

# THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER."

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

It is difficult to understand what the Archbishop of Canterbury can have hoped to accomplish by raising in the House of Lords last week the question of the persecution of the Russian Church. He wanted the Government to make "representations." But Mr. Stalin must be presumed to have foreseen the reaction of Christian sentiment in this country to his policy before he inaugurated it; so the mere notification to him of the attitude of the Churches could not be expected to alter the policy. Nor, even if their attitude were to be sponsored by every member of both Houses of Parliament would he necessarily change his mind. It would all depend on whether he had reason to expect action to follow on the protest. Such action could take one of only two forms: financial coercion or military coercion. Now, so far as financial coercion is possible the decision to use it does not rest within the discretion of the politicians, but of the high-financiers. And not simply British financiers—for these alone could not effectively besiege Russian credit; they would have first to make sure that other financiers co-operated in the siege and did not, on the other hand, fly over the British lines and drop supplies among the enemy. There would have to be an alliance of the dominant financial interests of the world to rescue the Russian Christian Church. Such an alliance would be conceivable if the monopoly of the world's credit were in the hands of Christians. But it is not: it is divided between Christians and non-Christians—or, if you like, between Gentiles and Jews—although in what proportions there is no clear evidence. If then, these financiers were to take common action, they would have to be inspired by something other than the fact that Christians were being oppressed. They would only act if the immediate or ultimate consequences of the persecution threatened their common interests. It is difficult to see how this could arise; for although the Russian authorities are courageous enough to deride the Christian Church they are among the most obedient sons of the Financial Church.

Lord Passfield's defence of the British Government's policy of non-intervention was a paraphrase of what we are saying. Before they could think of interfering, said he, the evidence of the oppression must be convincing, and the nature of the oppression must be such as to justify their incurring the risks attendant on the exercise of reprisals. This was a discreet way of saying that the Government could not act ahead of City opinion, and that therefore the prerequisite task of Lambeth Palace was to secure the support of the Mansion House. There must be shown to be an identity of interest between the financial authority and the spiritual authority arising from a common objective. Further than that, the interest of each must be shown to be dependent on the support of the other. Would the defeat of the Archbishops necessarily frustrate the plans of the Archbankers—or *vice versa*? Would conflict between the two impair the power of each to an equal degree? Does the formula: "United we stand; divided we fall" apply to this situation? Our answer to these questions is *No*.

Our chief reasons were given in an editorial article entitled "The Passing of Anglicanism," which we published in THE NEW AGE on November 3, 1927. The occasion for writing it was the conflict within the Anglican Church on the question of the Sacraments, which culminated in the rejection by the House of Commons of the revised Prayer Book. But it is just as applicable to the present conflict between the Church and atheism.

We took occasion to point out and explain the declension of the authority of the Church in this country. Press, Parliament and Pulpit were no longer three independent participants in the power of shaping the nation's policy: they had become subservient administrative instruments of the high financiers. The experienced journalist is fully conscious of the fact that the great newspapers are virtually controlled, if not actually owned, by the banks. The experienced politician knows that the ability of any party to attain Office depends upon party-funds, and that when



in Office its ability to administer public affairs depends upon the co-operation of the Bank of England as the money-lender to the Government. But the Churchman, however experienced, seems to be unaware that his power to influence public opinion is just as truly restricted by the bankers. The reason for his unawareness is that in recent times the Church has rarely felt moved to say or do anything which would constitute an encroachment upon the prerogatives reserved by the bankers. In fact it is a principle of the Church to hold itself aloof from party politics. Since all politics is party politics the result of obeying this principle has been that the Church has renounced the right to pronounce upon any problem affecting the material affairs of mankind. Naturally, therefore, the bankers, who claim to be the ultimate arbiters of these affairs, have had little or no occasion to impose visible, direct restraints on the Church. The Church is now in the position of a mandatory power entrusted with the administration of celestial affairs on condition that terrestrial affairs are left under the exclusive jurisdiction of the banks.

In our article above referred to we mentioned one occasion when the Church infringed this implicit understanding. We said:

"Speaking at Norwich soon after the General Strike, Mr. Baldwin made a flippant reference to the Archbishop of Canterbury's statesmanlike Manifesto issued while the Strike was proceeding. It will be remembered that Mr. Churchill had denied it publication in the Government's emergency newspaper. Mr. Baldwin joked about this document by comparing it with a hypothetical intervention by the Federation of British Industries to settle a difference between 'Particular Baptists and Anglo-Catholics.' That was as much as to say that the Churches had no more concern with the moral aspects of a national social upheaval than, let us say, Sir Alfred Mond should have on a question of Christian doctrine. This was not only an irrelevancy and an impertinence, but it showed complete disregard for the long-established constitutional position of the Head of the English Church. The explanation is simple. The Archbishop's Manifesto contained, among other things, a reference to the possibility of a continued subsidy to the miners to tide both parties over another truce. This was quite sufficient. For the high financiers had precipitated the Strike on the very principle: 'No more subsidy.' It was nothing to them that the Bishop of Lichfield had got the Miners' Federation to agree to go back to work on terms including a four-months' subsidy—as the Bishop was promptly told by Mr. Baldwin when he asked him to receive a deputation of Church leaders. 'This is a suggestion to which the Government could not possibly assent,' wrote Mr. Baldwin before he met the deputation, thus ruling out the very factor on which the Bishop of Lichfield was resting his hopes of peace."

Now Mr. Baldwin, as Prime Minister, was the titular head of the Government, and his attitude amounted to a warning to the Church to keep out of politics. That is to say, the temporal authority required no assistance—and even resented it—from the spiritual authority. The only form of assistance permitted to the Church under this ruling was that of offering prayers for a happy issue out of all the trouble.

This contempt for—or at least indifference to—spiritual values was reproduced in the House of Lords last week, though in more polite terms. Lord Passfield's reply for the Government, put into frank language, would be as follows:

"His Majesty's Government, though in full sympathy with the Church in its adversity, is instructed by its financial advisers to say that attacks by atheists on Christian faith and Christian property do not of themselves constitute sufficient ground for political intervention. The financial and economic stability of the State, which is the primary objective of good government, does not depend on the belief or disbelief of people in any theological concept whatsoever, but upon their observance of a non-theological moral code. The case for intervention in Russia fails if it does not rest on evidence that the

acts of the Soviet Government are an infringement of that code. Does, for instance, the confiscation of Church property tend to undermine the confidence of the investing classes? Or can it be shown that the destruction of belief in a Creator will destroy or even weaken the obedience of the people to the moral doctrines considered essential by the State? These are the considerations which alone are pertinent. The Government's financial advisers have been unable to discover in the evidence adduced any cause for apprehension. Unless and until they do, the Government is unable to see any reason for straining the friendly relations which subsist between itself and that of another State. The menace, such as it is, belongs to the spiritual plane, and can only be met by the prayers of the Church. Before the Government may properly intervene the menace must take on a secular character."

The Archbishop of Canterbury could, of course, reply that Christianity enjoins the cultivation of foundational virtues such as honesty, industry, abstinence, patience, and humility—all of which contribute to consolidate and maintain the social and economic security of the State. But this line of argument is unavailing, because the Atheist State of Russia enjoins these same virtues with quite as much zeal as any Christian State. The financial oligarchy finds Stalin as efficient an agent of its policy as Mussolini or MacDonald or any other statesman. So why should it do anything to weaken its authority? On this point we quote again from our article:

"The financiers' policy necessarily implies economy of means in its administration. In the industrial field this is manifested in the familiar process of closing down redundant factories and plants to save costs. The inevitable extension of the process will be to close down redundant moral agencies. In a word, to scrap the Church. Now that the bankers, by reason of their complete control of the Press and Parliament, can convince the nation of the inexorable necessity for submission to economic hardships, they do not require the services of a paid Priesthood to add the superfluous information that God wills it. Theology is, for them, an obsolete implement of economic discipline—and that aspect of it is all they are interested in. They regard the Bishops and Clergy as equivalent to redundant State officials, whose emoluments, together with the cost of maintaining 'departmental accommodation'—church property—could be applied to more remunerative purposes in other directions."

We supported this by references to

1. The scandalous underpayment of the lower clergy contrasted with the incomes of journalists and members of Parliament.
2. The centralised pooling of tithe funds, and the long delays in paying out the pittances allowed to the clergy.
3. The assumption by the B.B.C. and the great newspaper magnates of the function of preaching.
4. The generous financial support afforded by City financiers—Jew and Gentile—to the Salvation Army.

To the outsider our analysis and evidence will not carry weight, because he has been taught to accept things like these as happening by themselves. But students of the credit question and the politics of finance will recognise that they all proceed from the bankers' policy of imposing an artificial restriction of money on the community.

On the question of Church property, there is no essential difference between the compulsory closing of Churches in Russia and the voluntary closing of Churches in Britain. In either case people are equally denied access to an accustomed place of worship; and it is this which constitutes the injury to religion. Psychologically, we should say that the injury is not so vital when the closing is imposed by an avowed enemy of Christianity as when Christianity itself relinquishes its Churches through lack of funds. Be that as it may, our main point is to emphasize that the financial powers can afford to be, and are, indifferent to the consequences of their policy. The warning of the Church: "If Christianity goes what will you put in its place?"

falls flat, because nothing that is essentially and distinctively Christian in a human being's character is necessary for their purpose in directing the temporal affairs of the nation. They could reply: "Yes; you may be right in saying that in losing their belief in a Creator men will lose some irreplaceable element in their character; but we have our own means and agencies for establishing the kind of behaviour we want from them—and that is all we are concerned about." Take the B.B.C. as one of those agencies. Attentive readers will recall the several occasions when notice has been taken in these pages of the perverse persistency in which that body uses the writings of Paul to cultivate the secular virtues that we have enumerated ("He that will not work, neither shall he eat" and cognate ideas) and on the other hand its virtual boycott of the Gospels where one might behold the bright array of the lazy lilies.

There never was a time when the State stood in less need of the assistance of an independent Church in securing obedience from its subjects. It will be remembered that in Italy, Signor Mussolini, within a day or two of the national celebrations that were held over the restitution of temporal power to the Pope, made a speech which meant in so many words—"So that's settled that; and now we can get to work on problems of real importance without clerical interference." It was the veiled expression of a universally prevalent idea that the Church has nothing to contribute to the elucidation and resolution of the concrete problems of men's daily lives. The Salvation Army is the safest and most economical spiritual organisation in existence to-day. That is why it gets the patronage of the City financiers. Its officers are practically all men and women in humble circumstances who are less concerned with political issues than any others, and who, if they were concerned with them, would be unable to exercise any political influence to speak of. These officers collect a lot of money and live on next to no money. They provide employment or relief to the very poor, and in the performance of these acts of beneficence they make thousands of contacts through which they are able to imbue the "submerged tenth" with the courage and faith to endure hardships with patience. As the Army Headquarters invariably emphasize in their annual appeal for funds, their organisation is the most potent institution of any for allaying industrial unrest. For all practical purposes it has been a department of the Ministry of Health administering the Poor Law—the only difference being that its funds have not been raised by taxation. The bulk of these funds having been supplied by financiers it is natural that they should be held and administered under the supervision of financiers. When the late General Bramwell Booth fell ill the financiers who were subsidising the American branch of the Army took steps to alter the constitution of the Army. They got Commissioner Eva Booth to summon delegates from all over the world to decide upon a successor without reference to the General's own nomination. The ostensible ground was that the work of the Army would deteriorate because of the General's inability to give personal attention to it. The real reason arose from the strained relations between America and Britain. The American financiers naturally felt an objection to the control of Army property and funds derived from American contributions being exclusively (or "autocratically" as they said) administered by someone who was not responsible to them for his policy. It may be supposed that they knew, or guessed, whom it was whose name was sealed up in the celebrated envelope as General Booth's successor, and did not want him. Or it may be supposed that in any case they

saw that the occasion had come to engineer the transference of control from Britain to America. What is certain is that the nomination of General Higgins was received with popular acclamation in the United States, and that Mr. Rockefeller showed great generosity in financing the plans which culminated in that happy event. The Salvation Army was now, so they said, "democratised." What is meant by the term is not clear, for the rank and file of the Army were not consulted. We are left to put our own interpretation on it; and we suggest that a democratic institution is one on which the largest contributor to its funds imposes his policy. There can be no doubt that the powers exercised to-day by General Higgins have been modified considerably in the process of his inheritance of them from the Booth family; and that one of the results is that the Army's property, funds and organisation in America have now become virtually an instrument of the United States Government and no veto from London can constitutionally hinder their mobilisation for American purposes in the economic struggle which is developing between the two nations.

Nobody can suppose that when cosmopolitan financiers of all beliefs and none stir themselves over the constitution of a religious organisation their concern is with the nature of its doctrine. The doctrine may be anything so long as the preaching of it is an earning asset. The Archbishop of Canterbury was greatly shocked at the story he heard of a child in Russia who was told to pray to God for a piece of bread—which he did in vain; and was then told to pray to Lenin—whereupon the bread was produced. But the transfer of this child's faith from God to Lenin would in no wise impair his efficiency as a wheel in any modern economic mechanism whether run under Atheistic auspices or Christian or any other. On the other hand, any attempted act of coercion by the British Government committed against Russia would be bound to cause at least some economic disturbance. So the financiers with a single mind decline to endorse intervention even of the mildest quality.

The upshot of what we are saying is this. The bankers have no present use for the Church and no present fear of the Church. Instead of students of divinity they are relying on students of economics to subserve their purposes. Their general policy is to keep fixed in the minds of people the belief that *economic scarcity is a law of nature*. Whatever the reasons may be, it is beyond dispute that on any physical problem (e.g. the lack of the means of life) an overwhelming majority of people will attach no weight to the instruction of Religion and all weight to that of Science. Hence any person possessing a diploma in the science (so-called) of Economics can produce more effect than could hundreds of clergymen. Therefore the Economist is an immeasurably cheaper agent to employ than the Clergyman. That is why Chairs of Political Economy are endowed by the bankers while Chairs of Divinity are ignored by them. The only thing that the clergyman could plead as a justification for supplementing the teaching of the economist would be that he, the clergyman, could additionally offer the consolations of religion to victims of material hardships. But this would fail as a business proposition unless it could be shown that the "common-sense" of the economist was insufficient to keep these people from revolting against their condition. There is plenty of direct evidence that this end can be secured by the use of purely secular methods of instruction and admonition.

Students of the credit question are agreed that the Church is in this humiliating position partly as a



result of her own policy. She has held aloof from politics. It appeared a wise thing to do because she had no experience of any politics in which there was not involved a struggle on the part of one section of the community to seek an advantage at the sacrifice of another. Hence the word politics connoted discord instead of concord. But to-day it is known to some thousands of students that there is a developing political issue in which the Christian Church may consistently take sides, because—to be paradoxical—both sides are on the same side; or, to be accurate, will discover themselves to be on the same side as soon as they comprehend the nature of the issue. On its material side it concerns the conditions on which populations shall eat their bread, and on its spiritual side it concerns what St. Paul described as "principles of wickedness in high places." The two are causally related. It can be proved to-day that material poverty among civilised communities is the result of their obedience to a certain code of conduct. According to that code it is the duty of the individual to accept economic scarcity as a law of nature, and to abstain from consumption for the safety of his fellows. Now, if it be a scientific truth that scarcity is a law of nature then it is a theological truth that God ordained poverty as a permanent terrestrial phenomenon. The Church in that case has no option but to preach patient submission to the inevitable, and to offer consolations to stimulate that virtue. Long ago there was no doubt at all about the truth. It was a self-evident fact, and the Church dealt with its consequences accordingly. Poverty being unavoidable for many, its existence was reconciled with the goodness of God in the consciences of Christians by the reflection that it was ordained by Him for the perfecting of character.

But within the last few years there have been unmistakable evidences that nature is able to afford means of material welfare on a scale which can abolish the experience and the fear of poverty from the homes now stricken by it, and can do so without depriving the more affluent homes of a fraction of their present comfort. Instead of economic scarcity, science is able to demonstrate the instant possibility of economic abundance. The actual production of this wealth is held up by one agency—the controllers of the monetary system, on whose decision the work waits. Their affirmative decision is withheld on two grounds (a) technical and (b) moral. The technical objection has been disposed of. There remains the moral objection. This concerns the Church in particular and all conscientious citizens in general. It does not concern the bankers, except as single units of the population. Insofar as the issue is reserved for the decision of any constituted authority at all, the claim of the Church to be that authority infinitely transcends that of any monetary or commercial institution, however rich and powerful. What is the Church's attitude to be if this imposition of poverty on large masses of the population is proved to her to be economically unnecessary? What will then be the Christian judgment upon this secular decree of economic abstinence?

Mr. C. E. M. Joad has recently declared that in one hundred years' time science will have destroyed religion. We would prefer to say that another ten years of the present *frustration of scientific effort* may well do so. Whatever obstacle be interposed between necessities of life and necessitous human beings is a demoralising agent. It poisons the soil in which the Church is endeavouring to sow her seeds of faith. An apposite illustration of this is provided by an incident in Russia vouched for by Mr. H. N. Brailsford in *The New Leader* of February 21.

"It sounds incredible, but I came on a case where the priest—the man who could bar the gates of Heaven to a trembling peasant—actually opposed as impious the planting of cabbages in the new manner with adequate space in which to grow."

In another case when peasants were being taught to fight drought by ploughing deep, they resisted the instruction under the conviction that God sends or withholds rain, and that the way to get it was to pray for it. Such prohibitions in the name of the Church on the utilisation of scientific knowledge are much more dangerous to her in themselves than are the frontal attacks on religious faith which they inevitably provoke. There is no more urgent and vital question to which Christians should address themselves to-day than this one: *Are economic scarcity and insecurity conducive to Faith or to Infidelity?* It will not do to leave it unresolved and hide behind the formula: "There is much to be said on both sides." There must be a definite answer; and the problem must be explored until it is found. The bankers are causing scarcity and insecurity. In America they are financing a scheme to hold wheat off the market in quantity equal to a whole year's exports. In China it is stated somewhere that millions of people are threatened with death from famine. In Belfast the bankers caused the destruction of a practically new textile factory and plant. All over Britain there are unemployed people who are unable to procure adequate clothing. Listen to this:

"Meanwhile the last thirty years have witnessed a phenomenal increase in the technical arts of production. Messrs. Gilbert and Pogue have estimated that 'it would require the labour of 3,000,000,000 hard-working slaves to accomplish the work done annually in the United States by our energy resources.' . . . basing their calculation on the 150,000,000 horse-power now secured from our boilers and turbines, multiplied by twenty man-power for every man, woman and child in this country the equivalent of thirty servants."—Stuart Chase in *The Tragedy of Waste* (Macmillan, New York), quoting from Gilbert and Pogue's *America's Power Resources* (Century Co., New York, 1921).

Here is material on which the Christian Evidence Society can apply the logic of the "Design" argument. Have these tremendous strides in productivity taken place according to God's ordinances or against them? If according to them, what purpose must we infer? There are two hypotheses: the one that the resultant abundance of products should be consumed; the other that it should be wasted. The bankers proceed on the latter assumption. What does the Church say?

In July next the Pan-Anglican Conference is to assemble at Lambeth for the sixth time. We hope that all readers who hold the Christian faith, and any others who are willing, will take this opportunity of raising the issue we have described. How they can do it is not in our power to advise in detail. But the way to begin is to confer. So, in the first place, let everyone who wishes to co-operate send his name and address to the office of this journal, marking the envelope "Lambeth Conference." If the response justifies it we will see that a committee is formed to direct this work. We print elsewhere an account of the history and function of the Lambeth Conference. It has an added incidental interest because of the likeness between the loose form of organisation adopted by the Conference and that of the Social Credit Movement. It allows the "widest latitude of opinion consistent with loyalty to the fundamental truths of the Faith." This allows of the question being raised as to whether the moral code prescribed by high-financial interests is not fundamentally subversive of these fundamental truths. If it is, then it is the duty of the Church to denounce it in the name of God and the people.

## The Screen Play.

### Fashions in Love.

There is a certain sense of adventure in seeing the first talkie of a player with whose methods and personality the silent screen has made one familiar. At times the result is complete disillusionment, as in the case of Janet Gaynor, but the spoken word may also enhance the player's personality, as has happened to Gloria Swanson, Bessie Love, and Milton Sills. "Fashions in Love" will not heighten Adolphe Menjou's reputation, partly because it is not a particularly good film, but mainly because Mr. Menjou's extremely finished art, which is in the best mimetic tradition, is so complete in itself that the spoken word adds nothing to his screen personality. For this reason the film has a certain interest, since it indicates by comparison how many well-known screen actors and actresses were not completely suited to a medium of wordless expression, and thus serves also to explain why the talkie has given them greater scope. Only a few are completely equipped without dialogue, and in this category come Menjou, Chaplin, and Jannings.

It was a pleasure to discover that Mr. Menjou, despite rumours to the contrary, speaks with a French and not an American accent. It will be an even greater pleasure if this distinguished artist is one day cast for a role worthy of him, instead of being entrusted with one banality after another; since he made his name in that outstanding film, "A Woman of Paris," he has never been given a part capable of doing him justice.

"Fashions in Love"—a stupid title—has been generally released. I saw it last week at the Stoll, where the excellent acoustics give pleasing voices their due, and make Chicago accents less repellent.

### The Queen's Necklace: Palace.

This film, which reconstructs history on the Carlylean "flashes of lightning" formula, has received an uncommon amount of advance publicity because of the pig-headed attitude of the Censorship in insisting on the deletion of a few feet of celluloid depicting the flogging and branding of the Countess de la Motte. The official explanation by the safeguarders of the morals of our picture theatres is that their index expurgatorius, which is, of course, known to all exhibitors, definitely forbids scenes showing the flogging of women and branding, the latter, I believe, being regarded as objectionable irrespective of the sex of the brandee. There is, perhaps, something to be said for this attitude, at least so far as concerns pictures licensed for universal exhibition, but the Censorship has stultified itself by the fact that it has licensed so many American films containing similar incidents, such as "Broken Blossoms." But while the British Board of Film Censors is willing to act as the stool pigeon of Hollywood, it will not turn a blind eye to an intelligent and thoughtful production which has been sponsored by the French Government, who gave the makers special facilities to ensure historical accuracy.

"The Queen's Necklace" has a few talking sequences, and I understand that the Censors required an English translation, and that they also refused to look at the film under its original title of "Le Collier de la Reine," because they did not understand the meaning of the phrase. No doubt they feared the worst, on the principle of "You know what foreigners are." Since I am prepared to believe anything of the British Board of Film Censors, I am quite ready to believe that its personnel includes no one able to interpret "Avez vous le canif de la jardinière?"

Having seen this film in its uncensored form as well as the version which is being presented to the British public, I am inclined to think that the action

of the Censorship is an outrage on liberty rather than on art. The excised portion is extremely effective in its realism, but the spectator can safely be relied on to fill in the gap, and to bridge it with such embellishments as his imagination or his sadistic fancies may suggest. In saying this, I am not for a moment attempting to excuse or condone the British Board of Film Censors, which has merely provided another outstanding instance of its complete and inherent unfitness for its job.

"The Queen's Necklace" introduces Marcelle Jefferson Cohn to the screen. Mme. Cohn is, I believe, an amateur who assumed the role of the Countess de la Motte, which was thrown up by a professional, because it appealed to her. I hope she will become a permanent recruit. Incidentally, this film is notable for some most admirable sound sequences in which the voices of a crowd are used in true contrapuntal fashion. This is the intelligent use of sound as it should be used, to supplement action, to suggest, or to heighten emotion, rather than in the form of the spoken word.

DAVID OCKHAM.

### THE LAMBETH CONFERENCES.

"Since 1867 Lambeth Conferences have been held at intervals of approximately ten years, namely, in 1878, 1888, 1897, 1908, and 1920. It has become an established institution. It has grown steadily in numbers; the range of subjects discussed has become wider; its influence has been more widely felt; and its place in the Anglican system has become clearer. What that place exactly is may need some explanation. We have seen that before the first meeting the Canadian Church asked for a council or synod, but the Conference wisely decided to remain a conference. It is a consultative, not a legislative body. It can pass resolutions and give advice to local Churches. It does not claim to pass canons and give commands. This was not quite clear at first and was perhaps the cause of some of the opposition; when it became clear the opposition died down. On the other hand there were many who were disappointed. They would have liked a strong centralised organisation for the Anglican Communion, with the Archbishop of Canterbury as "patriarch" and with a Pan-Anglican Synod and a final Court of Appeal. They felt that something of this kind was needed to preserve unity and keep the constituent Churches of the Anglican Communion in touch with one another. It is doubtful if it would have had that effect. The Church of England and the Churches which derive from it are engaged in a very important and interesting experiment. They are unique in Christendom in allowing the widest possible latitude of opinion and religious practice consistent with loyalty to the fundamental truths of the Faith as expressed in the New Testament, defined by the undisputed General Councils, and summarised in the creeds. Hence the existence of very different "schools of thought" and even parties in the Church of England. These differences are reflected in the daughter Churches overseas; but while in England parishes representative of all parties will be found in all dioceses, you will find in some countries abroad whole dioceses of one "colour." For example, the way in which the Christian religion is presented throughout the diocese of Zanzibar is strikingly different from the way in which it is presented in the neighbouring diocese of Mombasa; but the two bishops (and their flocks) are in communion with one another and wish to remain so. The Lambeth Conference is one of the means of preventing such differences from becoming too acute. It helps to do so because it gives all the bishops of our Communion an opportunity of meeting one another and of mutual consultation and discussion at regular intervals. It is unlikely that it would do so if it were an authoritative body to which local Churches could appeal for a final decision on vexed questions of doctrine or devotion or policy. If our experiment of "comprehensiveness" is a good one, then it is fortunate that the Anglican Communion is simply an informal federation of independent Churches recognising no legislative authority outside themselves except that of a future General Council in a re-united Catholic Church."—*Overseas*. Organ of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Second Quarter, 1930.



## Divorce Law Reform.

"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife."—Deuteronomy, ch. xxiv. 1, 2.

"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband. But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife."—1 Corinthians, ch. vii. 10, 11.

One of the most alluring dreams of the international lawyer is that of a universal law of divorce. Though there are, unfortunately, too many differences in the respective practices of the various peoples of the world to permit of such a project being put into immediate execution, it would be quite possible for some of the countries whose divorce laws are in a backward condition (such as England) to introduce certain reforms in order to approximate fairly closely to those countries whose laws on this subject are more rational. At present divorce is allowed in one country and denied in another. The Roman Catholic Church forbids divorce on any ground whatsoever, though its wealthier members can usually for a consideration get their marriages set aside as null by means of a papal dispensation. The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics permits divorce on the application of either party. In England divorce can be granted on only one ground, viz., adultery. In Sweden it can be granted on at least twelve, including mutual consent. In the U.S.A. the grounds for divorce vary greatly in accordance with State laws—in South Carolina there is no divorce, while in Nevada such a slender ground as "mental cruelty" has been known to suffice. In China, till comparatively recent times, a man might put away his wife for being a chatterbox.

Most countries make no distinction between husband and wife as to grounds for divorce, but there are a few exceptions to this rule, notably Egypt, Belgium, and (until quite recently) England. Under Mohammedan law in Egypt a husband may divorce his wife without any misbehaviour on her part, and he need not assign a cause for so doing, but a wife can only obtain a divorce if her husband has been deprived of his organ of generation and for a few other reasons such as insufficiency of dower, or his refusal to embrace the faith of Islam. Usually, the domicile of the husband is the place where the action must be instituted, but in the U.S.A. a wife may acquire a separate domicile from that of her husband, and she may file her petition there if her husband is the "guilty" party. Nearly every country possesses a specially constituted court for the purpose of trying divorce applications, but in Ireland (largely owing to clerical influence) the cumbersome and expensive machinery of an Act of Parliament must be set in motion in order to dissolve a marriage.

The antinomy of the Mosaic law, which permitted a husband to divorce his wife at will, and the Pauline (so-called Christian) doctrine, which did not permit divorce even in the case of adultery, requires no emphasis. The first is essentially the conception of a primitive legislator who classified a man's wife with his house, his ox, and his ass; the second is the conception of a religious missionary and celibate who, realising that humanity must have some outlet for its sexual desires, tolerated marriage since it appeared to fulfil this purpose—but only as a sacrament which must be binding on both parties during their lives. On one occasion, in order to escape a scourging, St. Paul boasted that he was a Roman citizen. "Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me,

art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born." (Acts, ch. xxii. 27, 28.) Yet St. Paul's view ran quite counter to the marriage laws of the nation whose citizenship he so proudly claimed. In his time it was a fixed principle of Roman law that as marriage was a contract entered into by the agreement of the parties to it, it could be terminated in the same manner—this termination was called *Divortium* (literally a separation). Furthermore, either party could repudiate the agreement by sending to the other a letter to this effect which had to be sealed in the presence of witnesses—this procedure was called *Repudium*. This formality was declared to be unnecessary by Diocletian (c. 300 A.D.), and absolute freedom remained the law under the Roman Empire till Justinian (Emperor 527-561 A.D.), no doubt inspired by his clerical advisers and the writings of the early Christian fathers, practically forbade divorce except in very flagrant cases.

Though both Catholics and Protestants have always been inclined to regard marriage from the theological point of view of sin, the Protestants, while admitting the practice of divorce within certain limits, have been careful to stigmatise adultery more severely than the Catholics. The result of this sectarian difference is well summed up by the Hon. Bertrand Russell, in a recent work, as follows:

"One finds, accordingly, that in those Protestant countries where marriages are easily dissolved, adultery is viewed with extreme disfavour, while in countries which do not recognise divorce, adultery, though regarded as sinful, is winked at, at any rate where men are concerned. In Tsarist Russia, where divorce was exceedingly difficult, no one thought the worse of Gorki for his private life, whatever they may have thought of his politics. In America, on the contrary, where no one objected to his politics, he was hounded out on moral grounds, and no hotel would give him a night's lodging."—*Marriage and Morals*, p. 178.

Neither point of view can be supported on rational grounds, for the Catholic results in needless human suffering and the Protestant encourages hypocrisy and licence.

The history of the law relating to divorce in England is briefly as follows. Before 1858 absolute divorce could only be obtained by applying first to the ecclesiastical courts, and, having received their "nihil obstat," then to the House of Lords, a costly procedure which necessitated a special Act of Parliament in each individual case. In sentencing a poor man for bigamy in 1845 Mr. Justice Maule commented on this scandalous state of the law:

"You should have gone to the ecclesiastical courts and obtained a divorce a mensa et thoro; then you should have brought an action [the action of Criminal Conversation which formerly lay against the adulterer] and obtained damages, which the other side would probably not have been able to pay, and you would have had to pay your own costs—perhaps £100 or £150. Then you should have proceeded to the House of Lords, where, having proved that these preliminaries had been complied with, you would have been able to marry again. The expenses might amount to £500 or £600, or perhaps £1,000."

The remedy came in the shape of the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1857, which instituted a Court to try matrimonial causes (now the Divorce Court). Divorce was to be granted on one ground only, viz., adultery. The bulk of this Act is in force to-day. The adulterer is generally made a party to the suit, and he is liable in damages and costs. If the petitioner has been accessory to or connived at the adultery or has condoned it, or if the petition is presented by collusion, no decree of divorce can be granted. Every decree is in the first instance a decree nisi, and it cannot be made absolute till six months have expired, after which latter date either party is free to marry again. But at any time before this decree nisi is

made absolute by the Court the King's Proctor may intervene to show cause why it should not be made absolute.

Whereas under the Act of 1857 a husband could obtain a divorce solely on the ground of his wife's adultery, a wife could only obtain a divorce if her husband's adultery was accompanied by cruelty or desertion. This has been altered by an Act of 1923 which puts a wife on substantially the same footing as regards valid grounds for divorce, i.e., the new Act empowered the Court to grant a wife a decree on the ground of her husband's adultery without any other matrimonial offence on his part. In 1914 a special department in the High Court of Justice was established for the assistance of poor persons in litigation, including divorce. A poor person has to satisfy the department that he or she is not possessed of more than £50, but there can be few "poor persons" who can afford the luxury of availing themselves of the services of this department, since in the case of divorce the applicant has still to find the out-of-pocket expenses of the solicitor and witnesses, which always amount to at least £10.

Lord Sumner referred to the effect of the Act of 1857 in his judgment in the House of Lords in the celebrated case of "Russell v. Russell" [1924], A.C., at p. 746:

"I am afraid that the sanctity of married intercourse passed into the limbo of 'lost causes and impossible loyalties' in 1857. You cannot give the spouses the legal right to have their married life investigated in open court, with a view to its formal and legal termination, without being prepared, when necessary, to violate the sanctity of that life. The law recognises this. The Divorce Court sits that the secrets of married life may be divulged."

Though evidence in divorce proceedings may no longer be published to the world, the names of the parties, the co-respondent, and the witnesses appear in the newspapers, and in court they are frequently compelled to undergo a degrading ceremony in which it would be idle to pretend that either Bench or Counsel enjoy in assisting. Unless the parties are willing to submit to the definitely unsatisfactory "judicial separation," which allows them to live apart but does not allow either of them to re-marry, husband and wife are aware that the only legal method by which their marriage can be dissolved is by one proving that the other has committed adultery. Such is the present state of our divorce law, and there is no doubt that since the war it has been open to very grave abuses.

The growth of the use of contraceptives has put an entirely different complexion on the question of adultery from the hitherto conventional one to which we have mostly been accustomed, and which regarded adultery as a crime with social but no legal penalties attached. (Adultery is still a crime in Spain, where the "guilty" party is liable to imprisonment.) Marital infidelities, so-called, have much diminished in importance, since the risk of "accidents" is much less, while the economic and (to a certain extent) political emancipation of women, assisted by post-war legislation, has greatly contributed to place both sexes on the same footing as regards sexual intercourse outside marriage. It is extremely doubtful whether adultery *per se* should form a valid ground for divorce, but this question is not susceptible of discussion here.

The difficulties which confront the divorce law reformer have been excellently stated by the Hon. Bertrand Russell, who incidentally puts forward what appears to be the most rational solution of the problem:

"There is very great difficulty in framing laws as regards divorce, because, whatever the laws may be, husbands and wives will do whatever their passions, while circumvent the intentions of the legislators. Although in English law a divorce cannot be obtained where there is any agreement between husband and wife, yet every-

body knows that in practice there often is such an agreement. In New York State it is not uncommon to go further and hire perjured testimony to prove the statutory adultery. When the most eminent of all film-stars was divorced by his wife for cruelty, one of the counts in the proof of cruelty was that he used to bring home friends who talked about Kant. I can hardly suppose that it was the intention of the California legislators to enable any woman to divorce her husband on the ground that he was sometimes guilty of intelligent conversation in her presence. The only way out of these confusions, subtleties, and absurdities is to have divorce by mutual consent where there is not some very definite and demonstrable reason, such as insanity, to justify a one-sided desire for divorce. The parties would then have to settle all monetary adjustments out of court, and it would not be necessary for either party to hire eleven men to prove the other a monster of iniquity" (my italics).—*Marriage and Morals*, pp. 184-5.

A rational system of divorce, such as that advocated by Mr. Russell, would put an end to such degrading features as faked hotel bills and suborned chambermaids which disfigure our Divorce Court. The contract of marriage is a simple civil proceeding, and its dissolution should be characterised by a similar simplicity—just like the formation and dissolution of a business partnership. The fact that the Court will grant a nullity decree where either party is unable through some physical defect to consummate the marriage is proof that the State has realised that the object of marriage is the production and upbringing of children, and no union which fails to discharge this obligation should remain binding on the parties. Where there are no children, therefore, divorce should be granted on the application of either party. Where there are children divorce should be granted on a basis of mutual consent (as Mr. Russell has suggested), such questions as alimony and the custody of the children being decided by the parties themselves, or, in the event of a dispute, by the Court. Divorce should also be granted on request of either party in the case of desertion (as under Scottish law to-day) and cruelty, and when one of the parties is suffering from insanity or a contagious disease.

The fact that there are over 850 matrimonial cases down for hearing in the Probate, Admiralty, and Divorce Division of the High Court of Justice this term (an increase of over a hundred as compared with last year) is indeed a sign of the times, though it would be wrong to regard it as a particularly unhealthy one. It merely shows that the public has begun to realise that divorce is not a luxury only enjoyed by childless millionaires for convenience, and by actors and actresses for publicity, but can be obtained by any of its members of moderate means provided that compliance is made with the legal formalities. On the first day this term that the Divorce Court sat Mr. Justice Hill made a good start by granting one decree nisi in under four and a half minutes. But good going of this kind is required, not only in the granting of divorces, but in revising the grounds on which it is possible to obtain licence, and as such is entirely out of keeping with the needs of the community.

ERIC MONTGOMERY.

"In a lesser extent last year similar conditions prevailed in the United States, where, however, the later development is more serious. Following the example of the Canadian Wheat Pool, the U.S. wheat manipulators have decided upon a continuance of restricted selling, and in order to prevent a slump in prices, it has been decided, as already stated in these columns, to buy up, with the help of the Farm Board, the bulk of all the wheat offering on the market—to the extent, it is said, of at least fifteen bushels out of every sixteen. This naturally requires a long purse, but the Federal Farm Board has announced its intention to engage in grain stabilisation operations on a really big scale, and to accomplish this will finance a surplus segregation in order to protect prices."—*Journal of Commerce*, leading article, March 20.



## Drama.

**Out of the Blue: Lyric, Hammersmith.**

Evreinov, who wished mankind to take life itself as a harlequinade, in "The Theatre in Life," introduced a company of actors as paying-guests into a boarding-house to brighten it. Soon the hitherto life-weary son of the proprietor told the leading lady that she was not as other women are, but rather as women on the stage; and life became for him, if not more real, at least more attractive. Evreinov's theory was that all life was theatre, from a kitten playing with a ball, or a cat with a mouse, to the love-sick youth tearing his soul to pieces for words as fine as Romeo's. Recognising that youth rarely succeeded even in his own estimation, and that his suit must have failed but for the charity of the beloved audience, Evreinov preached and illustrated on the stage how life might be better acted. Hans Chlumberg, author of "Das Blaue vom Himmel," which Michael Orme has excellently adapted for the English theatre as "Out of the Blue," has begun at the other end. Life, he would pretend, in analogy with the supposition that truth is stranger than fiction, is more dramatic than drama. He escapes from the fourth-wall theory by causing the stage to represent—a stage; and the auditorium—an auditorium. The stage-manager has made a slight mistake. Believing that "to-morrow" was the first night, he has sent the actors, stage-hands, and orchestra home. But the first night, the producer convinces him in the end, is advertised for to-night; the audience is already in the theatre. Here is make-believe with a vengeance, surpassing, indeed, the north-country "tackler," whose wife had gone to spend a week-end at her mother's, and who, forgotten on the Saturday morning by the knock-up, appeared at the mill-gate on Sunday morning at six o'clock complete with overalls and white-spotted red handkerchief containing breakfast. But let Herr Chlumberg have his way. Dramatists, like poets, must have licence. Here we are, as the producer says, and what's to be done? This, replies the bright young lay-reader with the Gate Theatre beard, is where old-stagers with nothing but experience to fall back on stick in the mud. What you lack is the seven Godfrey virtues, creativity, invention, initiative, gumption, imagination, and audacity twice. Whereupon the bright young man descends into the auditorium and hauls a solicitor—who drags his timid wife after him—on the stage. There are two actors, anyway, and a theatre-full to be had for fetching. Now get on with it. What shall you act? Just make yourselves at home, says the producer, and proceed with your daily lives. In the solicitor's house, unfortunately, there is not a play; there is only a squabble. A lover is wanted. When the producer calls for volunteers, the whole of the audience, or so it seems, volunteers. This quite naturally does not deter the wife from going on with the game. It does not even deter the husband. Suddenly by the producer's side stands a determined man, who claims the part of the lover against all comers. If the play is adapted for the Chicago stage, this lover will no doubt be armed with a machine-gun, and establish his claim by mowing down half the audience. For his qualification is not that he can act; he is really in love, madly, hopelessly, with the woman whose unappreciative husband has just pitched her into the limelight and her lover's reach.

The illusion is successful. As the lover, Mr. R. Claude Pascoe goes about his affair as if he means it, and apart from a tendency to sheep's eyes hardly appropriate to the resounding name of Captain Stanislaus Legarde of the Royal Engineers, gives a good performance. As the wife, Miss Minnie Blagden also acts with sincerity in a performance

which steadily improves as the play proceeds. Playing the cocksure husband who has obviously shoved himself to the front at every meeting or party in his life, Mr. George Merritt goes through an alternation of convincing torment and excessive gaiety as he forgets and remembers that he is engaged in theatre make-believe. By Mr. Merritt's understanding acting this malicious caricature of a husband becomes an almost lovable character for the sportsmanship with which he sees through an adventure the beginning of which threatened so little of the continuation. Nobody in London could be more at home as the bewildered producer, showing his face through the curtains to observe progress, tiptoeing on the stage to give "cues," or whistling the husband off to remove his embarrassing presence from a promising scene between the lovers, than Sir Nigel Playfair. The audience enjoyed the show immensely.

The first time I saw a stage-conjurer "accidentally" tread on a bowler-hat borrowed from a gentleman in the stalls I was thrilled and horrified. In my laughter mixed with shame, I wondered, being about twelve years old at the time, if the gentleman would be angry and if the conjurer could pay for the damage. During the performance of "Out of the Blue" I felt that the same old trick was out again, not for an instant in a variety-show, but for a whole show. Herr Chlumberg uses for his play every hitch that might occur in a theatre, from the sticking of the curtain to the absence of the actors, in a way that belongs not to the theatre, but to the funny man of the music-hall. The programme calls "Out of the Blue" an improvisation; but it is not, of course, in the least an improvisation. It is an elaborate and studied imitation of an improvisation. It recalls the man who wanted a day's notice to give a prepared speech and a week's notice to give an ex-temporary one. The domestic comedy into which "Out of the Blue" develops is as trite as any divorce-case. The dramatist's method of attracting interest is precisely that of the literary journalist, who drags all the readers between Cardiff and Colchester into excitement about some trivial affair in Glasgow. In the play this is done by apparently drawing characters from the audience at random. During this fishing in the audience I wondered what would happen if a dozen university-students were to roll up one evening, and, like the Irishman, to join in the fun. The bridge between reality and the theatre would not, of course, be any sounder than it is. As it is, it disappears between the acts for an interval, and at the end of the play for good, which does not apply to Pirandello's theatrical illusions or bridges between more than one sphere of reality.

**Socrates: Stage Society.**

Of the six scenes in Mr. Clifford Bax's play only the last one, the death of Socrates, can be called dramatic. All the scenes are rather dialogue-tableau. For those already interested in Socrates that is enough for an afternoon of purely intellectual entertainment. But drama requires that the emotions, even the passions, be engaged. All that Mr. Bax brings forth from Socrates and his relations with his family, pupils, friends, and enemies, was already possessed by readers, and it would have been preferable if the author had attempted to dramatise Socrates against a background of the events of his time, instead of giving a Socrates almost as cut-off from them as a professor of pure mathematics at Cambridge. Only once does Socrates betray that he is human: in prison when he wonders where his philosophical insight was when he married Xantippe. The trial-scene was not nearly so dramatic as it might have been.

Mr. Lewis Casson's performance in the main part was distinguished by its friendliness and good humour. In spite of his speeches, which are, of course, twice edited Socrates, Mr. Casson steered

wide off the oracular manner, and emphasised the modesty of wisdom. Nevertheless, I could not help seeing Socrates as an old man of long debating experiences delighting in tripping up high-brow schoolboys, and his modesty as a smoke-screen to cover his sophistries. His argument for the existence of mind as the fount of creation was final. Only those can reply who cannot see it. But his reasoning that a philosopher should welcome death because he then gains the truth which is a philosopher's whole pursuit could be answered by any modern schoolboy except, of course, one taught by the higher education to take Socrates' word for it. Granted the premises there would be a short cut to truth. If we were to accept his philosophy about death, the death-scene would at once change places from the most to the least dramatic. As action alone death is brief and easy while life is long and hard; as an emotional prospect life is the pleasanter. That thousands of millions have died before us makes death no more welcome. The aim of philosophy, Seneca said, is to learn to die; not to welcome death, but to be able to bear the knowledge of its inevitability without allowing the fear of it to spoil the meantime. Possibly that is the way to learn the truth about it before we come to it. Rationalisation is in one aspect a merciful trick played by Nature on ourselves for veiling the truth from us until we have been prepared to bear it.

PAUL BANKS.

## The Pleasures of Persecution.

By W. H. McKenna.

To the psychologists who believe that pugnacity and cruelty are the most firmly rooted of human imperfections I dedicate the observation that gladiatorial shows and combats of all kinds, especially single combats, have always been popular entertainments. But it should not be supposed that the spilling of blood and the death of the vanquished are essential to their success. They are as popular now as they have ever been, although at the moment blood is out of fashion and those who propose to shed it, whether in the bull-ring in the name of sport or on principle as regicides and revolutionaries, are rebuked for their inhumanity. Where it is still traditional and proper to solve problems by spilling blood, as in the domestic disputes of savage peoples and the foreign politics of European nations, the method is popular and all other methods are stubbornly resisted. Even in discussions of the possibility of insurrection at home there may be detected a certain sadistic anticipation. No general election, however keenly contested and no matter what interest, as keen a delight in some, as great a fear in others and as violent a partisanship in everyone, as an armed revolution. If the French Revolution of 1789 had not been transformed into the Terror of 1793, if Louis and his queen, Danton, Hebert, Robespierre and the rest had died in their beds instead of upon the scaffold it would make little appeal to the public imagination, although its importance would not in any way be diminished. Why is it that the constitutional revolution of 1688, which deposed a king without doing him any bodily harm, figures less prominently in popular history books than the revolt of forty years before, which cut off a king's head? There may be political reasons, but I am convinced that historians are influenced more by psychological ones.

It is a truism in Fleet Street that War is the best-seller. The part played by Reason in effecting reforms is negligible for this reason. It usually happens that no measures are taken to remedy an abuse until a spectacular protest is made, and to the onlooker no spectacle has a greater interest than one

which involves physical conflict. This has been made the great argument for political assassination. Resolutions passed at public meetings can be comfortably overlooked, but a crime demands an enquiry. The joy of fighting, and more particularly of watching others fight, has influenced literature to an extent only realised when we complain of books in which "nothing happens"—books, that is, appealing to the intellect, the aesthetic sense and the less tumultuous emotions. It may be said that history, too, is only interesting when it is as vivid as fiction. There is, I believe, historical evidence of the Trojan war, but not a particle to suggest that Hector and Achilles ever lived. But who would find the history bearable if their heroic conflicts were eliminated?

Although torture, mutilation, and violent death may, in the intervals between wars, be regarded as too crude for the modern taste, the first principle of social life—that it is inexcusable to persecute a person because you dislike his opinions—has certainly not been learnt. In various disguises and with slight modifications gladiatorial shows have survived the Roman Empire and under the forms of democracy they flourish as lustily as under the imperial purple. The spectacle of human suffering has an inexhaustible interest and delight, which is all the more intense when one dislikes or disapproves of the person who is suffering. The instincts of the primitive hunter survive, not only in the sporting gentlemen who chase foxes and shoot birds, but also in the majority of people who cannot afford such expensive pleasures and who gratify their instincts in moral heresy-hunts by vilifying, ostracising and, if possible, imprisoning those whose opinions on religion, patriotism, and the purposes of Government differ from their own. In the democracies of the modern world, where men boast most loudly that they have freedom and self-Government, an instrument has been devised which stifles originality of thought and freedom of state-ment more effectively than any instrument invented by theological intolerance. It has been called Public Opinion; it has also been known under other names.

This instrument of persecution has advantages for those who wield it which older instruments have lacked. If Star Chamber and the Inquisition were revived they might not be popular, for the persecutor can only feel secure in his enjoyment if he is assured he will not have to take his turn upon the rack. There is no fun in watching tortured men if you know that soon you will share their agonies. Robespierre fell, and the Terror ended, not because people were sick of the sight of blood, but because of an uncomfortable suspicion that sooner or later their blood would provide a spectacle. The point to be emphasised, however, is not this natural unwillingness to be the victim but the absence of principle which distinguishes present persecutions from those of the past. The Inquisition (to take it as an example) did not affect the modern hypocrisy of pretending to be tolerant. The religion we profess is free from dogmas and sectarianism, and by the constitution of our Church you may avow whatever faith you like. There might be a thousand blasphemers and heretics, and it would do its best to stamp them out. But the blasphemers were always conscious of blaspheming; the heretics knew that they held unpopular opinions on the nature of God and the functions of His Church. There were dogmas it was foolhardy to deny because everyone knew the consequences of denial. The persecution of heretics by the Church resembles, in this sense, the persecution of criminals by the law; it does not in the least resemble modern persecutions by Public Opinion. There were bad dogmas then as there are bad laws now;



but however bad they were the penalties were not arbitrary. The Church did not profess freedom of belief and punish men for believing freely. It did not proclaim from its pulpits that doubt upon the Trinity was a matter between a man and his conscience and then burn him for thinking it an impossible metaphysical assumption. It might do one or other of these things, but it was not guilty of the hypocrisy of doing both. And because the limits of liberty were defined there was considerable liberty within the limits.

To the man who wants a quiet life more than anything else the modern democracies are not to be recommended. Where the limits of liberty are undefined persecutions are universal and unescapable. A fault frequently to be observed in democracies is that they take liberty for granted, forgetting to inquire whether it is infringed in practice. The consequence of this forgetfulness is that the operations of Public Opinion cannot be reconciled with its pretensions. While it is asserting freedom of speech it is penalising those who take advantage of it to express unpopular opinions. While it is proclaiming that modern thought demands for a free citizen the right to think and speak as he likes within the limits of decency it is placing him under severe social disabilities for supposing that "modern thought" means what it says.

In a recent defence of Fascism\* this unconscious hypocrisy is amusingly illustrated. The author claims for Fascism that it is restoring to the Italian people almost all their former liberties. Once again they may worship in the traditional way, and those who are interested in the control of industry and business no longer have cause to fear undue interference by the Government. On the other hand, it is not denied that the Press is strictly censored, that freedom of speech is limited to speeches in support of Mussolini, and that strikes and lock-outs have been declared illegal. Unexpectedly the cat escapes from the bag. I must quote. "They (the youth of Italy) have learnt to make thought and action one, to do what they say, to say what they do, to stand up for their own opinions, to be courageously sincere and sincerely courageous. To hear them singing their fascist songs as they go marching out of a Sunday, little boys and little girls in their most attractive 'Balilla' uniforms, is most touching and inspiring." What can one add to this? It is delightful, of course, to know that children sing Fascist songs in Fascist Italy, but it is not necessarily a proof of sincerity and courage. It is even legitimate to doubt whether, as a rule, children are interested in Fascism or any other political theory. A sense of proportion prevents one from acclaiming every child who sings "Rule Britannia" on Empire Day as a hero in miniature, and a sense of reality suggests that children who are free to choose (free, that is, from the supervision of parents and teachers) will sing all kinds of songs, perhaps even the "Internationale." And a Government which was restoring to the people their former liberties would let them, and might even encourage them.

But it is part of the business of a dictatorship to ignore liberty in the interest of order. The persecutions I have in mind are those of democracy; they range from the imprisoning of pacifists in time of war to the lynching of negroes in the primitive parts of America; from the persecution of Catholics by the Ku Klux Klan to the persecution of free-thinkers by Protestant Fundamentalists; from the victimising of strikers to the proscribing of radical journalists. Because America is most democratic in tradition, her sins are especially glaring; the contrast of the Sacco-Vanzetti trial and the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour is too plain to pass unnoticed. But

\* "The Universal Aspects of Fascism." By J. S. Barnes.

the uneasy conscience of the rest of the world which makes a scapegoat of America to conceal its own delinquencies, must not be mistaken for generous and genuine indignation. Both the joy of persecuting and the semblance of humanitarianism beneath which it hides are as widely diffused in the Old World as in the New, and of all the rights for which men have struggled on both sides of the Atlantic the right to persecute has the most determined supporters.

## A Poet's Economics.

The original manuscript of this diary\* was purchased from a descendant of Southey in 1864 by the late Sir Robert Rawlinson, who presented it to the Institute of Civil Engineers in 1885. At the Centenary celebrations in 1928 of the grant of a Royal Charter to that Institute—obtained mainly through the exertions of Southey's fellow-traveller, Thomas Telford, the great Scottish engineer, who was its first President—the exhibition of this almost-forgotten MS. led to the present publication. The friend-ship of a Poet-Laureate with the leading engineer of his own day may be set down to the fact that there was something of a minor poet. Both had been fired by the French Revolution with "democratic" ideas which were, however, in the case of the poet, subdued by the laurels of his Royal office. The two men had never met previous to their setting forth together on a six weeks' summer tour; but of Telford the poet says that he "was upon cordial terms with him in five minutes." "Eskdale Tam" was 62, with an established European reputation; while "The Wolf" (Southey earned this name from his prowess at meals, as he genially tells us) was seventeen years his junior.

Telford had to make a professional tour of inspection of the extensive schemes that were then in progress for the designs—of roads, bridges, canals, and harbour improvements. The public fund which made those vast engineering works possible arose from the accumulation of rents and profits derived from the estates forfeited after the Rebellion of 1745—the defeated Jacobite chiefs thus unwillingly contributing to the general improvement of the Highlands. The hero-worship of the Laureate led him to disparage the bridges and roads carried out by General Wade some 75 years previously. But it should be remembered that work constructed hurriedly for purposes of military occupation and for rapid transport of heavy armaments against a less encumbered "enemy" who used dangerous footpaths across high and rugged mountains, would naturally compare unfavourably with similar schemes carried out under a more leisurely dispensation in a later century.

For NEW AGE readers the chief interest of Southey's diary of his tour through England's most northerly county—Scotland—lies in his passages relative to Economics. He was an avowed Conservative in politics, but was perplexed at the tyrannous conduct of certain landlords towards their poverty-stricken tenants:—

"There is at this time a considerable ferment in the country concerning the management of the M. of Stafford's estates: they comprise nearly two-fifths of the County of Sutherland, and the process of converting them into extensive sheep-farms is being carried on. A political economist has no hesitation concerning the fitness of the end in view, and little scruple as to the means. Leave these bleak regions, he says, for cattle to breed in, and let men remove to situations where they can exert themselves and thrive. The traveller who looks only at the outside of things might easily assent to this reasoning. I have never—not even in Galicia—seen any human habitations so bad as the Highland 'black-houses': by that name the people of the country call them, in distinction from such as are built with stone and lime. The worst of these black-houses are the 'bothies'—made of very large turfs, from 4 to 6 feet long, fastened with wooden pins to a wooden frame. . . . To transplant these people from their native mountain glens to the sea coast, and require them to become some cultivators, others fishermen, occupations to which they have never been accustomed—to expect a sudden and total change of habits in their children; to expel them by process of law from their black-houses, and if they demur in obeying the tenements—oust them by setting fire to these combustible tenements—this surely is as little defensible on the score of policy as

\* "Journal of a Tour in Scotland in 1819." By Robert Southey. With an Introduction and Notes by Professor C. H. Herford. (Murray. 10s. 6d. net.)

of morals. And however legal this course of proceeding may be according to the notions of modern legality, certain it is that no such power can be legitimately deduced from the feudal system, for that system made it as much the duty of the Lord to protect his vassals as of the vassals to serve their Lord."

Despite the fact that Lady Stafford annually spent the whole of the £6,000 from the rents of her Highland estates, as well as a like amount from her husband's English properties, in improvements on her Scottish heritage, the sight of these evictions disturbed the poet's political morality. The passage of another century, moreover, has not enabled successive generations of "brilliant" political economists and pushful "promising" politicians to solve this hardy perennial problem.

Our Diarist was again distressed by the insecurity of tenure encouraged by his Conservative friends in the North, as this extract shows:—

"If a man improve his farm, instead of encouraging him, they invite others to outbid him in the rent; or they dispeople whole tracts to convert them into sheep-farms. Whereas if they would offer beneficial leases to their tenants to men who are willing to bring it into cultivation such is the disposition of the Highlanders (manifested by them wherever they have opportunity to manifest it) that in half a century the Highland valleys would be as well cultivated as any part of England."

At New Lanark Southey visited the factory of Robert Owen, and was appalled by the methods employed by this pioneer exponent of what is now called "scientific management" and "welfare work" in dealing with the "mass production" of cotton goods. The ex-revolutionary Conservative poet, after his talk with Owen, piously journalises thus:—

"But I never regarded man as a machine; I never believed him to be merely a material being."

No more did the whimsical Robert Owen, of course—but that is another story. Exactly a century from the year of Southey's Highland tour with the eminent Scots engineer, another far-seeing Scots engineer was busy forging that famous economic formula which will ultimately remove all the muddled perplexities of the poets, the philosophers and the politicians who are still limping along the old economic highways that always end, like many Roman roads, in a quagmire.

Our poet rides his Pegasus with the snaffle during his journey; and seldom soars above recording what he actually sees and hears. His deference to the towering genius of his companion is conspicuous; and his admiration of Telford's personality as well as his engineering achievements, find frequent expression. Not the least entertaining are the pieces of gossip and the records of chance encounters which Southey preserves in that pleasant prose which is characteristic of his style. Professor Herford's introductory chapter and notes clarify sundry points that are somewhat obscure on account of the century that has passed since the Journal was written. A key map of the route taken by the travellers would be a useful addition to any subsequent edition of this agreeable book.

SCOTT CURFEW.

## Reviews.

**The Challenge of the Dead.** By Stephen Graham. (Ernest Benn, Ltd. 3s. 6d. net.)

Mr. Graham describes vividly a visit to the battlefields of France and Flanders in 1920, and recalls one's state of mind at that time, when, though we knew that the war had been a ghastly mistake, we still thought it was a mistake from which we might profit. The war was still a subject for "fine writing" and noble sentiments, and the bleak grandeur of "All Quiet" would have seemed as marked as the nightmare bitterness of "The Silver Tassie."

After ten years of disillusionment the "Challenge of the Dead" makes ironical reading, but that is not Mr. Graham's fault.

N. M.

**A Challenge to Neurasthenia.** By Doris Mary Armitage. (Williams and Norgate, Ltd. 2s. 6d.)

Since the flooding of the world with psychoanalytic literature we have nearly all discovered that we are neurasthenics, at least potentially, so that this little book should appeal to a large public. Its unusual feature is that it is written from the point of view of the patient, by a lady who has gone through the hell of neurasthenia and emerged, with the help of the wise treatment of her physician, Dr. Barnes, his patient fit for a normally happy life, rather than to provide a complete and minute dissection of the patient's "psyche." Dr. Barnes pinned his faith not so much to a thorough-going analysis in the Freudian sense, as to a

gentle but inexorable leading of the patient up to his difficulties, and a careful demonstration of their purely subjective nature. One of his favourite sayings was:—

"The subconscious mind has no power over you other than *Fear* and *Bluff*. He can make you a puppet in his hands by these two means. Why be the miserable slave when you can be the happy master?"

No doubt insistent suggestion upon these lines can be of immense help to the milder types of psychopath, but I fear it needs for its success the presence of two factors very difficult to obtain: (a) a physician with the tact and personality of Dr. Barnes, and (b) a "neurasthenic" of the calibre of Miss Armitage.

N. M.

**Politics and Literature.** By G. D. H. Cole. (Hogarth Press. 3s. 6d.)

Mr. Cole, selecting the writings, including pamphlets, in English literature which treat of political questions, leads the reader to expect that he will treat of them as literature. But he is so much more interested in ideas than in forms that he very soon forgets the task he set himself, and treats of ideas only. In his chapter on the seventeenth century he shows very little concern for the style in which writers upheld the divine right of kings in his eagerness to destroy their arguments. In the eighteenth century he is much more at home, and his notes on Swift and Defoe, the latter of whom he cites as the founder of modern journalism, are excellent. Even here, however, he is more interested in the political reasons why Swift wrote in the style of Swift, and Defoe in the styles of Defoe than in any human or literary reasons. Consequently although entitled "Politics and Literature" the book is much more a history of the development of political ideas, and a criticism of those with which Mr. Cole disagrees.

A. N.

**Romance of the Machine.** By Michael Pupin. (Charles Scribner's Sons. 4s. 6d.)

"Romance of the Machine" actually turns out to be a defence of American romanticism against anybody in the world who may be inclined to ridicule it. As the author sees machines where there are none (he has a chapter entitled "The Cosmic Engine") it is natural that he should also see romance all over the place. Nobody denies that science, invention, development, experiment, and the American Republic have spread wonders over the face of the earth. The question is whether they are spreading their benefits as widely and as fairly over society as they might do. There would be nothing romantic about the answer to that question.

A. N.

**The Thinker's Library.** (Watts and Co. 1s. each.)

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- XI. GIBBON ON CHRISTIANITY.
- XII. THE DESCENT OF MAN. By Charles Darwin.

These new additions to the excellent "Thinker's Library" maintain the high standard of the earlier numbers. McCabe gives a vivid picture, based on his own experience, of modern monasticism. A good "bird's-eye view" of philosophic thought, useful as an introduction to its study, can be obtained from Benn. The two chapters of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall" are amusingly sardonic. Especially attractive are the three works of Darwin, which represent amazing value for the cheap price. In spite of later biological work, they will be of value to all who wish to understand something of organic evolution.

I. O. E.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

### WOMEN'S FRANCHISE.

Sir,—It is all very well to say the Suffragettes had "liberty of action" to go to prison. Not all of us were in that fortunate position. I well remember that when Miss Christabel Pankhurst called upon me to take my place in the front line, the thought of an invalid mother filled me with misgiving. Still I chanced it, got myself arrested by a gigantic, red-haired policeman—and was rescued by Mr. Winston Churchill!

AGNES CLARKE.

"What solution will be found for the almost world-wide over-supply of workers, and the almost world-wide over-supply of the things workers produce?"—B. C. Forbes, *San Francisco Examiner*, March 7.



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