombe indeed had hazarded that a manuscript 'Character' of Salisbury had been written by this author; but this 'Character' is now printed for the first time in a collection of Tourneur's works and definitely established as his composition. In addition to this I have presented here music written for 'The Nobleman' (presumably but not certainly Tourneur's play), a hitherto unprinted poem 'On the Succession,' and also the strange pamphlet, 'Laugh and lie down.' The first, so far as I know, has never got beyond the stage of manuscript, and the last, of which only one copy exists, has never been reprinted."

Evidently, then, this volume must be of interest not only to those who collect these expensive limited editions, but also to the scholar and to the more important public libraries. From the point of view of pure literature, however, I can see no reason why Tourneur should not be allowed to sink into oblivion. Indeed, he is very near oblivion. Who can read him now with interest, except scholars of the Elizabethan theatre? He has not that excuse for survival which belongs to many of the minor Tudor dramatists, who was being occasionally poetic. Even Charles Lamb, who was so largely responsible for reviving interest in these writers, could find little to extract from Tourneur to include in his famous book of "Specimens." Swinburne raved about him, describing him, if I remember rightly, as the British Aeschylus; but Swinburne, of course, was talking nonsense, as he often did. Good heavens! Tourneur was nothing more than a blood-and-thunder merchant, trafficking in the popular taste for "thrillers." His plays are equivalent in artistic value to such modern examples as "Dracula" and "The Face at the Window." His powers of construction are not noticeably strong even for a day when the plot of a play was a go-as-you-please affair in point of time and place. His characters are dummies or hollow servant heads with fireworks in them, very fit to frighten girls. His stories would be unpleasant if they were not too silly to be anything but laughable. His verse is mostly dull, ragged, halting fustian. There is something, therefore, slightly ridiculous, from the literary point of view, in this elaborately bound and printed volume, with its eighty-odd pages of introduction and textual notes and commentary. It is as if, three hundred years hence, some scholar of the day reprinted a few of our silly spook plays, from the only copies extant, which he had found in the British Museum.

I am entirely in agreement with the late William Archer on the subject of the lesser Elizabethans, especially in his opinion on Tourneur. His resume of "The Revenger's Tragedie" in "The Old Drama and the trouble of checking for quotation, but those who will take the play including it will find he is correct in stating that the play includes fifteen murders and executions, a rape, attempted seduction, and adultery. "Tourneur had a hideous language," said Archer. One of the bright scenes in this play is where a son in disguise, tries to test his mother's morals by getting her to persuade her unwilling daughter to be a whore. The mother accepts the office of bawd; after a few lines of rhetorical fustian from her son her scruples vanish, and she exclaims: "O heavens, this overcomes me!" Another pretty scene is the scene of revenge triumphant. For the sake of brevity I will use letters instead of names.

\* "The Works of Cyril Tourneur." Edited by Professor Allardyce Nichol. Limited edition of 750 copies. Fanfrolico Press. £3 3s. od.

has been murdered by B. Disguised he has become B's servant. A gets the skull of the dead woman and poisons the grinning teeth. He persuades B that a wench awaits his pleasure in a dark corner of the garden. B kisses the skull, and immediately his face begins to rot away. A has also arranged that B's wife, who has cuckolded him, shall meet her lover at this place. Her lover is a bastard son of B. As B lies dying, a dagger stuck through his tongue to prevent him making a noise, he has to watch and listen to his wife and his bastard making love.

As Archer says, it is ludicrous to find critics solemnly aestheticising about this unpleasant rubbish. Listen to Professor Nichols, who ought to know better, rhapsodising about the opening scene of this play.

"Note the stage sense implied in the picture, cynical and macabre. The setting is a gloomy hall, oak-panelled and tapestry-hung, in a Renaissance palace. Two servitors, bearing their spluttering torches aloft, lead in a strange procession: a grey-haired Duke, in whom the lines of age are hard and cruel—his Duchess, whose form is florid and voluptuous—her son, whom debauchery has already made old—and the Duke's bastard, hatred and envy gleaming from his eyes. The fluttering flames of the torchlight catch their evil faces as they pass by; stray rays of light, too, search fitfully into the dimmer reaches of the hall, and in their search succeed faintly in outlining a dark figure, muffled close and staring madly at the group now moving into the corridor beyond. In his hands, deep-clasped lovingly and bitterly to his bosom, this dark figure clutches something white and ghostly, which a sudden turn of a departing touch reveals as a woman's skull."

This is the very ecstasy of commentation! Where do you think Professor Nichols got all this Christmas Supplement stuff. From his own fancy. There is nothing more in the text than this bare stage direction: "Enter Vendici, the Duke, Duchess, Lusurioso her son, Spurio the bastard, with a train, pass over the stage with torchlight." Follows a long soliloquy from Vendici, and then enters his brother, who says, "Still sighing over death's vizard?" which certainly implies that he held a skull in his hand. But as for the rest of the scene as described by the professor, I can only say that he knows as well as I do that the Tudor stage had no pictorial background and that the theatre was lit by the sun. All that nonsense about "stray rays of light searching fitfully into dimmer reaches," about "oak-panelled and tapestry-hung walls," might be applicable to a production of this play by Herbert Tree. As an attempt to picture the scene as it looked to a Tudor audience it is obviously false. Those bare stage directions—as bare as the Tudor platform stage—merely indicate a sort of dumb show prologue to the play, such as Shakespeare ridiculed in the Players' Scene in "Hamlet."

By the way, it is good to read a play by Shakespeare after these works of Tourneur. It refreshes one's appreciation of his poetry and his sense of drama. It makes painfully clear how coldly mechanical are Tourneur's attempts to horrify, how crude his characters, how naive his attempts to motivate their actions, how devoid of rhythm and music with their author.

JOHN SHAND.

## Review.

Pudovkin on Film Technique. (Victor Gollancz, Ltd. 6s. net.)

One of the rarest things in the world is to come across anyone who can not only do a job of work supremely well, but is able to explain how and why he does it. As a rule, the expert either lacks the gift of literary expression, or can express himself only in arid technicalities which, while they may interest his brother experts, are above the comprehension of the general public. In this little book, about the best contribution to date to the literature of the subject, Pudovkin shows himself to be as lucid a writer as he is a distinguished director, and the volume is cordially to be recommended not only to every maker of films, but to everyone who takes an intelligent interest in the art of the screen. "The foundation of film art is editing," says Pudovkin, and this phrase sums up the whole of his ideas and methods. But by "editing," it is necessary to emphasise, he does not mean what now passes for such in the average commercial film factory, namely, cutting—and often unintelligent mangling—by someone out of touch with the director's aims or conception. Pudovkin's "editing" generally known nowadays as *montage*, is a constructive process, which, in his own words, embodies "the creative force of filmic reality, and nature provides only the raw material with which it works. Every object must, by editing, be brought upon the screen, so that it shall have not

photographic, but cinematographic essence." In this last pregnant phrase he incidentally crystallises the immense and essential difference, not only between the stage and the screen, but also between the photo-play and the film-play proper. Equally pregnant are his observations that "The movement of an object before the camera is as yet no movement on the screen, it is no more than raw material for the future building up," and that "Between the natural event and its appearance upon the screen there is a marked difference. It is exactly this difference that makes the film an art." From this brief exposition, it is evident that editing, in the sense meant by Pudovkin, is not merely a constructive process, on which depends incidentally the all-important characteristic of rhythm, but that to some extent it must also precede the taking of the first "shots." I lack the space to do this book justice; the author's already celebrated remarks on the place of sound in films and the way in which it should not be used, would alone make it notable. Get it; it is one of the few books on the film worth keeping.

DAVID OCKHAM.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

"THE MYSTERY OF THE TRADE DEPRESSION."  
Sir,—The address of Mr. Frederic E. Holsinger, the author of "The Mystery of the Trade Depression," is 32, Drakefield Road, Upper Tooting, S.W.17, from whom copies of his book may be obtained.

S. R.

GERHARDT.

Sir,—Gerhardt, via wireless, is no better nor no worse than she is *propria persona*. What I heard that Sunday, in the way of glaring defects, etc., can be heard just as much at her recitals.

Your correspondent does not think so. I do, so do a number of others whose knowledge, long years of study and experience in the art of singing, entitle them to express an opinion.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

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